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## Unitarian Thought



*Christian Theology From a Unitarian Perspective*

### **Atonement**

Atonement can be any righteous means in which one seeks to establish a state of peace and reconciliation with God, oneself, and another human being.

"We can expect forgiveness of our sins by God only if we sincerely repent, turn away from our sins and daily strengthen ourselves in love and goodness."  
(Hungarian Unitarian Catechism)

"Unitarians do not believe that Christ came to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God." (Rev. James Freeman Clark-Unitarian Minister)

### **Angels**

Angels, also known as "messengers and helpers of God", are immortal heavenly beings believed to be loyal to God's Divine Providence. They are said to be assigned to protecting and assisting humanity in leading a good and righteous life.

Many Unitarians take a non-literalist stance concerning the topic of angels; hence, angels are viewed as a personification of the good within the world and hearts of human beings. Yet, there are some Unitarians that believe in the physical existence of Angels.

## **Bible**

The Holy Bible is the bedrock of Christian theology. It serves as a source of spiritual inspiration for seekers pursuing its religious insight and wisdom.

"The Bible is a collection of man-created writings, including teachings of Jewish and Christian teachers, historical accountings and literature. These works were inspired by God but we are not to forget that this inspiration was grasped by those who lived long-long time ago in a certain historical time and place. This is why each writing has the marks of a cultural trend from ancient times, with that characteristical world-view, containing precious intuitive insight but mistakes too." (Hungarian Unitarian Principles of Faith)

"It is necessary to know the Bible because the teachings included in it are the basis of the Christian religion and (the basis for) direction of Christian life. For this reason we have to read and study the Bible with love and reason."  
(Hungarian Unitarian Catechism)

"a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books." ([Rev. William Ellery Channing-Unitarian Minister](#))

## **Born Again**

From a Unitarian perspective, any human being is considered to be "born again" when he/she sees God's presence and love in all things.

## **Christianity**

Christianity is the religion taught by Jesus of Nazareth and his followers as compiled, recorded, interpreted, and paraphrased in the New Testament.

## **Christology (Nature of Jesus the Christ)**

According to Unitarianism, Jesus the Christ was a self-realized human being. Unitarian ministers generally teach that all people have full access to the relationship that Jesus established and experienced with God. Biblical terms referring to Jesus as the "son of God", "Messiah", "Lord", etc. are understood as being honorary titles bestowed upon him to signify his devotion to "the Father" and distinguishment as a spiritual guide, leader, savior, and deliverer.

"Jesus was God's best child as he lived his life according entirely to God's will.

Jesus was a *man*. Jewish religious teacher, prophet, regarded by unitarians as an example to follow, a master of religious and ethical life in teaching and acting."  
(Hungarian Unitarian Principles of Faith)

## **Creed**

A creed is a statement of beliefs that are declared binding upon Christians to profess in order to receive salvation. It is not required in the Unitarian Christian Church to acknowledge a specific creed or dogma to be a congregant.

## **Demons**

Demons, also known as "fallen angels" and "helpers of Satan", are immortal beings believed to be adversaries of God's Divine Providence. They are said to be dedicated to instigating the fall and destruction of humanity.

Many Unitarians take a non-literalist stance concerning the topic of demons; hence, demons are viewed as a personification of the evil within the world and hearts of human beings. Yet, there are some Unitarians that believe in the physical existence of Demons.

## **Divine Inspiration/Revelation**

Most Unitarians are in agreement that this form of inspiration contains a lot of beneficial knowledge, but is not entirely immune from errors and contradictions. Divine inspiration, according to this Christian theology, is an awakened spiritual state in which God's divine will and truths are revealed, but humanity is not free from his/her own biases and false teachings. Thus, the will of man and the will of God are both recorded in scripture. Yet, there are some Unitarians that believe in Biblical literalism and infallibility (inerrancy).

## **Divine Intervention & Daily Prayer**

Many contemporary Unitarians assert that it is not necessary to petition for a miracle or divine intervention because God is fully aware of our needs and wants. Expressing prayers that honor God, seek clarity and wisdom, and show appreciation for all that the Lord has already given us are normally preferred.

"Prayer is a spiritual communion and conversation with God. So our prayers must be simple, short, and rising from our spirit. In our prayer we must ask more about spiritual needs than about material goods. In that way our prayer

will be a clear mirror of trust in God." (Hungarian Unitarian Catechism)

## **Divine Providence**

Divine Providence is the manner in which God sustains, governs, and progresses human lives and history. This is a theological term for the Laws of Nature which include the Laws of Evolution.

Unitarians do not interpret this concept in a fatalistic way. They affirm that human beings have been given free will to make choices in life and decisions that shape their future.

"Free will means *moral independence*, the chance of learning and spiritual growth, and the chance and guarantee in addition in attaining *personal salvation* out of one's own in the same time. Man is supported in this endeavour by *providence* and the *holy spirit*, which is *God's spiritual power*." (Hungarian Unitarian Principles of Faith)

## **God**

Unitarians attest that God, the creator and sustainer of the Universe, is one in being and person. Eternally existing as a pure spirit and intelligence that lacks form, the Creator is believed to be interconnected with all life. According to Jesus, in addition to God' many glorifying attributes and names, our Creator is above all most loving and merciful.

"They (Unitarians) believe in God as a *personal* and *spiritual power* who takes care of his *providential act* manifested in nature and history, on the universal and personal level alike." (Hungarian Unitarian Principles of Faith)

## **Heaven**

Heaven is a state of being in the presence of God after one dies. It is said to be reserved for those whom, in their lifetime, were good natured and lived a lifestyle loyal to our Divine Maker. Abundant blessings and rewards are said to be bestowed upon those residing in this place.

Many Unitarians take a non-literalist stance concerning the topic of Heaven; hence, Heaven is viewed as a personification of the belief in or a hope of Divine union or reconciliation with the Creator. Also, Heaven (according to some Unitarians) is seen as a state of mind or being, rather than an actual place, that one can experience here and now based on the lifestyle or way of thinking that

one chooses to adopt. Yet, there are some Unitarians that believe in the physical existence of Heaven.

"The purpose of one's life is to attain the salvation. This *physical and spiritual state of mind* and the reward for the good conduct are not always attained in this earthly life. The unitarians believe in *eternal life*, beyond this earthly one, where the immortal soul will win it's reward according to one's way of life." (Hungarian Unitarian Principles of Faith)

## **Hell**

Hell is a state of being cut off, annihilated, rejected, punished, and/or purified by God. It is said to be reserved for those whom, in their lifetime, didn't repent or receive penalization for crimes he/she committed against humanity or one's self.

Many Unitarians take a non-literalist stance concerning the topic of Hell; hence, Hell is viewed as a personification of the belief in or hope of Divine justice or purification. Also, Hell (according to some Unitarians) is seen as a state of mind or being, rather than an actual place, that one can experience here and now based on the lifestyle or way of thinking that one chooses to adopt. Yet, there are some Unitarians that believe in the physical existence of Hell.

## **Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is God's active power that permeates all of creation and gives everything its form, lifespan, and general purpose. Furthermore, it is through the Holy Spirit that we have been endowed with many innate abilities and knowledge.

"By holy spirit we mean the power of God, and its help for good, which clarifies the intellect, cleanses the heart and strengthens the will, thus enlightening, calming, encouraging and making one happy." (Hungarian Unitarian Catechism)

## **Jesus of Nazareth**

Jesus of Nazareth, son of Mary and Joseph, is considered to be a Jewish prophet, high priest, rabbi, and messiah. As a devout son of God, he was known for his acts of healing, loving-kindness, and self-sacrifice. His ministry emphasized the loving, forgiving, and unconditional nature of God. By revealing a God of peace and justice, he moved humanity away from earlier perceptions of God that led people to believe that God was full of anger, jealousy, and wrath.

Jesus showed people how to establish an intimate and personal relationship with God and to break down the walls of fear between themselves and their heavenly parent. He taught that the Kingdom of God is within reach and that it resides within ourselves and can be established through our godly works here on Earth.

## **Kingdom of God**

The Kingdom of God is God's sovereign reign, as opposed to man's rule, over the Earth. In God's case, this also encompasses the Universe and extends throughout life and death. The representative and facilitator of this Godly Kingdom was hailed as Jesus of Nazareth by his early disciples and present day followers. He taught men/women how to be upright children and stewards of God.

"The purpose of human kind is *accomplishing the kingdom of God* on Earth, which means fulfillment of the good natural endowments of men, on a personal and social level." (Hungarian Unitarian Principles of Faith)

## **Original Sin**

Most Unitarians believe that sin and evil are brought about by biological, environmental, and/or psychological reasons as opposed to being inherited from our primeval parents.

"Unitarians do not teach original sin. We do not believe that through sin of the first human couple we all became corrupted. It would contradict the love and justice of God to attribute to us the sin of others, because sin is one's own personal action." (Hungarian Unitarian Catechism)

## **Purpose of Scripture**

The purpose of scripture is to refine and elevate the human spirit and condition. Through moral stories and examples, humans are encouraged to live according to divine will as opposed to the will of man.

## **Satan**

Satan, also known as "the Devil", is believed to be a fallen angel that rebelled against and opposed God's Divine Providence. He is depicted as the serpent that tempted our primeval parents and caused their "fall from grace." Him and his demons are said to be devoted to instigating the corruption and destruction of

humanity.

Many Unitarians take a non-literalist stance concerning the topic of Satan; hence, Satan is viewed as a personification of the evil within the world and hearts of human beings. Yet, there are some Unitarians that believe in the physical existence of Satan.

## **Unitarianism**

Unitarianism is the belief that God is one in being and person. Jesus, in Unitarian thought, is considered to be a human being and distinct from God "the Father."

## **Word of God**

Unitarians basically interpret the term "Word of God" as any concept or thought that is found to be true and beneficial. Humans have come to know the *Mind of God* through a variety of names and avenues. Some have discovered the *Divine Truths* by utilizing their higher faculties of common sense and reason. Others have derived *Divine Laws* through scientific discovery and exploration. Most intensely, people have found the innate *Divine Wisdom* within their hearts and minds whenever they are inspired or moved.