

## 4 CHRISTIAN SEMINARIES TAUGHT UNIVERSALISM(U) BEFORE 400 A.D.

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There were 2 Seminaries in the 2nd century that taught U and there is no record of any of them, before 500 A.D., as having taught the idea of Eternal punishment for the people in Hell at the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ (E-C). They were (writes F.O.) located at Antioch in Syria (see also Acts 13:1) and at Alexandria in Egypt (see also Acts 2:9). The later Seminary was an extension of the School of Theology (Biblical Interpretation) that Mark established when he was a bishop there.

That the teaching of U at these Seminaries could be traced back to The Doctrine of the Apostles (Acts 2:42) in the 1st century N.T. Church is attested to by the fact that in the 2nd century there were many people still living who were taught by those who knew 1 or more of the apostles and / or 1 or more of the 70 disciples of Jesus (Luke 10:1). ALSO, U was taught in the Seminary at Ceaserea (see also Acts 10). It was founded by Origen at c. 233 A.D. He was the most learned Biblical scholar in the ancient Church and he succeeded Clement as the president of the Alexandrian Seminary before he was ordained a priest in the Church at Ceasarea. Origen, writes Eusebius (see below), was fluent in Hebrew, Greek and Latin and he wrote a commentary on Matthew's Gospel and MANY other books. He also established a library at Ceasarea (where this Clement was a speaker as he was in the Church at Jerusalem: Ballou - who also tells us that the bishop in these cities at this time both called Clement "Their Master". Dr. Ballou also tells us that the bishop in Jerusalem at this time, Alexander, was educated at the Alexandrian Seminary under Pantaenus).

This library, the bishop at Ceasarea and historian, Eusebius (c.265-c.340), had used for his research. He was a believer in U (see *H.B.H.*, etc.) and he wrote many books that pertain to Biblical issues. This includes his book, *The Church History* (translated by Paul L. Maier).

This book mentions many of the earlier Church Fathers that he had read - most of which are now, in whole or part, lost. However, his knowledge of these writings does much to establish his credibility as a Church historian. One example of them is the 5 books by bishop Papias (c.135), called, *The Interpretation of the Teachings of the Lord Jesus*. The source for his 5 books, Papias tells us, were those who were taught by the apostles - such as Polycarp (c.69-c.155). Another example is the 5 books on Church history by Hegesippus (c. 170), called, *Memoirs* - which Eusebius claims to have "preserved the authentic tradition of apostolic preaching". An additional example is, *A Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching*, by Irenaeus (c.130-c.200). The last example is, *On the Apostles*, by Heraclitus (c. 190). Also, Eusebius was educated in part by Pamphilus, an alumni from the Alexandrian Seminary. LASTLY, U was taught in the Seminary at the *School of Nisibis* in Syria. This was a MAJOR Christian University with a Department of

Medicine, Philosophy and Theology (see *Wikipedia*). It was founded at c.350 A.D. by Jacob of Nisibis and it lasted until the early 7th century (Ibid). That this Seminary taught U is seen from the fact that the 4th century Seminary at Antioch, under the leadership of Diodorus of Tarsus, was "The Model" for the one at Nisibis (Ibid. See also the *School of Edessa* in *Wikipedia*). Now Diodorus was a believer in U (see below). After Diodorus the Seminary at Antioch was taken over by Theodore of Mopsuestia (c.400 A.D.). He was a believer in U (see below) and his writings were the foundation for the Seminary at Nisibis, and at Edessa, and for Syriac Christian Theology (Ibid). Also, one of the teachers at these Seminaries was Ephrem the Syrian. NOTE: The Peshitta was produced at Edessa in the early 5th century when the above Seminary was relocated there before it moved back to Nisibis (See Syriac versions of the Bible in *Wikipedia*).

Also, Bishop Clement of Rome (who knew the apostle Paul - Phil. 4:3) appears to have taught U by his making the following claims:

- 1.) "Let us reflect how free from wrath God is towards His creation" (*A.N.F.*, vol. 1, p.10). Now this claim would be in contradiction to the idea of E-C, but it would be consistent with the idea of U.
- 2.) "God has justified all people" (p.13). Now if ALL people are going to be justified (= to be made right with God), then obviously, ALL people since Adam and Eve\* are going to Heaven. \*It is possible that the bodies of Adam and Eve are now located in the Cave of Machpelah given the fact that the Jewish *Talmud* taught that they were then there (Soncino Edition: Baba Bathra, 58 a; Sotah, 13 a; Erubin, 53 a. See also, [www.caveofthepatriarchs.com](http://www.caveofthepatriarchs.com) in *Wikipedia*). Also, the Church Father, Hippolytus (c.210 A.D.), taught that Noah took Adam's (and presumably Eve's) body (bodies) on the Ark (*A.N.F.*, vol. 5, p. 197). This claim by him would explain how their bodies could have survived the world-wide flood of Genesis 6-9.
- 3.) "God does good to all" (p. 11). Now if God does good to ALL people, then obviously, ALL people since Adam and Eve are going to Heaven.
- 4.) "God has set the grace of repentance before the whole world" (p. 7). In other words, ALL people (including those in Hell - see Col. 1:23-b) will hear of God's Grace = His giving sinners the opportunity to have eternal life in Heaven by repenting of their sins and by believing in Jesus.
- 5.) Clement says that "our Creator" is of "tender mercy" (p.8). Now if it is true that our Creator is of "tender mercy" (= He will be merciful to the people in Hell), then the idea of E-C is false and U is true.
- 6.) "Since God is good, He corrects us that we may be admonished by His Holy chastisement" (p. 20). This claim does not fit with the idea of E-C, but it is in harmony with temporary punishment for the people in Hell and with U.
- 7.) Clement quotes from Is. 26:20 as proof that God's anger against the sins of people is not eternal (p.18). This claim is in harmony with U as is defined in #6. Also, there is nothing in this letter (of 18 pages)

that would require us to believe that he did not believe in U - a fact that could also be said of the 8 letters by Ignatius (7) and by Polycarp (1). Incidentally, Eusebius claims that Clement's letter to the Church at Corinth is "Apostolic in its Doctrine" (Ibid). NOTE: The Greek word for "punishment" in Mat. 25:46 is "kolasis" and it carries the idea of "correction". Now the idea of "eternal correction" would be impossible because it is a contradiction. But this word is in harmony with temporary punishment for the people in Hell and with U (*H.B.H.*, pp. 27, 127). Also, this word is in harmony with the fact that the phrase "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:15) simply meant "Lake of Divine Purification" (p.221).

Furthermore, Tertullian (c.200 A.D.) of Carthage\* in North Africa is known as The Father of Latin / Western Christian Theology. He (like Augustine) was never educated at any Seminary, and his knowledge of Church history in the Eastern portion of the Roman Empire and of the Bible\*\* and of the writings of the 2nd century Fathers (who all wrote in Greek) were all inferior to Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Eusebius, *is the first known Father to have clearly taught the idea of E-C* (Ballou and Pridgeon). *And when he did teach this in his extant writings* (*A.N.F.*, vol. 3, pp. 54, 91, 249), *he gave NO Biblical support for it !* The last reason to believe that Tertullian is not credible when he asserted his belief in the idea of E-C is seen from the fact that his living at Carthage (see below) would have greatly limited his access to reliable sources of information regarding the teachings of the 1st century Apostolic Church. \*Carthage was about 1300 miles west of Ceaserea and Jerusalem. \*\*Tertullian could read Greek, but not Hebrew and not Aramaic.

Augustine was a Western Father and a bishop at Hippo in North Africa. When he asserted his belief in the idea of E-C he also mentioned that there were then "very many" genuine Christians who did not believe in this idea and who did not deny the authority of the Bible (*City of God*, XXI, 17-19; *H.B.H.*, p. 146). Also, Augustine had a STRONG influence on the Theology of the Western Church since the 5th century, especially upon the Theology of John Calvin (1509-1564).\* However, as a scholar of the Bible, Augustine was inferior to Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Pamphilus and Eusebius. \*The ONLY college/university degree that Calvin had was in Law.

Lastly, the philosopher, Celsus (c.178), tells us that the idea of E-C was taught by some of the Christians in his day. However, nowhere in his extant writings did he claim that this idea have the support of any person with authority in the 1st or 2nd century Church (*Celsus: On the True Doctrine*, translated by R. Joseph Hoffman. See p.121, etc.). NOTE: There is no record of any ancient rabbi, such as Gamaliel (see also Acts 22:3), as having taught the idea that all of the people in Hell will suffer eternal "punishment" or eternal "remorse" (*Everyman's Talmud*, by A. Cohen, chapter 11) - and they were familiar with Is. 66:24

and Dan. 12:2 (see also *H.B.H.*, p. 142). Also, there were many ancient rabbis who taught that there would be people allowed into Heaven (The World To Come) after their punishment in Hell was over (*Ibid*).

### **THE TEACHING OF DIODORUS OF TARSUS ON U**

"For the wicked there are punishments not perpetual [=Eternal]... according to the amount of malice in their works. The Resurrection, therefore, is regarded as a blessing not only to the good but also to the evil" (*H.B.H.*, p. 232).

### **THE TEACHING OF THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA ON U**

"Who is so great a fool as to think that so great a blessing can be to those that arise [to] the occasion of endless torment." He also says, "All have the hope of rising with Christ, so that the body having obtained immortality, thenceforward, the proclivity to evil should be removed." And "[God] recapitulated all things in Christ...as though making a compendious renewal, and restoration of the whole creation, through Him...Now this will take place, in a future age, when all mankind and all powers possessed of reason, look up to Him, as is right, and obtain mutual concord and firm peace" (*H.B.H.*, pp. 232-233).

### **TWO FATHERS WHO TESTIFY ABOUT JESUS GOING TO HELL**

Athanasius (c. 296-c. 373) was a bishop at Alexandria and he has been called "The Father of Orthodox Theology." He says, "While the Devil thought to kill one he is deprived of all cast out of Hades [=Hell], and sitting by the gates, he sees all the fettered beings [=people] led forth by the courage of the Savior" (*H.B.H.*, p. 230). Also, bishop Gregory of Nazianzen was a Biblical scholar and he was the president of the 2nd great Church council in the 4th century at 381 A.D. He says, "Until he loosed by his blood all who groan under Tatarian [=Hell's] chains" (p.230). NOTE: Celsus tells us that the Christians in his day also taught that Jesus went to Hell and preached to the people there (p.65).

### **THE TEACHING OF ORIGEN ABOUT THE PEOPLE IN HELL**

But he that despises the purification of the Word of God and the doctrine of the Gospel only keeps himself for dreadful and penal purifications afterward; so that the fire of Hell may purge him in torments of which neither apostolical doctrine nor Gospel preaching has cleansed, according to that which is written of being "purified by fire" (p. 230).

### **THE TESTIMONY OF ONE LATIN / WESTERN FATHER ON U**

Ambrose (c.340 - c.400) was a bishop at Milan. He says, "The mystery of the Incarnation\* is the salvation of the entire creation" (p. 231). \*God becoming man - see John 1:1-14 and Ignatius and Athanasius.

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