

(no subject)

The Urth list — 30 messages, 8 voices, 15 Dec 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5825>

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Lee Berman — 15 Dec 2010, 19:14

Gerry Quinn: I don't think there's any special reason to think Severian's universe is without a Christ. There is substantial evidence that it's history is similar to ours. In BotLS there are notable religious references, including some to Christ.

Jerry recently cited Wolfe interviews which explicitly say it. Special? Not special? Jerry is wrong?

The "similar history" is explained by the same principle as the similar (but not identical) geography of Urth to our Earth. Wolfe says he conceives of Briah as a different universe than ours, a previous iteration.

I think it is more accurate to say Long Sun has religious references to a Jesus-like character. Nothing about salvation is mentioned, that I know of.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 15 Dec 2010, 19:26 · in reply to Lee Berman

On Wed, Dec 15, 2010 at 11:14 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:
I think it is more accurate to say Long Sun has religious references to a Jesus-like character. Nothing about salvation is mentioned, that I know of.

As mentioned elsewhere, to describe Jesus as "enlightened and possessed by the Outsider" would be hideously incorrect theology. However, such a description might well address the problem of His having an analogue in the Briahitic universe.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Son of Witz — 15 Dec 2010, 21:23 · in reply to Lee Berman

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Wait. There is a very unambiguous salvation metaphor here.

The Whorl is a sort of gnostic false creation with a false pantheon. God sends his healing energy, Logos- Christ the physician - the Outsider to usher them out of the false creation into a new

world free of the Demiurgos of the Whorl, Pas. How much clearer could the salvation metaphor be? The humanity of the whorl has no future if they don't leave it. The outsider saved them, acting through silk, who was enlightened, not possessed by the Outsider.

Man Lee, you should read Phillip K. Dick's VALIS and Divine Invasion for some great sci-fi permutations of this idea if you haven't already.

~witz

DAVID STOCKHOFF — 15 Dec 2010, 21:29 · in reply to Son of Witz

I assume Lee refers to salvation-after-death.

--- On Wed, 12/15/10, Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org> wrote:

From: Son of Witz <Sonofwitz at butcherbaker.org>

Subject: Re: (urth) (no subject)

To: "The Urth Mailing List" <urth at lists.urth.net>

Date: Wednesday, December 15, 2010, 4:23 PM

On Dec 15, 2010, at 11:14 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 16:14 · in reply to Lee Berman

From: "Lee Berman" <severiansola at hotmail.com>

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In BotLS there are notable religious references, including some to Christ.

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is wrong?

IIRC, in the interviews Wolfe said that he was playing with the idea of cyclic universes. He suggested the idea was not fully formed. And I don't recall him ever suggesting that Severian's iteration had no Jesus Christ. Indeed, there is substantial evidence that it had.

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I agree that this aspect of Christian doctrine is not mentioned, but the obvious reason is that Wolfe's cosmogony is complex enough without it! Also, I think it plausible that Wolfe believes salvation might be attained by means other than the Incarnation, particularly in a hypothetical universe where Jesus did not exist. So I don't see the necessity for making great interpretational leaps just because it is not mentioned.

- Gerry Quinn

Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 16:18 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

From: "Dan'I Danehy-Oakes" <danldo at gmail.com>

On Wed, Dec 15, 2010 at 11:14 AM, Lee Berman <severiansola at hotmail.com> wrote:

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But is it not exactly the interpretation that would spring to the mind of an augur in Silk's hideously incorrect religion?

- Gerry Quinn

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 16 Dec 2010, 16:57 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 8:18 AM, Gerry Quinn <gerryq at indigo.ie> wrote:

From: "Dan'I Danehy-Oakes" <danldo at gmail.com>

As mentioned elsewhere, to describe Jesus as "enlightened and possessed by the Outsider" would be hideously incorrect theology. However, such a description might well address the problem of His having an analogue in the Briahtic universe.

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Yes, I believe that is correct.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 17:01 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Why is it a great leap?

Either other paths of salvation exist, or they do not. I have never heard of any such, except that many have commented that heathens may attain grace and thus be considered eligible. Generally, Christians speak of "Salvation through Jesus Christ Our Lord amen etc."

But the Son came here for the express purpose of salvation. If he doesn't show up, then all we are left with is grace---and Severian seems to attain some version of that.

No leap at all.

On 12/16/2010 11:14 AM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 18:36 · in reply to David Stockhoff

From: "David Stockhoff" <dstockhoff at verizon.net>
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To start with, because to assume something not mentioned in a text must therefore not exist in the universe of that text is a leap.

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You have not heard of any... except insofar as you have!

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The existence of grace implies the non-existence of salvation?

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David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 19:02 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

As I tried to specifically state, grace is not salvation but rather a consolation prize for nonbelievers. Let's let the theologians parse that. But for you to insist that salvation exists "just because" is worse than a leap.

On 12/16/2010 1:36 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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James Wynn — 16 Dec 2010, 19:04 · in reply to Lee Berman

Lee Berman-

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Nothing about salvation is mentioned, that I know of.

A very, very Jesus-like character. Complete with driving out money-changers with a whip, being equivalent with God**, and being nailed to a cross (scaffolding). Such a Jesus without salvation is like Thyone without Dionysus.

**If Silk spoke to the possessed Chenille as though she were Kypris, then one possessed AND enlightened by the Outsider--knowing is far more equivalent.

u+16b9

Son of Witz — 16 Dec 2010, 19:08 · in reply to David Stockhoff

I guess then, that you feel there is no possible salvation but through Jesus Christ?

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David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 19:15 · in reply to Son of Witz

Well, it's not a concern of mine, so I'm trying to stick with what I understand as the technical definition.

Yes, but with a loophole for really good pagans. ;)

On 12/16/2010 2:08 PM, Son of Witz wrote:

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Gerry Quinn — 16 Dec 2010, 19:38 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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Son of Witz — 16 Dec 2010, 19:41 · in reply to David Stockhoff

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David Stockhoff — 16 Dec 2010, 22:22 · in reply to Gerry Quinn

Now you're making things up. First, what evidence? Second, what difference are you talking about?

On 12/16/2010 2:38 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:
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On Dec 16, 2010, at 11:02 AM, David Stockhoff<dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 22:36 · in reply to David Stockhoff

If I may (as one who does theology from time to time)...

I'm trying to understand the sense in which David is using the term "grace". I find it difficult to separate from the concept of salvation, because salvation is only possible through grace. In other words, it is by the grace of God that we are saved, not through any striving of our own (although obviously we need to respond to that grace in some way).

Christians believe that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. This is not to say that Jews, Muslims, virtuous pagans, etc cannot be saved; it is, however, to say that whether they are aware of it or not, it is Jesus who saves them. Salvation consists in being freed from the just consequences of our sins, due to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. We are no longer subject to punishment for our misdeeds, because Another has taken that punishment on our behalf. The word "grace" denotes that this is a gift, not something we are expected to earn; our good works are not a means of winning this gift, but a natural response of gratitude--you could say "thank-you notes to God" if it doesn't make you want to throw up. (NB : I am aware that ultramontane Catholicism and five-point Calvinism alike will find points of disagreement in this paragraph)

Grace in the Christian sense doesn't seem to have existed before Christ's passion and resurrection. The Torah seems to embody an accountant's approach to morality, with each transgression appearing in the debit column and requiring the sacrifice of a corresponding asset. In comparison, the sacrifice of Christ is a general debt amnesty, a super-Jubilee if you will.

I hope this clarifies rather than muddies. If the latter case obtains, feel free to ignore!

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On Dec 16, 2010, at 11:02 AM, David Stockhoff<dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:

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Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 22:43 · in reply to David Stockhoff

As far as evidence is concerned, the same sort of evidence exists for Jesus as exists for Socrates. There doesn't seem to be any good reason to assume he didn't exist, unless such an assumption is necessary to validate a distaste for Christianity (or religion in general).

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 2:22 PM, David Stockhoff <dstockhoff at verizon.net> wrote:
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On 12/16/2010 2:38 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 16 Dec 2010, 22:47 · in reply to Matthew Weber

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 2:36 PM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

A bunch of good stuff with which I take mild exception only to this one paragraph.

Grace in the Christian sense doesn't seem to have existed before Christ's passion and resurrection. The Torah seems to embody an accountant's approach to morality, with each transgression appearing in the debit column and requiring the sacrifice of a corresponding asset. In comparison, the sacrifice of Christ is a general debt amnesty, a super-Jubilee if you will.

1) Grace existed before Christ's passion and resurrection, but it did so as a result of Christ's passion and resurrection. Grace always already can be extended to the "virtuous pagan" as well as people like Moses, Elijah, etc.

2) I'm of Jewish descent, and if I were a practicing Jew (rather than a rather poorly practicing Catholic) I would take strong offense at your characterization of the Torah. That is a Christian's view of the Torah, but not a Jew's.

3) Your soteriology is one common model but not the only one.

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 22:51 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 2:47 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danl do at gmail.com> wrote:
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To be sure, they weren't punished, but they weren't redeemed either--at least not until the Harrowing of Hell, no?

2) I'm of Jewish descent, and if I were a practicing Jew (rather than a rather poorly practicing Catholic) I would take strong offense at your characterization of the Torah. That is a Christian's view of the Torah, but not a Jew's.

Not since the end of the Second Temple, certainly. Point taken.

3) Your soteriology is one common model but not the only one.

Sure--there are at least 3 other models that I can think of in the Cappadocian Fathers, but PSA is the most commonly encountered one in the West. And since I was writing a short response rather than a book... :)

Matt +

Let each man pass his days in that wherein his skill is greatest.
Sextus Propertius (54 B.C.-A.D. 2), Elegies, II, i, 46

James Wynn — 16 Dec 2010, 22:56 · in reply to Matthew Weber

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Not since the end of the Second Temple, certainly. Point taken.

I took Matthew's post to be speaking from the POV of a Christian theology to the exclusion of others. Albeit, it must be admitted that his characterization was originally defined by Jews who happened to believe that Jesus was the Jewish promised savior.

And, as I was instructed by an Orthodox Jew, modern Judaism was born in the 2nd century to continue Jewish traditions in absence of a Temple and in conscious response to Christians.

u+16b9

Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 23:03 · in reply to James Wynn

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 2:56 PM, James Wynn <crushtv at gmail.com> wrote:

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And, as I was instructed by an Orthodox Jew, modern Judaism was born in the 2nd century to continue Jewish traditions in absence of a Temple and in conscious response to Christians.

That's funny; I was just thinking (after reading Dan's response) the same thing--that modern Judaism has been unalterably conditioned by the loss of the Temple and the dominance of

Christianity. The destruction of the Temple certainly put paid to the Sadducees; today's rabbinical tradition is a direct descendant of the Pharasaical party which gets such a bad rap in the Gospels.

Matt +

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Sextus Propertius (54 B.C.-A.D. 2), Elegies, II, i, 46

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 16 Dec 2010, 23:09 · in reply to Matthew Weber

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 2:51 PM, Matthew Weber <palaeologos at gmail.com> wrote:

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I think this is an error as you are applying "before" and "after" to states in Eternity, outside of Time.

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Sure--there are at least 3 other models that I can think of in the Cappadocian Fathers, but PSA is the most commonly encountered one in the West. And since I was writing a short response rather than a book... :)

I guess my objection was to your stating it in a manner that sounded as if you were describing The Standard Christian Model, when there is no Standard Christian Model...

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Matthew Weber — 16 Dec 2010, 23:14 · in reply to Dan'I Danehy-Oakes

Both good points, which I'll concede (I could discuss either at greater length, but I feel I'm already substantially digressing from topic).

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 3:09 PM, Dan'I Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:

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3) Your soteriology is one common model but not the only one.

Sure--there are at least 3 other models that I can think of in the Cappadocian Fathers, but PSA is the most commonly encountered one in the West. And since I was writing a short response rather than a book... :)

I guess my objection was to your stating it in a manner that sounded as if you were describing The Standard Christian Model, when there is no Standard Christian Model...

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 23:25 · in reply to David Stockhoff

Better check with the theologians on that. Here, Wolfe's probable beliefs must trump our own.

The concept of "anonymous Christianity" is built on the precept that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to save everyone for all times, and that His transcendent grace is not restricted by human ignorance of the gospel. This is held to allow innocent pagans, unbaptized infants, etc. to constructively embrace salvation without exposure to the gospel or the capacity to intellectually comprehend it. There's a sort of darker side to it, in that missionaries who bring the good news give people who otherwise wouldn't the chance to affirmatively embrace it but also to overtly reject it.

Jeff Wilson — 16 Dec 2010, 23:40 · in reply to Matthew Weber

Grace in the Christian sense doesn't seem to have existed before Christ's passion and resurrection. The Torah seems to embody an accountant's approach to morality, with each transgression appearing in the debit column and requiring the sacrifice of a corresponding asset.

There are examples of forgiveness in the Torah, as long as you don't equate it with a lack of consequences. All the times that the covenants with G-d were broken, and G-d keeps giving Adam's brood one more chance, then Noah's, then the Israelites. Other Hebrew scriptures record Jonah's many refusals to deliver G-d's judgment to Nineveh and hardships he endures shirking his divine duty out of bigotry, but G-d forgives him, and the Ninevites as well when they finally get the judgment.

David Stockhoff — 17 Dec 2010, 01:13 · in reply to Matthew Weber

As I thought, my distinction was one without much difference.

In any case, in my understanding grace was retroactively applied to good pagans, and the question of the orthodoxy of this application is probably open.

On 12/16/2010 5:36 PM, Matthew Weber wrote:
If I may (as one who does theology from time to time)...

I'm trying to understand the sense in which David is using the term "grace". I find it difficult to separate from the concept of salvation, because salvation is only possible through grace. In other words, it is by the grace of God that we are saved, not through any striving of our own (although obviously we need to respond to that grace in some way).

Christians believe that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. This is not to say that Jews, Muslims, virtuous pagans, etc cannot be saved; it is, however, to say that whether they are aware of it or not, it is Jesus who saves them. Salvation consists in being freed from the just consequences of our sins, due to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. We are no longer subject to punishment for our misdeeds, because Another has taken that punishment on our behalf. The word "grace" denotes that this is a gift, not something we are

expected to earn; our good works are not a means of winning this gift, but a natural response of gratitude--you could say "thank-you notes to God" if it doesn't make you want to throw up. (NB : I am aware that ultramontane Catholicism and five-point Calvinism alike will find points of disagreement in this paragraph)

Grace in the Christian sense doesn't seem to have existed before Christ's passion and resurrection. The Torah seems to embody an accountant's approach to morality, with each transgression appearing in the debit column and requiring the sacrifice of a corresponding asset. In comparison, the sacrifice of Christ is a general debt amnesty, a super-Jubilee if you will.

I hope this clarifies rather than muddies. If the latter case obtains, feel free to ignore!

David Stockhoff — 17 Dec 2010, 01:19 · in reply to Matthew Weber

And by the same logic, there may have been a dozen of these people---Jesuses, Christs, dud Christs as Gerry says, or full-blown messiahs---that we have forgotten entirely. Almost as though ... they don't exist.

Who now studies Zoroaster?

You can't talk about Good News no one has heard. Isn't the end the same? Salvation is not a concern of a single character in the series. Perhaps someone who supports the idea of identical "parallel" universes should explain this discrepancy.

On 12/16/2010 5:43 PM, Matthew Weber wrote:

As far as evidence is concerned, the same sort of evidence exists for Jesus as exists for Socrates. There doesn't seem to be any good reason to assume he didn't exist, unless such an assumption is necessary to validate a distaste for Christianity (or religion in general).

On Thu, Dec 16, 2010 at 2:22 PM, David Stockhoff
<dstockhoff at verizon.net <mailto:dstockhoff at verizon.net>> wrote:

Now you're making things up. First, what evidence? Second, what difference are you talking about?

On 12/16/2010 2:38 PM, Gerry Quinn wrote:

As I tried to specifically state, grace is not salvation but rather a consolation prize for nonbelievers. Let's let the theologians parse that. But for you to insist that salvation exists "just because" is worse than a leap.

We have evidence for the existence of Jesus. We have no evidence for any difference between the Jesus of this universe (if different universe it is) and our own.

It seems to me that the leap is to assume a difference.

- Gerry Quinn

David Stockhoff — 17 Dec 2010, 01:27 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I think this issue is a critical point. Certainly something to be addressed in discussing whether entire universes may have been left in the dark by chance or intent.

Personally, I envision infinite universes which are ruthlessly pruned as needed, as Severian drowned Urth, in a process akin to natural selection. I understand if this idea is distasteful to some, and I can't support it from the text even though we know this principle applies to life on Earth.

But why else would entire races of beings work to uplift one (even the one that received the Logos), if there were not some background process that was deemed insufficient?

On 12/16/2010 6:25 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:

Better check with the theologians on that. Here, Wolfe's probable beliefs must trump our own.

The concept of "anonymous Christianity" is built on the precept that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to save everyone for all times, and that His transcendent grace is not restricted by human ignorance of the gospel. This is held to allow innocent pagans, unbaptized infants, etc. to constructively embrace salvation without exposure to the gospel or the capacity to intellectually comprehend it. There's a sort of darker side to it, in that missionaries who bring the good news give people who otherwise wouldn't the chance to affirmatively embrace it but also to overtly reject it.

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