

MODULE 12: THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS PART 2  
SESSION 24

We have the Holy Spirit of Truth in us and with us as our guide  
We have Jesus, the way, truth and life, in us and with us to disciple us  
We have our loving Father in us and with us to Father us into sonship  
Agape love should be what we use to measure and test everything against

The 4 streams of thought that are converging into one mighty river are:  
Mystic sonship, Realised eschatology, Universal reconciliation, Energy frequency healing  
Realised eschatology inevitably leads to universal reconciliation because all Jesus prophesied about Gehenna was fulfilled in AD70, not a distant future.

Realised eschatology leads to universal restoration  
*Apokatastasis* is the early church Greek term for the restoration of all things  
Christian Universalism (CU) is the belief in the restoration of all things

The essence, nature and characteristic of God (who is Father, Son and Spirit) as love is the backdrop to all our discussion about creation's beginning and end  
Creation's beginning and consummation is totally connected to Jesus being the Alpha and Omega

Col 1:16 ... all things have been created through Him (Jesus) and for Him... 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself  
Eph 1:10 the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

1 Cor 15:28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.  
Col 3:11 but Christ is all, and in all.

Creation from beginning to consummation is Jesus- or Christ-centred, or Christocentric  
So restoration must be Christocentric  
Jesus is at the centre of God's purposes and we are in Him as God's sons

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ  
Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

What is Christian Universalism? Even though I do not want to be labelled, it is useful to know what it is and what it is not  
There is a stigma attached to the word 'universalism' that causes great offence to evangelical streams of thought

Christian universalism definition by Robin Parry, whom I thank for influencing some of this content  
Christian universalism is the belief that in the end all people will participate in the salvation achieved for them by Jesus

What Christian Universalism (CU) is **not**:

- The belief that all roads lead to God (all religions or none). Only Jesus leads us to the Father
- The belief that there is no punishment after death.
- The belief that the Bible is wrong. I use the Bible a lot – but confirmationally biased views may be wrong
- The belief that sin is not a big deal. Sin as lost identity leading to damaging behaviours is obviously important

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- The belief that it does not matter how we live. There are clear consequences of how we live. We reap what we sow.
- The belief that God is loving but not just. There is no contradiction in love, holiness and justice.

The belief that we do not need to evangelise. God saves through the good news, the gospel, on either side of death

How do people come to CU position? Through scripture, tradition, experience and reflection of how this relates to who God is

My encounters led me to see that CU best reflects the nature and characteristic of God as Father; and the Bible truth, when interpreted through the lens of love

The Bible plays a key role in most people's journey towards a CU or a universal restoration perspective

Traditional Christian views align with CU when not biasedly interpreted

We are made in God's image, God loves everyone, Jesus died for everyone

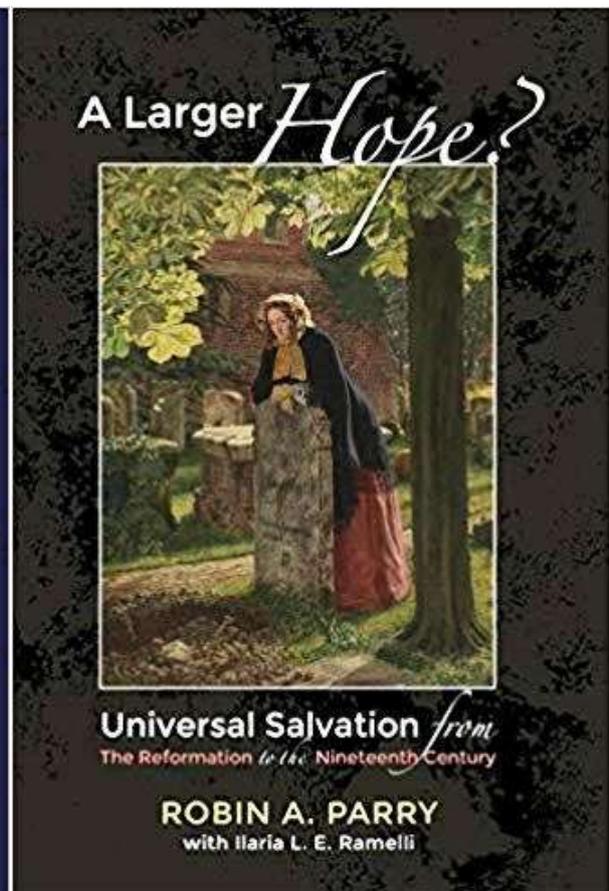
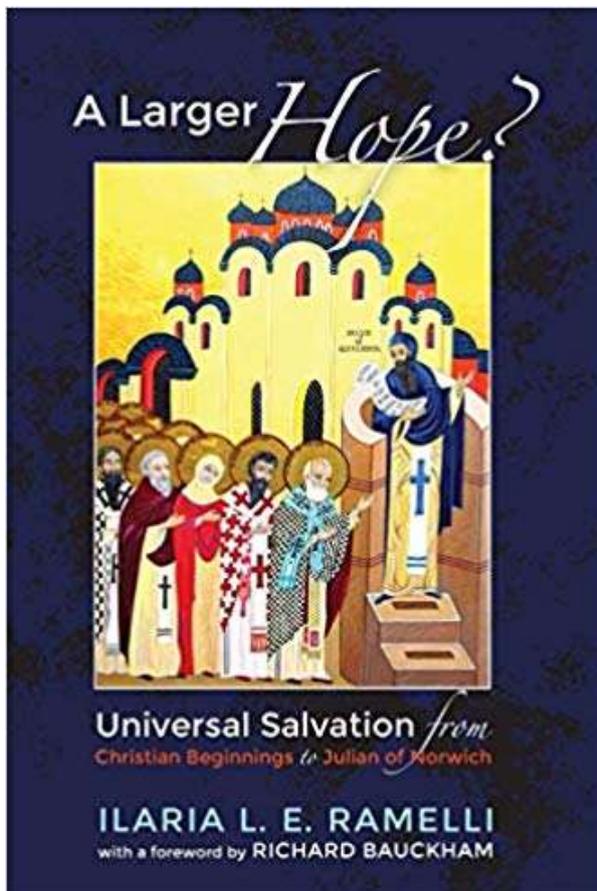
It keeps inevitably leading people to this truth

Many orthodox early church fathers' beliefs were consistently CU

Good books:

[\*A Larger Hope? Volume 1: Universal Salvation from Christian Beginnings to Julian of Norwich\*](#) – Ilaria Ramelli

[\*A Larger Hope? Volume 2: Universal Salvation from the Reformation to the 19th Century\*](#) – Robin Parry (who also has many great [YouTube videos](#) on the subject).



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Personal experience and testimony of encountering God as love through face to face engagements  
I have testimony after testimony of heavenly experiences of the heart of God and actually going into the fire, as do others.

There are good testimonies of people's journeys: many were mystics Jane Ward Lead, Julian of Norwich

CU is a simple concept that is consistent with many different views

Atonement views that encompass PSA, or hates it

Free will and sovereignty: both views are held by CU adherents

Sacraments, Catholics, Orthodox, Quakers

Inclusivism or Exclusivism: saved but do not know it explicitly, or only by faith

Great diversity amongst CU adherents

Many current controversy and issues of debate and disagreement

Debate over specific texts about 'hell' or ECT, annihilationism, sheep and goats,

Scriptural paradoxes, Calvinism and Arminianism,

Study of the early church fathers opens the debate to CU e.g. Origen

Origins of apokatastasis, restoration of all things, where did it come from?

Some say it is a gnostic infection but I believe there clear Christian roots, Biblical roots and traditional roots e.g. there are accounts of the early church praying for people to be freed from the Lake of Fire

There are questions that are raised.

The nature of divine justice as retributive or restorative

If there is free will, how could God ensure all will be restored?

Can we thwart God's purposes?

Divine love and its implication regarding the atonement: PSA, CV, limited or full, Jesus' death cannot be in vain...

Election, predestination: only some elected, or some elected to salvation and some to damnation

No election of individuals but of Christ; but all are sharing in that election by their inclusion in Christ

In CU discussions there are many different points of view and positions

What questions do we need to ask that frame the discussion?

These were posed by Thomas Talbott

1. Is it God's redemptive purpose for the world (and therefore His will) to reconcile all sinners to Himself?

2. Is it within God's power to achieve His redemptive purpose for the world?

3. Will some sinners never be reconciled to God, and will God condemn them to 'hell' for ever?

You can find some support from the Bible for each statement but they cannot *all* be true

Calvinists say 1 is wrong but 2 and 3 are correct

Arminians say 1 is correct and 3 is correct but 2 is rejected

CU accepts 1 and 2 but rejects 3

Everyone can find agreement or problems in their interpretation of the Bible

There seem to be contradictions or paradoxes: that is why we need direct revelation

There are 2 threads that run throughout the Bible that seem paradoxical

Judgment, condemnation punishment for some/many/most

Salvation for all

How do they relate together?

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Respect that there are different views, with genuine reasons for those beliefs, and honour people in our differences

Thread 1 – Eschatological punishment Matt 25:46 eternal punishment, Mark 9:47, 2 Thes 1:9 Rev 21:8

Thread 2 – Universal restoration

Col 1:1-20 reconcile all things of creation

Rom 5:18-19 justification for all those in Adam

Phil 2:10-11 every knee will bow heaven, earth and under the earth

The Bible teaches incompatible views of the future? What do we do with that?

Accept it and don't be bothered?

Opt for one thread and reject the other?

Try to harmonise the views to make the two fit?

Engage God directly about it?

In the end, God... Eschatology is a function of our view of God; it is what must be true if God is the God that I believe in: whether angry or loving

If God is revealed in Jesus, what is the end like from His express image?

From our perspective, there is a choice between life and death; and if you choose death, that will be the result

Seeing it from God's perspective, in the end everyone will choose life

The Bible is revealing the 2 realities from 2 different perspectives

Read the universal salvation in the light of 'hell' and interpret biasedly to fit your view:

"We know what the 'hell' passages mean, therefore the 'universalist' passages cannot mean what they seem to."

Universalist texts are then reinterpreted to harmonise them with ECT in 'hell'

An example: when 'all' is used, well 'all' must mean all kinds of people rather than all people, because we know some people are in 'hell'

Texts that state God wants all saved: 'but it will not happen, because of free will'.

There are those that only look at proof texts for what they believe and ignore everything else.

Denny Burk's '10 passages that affirm ECT as fact' is a case in point in the book [Four views on Hell](#):

Isa 66:22-24, Dan 12:2-3, Matt 18:6-9, 25:31-46, Mark 9:42:48, 2 Thes 1:6-10, Jude 7:13, Rev 3:14:9-11, Rev 20:10, 14-15

I do not believe they prove ECT at all – and what about the rest of the Bible?

Read 'hell' in light of universal texts and interpret these in that light and from Biblical themes

Hold biblical teachings together than keep them in balance

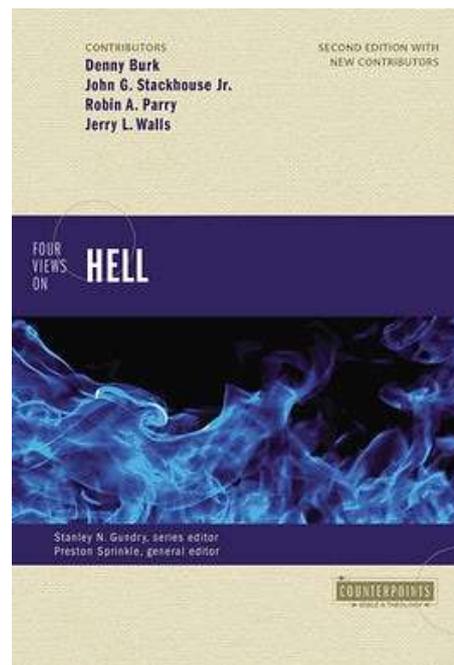
Eph 1:9-10, Col 1:19-20, Rev 5:13, Rom 5:18-20. 2 Cor 5:19

The promises have truth principles that underpin the texts, they are not to be taken in isolation

There are those who say the 'hell' passages do not teach everlasting 'hell' as the words do not mean everlasting.

The literal texts or language do not mean forever

Therefore 'hell' is real but only temporary – could be a long time but not compared to eternity.



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There are seemingly contradictory statements where you find the language of wrath that threatens punishment but then promises of restoration afterwards  
Jeremiah applies punishment to the Gentiles and Israel as incurable but then cured it.  
These create tension when we read these paradoxical statements

Ezekiel 16 God destroys Sodom but God then restores Sodom  
What is the context of the threat? Can we assume there is not anything else after?  
There is no real threat if restoration is promised  
Prophets e.g. Jonah pronounced judgment to Nineveh but then God restored them (much to Jonah's annoyance)

The absence of restoration in a judgment text cannot be used to argue from silence  
Is a text limited to what the author intended or can it unfold and expand? Or can revelation be progressive from old to new covenant  
Isa 45 and Phil 2 is an example  
An invite to the survivors of the nations to be saved – and then it gives an oath to save them all

Phil 2 Paul applies this to Jesus, that every knee will bow and expands the prophecy to all heaven, earth, under the earth.  
Paul expanded the prophecy in Jesus to all including the dead and everyone.  
Revelation of Isa 45 provides the starting point for the expansion to include all, beyond what Isaiah meant, to all that is fulfilled in Jesus

The doctrine of the Trinity is not explicitly revealed but various biblical thoughts converge in these teachings, come together and meet in the truth of God being Father, Son and Spirit.  
Universal salvation brings various truth streams together as a whole. It becomes the natural implication of where the various teachings are heading.

Paul (and others) may have not directly answered the questions that we are asking but that is where his teachings lead.  
This is the convergence of various thoughts. You cannot limit the issue to only certain texts e.g. love and justice, sin and the victory of the cross, free will and sovereignty

Are we open to fresh and progressive revelation?  
Or is everything a done deal, where we know all we need to know.  
We need to see that each part is part of a larger metanarrative.  
Does ECT really fit within the overall story narrative of creation?

We must see the individual stories in light of the overall truth, which is not just derived from just one author  
We need revelation in light of what is written and said for our day so we can serve the purpose of God in our generation through who we are and what we say.

What is the metanarrative of the story of salvation that gives a context for 'hell' and CU in relation to the beginning of creation and the end of creation?  
What is the best end to the story which is in keeping with the overall narrative?

Hell or CU, which is most harmonious and which is most discordant?  
Looking at creation and eschatology in its wider perspective, not just the biblical end  
Creation is created for something that is related to Jesus: from Him and for Him

Rom 11:36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen

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Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him.

God is the destiny of creation; there is no suggestion that creation was made to be separated from God  
Gen 1:26-28 Our coheirship is that we are sons and heirs of creation. Our identity and destiny and responsibility is linked to creation itself (Rom 8:19-21) and its freedom is linked to our freedom

Gen 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule...”

Rom 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Our destiny is oneness, union with God; that is the goal of creation, beginning and end

Jesus pronounced us gods with a little g

There is nothing that points to us to the idea that man was created for judgment and ‘hell’

Human destiny is seen in Jesus as the perfect model of sonship

Jesus is the last Adam

The first Adam was not the finished article but had ascension to go through.

The first Adam was a living soul and sin side-tracked him from being glorified in sonship.

Jesus as the second or last Adam is a life-giving spirit to bring us to resurrection ascension glory

Eternal ‘hell’ implies either:

A problem with creation as some must have been created for ‘hell’!

The eternal thwarting of God’s purpose in creating Man!

God is not powerful enough to fulfil His purposes!

CU says God fulfils His purpose in the end and unifies creation’s purpose

Sin and the fall

Sin side-tracks people from the course set towards God, the source of life; and turns them towards death, away from God

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is age-enduring life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Sin affects all people Rom 3:23 all have sinned

Sin is the road block between the creation purpose and its fulfilment

Sin is actually the specific definitive sin of Adam that has affected us all

Sin is actually our lost identity as God’s children.

We have lost our way and our memory so we don’t know who we are what our purpose is

Is sin bigger than and more powerful than our Father, who created us in His image for relationship with Him?

Sin and eternal ‘hell’ are linked as the doctrine of ‘hell’ is built on the premise that human sin is more powerful than God’s solution, Jesus and the cross

Sin wins! No, love wins, because love has always won.

Therefore is it human sin that determines the destiny of creation or is it God’s eternal creative purpose?

Which is more powerful, sin or God’s desire and purpose?

Is the story of the Bible one of overall ultimate victory (Jesus wins) or defeat (sin wins)?

Jesus has won, is winning and will win!

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Will God allow sin to derail God's purpose for creation for ever?

What is God's solution to the sin problem? Is that good enough to deal with the consequences, wages or results of sin?

Is what Jesus did through the cross (death, burial, resurrection and ascension) more powerful than, and victorious over, sin?

Yes and amen!

2 Cor 5:19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Col 2:13 ... He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

The whole metanarrative is the story of Jesus and creation

In creation, God created all things through Christ Col 1:16

In redemption, God reconciles all things through Christ Col 1:20

In eschatology, God will unite all things in Christ Eph 1:10

Col 1:16 ... all things have been created through Him (Jesus) and for Him.

Col 1:20 ... and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself

Eph 1:10 the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him...

The incarnation – Immanuel, God is with us – is the key to understanding who God is

Jesus represents and reveals the invisible God

What kind of God do we see in Jesus?

What purposes of God are revealed in Jesus?

Jesus demonstrates God as love in healing, forgiving, raising and delivering people

Being the Son of Man, Jesus represents all humanity before God

As our representative, Jesus takes humanity through death, the problem created by sin, and then resurrects mankind to new life

Did Jesus represent all humans or only some people? – All the sins of the whole world

At the crucifixion, what Jesus did through His death, was it for all people or some people?

- ALL

Jesus represented our broken humanity and lost identity so we can be healed and restored

Jesus died for our sin, bearing the consequence of sin, taking our death into the grave; and went beyond, through the victory of the resurrection over death

Jesus was raised from the dead, taking back the keys of death and Sheol or Hades, defeating the wages of sin by overcoming death for all of humanity

Did Jesus die for all or only some people?

The Calvinistic view of limited atonement: it was for only some, elected people

Was Christ's death for nothing?

The Arminian view says yes, because our free will to choose can thwart God's purposes

Resurrection and ascension to rule

In resurrection, is the salvation of all from death achieved or just made possible?

Salvation is achieved in the body of Christ; as, in the middle of history, the end of the story or the eternal purpose has broken in

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In the kingdom of God, the age to come, the new heavens and new earth, the future is here now. The end is revealed in the resurrection and is the promise of what is now for all who are now alive in Christ, born from above

To be confident that God will save all people is because all are made alive in Christ in the resurrection 1 Cor 15:21-22

What determines the end of the story?

Sin, leading to 'hell'?

Jesus, leading to salvation for all?

Universal restoration for all things?

Salvation is something we have to participate in for it to be realised in our lives

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he

Past. The Spirit is seeking to unite us in and join us to what Jesus has done: therefore we have been saved in Christ (He died, we died; he resurrected, we were made alive).

This is a done deal.

Present. The Spirit is working to transform us to become more like Jesus; therefore we are being saved in Christ. Salvation being worked out in our maturing in sonship

Future. The Spirit will raise us from the dead if we die physically so we will be saved from death's sting

We need to participate; so we are either living in, or living outside of, what Jesus did but we are all already included in it.

To be outside is to remain living in Adam; still affected by sin and death; still living in lost identity and a 'less than' kind of life

Is that person currently saved in Christ?

The answer is yes and no depending on how you phrase the question

Yes, they are fully included in what Jesus did on the cross as part of humanity

No, they are not living in that experience

Will that person one day actively experience that reality of salvation in Christ?

CU would say 'Yes', because that is the harmonious end to the story and is fully in line with the metanarrative of creation from the beginning to the end

What about 'hell'?

The story indicates that there are two roads to follow that have two separate destinations

Life and death, heaven or "

The message is clear throughout the story: choose life and avoid death

Is the second death an ultimate or penultimate fate?

The end of the story for CU is that there would be hope beyond death and 'hell'

'Hell' is only a penultimate fate that is consistent with the story narrative

Many in the early church did not think that eternal destiny was fixed at death.

Heb 9:27 Judgment is not punishment and death is not inevitable but this does not say that death is the end of choice

The opportunity of choice after death is not denied in the Bible.

There is hope beyond 'hell' according to many in the early church and that is certainly my experience

Is 'hell' everlasting? - NO

It is not clear from the passages, and many are vague about condemnation, death etc., but they do not mention 'everlasting'.

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The interpretation of *aionios* as everlasting is not an accurate reflection of its Greek meaning  
Sheep and goats argument in Latin is everlasting life vs everlasting punishment  
How long it lasts is not explicit in the words themselves. There is nothing that says that punishment is everlasting.

Lake of fire as torment for ever and ever is in the context of those thrown into the fire but still ending up in the New Jerusalem

Nations and kings of the earth are not the church, yet in Rev 21 these nations and kings enter the New Jerusalem and enter through the blood of the Lamb

The image of 'hell' as ECT is not present within the narrative

What does Christian Universalism believe?

All those created by God will be brought to the destiny that God created them for

All those that God desires to save and that Jesus came to save will be saved: that is, all things that He created

Jesus, not sin, will determine the future of creation

Everlasting 'hell' is not evangelical in that it thwarts God's purpose in creation and salvation and is incompatible with the God of the gospel story

The God who is wholly love (not just love or holy, but is in essence love) will have His way eventually; through kindness, tolerance and patience

"It will be all right in the end; and if it is not all right, it is not the end"

In the end, God will be all in all; and if He is not, then it is not yet the end of the story

CU gives us hope of God's ultimate triumph over evil

CU gives us joy that Jesus brings all sons to glory

CU gives us the hope of glory in the face of suffering and tribulations; that there will be ultimate victory in time as well as eternity

If God has given us free will to choose, then why would he take away our free will to choose Him after we die?

It is difficult to comfort those facing death or who are mourning someone who has died without the hope of CU yourself

CU gives hope because God is love and love wins

Rest is the key to restoration and revelation

Start to focus on your breathing, slowing it down

And start thinking of the name of God, YHVH

Breathe in deeply and exhale slowly: Yod

Breathe in: Hei and out: Vav

Repeat: in Hei, out Yod, in Hei, and out Vav...

Be still and know that I am God

I am love, I am joy, I am peace

Invite love, joy and peace to flow in you and through you to create an atmosphere of rest around you

You are in a safe place

Start to think of an open heaven and set your desire upon it

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Steps like Jacob's ladder leading up to heaven  
Hear the invitation to come up here  
Shift focus of our mind  
Walk up those steps to the door  
Now step through the veil into the kingdom realm



Jesus is standing in the doorway  
Present yourself to Jesus, your High Priest, as a living sacrifice  
Let Him take you by the hand  
Ask Him to take you to the altar, to the fire stones, to the fiery place of  
His consuming, loving presence



Jesus, please take each person and show them what they need to  
receive the revelation about restoration  
Reveal the nature of your love, the nature of the fire  
  
Go wherever He takes you.

