



Sermon Notes

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Title: The Unshakeable Kingdom

#16 in the Series on the Book of Hebrews

1) Mt. Fuji aka *Universalism*

a) What is Universalism?

- i) Christian Universalism is a school of Christian theology which includes the belief in the doctrine of universal reconciliation, the view that all sinful and alienated human souls—because of divine love and mercy—will ultimately be reconciled to God with heaven. Universalism is distinct from modern Unitarian Universalism, which is a syncretic religion that does not recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the unique savior of humankind, although the latter is historically derived in the from a union with a now-defunct Christian denomination which did affirm that all people would eventually come to salvation through Christ.

(1) *"People are amazingly receptive to the teaching of universalism today.... I find that church members of mainline denominations are often ahead of their pastor on this issue."* Rev. Kalen Fristad, author of Destined For Salvation: God's Promise to Save Everyone

- ii) *"One day some travelers came to a holy mountain. At the foot of the mountain there were many camps of men and women selling their trail as the only proper one to the summit. And so the travelers were confused and could decide not. Then they themselves climbed a small foothill at the base of the mountain, where they were surprised to hear a voice echoing from the peak; and they strained their ears to hear it. The voice said "ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN!" The travelers became so overjoyed that they began to hoot and cry and laugh and scream. One began jumping up and down, while another threw himself down the hill for joy. And so the travelers went about and made argument with the trail keepers. Because of their innate talents, they won many of their conflicts, and converted a few. And they were clowns and took delight in their efforts. Finally, one at a time, they grew old and died, and were each buried at the base of the mountain; and they never got around to returning to that foothill. If they had they might have heard the complete message: which was this..."ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN, SO CHOOSE ONE OF THEM!"*

(1) Rev. John Shelby Spong (former Episcopalian Bishop), *"I walk the Christ path, but I could never say it is the only path. I walk it faithfully because I know that it leads me beyond all human limits, even the limits of Christianity, into the experience of the divine. That has also been the experience of those who walk the Jewish path, the Islamic path, the Hindu path and the Buddhist path."* and *"Religion emerged in human history as a coping device to bank the fires of anxiety born in self-consciousness."*

b) Problems with universalism...

- i) It casts it own uncertain confusion

(1) The paths seem to lead to the top of different mountains. Supposedly no matter what route you take, the top of the mountain never changes and the view remains the same. If all roads lead to God, then one would expect the same God to be at the top, and it is precisely at this vital point

that the 'one mountain many paths' analogy falls down, since the God at the end of each religion is quite different.

- (2) It tells us that the only significant function of spirituality is individual spiritual advancement and nothing else matters. What about the important social needs around us? Karma
- (3) Tolerance, though admirable in some respects, also sets up a culture which does not value the use of reasoning or critical reflection; it implicitly says all spiritual paths are equal from an outsider's viewpoint so it is not okay to judge them.
- (4) Ravi Zacharias, *"The truth is that all religions are not the same. All religions do not point to God. All religions do not say that all religions are the same. In fact, some religions do not even believe in God. At the heart of every religion is an uncompromising commitment to a particular way of defining who God is or is not. Buddhism, for example, was based on Buddha's rejection of two of Hinduism's fundamental doctrines. Islam rejects both Buddhism and Hinduism. So it does no good to put a halo on the notion of tolerance and act as if everything is equally true. In fact, even all-inclusive religions such as Baha'ism end up being exclusivistic by excluding exclusivists!"*

ii) It disagrees with the words of Jesus.

- (1) Is. 35:8, "A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray."
- (2) Jn. 14:6, "Jesus said to him, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."*
- (3) Jn. 6:68, "But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."
- (4) Acts 4:12, "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

2) Mt. Sinai (vv. 18-21) aka Legalism

a) Exclusiveness

- i) Ex. 3:6-7, "Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."

b) The Law

- i) Dt. 4:1, "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live..."

c) The problem with the Law

- i) Eph. 2:4-9, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."
- ii) Rom. 3:19-20, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

- iii) 2 Cor. 3:5-9, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory."
- iv) Ez. 36:26, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."
- v) Jn. 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

3) Mt. Zion (vv. 22-24) aka Grace

- a) Under the Jewish dispensation, everything was adapted to awe the mind, and to restrain by the exhibition of grandeur and of power; but that under the Christian dispensation, while there was as much that was sublime, there was much more that was adapted to win and hold the affections. There were revelations of higher truths. There were more affecting motives to lead to obedience. Mt. 5:38-39, "You have heard that it was said... But I tell you..."
- b) Abel's blood versus Jesus'. This covenant is made firm by the blood of Christ sprinkled upon our consciences, as the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar and the victim. This blood of Christ speaks in behalf of sinners; it pleads not for vengeance, but for mercy.
 - i) Gen. 4:10-11, "And He said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.'"
 - ii) Mt. 23:34-35, "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar."
 - iii) Mt. 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy."
 - iv) Jn. 8:7-11, "...He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."
 - v) Ez. 18:23, "Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live?"
- c) Jesus did all the heavy lifting.
 - i) Gen. 22:8, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering."
 - ii) Eph. 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

4) The unshakeable kingdom of God (vv. 25-29)

- a) The historicity of the Bible; we can trust what we read.

- i) *"The Bible is a reliable collection of historical documents written down by eye witnesses during the life time of other eye witnesses that report supernatural events which took place in fulfillment of specific prophecies and claim to be divine rather than human in origin." Voddie Bauchman*
 - ii) The Bible we hold today is not a translation of a translation; early church fathers quoted 95% of the Bible.
- b) Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a statue. Dan. 2:1-47
- i) Dan. 2:1, *" Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him."*
 - ii) Dan. 2:10, 11, *" The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has ever asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."*
 - iii) Dan. 2:19-22, *" Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven... and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding. He reveals deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him."*
 - iv) Dan. 2:30, *" But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for our sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, and that you may know the thoughts of your heart."*
 - v) Dan. 2:31-47, *" You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. "This is the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all--you are this head of gold. But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the*

clay, the silver, and the gold--the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure." Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering and incense to him. The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.""

- c) Shaking earth and heaven. God desires to remove all things that are unstable in our lives so that only the Rock would be our sure foundation. He allows things to happen to us so that we can see with the eyes of soul that which is truly solid.

- i) Mt. 24:35, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.*"

- ii) Is. 55:11, "*So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*"

- d) John's unmet expectations. Mt. 11:2-6, "*And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."*

- e) Heb. 10:23-24, "*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*"

- f) Robert Frost, "*Hope is not found in a way out but a way through.*"

5) Eucharist

a) Review

- i) The 3 mountains

- ii) "*The God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.*"

- iii) The Way of Jesus, not out but through.

- iv) Veterans' Day

- b) Luke 9:23-26, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.*"

- c) 1 Cor. 10:16-17, "*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*"

- d) q