

# God's Absolute Sovereignty

A case for

Calvinism

*Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. 1 Chronicles 29:11-13*

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*Soli Deo Gloria*

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## Abbreviations

Genesis	Gn	Matthew	Mt	NT	New Testament
Exodus	Ex	Mark	Mk	OT	Old Testament
Leviticus	Lv	Luke	Lk	V	Verse
Deuteronomy	Dt	John	Jn	Vv	Verses
Numbers	Nm	Acts	Acts	C.f.	See further (cross-reference)
Joshua	Jos	Romans	Rom	ESV	English Standard Version
Judges	Jdg	1 Corinthians	1Cor	HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible
Ruth	Ru	2 Corinthians	2Cor	NLT	New Living Translation
1 Samuel	1Sm	Galatians	Gal	NASB	New American Standard Bible
2 Samuel	2Sm	Ephesians	Eph		
1 Kings	1Kg	Philippians	Phil		
2 Kings	2Kg	Colossians	Col		
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Thessalonians	1Thess		
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Thessalonians	2Thess		
Ezra	Ezra	1 Timothy	1Tim		
Nehemiah	Neh	2 Timothy	2Tim		
Esther	Est	Titus	Titus		
Job	Job	Philemon	Philem		
Psalms	Ps	Hebrews	Heb		
Proverbs	Prov	James	Jas		
Ecclesiastes	Ec	1 Peter	1Pet		
Song of Solomon	SOS	2 Peter	2Pet		
Isaiah	Isa	1 John	1Jn		
Jeremiah	Jer	2 John	2Jn		
Lamentations	Lam	3 John	3Jn		
Ezekiel	Ezk	Jude	Jude		
Daniel	Dan	Revelation	Rev		
Hosea	Hos				
Joel	Joel				
Amos	Amos				
Obadiah	Obad				
Jonah	Jonah				
Micah	Mic				
Nahum	Nah				
Habakkuk	Hab				
Zephaniah	Zeph				
Haggai	Hag				
Zechariah	Zch				
Malachi	Mal				

# The Doctrines of Grace, the 5 Points of Calvinism, Sovereign Grace

## Total depravity, Radical corruption

Man is dead in sin, completely and radically impacted by the Fall, the enemy of God, incapable of saving himself. This does not mean that man is as evil as he could be. Nor does it mean that the image of God is destroyed, or that the will is done away with. Instead, it refers to the *all pervasiveness of the effects of sin*, and the fact that man is, outside of Christ, the enemy of God.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the Fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free; it is in bondage to his evil nature. Therefore, he will not—indeed, he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ. Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not salvation, but itself a part of God's gift of salvation. It is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.<sup>2</sup>

## Man is sinful, evil, unrighteous

**Gn 6:5** *The LORD saw that the **wickedness of man** was great in the earth, and that **every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**.*

**Gn 8:21** *And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the **intention of man's heart is evil from his youth**. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.*

**Job 14:1-4** *"Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. <sup>2</sup> He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not. <sup>3</sup> And do you open your eyes on such a one and bring me into judgment with you? <sup>4</sup> Who can bring a **clean thing out of an unclean**? There is not one.*

**Job 15:14-16** *What is man, that he **can be pure**? Or he who is born of a woman, that he **can be righteous**?<sup>15</sup> Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight; <sup>16</sup> how much less **one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks injustice like water!** (c.f. Job 4:17-19; 25:4-6)*

**Job 21:13-16** *They spend their days in prosperity, and in peace they go down to Sheol. <sup>14</sup> They say to God, 'Depart from us! We do not desire the knowledge of your ways. <sup>15</sup> What is the Almighty, that we should **serve him**? And **what profit do we get if we pray to him**?' <sup>16</sup> Behold, is not their prosperity in their hand? The counsel of the wicked is far from me.*

**Ps 51:5** *Behold, I was **brought forth in iniquity**, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

**Ps 58:3** *The **wicked are estranged from the womb**; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.*

**Ps 130:3** *If you, O LORD, should **mark iniquities**, O Lord, **who could stand**?*

**Ps 143:2** *Enter not into judgment with your servant, for **no one living is righteous** before you.*

**Prov 20:9** *Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; **I am clean from my sin**"?*

**Ecc 9:3** *This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that the same event happens to all. Also, the hearts of the children of **man are full of evil**, and **madness is in their hearts** while they live, and after that they go to the dead.*

**Isa 64:6** *We have all become like **one who is unclean**, and all our **righteous deeds are like a polluted garment**. We all fade like a leaf, and our **iniquities**, like the wind, **take us away**.*

**Jer 13:23** *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then also you can **do good who are accustomed to do evil**.*

**Jer 17:9** *The **heart is deceitful above all things**, and **desperately sick**; who can understand it?*

**Mt 7:17-18** *So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the **diseased tree bears bad fruit**. <sup>18</sup> A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can **a diseased tree bear good fruit**.*

<sup>1</sup> James White, The Potter's Freedom (New Revised Edition 2009) p. 39

<sup>2</sup> "The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented" Ed. 2, pp. 5-6.

**Mk 7:21-23** For from within, out of the **heart of man**, come **evil thoughts**, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,<sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.<sup>23</sup> All these **evil things come from within**, and they defile a person.”

**Mt 12:33** “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the **tree bad and its fruit bad**, for the tree is known by its fruit.

**Lk 19:11-14** As they heard these things, he proceeded to tell a parable, because he was near to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.<sup>12</sup> He said therefore, “A **nobleman** went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return.<sup>13</sup> Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’<sup>14</sup> But his **citizens hated him** and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘**We do not want this man to reign over us.**’

**Jn 3:19-20** And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and **people loved the darkness** rather than the light because **their works were evil**.<sup>20</sup> For everyone who **does wicked things hates the light** and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

**John 5:24-25** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has **passed from death to life**.<sup>25</sup> “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the **dead will hear the voice of the Son of God**, and those who **hear will live**.

**Rom 3:9-18** What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both **Jews and Greeks, are under sin**,<sup>10</sup> as it is written: “**None is righteous**, no, not one;<sup>11</sup> **no one understands; no one seeks for God**.<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have **become worthless; no one does good**, not even one.”<sup>13</sup> “Their throat is an open grave; they use their **tongues to deceive**.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.”<sup>14</sup> “Their mouth is full of **curses and bitterness**.<sup>15</sup> “Their feet are swift to **shed blood**;<sup>16</sup> in their paths are **ruin and misery**,<sup>17</sup> and the way of **peace they have not known**.<sup>18</sup> “There is **no fear of God** before their eyes.”<sup>19</sup>

**Rom 5:12-19** Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men because all sinned**—<sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.<sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if **many died through one man's trespass**, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the **grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many**.<sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following **one trespass brought condemnation**, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.<sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, **death reigned through that one man**, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as **one trespass led to condemnation for all men**, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.<sup>19</sup> For as by the **one man's disobedience the many were made sinners**, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

**Rom 14:23** But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For **whatever does not proceed from faith is sin**.

**Eph 2:1-3** And you were **dead in the trespasses and sins**<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, **following the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind.

**Eph 4:17-19** Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.<sup>18</sup> They are **darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God** because of the ignorance that is in

<sup>3</sup> C.f. Ps 14:1-3; Ps 53:1-3

<sup>4</sup> C.f. Ps 5:9; Ps 140:3; Jer 5:16

<sup>5</sup> C.f. Ps 10:7

<sup>6</sup> C.f. Prov 1:16; Isa 59:7-8; Rom 3:15-17

<sup>7</sup> C.f. Ps 36:1



them, due to their **hardness of heart**.<sup>19</sup> They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, **greedy to practice every kind of impurity**.

**Eph 5:1-14** Therefore be **imitators of God**, as beloved children.<sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as **Christ loved us and gave himself up for us**, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.<sup>3</sup> But **sexual immorality** and all **impurity** or **covetousness** must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.<sup>4</sup> Let there be no **filthiness** nor **foolish talk** nor **crude joking**, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.<sup>5</sup> For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has **no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ** and God.<sup>6</sup> Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the **wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience**.<sup>7</sup> Therefore do not become partners with them;<sup>8</sup> for at one time **you were darkness**, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light<sup>9</sup> (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true),<sup>10</sup> and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.<sup>11</sup> Take no part in the **unfruitful works of darkness**, but instead expose them.<sup>12</sup> For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.<sup>13</sup> But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible,<sup>14</sup> for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and **arise from the dead**, and Christ will shine on you."

**Col 2:13-15** And you, who were **dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive** together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,<sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.<sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

**Jas 1:13-14** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for **God cannot be tempted with evil**, and he himself **tempts no one**.<sup>14</sup> But each person is **tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire**.

**1Jn 1:8-10** If we say we have **no sin**, we **deceive ourselves**, and the **truth is not in us**.<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<sup>10</sup> If we say **we have not sinned**, we **make him a liar**, and his word is not in us.

### Man is a slave to sin & the Devil

**Jn 8:34-36** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who **practices sin is a slave to sin**.<sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever.<sup>36</sup> So if the **Son sets you free, you will be free** indeed.

**Rom 6:6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the **body of sin** might be brought to nothing, so that we would **no longer be enslaved to sin**.

**Rom 6:15-20** What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are **slaves of the one whom you obey**, either of **sin, which leads to death**, or of **obedience, which leads to righteousness**?<sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God, that you who were once **slaves of sin** have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,<sup>18</sup> and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.<sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your **members as slaves to impurity** and to **lawlessness leading to more lawlessness**, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.<sup>20</sup> For when you were **slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness**.

**Eph 2:1-3** And you were **dead in the trespasses and sins**<sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, **following the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—<sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind.

**2Tim 2:24-26** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,<sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. **God may perhaps grant them repentance** leading to a knowledge of the truth,<sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the **snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will**.

**Tit 3:3-7** For we ourselves were once **foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions** and pleasures, passing our days in **malice and envy, hated** by others and **hating** one another.<sup>4</sup> But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,<sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but **according to his own**

mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit**,<sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,<sup>7</sup> so that being **justified by his grace** we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

### *Man is not able to come to God or believe in Him on his own*

**Jn 3:5-7** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.<sup>6</sup> That which is **born of the flesh is flesh**, and that which is **born of the Spirit is spirit**.<sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be **born again**.’

**Jn 6:43-47** Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves.<sup>44</sup> **No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**. And I will raise him up on the last day.<sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me**—<sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.<sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

**Jn 6:60-71** When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”<sup>61</sup> But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were **grumbling** about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this?<sup>62</sup> Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?<sup>63</sup> It is the **Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all**. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.<sup>64</sup> But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For **Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe**, and who it was who would betray him.)<sup>65</sup> And he said, “This is why I told you that **no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father**.”<sup>66</sup> After this **many of his disciples turned back** and no longer walked with him.<sup>67</sup> So Jesus said to the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? **You have the words of eternal life**,<sup>69</sup> and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”<sup>70</sup> Jesus answered them, “**Did I not choose you, the Twelve?** And yet one of you is a devil.”<sup>71</sup> He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.

**Jn 8:39-47** They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,<sup>40</sup> but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.<sup>41</sup> **You are doing the works your father did**.” They said to him, “We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God.”<sup>42</sup> Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me.<sup>43</sup> Why do you not understand what I say? It is because **you cannot bear to hear my word**.<sup>44</sup> You are **of your father the devil**, and **your will is to do your father’s desires**. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.<sup>45</sup> But **because I tell the truth, you do not believe me**.<sup>46</sup> Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?<sup>47</sup> Whoever is **of God hears the words of God**. The reason why you do not hear them is that **you are not of God**.”

**Jn 10:22-29** At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter,<sup>23</sup> and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon.<sup>24</sup> So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? **If you are the Christ, tell us plainly**.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus answered them, “**I told you, and you do not believe**. The works that I do in my Father’s name bear witness about me,<sup>26</sup> but **you do not believe because you are not among my sheep**.<sup>27</sup> **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me**.<sup>28</sup> **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish**, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.<sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand**.

**Jn 12:37-41** Though he had done so many signs before them, **they still did not believe in him**,<sup>38</sup> **so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled**: “Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”<sup>39</sup> Therefore **they could not believe**. For again Isaiah said,<sup>40</sup> “He has **blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see** with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.”<sup>41</sup> Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him.

**Jn 14:15-17** “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Helper, to be with you forever**,<sup>17</sup> even the **Spirit of truth**, whom the **world cannot receive**, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

<sup>8</sup> C.f. Isa 6:10; Mt 13:14-15; Mk 6:52

**Rom 3:9-12** What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both **Jews and Greeks, are under sin**, <sup>10</sup> as it is written: “**None is righteous, no, not one; <sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.**”<sup>9</sup>”

**Rom 8:5-8** For those who live according to the **flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> For to set the mind on the **flesh is death**, but to set the mind on the **Spirit is life** and peace. <sup>7</sup> For the mind that is set on the **flesh is hostile to God**, for it **does not submit to God's law**; indeed, **it cannot**. <sup>8</sup> Those who are in the **flesh cannot please God**.

**1Cor 2:14** The **natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit** of God, for they are **folly to him**, and he is **not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned**.

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<sup>9</sup> C.f. Ps 14:1-3; Ps 53:1-3

## Unconditional Election, Sovereign Grace

God elects a specific people unto Himself without reference to *anything they do*. This means the basis of God's choice of the elect is *solely* within Himself: His grace, His mercy, His will. It is not man's actions, works, or even *foreseen faith*, that "draws" God's choice. God's election is unconditional *and final*.<sup>10</sup>

God's choice of certain individuals for salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause, of God's choice. Election, therefore, was not determined by, or conditioned upon, any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus, God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.<sup>11</sup>

### General verses regarding Unconditional Election

**Ps 65:4** *Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple!*

**Mt 11:25-30** *At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that **you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children**; <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for **such was your gracious will**. <sup>27</sup> All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and **no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him**. <sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

**Mt 22:14** *For many are called, but few are chosen.*

**Jn 6:37** *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

**Jn 13:18** *I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.'<sup>12</sup>*

**Jn 15:16** *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.*

**Jn 17:6-10** *"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

**Acts 2:39** *For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."*

**Acts 2:46-47** *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

**Acts 13:46-48** *And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" <sup>48</sup> And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.*

<sup>10</sup> James White, *The Potter's Freedom* (New Revised Edition 2009) p. 39

<sup>11</sup> "The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented" Ed. 2, pp. 6.

<sup>12</sup> C.f. Ps 41:9

**Acts 22:14-15** And he said, ‘The **God of our fathers appointed you** to know his will, to **see the Righteous One** and to **hear a voice** from his mouth; <sup>15</sup> for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard.

**Rom 8:28-30** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for **those who are called according to his purpose.** <sup>29</sup> For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he **predestined** he also **called**, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**.

**Rom 9:10-13** And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup> though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that **God's purpose of election** might continue, **not because of works** but because of **him who calls**— <sup>12</sup> she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> As it is written, “**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**”<sup>13</sup>

**Rom 9:15-18** For he says to Moses, “I will have **mercy on whom I have mercy**, and I will have **compassion on whom I have compassion.**” <sup>16</sup> So then it **depends not on human will** or exertion, but **on God, who has mercy.** <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” <sup>18</sup> So then he has **mercy on whomever he wills**, and he **hardens whomever he wills**.

**Rom 11:5-7** So too at the present time there **is a remnant, chosen by grace.** <sup>6</sup> But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. <sup>7</sup> What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The **elect obtained it**, but the **rest were hardened**,

**Eph 1:3-6** Blessed be the God and **Father** of our Lord **Jesus Christ**, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he **chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be **holy and blameless** before him. **In love** <sup>5</sup> he **predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ**, according to the **purpose of his will**, <sup>6</sup> to the **praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

**Eph 1:11-12** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will**, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

**Eph 2:10** For we are his **workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which **God prepared beforehand**, that we should walk in them.

**Phil 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling, for <sup>13</sup> it is **God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure**.

**1Thess 1:4-5** For we know, brothers loved by God, that **he has chosen you**, <sup>5</sup> because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

**1Thess 5:9-10** For God has **not destined us for wrath**, but to **obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ**, <sup>10</sup> who **died for us** so that whether we are awake or asleep **we might live with him**.

**2Thess 2:13-14** But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because **God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved**, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> To this **he called you through our gospel**, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1Pet 1:1-2** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, **To those who are elect** exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup> according to the **foreknowledge of God the Father**, in the **sanctification of the Spirit**, for **obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood**: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

**Rev 13:7-8** Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, <sup>8</sup> and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written **before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain**.

<sup>13</sup> C.f. 1Kg 22:1, Mal 1:2



## God's purpose in election

**Isa 43:6-7** I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; **bring my sons from afar** and my daughters from the end of the earth, <sup>7</sup> **everyone who is called by my name**, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

**Rom 9:22-24** What if God, desiring to **show his wrath** and to **make known his power**, has endured with much patience **vessels of wrath prepared for destruction**, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the **riches of his glory for vessels of mercy**, which he has **prepared beforehand for glory**— <sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

**Eph 1:3-6** Blessed be the God and **Father** of our Lord **Jesus Christ**, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he **chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be **holy** and **blameless** before him. **In love** <sup>5</sup> **he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ**, according to the **purpose of his will**, <sup>6</sup> to the **praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

**Eph 2:4-7** But God, being **rich in mercy**, because of the **great love with which he loved us**, <sup>5</sup> even when we were **dead in our trespasses**, **made us alive** together with Christ— **by grace** you have been saved—<sup>6</sup> and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> so that in the coming ages **he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace** in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

**2Tim 1:8-12** Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who **saved us and called us to a holy calling**, **not because of our works** but **because of his own purpose** and grace, which he **gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**, <sup>10</sup> and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, <sup>11</sup> for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, <sup>12</sup> which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me.

## Saved by God's free will

**Jn 1:11-13** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become **children of God**, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the **will of the flesh** nor of the will of man, but **of God**.

**Rom 9:15-16** For he says to Moses, “**I will have mercy on whom I have mercy**, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on **human will** or exertion, but on **God, who has mercy**.

**1Cor 1:30-31** And **because of him you are in Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

**Jas 1:18** **Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

## The reason of election is not in the person being chosen

**Jer 1:5** “Before I formed you **in the womb I knew you**, and before you were born **I consecrated you**; **I appointed you a prophet to the nations**.”

**Rom 9:10-13** And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup> though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that **God's purpose of election** might continue, **not because of works** but because of **him who calls**— <sup>12</sup> she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” <sup>13</sup> As it is written, “**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated**.”<sup>14</sup>

**Rom 10:20** Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, “I have been **found by those who did not seek me**; I have **shown myself to those who did not ask for me**.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> C.f. 1Kg 22:1, Mal 1:2

<sup>15</sup> C.f. Isa 65:1

**1Cor 1:27-29** But **God chose what is foolish** in the world to shame the wise; **God chose what is weak** in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> **God chose what is low** and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that **no human being might boast** in the presence of God.

**Eph 1:3-6** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup> even as he **chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and blameless** before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he **predestined us** for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, **according to the purpose of his will**, <sup>6</sup> to the **praise of his glorious grace**, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

*God grants repentance, faith, grace to the sinner*

**Acts 5:31** God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give **repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins**.

**Acts 11:18** When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also **God has granted repentance that leads to life**.”

**Acts 15:8-9** And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by **giving them the Holy Spirit** just as he did to us, <sup>9</sup> and he made no distinction between us and them, having **cleansed their hearts by faith**.

**Acts 16:14** One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The **Lord opened her heart** to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

**Acts 18:27-28** And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped **those who through grace had believed**, <sup>28</sup> for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

**Eph 2:8-9** For by **grace you have been saved through faith**. And **this is not your own doing**; it is the **gift of God**, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.<sup>16</sup>

The ESV Study Bible explains:

- **By grace** refers to God’s favor upon those who have transgressed his law and sinned against him. But grace may also be understood as a “power” in these verses. God’s grace not only offers salvation but also secures it. **Saved** refers to deliverance from God’s wrath at the final judgment (Rom. 5:9); “by grace you have been saved” is repeated from Eph. 2:5 for emphasis. The verb form for “have been saved” (Gk. *sesōsmenoi*, perfect tense) communicates that the Christian’s salvation is fully secured. **through faith**. Faith is a confident trust and reliance upon Christ Jesus and is the only means by which one can obtain salvation. **this**. The Greek pronoun is neuter, while “grace” and “faith” are feminine. Accordingly, “this” points to the whole process of “salvation by grace through faith” as being the gift of God and not something that we can accomplish ourselves. This use of the neuter pronoun to take in the whole of a complex idea is quite common in Greek (e.g., 6:1); its use here makes it clear that faith, no less than grace, is a gift of God. Salvation, therefore, in every respect, is **not your own doing**.

**Phil 1:29-30** For it has been **granted to you** that for the sake of Christ you should not only **believe in him** but also suffer for his sake, <sup>30</sup> engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

**2Tim 2:24-26** And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup> **correcting his opponents with gentleness**. **God may perhaps grant them repentance** leading to a knowledge of the truth, <sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the **snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will**.

**Heb 12:1-2** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to **Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.gty.org/resources/bible-gna/BQ053113>

**2Pet 1:1-2** Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To **those who have obtained<sup>17</sup> a faith of equal standing with ours** by the righteousness of **our God and Savior Jesus Christ**: <sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

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<sup>17</sup> G2975 λαγχάνω lagchano (lang-khan'-o) v.

1. to lot, i.e. determine (by implication, receive) especially by lot

[a prolonged form of a primary verb, which is only used as an alternate in certain tenses]

KJV: his lot be, cast lots, obtain

Jonathan Kristen Mickelson's Enhanced Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries. Taken from the Bible software The Word.



## Limited Atonement, Definite Redemption

Since it is God's purpose to save a special people for Himself, and He has chosen to do so *only* through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Christ came to give His life "a ransom for many" so as to "save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The *intention* of Christ in His cross-work was to save His people *specifically*. Therefore, Christ's sacrifice is *perfect and complete*, for it actually *accomplishes* perfect redemption.<sup>18</sup>

Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.<sup>19</sup>

### The Atonement of the Lord Jesus was Penal Substitutionary/Vicariously

**Penal substitutionary atonement** refers to the doctrine that Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinners. God imputed the guilt of our sins to Christ, and he, in our place, bore the punishment that we deserve. This was a full payment for sins, which satisfied both the wrath and the righteousness of God, so that He could forgive sinners without compromising His own holy standard.<sup>20</sup>

**Isa 53:6** *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the **LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

**Isa 53:12** *Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet **he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.***

**John 11:49-52** *But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."*

<sup>51</sup> *He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that **Jesus would die for the nation,***  
<sup>52</sup> *and not for the nation only, but also to **gather into one the children of God** who are scattered abroad.*

**Rom 3:21-25** *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom **God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.** This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.*

**2Cor 5:21** *For our sake **he made him to be sin who knew no sin,** so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Gal 3:13-14** *Christ **redeemed us** from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "**Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree**"— <sup>14</sup> so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.*

**Titus 2:11-14** *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who **gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness** and to **purify for himself a people** for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

**Heb 9:25-28** *Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, <sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared **once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** <sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been **offered once to bear the sins of many,** will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.*

<sup>18</sup> James White, *The Potter's Freedom* (New Revised Edition 2009) p. 39-40

<sup>19</sup> "The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented" Ed. 2, pp. 6-7.

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.theopedia.com/Penal\\_substitutionary\\_atonement](http://www.theopedia.com/Penal_substitutionary_atonement)

**Heb 13:11-12** For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup> So **Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.**

**1Pet 2:24** He himself **bore our sins in his body on the tree**, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. **By his wounds you have been healed.**

**1Pet 3:18-20** For Christ also **suffered once for sins**, the righteous for the unrighteous, that **he might bring us to God**, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup> in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup> because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

**1Jn 2:1-2** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the **propitiation for our sins**, and not for ours only but also for the **sins of the whole world.**<sup>21</sup>

**1Jn 4:10** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and **sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.**

*Christ took the sins of the elect, not every single person in the world*

**Mt 1:21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will **save his people from their sins.**"

**Mt 20:25-28** But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, <sup>28</sup> even as the **Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**"

**Mk 14:22-24** And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; **this is my body.**" <sup>23</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, "**This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.** (Mt 26:28)

**Lk 22:19-20** And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is **given for you.** Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is **poured out for you** is the **new covenant in my blood.**

**Jn 3:16** For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish** but have eternal life.<sup>22</sup>

**Jn 6:35-40** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. <sup>37</sup> **All that the Father gives me** will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing** of all that he has given me, but **raise it up on the last day.** 40 For this is the will of my Father, that **everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him** should have eternal life, and **I will raise him up on the last day.**"

**Jn 10:14-18** I am the good shepherd. **I know my own and my own know me,** <sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and **I lay down my life for the sheep.** <sup>16</sup> And I have **other sheep that are not of this fold.** I must **bring them also**, and **they will listen to my voice.** So there will be **one flock, one shepherd.** <sup>17</sup> For this reason the Father loves me, because **I lay down my life** that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but **I lay it down of my own accord.** I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

**Jn 11:49-52** But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that **one man should die for the people**, not that the whole nation should perish."

<sup>21</sup> Look for an exegesis of [1 John 2:2](#) in "[Examination of Unlimited Atonement texts](#)"

<sup>22</sup> Lit. For this is how God loved the world; "whoever believes", πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων is literally "all the believing"

<sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that **Jesus would die for the nation,**  
<sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to **gather into one the children of God** who are scattered abroad.

**Jn 15:12-17** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.** <sup>14</sup> **You are my friends** if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup> No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; **but I have called you friends,** for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> **You did not choose me, but I chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup> These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

**Jn 17:1-2** When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; **glorify your Son** that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all flesh, to **give eternal life to all whom you have given him.**

**Jn 17:6-10** “I have **manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me,** and they have kept your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. <sup>8</sup> For I have given them the words that you gave me, and **they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you;** and they have believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I am **praying for them.** I am **not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.** <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

**Jn 17:19-21** And for their sake I consecrate myself, that **they also may be sanctified in truth.** <sup>20</sup> “I do not ask for these only, but also for **those who will believe in me** through their word, <sup>21</sup> that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that **the world may believe that you have sent me.**

**Jn 17:24-26** Father, I desire that **they also, whom you have given me,** may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. <sup>25</sup> O righteous Father, even though the **world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me.** <sup>26</sup> I made known to them your name, and **I will continue to make it known,** that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

**Acts 20:28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the **church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.**

**Rom 8:31-34** What then shall we say to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** <sup>32</sup> He who **did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all,** how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against **God's elect?** It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised— who is **at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.**

**Eph 5:25-27** Husbands, love your wives, as **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,** <sup>26</sup> that he might **sanctify her,** having **cleansed her** by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, **without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.**

**1Cor 15:3-5** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was **buried,** that he was **raised on the third day** in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

**2Cor 5:14-15** For the **love of Christ controls us,** because we have concluded this: that **one has died for all, therefore all have died;** <sup>15</sup> and **he died for all,** that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for **him who for their sake died and was raised.**<sup>23</sup>

**Heb 2:14-18** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and **deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.** <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the **offspring of Abraham.** <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made **like his brothers** in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make **propitiation for the sins of the people.** <sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

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<sup>23</sup> Look for an exegesis of [2 Corinthians 5:14-15](#) in “[Examination of Unlimited Atonement texts.](#)”

**Heb 7:23-27** The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,<sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to **save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him**, since he always lives to make **intercession for them**.<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a **high priest**, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.<sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since **he did this once for all when he offered up himself**.

**Heb 9:11-12** But when **Christ appeared as a high priest** of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)<sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood**, thus **securing an eternal redemption**.

**Heb 9:15** Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those **who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance**, since a **death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions** committed under the first covenant.

**Heb 9:24-28** For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to **appear in the presence of God on our behalf**.<sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,<sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has **appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin** by the sacrifice of himself.<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,<sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been **offered once to bear the sins of many**, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to **save those who are eagerly waiting for him**.

**Tit 2:11-14** For the **grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people**<sup>24</sup>,<sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,<sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of **our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**,<sup>14</sup> who **gave himself for us**<sup>25</sup> to **redeem us** from all lawlessness and to **purify for himself a people for his own possession** who are zealous for good works.

**1Jn 4:9-10** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that **God sent his only Son** into the world, so that **we might live through him**.<sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we have loved God but that **he loved us** and sent his Son to be the **propitiation for our sins**.

**1Pet 3:18** For Christ also **suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous**, that he might **bring us**<sup>26</sup> **to God**, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,<sup>19</sup> in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,<sup>20</sup> because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.

**Rev 5:9-10** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for **you were slain**, and by your blood **you ransomed people for God** from every **tribe and language and people and nation**,<sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

**Rev 13:7-8** Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,<sup>8</sup> and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written **before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain**.

### *Jesus intercedes only for His own*

**Rom 8:34** Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is **interceding for us**.

**Heb 7:23-27** The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,<sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to **save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him**, since **he always lives to make intercession for them**.<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a **high priest**, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted

<sup>24</sup> See "1 Timothy 2:1-6 & Titus 2:11" in "[Examination of Unlimited Atonement texts.](#)"

<sup>25</sup> The recipients were fellow believers, Tit 1:1-4.

<sup>26</sup> The recipients were the "elect exiles," 1Pet 1:1.



above the heavens.<sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since **he did this once for all when he offered up himself.**

**Heb 9:24-28** For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to **appear in the presence of God on our behalf.**<sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,<sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has **appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,<sup>28</sup> so **Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many,** will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

**1Tim 2:5-6** For there is one God, and there is one **mediator between God and men,** the man Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.<sup>27</sup>

**1Jn 2:1-6** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an **advocate with the Father,** Jesus Christ the righteous.<sup>2</sup> He is the **propitiation for our sins,** and not for ours only but **also for the sins of the whole world.**<sup>28 3</sup> And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.<sup>4</sup> Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,<sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:<sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

*The atonement saves and not merely makes salvation a possibility*

**Mt 1:21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for **he will save his people from their sins.**

**Lk 19:10** For the Son of Man came to seek and to **save the lost.**"

**Rom 3:21-26** But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—<sup>22</sup> the **righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.** For there is no distinction:<sup>23</sup> for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> and are **justified by his grace as a gift,** through the **redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**<sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a **propitiation by his blood,** to be **received by faith.** This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had **passed over former sins.**<sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the **justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

**Rom 4:22-25** That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."<sup>23</sup> But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone,<sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,<sup>25</sup> who was **delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.**

**Rom 5:9-10** Since, therefore, **we have now been justified by his blood,** much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.<sup>10</sup> For if while we were **enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,** much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be **saved by his life.**

**Rom 6:5-11** For if we have been **united with him in a death** like his, we shall certainly be **united with him in a resurrection** like his.<sup>6</sup> We know that our **old self was crucified** with him in order that the **body of sin might be brought to nothing,** so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.<sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin.<sup>8</sup> Now if **we have died with Christ,** we believe that **we will also live with him.**<sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.<sup>10</sup> For the **death he died he died to sin, once for all,** but the **life he lives he lives to God.**<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Rom 8:28-30** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for **those who are called according to his purpose.**<sup>29</sup> For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.<sup>30</sup> And those whom he **predestined** he also **called,** and those whom he called he also **justified,** and those whom he justified he also **glorified.**

**2Cor 5:21** For our sake he **made him to be sin** who knew no sin, so that in him **we might become the righteousness of God.**

<sup>27</sup> See "1 Timothy 2:1-6 & Titus 2:11" in "[Examination of Unlimited Atonement texts.](#)"

<sup>28</sup> See "1 John 2:1-2" in "[Examination of Unlimited Atonement texts.](#)"

**1Tim 1:15** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**, of whom I am the foremost.

**Heb 7:23-28** The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,<sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is **able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him**, since he always lives to **make intercession for them**.<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.<sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since **he did this once for all when he offered up himself**.<sup>28</sup> For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints **a Son who has been made perfect forever**.

**Heb 9:11-15** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)<sup>12</sup> he **entered once for all into the holy places**, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption**.<sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh,<sup>14</sup> how much more will the **blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God**, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.<sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the **mediator of a new covenant**, so that **those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance**, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

*Salvation is not universal, not everyone will be saved<sup>29</sup>*

**1Ch 17:20-21** There is none like you, O LORD, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.<sup>21</sup> And who is like your people Israel, the **one nation on earth whom God went to redeem** to be his people, making for yourself a name for great and awesome things, in driving out nations before your people whom you redeemed from Egypt?

**Isa 53:10-11** Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an **offering for guilt**, he shall **see his offspring**; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.<sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, **make many to be accounted righteous**, and he shall **bear their iniquities**.

**Mt 1:21** She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for **he will save his people from their sins**.

**Mt 22:14** For **many are called, but few are chosen**.<sup>30</sup>

**Jn 6:37-40** All that the **Father gives me will come to me**, and whoever comes to me **I will never cast out**.<sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.<sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day.<sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that **everyone who looks on the Son** and believes in him should have **eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day."

**Jn 10:3-4** To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he **calls his own sheep by name** and leads them out.<sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the **sheep follow him, for they know his voice**.

**Jn 10:11** I am the good shepherd. The **good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep**.

**Acts 20:28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the **flock**, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the **church of God, which he obtained with his own blood**.

**Eph 5:25-27** Husbands, love your wives, as **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**,<sup>26</sup> that he might **sanctify her**, having **cleansed her** by the washing of water with the word,<sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, **without spot or wrinkle or any such thing**, that she might be **holy and without blemish**.

**Heb 9:15** Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those **who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance**, since a **death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions** committed under the first covenant.

<sup>29</sup> See further [God is sovereign over the reprobate](#), [God gives the reprobate blind eyes, deaf ears and hardened hearts](#)

<sup>30</sup> The Greek word for 'chosen' is ἐκλεκτοί, the plural of ἐκλεκτός (G1588) which is also used in Col 3:12, 1 Pet 1:1, Rev 17:14.

**1Pet 2:7-9** So the **honor is for you who believe**, but for **those who do not believe**, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,”<sup>8</sup> and “A **stone of stumbling**, and a **rock of offense**.” They stumble because they **disobey the word, as they were destined to do**.<sup>9</sup> But you are a **chosen race**, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a **people for his own possession**, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

### The existence of eternal punishment

**Dan 12:2** And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to **shame and everlasting contempt**.

**Mt 3:12** His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will **burn with unquenchable fire**.<sup>31</sup>

**Mt 5:22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be **liable to the hell of fire**.

**Mt 10:28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather **fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell**.

**Mt 18:8** And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be **thrown into the eternal fire**.

**Mt 23:33** You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being **sentenced to hell**?

**Mt 25:41-46** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, **you cursed, into the eternal fire** prepared for the devil and his angels.’<sup>42</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,<sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’<sup>44</sup> Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’<sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’<sup>46</sup> And these will go away into **eternal punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life.”

**Jn 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word** and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He **does not come into judgment**, but has passed from death to life.

**2Thess 1:5-10** This is evidence of the **righteous judgment of God**, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—<sup>6</sup> since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you,<sup>7</sup> and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord **Jesus is revealed from heaven** with his mighty angels<sup>8</sup> in **flaming fire, inflicting vengeance** on those who do not know God and on those who **do not obey the gospel** of our Lord Jesus.<sup>9</sup> They will **suffer the punishment of eternal destruction**, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,<sup>10</sup> when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

**2Pet 2:17** These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the **gloom of utter darkness has been reserved**.

**Jude 6-7** And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has **kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness** until the judgment of the great day—<sup>7</sup> just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a **punishment of eternal fire**.

**Jude 12-13** These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;<sup>13</sup> wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the **gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever**.

**Rev 14:11** And the **smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever**, and they have **no rest, day or night**, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.”

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<sup>31</sup> C.f. Mk 9:43; Lk 3:17

**Rev 20:9-10** And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,<sup>10</sup> and the **devil** who had deceived them was thrown into the **lake of fire** and sulfur where the **beast** and the **false prophet** were, and they will be **tormented day and night forever and ever**.

**Rev 20:15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was **thrown into the lake of fire**.

### Repentance and faith are necessary for salvation<sup>32</sup>

**Mk 1:14-15** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel**."

**Lk 13:3,5** No, I tell you; but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish**.

**Jn 3:16-18** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him** should not perish but have eternal life.<sup>17</sup> For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him <sup>18</sup> **Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**

**Jn 3:36** Whoever **believes in the Son has eternal life**; whoever **does not obey the Son shall not see life**, but the **wrath of God remains on him**.

**Acts 3:19-21** **Repent** therefore, and turn back, that your **sins may be blotted out**,<sup>20</sup> that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus,<sup>21</sup> whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

**Acts 11:18** When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted **repentance that leads to life**."

**Acts 20:18-21** And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,<sup>19</sup> serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;<sup>20</sup> how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,<sup>21</sup> testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of **repentance toward God** and of **faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**.

**Rom 10:8-10** But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim);<sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that **Jesus is Lord** and **believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, **you will be saved**.<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

**Eph 2:8-9** For by **grace** you have been **saved through faith**. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,<sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

### Reasons for the Cross other than the atonement

**Col 2:11-15** In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,<sup>12</sup> having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.<sup>13</sup> And you, who **were dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive** together with him, having **forgiven us** all our trespasses,<sup>14</sup> by **canceling the record of debt** that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.<sup>15</sup> He **disarmed the rulers and authorities** and put them to **open shame**, by **triumphing over them** in him.

**Rom 14:9** For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be **Lord both of the dead and of the living**.

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<sup>32</sup> And they are provided by God thanks to the atonement of Christ ([God grants repentance, faith, grace to the sinner](#))



## Examination of Unlimited Atonement texts

### John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the **sin of the world!**"

This verse is used to prove that the Lamb of God died for every single human being. Is that what is being said by John the Baptist?

If this is what is being said then the only option available is Universalism which is not biblical and Arminians do not accept. Why do I say that? It is because of the way that the work of the Lamb for the "world" is described. He is to take away its sin.

How does the Lord Christ do that for every single human being? The expected answer is that for this to be effected we must believe, that is well and true (Jn 1:11-12). As Calvinists we believe that both faith and repentance, the conditions of salvation are granted to us by God based on Christ's atoning death (Eph 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; 2Tim 2:24-26). Unbelief is a sin and that is a sin for which Christ died (Jn 16:8-9; Heb 3:12; Rev 21:8). But if Christ takes away the sin of every single human being, then that should mean that everyone's sins has been forgiven and therefore hell should be empty. But that is not usually what our Arminian brethren believe. We go back to Owen's argument. If unbelief a sin did Christ die for it or not?

How has Christ according to Arminians taken away the sin of the world? Is this something that is a possibility based on conditions dependent on man? That does not seem to be what John the Baptist is saying. He says straightforwardly that He is to take away the sin of the world. He will not try, but He certainly will do. This is the purpose of His coming in the flesh. 1Jn 3:5 uses a similar expression.

Now we are left with a problem if we understand the word world to mean all people without exception because that would lead to Universalism which is rejected by Scripture by the fact that there still remains punishment for sin (e.g. Matt 3:12; 25:46; Dan 12:2; Jude 1:12-13; Rev 14:11). It is unreasonable to think that the word means everyone without exception. It simply means humanity in general which in Jewish thought was composed of Jews and Gentiles. This is relevant to the situation as the Jews thought that the Messiah was Israel's Messiah alone and He would come for her alone, not for the nations. Therefore, John by using the word "world" goes against their idea of the exclusivity placed upon the Messiah's work.

What John is saying is thus that Christ, the Lamb of God foretold (Gen 22:14) and typified through the sacrifice is not only the atoning sacrifices for Jews, but also for Gentiles. He is the atoning sacrifice for the whole world.

There is no reason to think that the extent of the atonement is the all people everywhere without exception when the purpose of the atonement is limited in scope.

It is perfectly fine to say that the Lord Christ died for the whole world if by that we mean that He is the only atoning sacrifice available and He died for people from everywhere under heaven. The habitable world is described in terms of tribes, peoples, languages and nations yet at the same time it is also limited by the fact that certain people were redeemed by the Lamb's blood.

The use of the word "world" is varied and that especially in John. It is used 77 times in the Johannine writings and its meaning depends on the context as does the meaning of every word.

Check the following verses which demonstrate the various uses of the word κόσμος: Jn 1:9-10; 7:4, 7; 8:26; 12:19, 31; 14:17, 19, 27; 15:18-19; 16:20; 17:6, 9, 16; 18:20, 36, etc..

That the word world when referring to humans simply means people without distinction rather than exception is seen from Lk 2:1; Jn 12:19; 14:17; Acts 19:27; Rom 1:8; Col 1:6; Rev 12:9, 13:3, 7-8.

Therefore I conclude that this verse simply teaches that the Lamb of God was slain to take the sin of all kinds of people from the world. To take the sin of the world, as in take the sin of certain people from every tribe, language, people and nation, and not only Jews.

#### Commentaries

Here is what the **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says:

- **John 1:29 The next day.** This phrase probably refers to the day after John's response to the Jerusalem delegation. It also initiates a sequence of days (v. 43; 2:1) that culminated in the miracle at Cana (2:1–11). **the Lamb of God.** The use of a lamb for sacrifice was very familiar to Jews. A lamb was used as a sacrifice during Passover (Ex. 12:1–36); a lamb was led to the slaughter in the prophecies of Isaiah (Isa. 53:7); a lamb was offered in the daily sacrifices of Israel (Lev. 14:12–21; cf. Heb. 10:5–7). John the Baptist used this expression as a reference to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to atone for the sins of the world, a theme which John the apostle carries throughout his writings (John 19:36; cf. Rev. 5:1–6; 7:17; 17:14) and that appears in other NT writings (e.g., 1 Pet. 1:19). **sin of the world!** See note on John 1:9; cf. 3:16; 6:33, 51. In this context "world" has the connotation of humanity in general, not specifically every person. The use of the singular "sin" in conjunction with "of the world" indicates that Jesus' sacrifice for sin potentially reaches all human beings without distinction (cf. 1 John 2:2). John makes clear, however, that its efficacious effect is only for those who receive Christ (John 1:11–12). For discussion of the relation of Christ's death to the world, see note on 2 Cor. 5:19.

The following is said by **John Gill**:<sup>33</sup>

- **and saith, behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world:** he calls him a "lamb", either with respect to any lamb in common, for his harmlessness and innocence; for his meekness and humility; for his patience; and for his usefulness, both for food and clothing, in a spiritual sense; as well as for his being to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people: or else with respect to the lambs that were offered in sacrifice, under the legal dispensation; and that either to the passover lamb, or rather to the lambs of the daily sacrifice, that were offered morning and evening; since the account of them best agrees with what is said of this Lamb of God, who was slain in type, in the morning of the world, or from the foundation of the world; and actually in the evening of the world, or in the end of it; and who has a continued virtue to take away the sins of his people, from the beginning, to the end of the world; and their sins, both of the day and night, or which are committed every day: for as they are daily committed, there is need of the daily application of the blood and sacrifice of Christ, to remove them; or of continual looking unto him by faith, whose blood has a continual virtue, to cleanse from all sin: the Jewish doctors say {d}, that
- "the morning daily sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities done in the night; and the evening sacrifice made atonement for the iniquities that were by day:"
- and in various things they were typical of Christ, as that they were lambs of the first year, which may denote the weakness of the human nature of Christ, which had all the sinless infirmities of it; they, were also without spot, signifying the purity of Christ's human nature, who was holy and harmless, a lamb without spot and blemish; these were offered as a sacrifice, and for the children of Israel only, as Christ has given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God, both in soul and body, for the sins of the mystical Israel of God, the Israel whom God has chosen for himself, whether Jews or Gentiles; for Christ is the propitiation for the sins of both: and these were offered daily, morning and evening; and though Christ was but once offered, otherwise he must have often suffered; yet as he has by one offering put away sin for ever, so there is a perpetual virtue in his sacrifice to take it away, and there is a constant application of it for that purpose; to which may be added, that these lambs were offered with fine flour, oil and wine, for a sweet savour to the Lord; denoting the acceptableness of the sacrifice of Christ to his Father, to whom it is for a sweet smelling savour, Eph 5:2. And Christ is styled the Lamb "of God", in allusion to the same, whom the Cabalistic Jews {e} call the secret of the mystery, and כבשי רחמנא, "the Lambs of God"; because God has a special property in him; he is his own Son; and because he is of his providing and appointing, as a sacrifice for sin, and is acceptable to him as such; and to distinguish him from all other lambs; and to give him the

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<sup>33</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

preference, since he does that which they could not do, "taketh away the sin of the world": by the "sin of the world", is not meant the sin, or sins of every individual person in the world; for some die in their sins, and their sins go before hand to judgment, and they go into everlasting punishment for them; which could not be, if Christ took them away: rather, the sin which is common to the whole world, namely: original sin; but then it must be observed, that this is not the only sin Christ takes away; for he also takes away actual sins; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read in the plural, "the sins of the world"; and also that this he takes away, only with respect the elect; wherefore they are the persons intended by the world, as in Joh 6:33, whose sin, or sins, Christ takes away: and a peculiar regard seems to be had to the elect among the Gentiles, who are called the world, in distinction from the Jews, as in Joh 3:16, and the rather, since the lambs of the daily sacrifice, to which the allusion is, were only offered for the sins of the Jews: but John here signifies, that the Lamb of God he pointed at, and which was the antitype of these lambs, not only took away the sins of God's people among the Jews, but the sins of such of them also as were among the Gentiles; and this seems to me to be the true sense of the passage. The phrase "taking away sin", signifies a taking it up, as Christ did; he took it voluntarily upon himself, and became responsible to divine justice for it; and also a bearing and carrying it, for taking it upon himself, he bore it in his own body on the tree, and carried it away, as the scape goat did under the law; and so likewise a taking it quite away: Christ has removed it as far as the east is from the west, out of sight, so as never to be seen any more; he has destroyed, abolished, and made an utter end of it: and this is expressed in the present tense, "taketh away": to denote the continued virtue of Christ's sacrifice to take away sin, and the constant efficacy of his blood to cleanse from it, and the daily application of it to the consciences of his people; and which is owing to the dignity of his person, as the Son of God; and to his continual and powerful mediation and intercession: this must be a great relief to minds afflicted with the continual ebullitions of sin, which is taken away by the Lamb of God, as fast as it rises; and who, for that purpose, are called to "behold", and wonder at, the love and grace of Christ, in taking up, bearing, and taking away sin; and to look to him by faith continually, for everlasting salvation; and love him, and give him the honour of it, and glorify him for it.

I think it is also helpful to note **Mathew Henry's** words concerning John 1:29:<sup>34</sup>

- I. Here is his testimony to Christ on the first day that he saw him coming from the wilderness; and here four things are witnessed by him concerning Christ, when he had him before his eyes:--
- 1. That he is the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*, v. 29. Let us learn here,
- (1.) That Jesus Christ is the *Lamb of God*, which bespeaks him the great sacrifice, by which atonement is made for sin, and man reconciled to God. Of all the legal sacrifices he chooses to allude to the *lambs* that were offered, not only because a lamb is an emblem of meekness, and Christ must be led as a *lamb to the slaughter* (Isa. liii. 7), but with a special reference, [1.] To the *daily sacrifice*, which was offered every morning and evening continually, and that was always a lamb (Exod. xxix. 38), which was a type of Christ, as the everlasting propitiation, whose blood continually speaks. [2.] To the paschal lamb, the blood of which, being sprinkled upon the door-posts, secured the Israelites from the stroke of the destroying angel. Christ is *our passover*, 1 Cor. v. 7. He is the *Lamb of God*; he is appointed by *him* (Rom. iii. 25), he was devoted to him (ch. xvii. 19), and he was accepted with him; in him he was well pleased. The lot which fell on the goat that was to be offered for a sin-offering was called the *Lord's lot* (Lev 16:8; Lev 16:9); so Christ, who was to make atonement for sin, is called the *Lamb of God*.
- (2.) That Jesus Christ, as the *Lamb of God*, *takes away the sin of the world*. This was his undertaking; he appeared, to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, Heb. ix. 26. John Baptist had called people to repent of their sins, in order to the remission of them. Now here he shows how and by whom that remission was to be expected, what ground of hope we have that our sins shall be pardoned upon our repentance, though our repentance makes no satisfaction for them. This ground of hope we have--Jesus Christ is *the Lamb of God*. [1.] *He takes away sin*. He, being Mediator between God and man, takes away that which is, above any thing, offensive to the *holiness* of God, and destructive to the *happiness* of man. He came, *First*, To take away the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, to vacate the judgment, and reverse the attainder, which mankind lay under, by an act of indemnity, of which all penitent obedient believers may claim the benefit. *Secondly*, To

<sup>34</sup> Matthew Henry, Whole Bible Commentary on John 1:29-36. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

take away the power of sin by the Spirit of his grace, so that it shall not have dominion, Rom. vi. 14. Christ, as the Lamb of God, washes us from our sins in his own blood; that is, he both *justifies* and *sanctifies* us: he *takes away sin*. He is *ho airon* --he is taking away the sin of the world, which denotes it not a single but a continued act; it is his constant work and office to take away sin, which is such a *work of time* that it will never be completed till time shall be no more. He is always *taking away sin*, by the continual intercession of his blood in heaven, and the continual influence of his grace on earth. [2.] He takes away the *sin of the world*; purchases pardon for all those that repent, and believe the gospel, of what country, nation, or language, soever they be. The legal sacrifices had reference only to the sins of Israel, to make atonement for them; but the Lamb of God was offered to be a propitiation for the *sin of the whole world*; see 1 John ii. 2. This is encouraging to our faith; if Christ takes away the sin of the world, then why not my sin? Christ levelled his force at the main body of sin's army, struck at the root, and aimed at the overthrow, of that *wickedness* which the *whole world lay in*. God was in him reconciling the world to himself. [3.] He does this by *taking it upon himself*. He is the Lamb of God, that *bears the sin of the world*; so the margin reads it. He bore sin *for us*, and so bears it *from us*; *he bore the sin of many*, as the scape-goat had the sins of Israel put upon his head, Lev. xvi. 21. God could have taken away the sin by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world; but he has found out a way of abolishing the sin, and yet sparing the sinner, by making his Son *sin for us*.

- (3.) That it is our duty, with an eye of faith, to *behold* the Lamb of God thus taking away the *sin of the world*. See him taking away sin, and let that increase our hatred of sin, and resolutions against it. Let not us hold that fast which the Lamb of God came to take away: for Christ will either take our sins away or take us away. Let it increase our love to Christ, *who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*, Rev. i. 5. Whatever God is pleased to take away from us, if withal he take away our sins, we have reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain.

### John 3:14-16

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,<sup>15</sup> that **whoever believes in him** may have eternal life.”<sup>16</sup> **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him** should not perish but have eternal life.**

Since the word world is used in this verse, it is therefore claimed that this speaks of all humans without exception. Every last one of them. But not only that, our Arminian brethren often like to quote and especially emphasize the KJV “whosoever will.”

Again, as with John 1:29 and the word there, only the context can determine the meaning of the word. As with other atonement-related texts, the non-Calvinists assume that world means “every and all human beings” apriori. They should also exegetically prove why they think the word means all people without exception and not merely assume it. But since this verse is raised against the doctrine of Definite Redemption, we will take the burden of proof.

This verse finds itself in the midst of the conversation between the Lord Jesus and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews (Jn 3:1). The conversation is about the necessity of the new birth.

The Lord points Nicodemus back to the incident with the Israelites in the wilderness, their sin and their redemption through the means of looking at the bronze serpent (Num 21:4-9). There is similarity between that incident and what the Lord is going to do. Just like the serpent was lifted up on a pole, so likewise the Son of Man will be lifted up on the cross (Jn 12:32, 34). The reception of the redemption by the serpent was through looking up to it, so likewise the reception of forgiveness of sins is by looking with the eyes of faith upon the crucified Son of Man.

The purpose of Him being lifted up is so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. For this purpose did God plan the cross, so that redemption will be found by those who look upon the Son.

Now we come to the verse under question. It begins with “For God so loved the world.” This does not indicate how much God loved the world, rather the way in which God loved the world. It was by giving His only Son that God demonstrated His love to the world.

Then we come to the word under question: world. The first thing we need must notice is the connection that is there between God's love and the giving of His Son.

We need to ask if this speaks of God's general or redemptive love. I believe it speaks not of God's general love for all men (Lk 6:35; Ps 145:9), but of His specific and redemptive love. The reason that I believe it is so is because the verse speaks of our redemption. Well then, the Arminian says that this admission makes the verse more stronger, indeed, "God desires all men to be saved" (1Tim 2:4; see answer below).

Here are a few problems. The many times that I've heard Jn 3:16 in debates and discussions, it seems to me that the Arminian does not have the concept that God actually in a way hates sinners. Arminianism is based on the belief that God loves all men and desires the salvation of all people without exception.

Well, what do we do for example with Ps 5:5-6; 10:5; Lev 20:23? Do we just ignore them? Do these verses have any meaning or relevance? Or do we say, "Oh that is Old Testament, now that Jesus has come we listen to Him telling us 'God so loved the world'"? The fact is that God says that He hates evildoers. While we may debate how God hates and what does it mean for God to hate, one thing is certain: it demonstrates that God does not love everybody equally. The glorious, gracious and redemptive love of God is restricted in Christ and to those who are His (Rom 8:39).

Therefore it is difficult to say that God loves those whom His soul hates in such a way that He would give His only Son in their place. This puts some restriction on the word "world." It cannot mean all people without exception.

Furthermore, as with Jn 1:29 the idea is still within the minds of the Jews that the Messiah is for them alone, but not only that but also that God's love is for them alone. They knew as they were the Old Covenant people of God that they were loved by God (Deut 7:7-8), but no such certainty or idea existed for the Gentiles. Indeed, they were hoping that the Messiah would destroy their Gentile enemies so that they would be the world leaders. Therefore, what the Lord says comes as a shock to Nicodemus. What the Lord says to Nicodemus is that the redemptive love of God is not only extended to Israel, but also to the world – to those outside of Israel, to humanity in general.

But the meaning of the word is further expanded by understanding the rest of the passage.

God gave His Son to demonstrate His love, but there was also a purpose in all of this. Again we come to the ἵνα purpose clause. The hina clause is translated with "that." It may also be translated with "in order that" or "so that." There is a clear and definite purpose for the giving of the spotless Son. Is God going to fail in that which He has purposed? If the world means "every single human being" how has God accomplished His purpose?

Then we come to the phrase that Arminians especially love to emphasize: that whosoever believeth in him. It is said that the word from the KJV whosoever proves that people have free will and are able to God from their own free will. A lot emotions go high and voices are raised when the word is spoken, but is that what it means? It is ironic that they don't take a look at the Greek. There is not a hint of an idea of people have the free will to choose God or the like.

The Greek under whosoever is πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων which literally translated means "**all the believing**" or "**everyone believing**." So much for the idea that everyone has free will to believe in God. Rather than being a proof-text for Universal Atonement, this verse supports Limited Atonement. The verse states that God loved the world by giving His Son so that "all the believing" should not perish.

This clarifies our understanding of the word world in the present context. God's purpose was to God eternal life to "all the believing", how does it make any sense to say that the motivation for His giving (16a) was His love for all people without exception, if His purpose is limited to "all the believing?"

The desire of God	"For God so loved the world
The action springing forth from His desire	that he gave his only Son
The purpose of the action	that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Therefore I believe that the word world here means the world of believers, i.e. the elect. Both from among the Jews and the Gentiles.

Arthur Pink writes:

That "the world" in John 3:16 refers to the world of believers (God's elect) in distinct contradistinction from the world of the ungodly (2 Pet. 2:5) is established by a comparison of the other passages which speak of God's love. "God commendeth His love toward us"—the saints, Romans 5:8. "Whom the Lord loveth He



chasteneth"—every son, Hebrews 12:6. "We love Him, because He first loved US"—believers, 1 John 4:19. The wicked God "pities" (see Matthew 18:33). Unto the unthankful and evil God is "kind" (see Luke 6:35). The vessels of wrath He endures "with much long-suffering" (see Romans. 9:22). But "His own" God "loves"!<sup>35</sup>

**Verse 17** supports and does not contradict what I have tried to argue for. God's purpose in sending the Son in to the world (the creation, the planet) was not to condemn the world (the elect, the believing among Jews and Gentiles), but that the same group be saved.

Do not think that the word might communicates something about possibility of God not accomplishing His purpose. In fact the word is not found in the Greek text, but it is supplied so that the sentence would make sense. The NET chooses a stronger word: but that the world should be saved through him.

**Verse 18:** Why would God plan the salvation of those who are already condemned for not believing? (see Reprobation in section 3 of chapter 3)

This verse does not deny Limited Atonement, rather it supports it.

An objection may be raised that says how we are to evangelize if we do not tell people that Christ died for them or God loves them?

Well, maybe we should review the way we do evangelism with what the Bible says. I have not yet found a place where the Apostles tell unbelievers that God loves them or Christ died for them. Or they in such a way preach to the lost. The call is always to repent and believe (Acts 20:21). They did not come up to people and tell them: God loves you, Jesus died on the cross for you and has a plan for your life. Rather their call was always to repent and believe the Gospel.

They did indeed speak of the Lord's atoning death, but not in such a direct way as stated above. The call of the Gospel is that God demonstrated His infinite love for all who repent and believe (which are gifts from Him), in giving His Son to die on their behalf for their sins, so that they would receive eternal life and forgiveness. Everyone who goes to Christ as Savior will not find Himself anything less than a perfect Savior (Jn 6:37-40).

### John's Commentary

1Jn 4:7-10 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

After writing the above about John 3:16 I came across an article written by Dr. James White wherein he made connection between John 3:16 and 1Jn 4:7-10 which seems to be John's commentary on the words of John 3:16.

That there is a connection between the two may be demonstrated thus:

1 John 4:9-10	John 3:16
In this the love of God was made manifest among us	For God so loved the world
that God sent his only Son into the world	that he gave his only Son
	that whoever believes in him
	should not perish
so that we might live through him.	but have eternal life.
sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins	that he gave his only Son

John encourages his believing audience to love each other and he bases that in the fact that God is love and love is from Him. The fact that we love as the Lord Jesus has loved us (Jn 13:34; 15:12), demonstrates that we have been born of God, because true and godly love is from God.

The way that we experienced God's love is by the fact that God sent His Son so that we might live through the Son. In John 3:16 the same idea is conveyed. God loved us and sent His Son so that we might have eternal life and not perish.

<sup>35</sup> A.W. Pink - The Sovereignty of God (Bridge-Logos, 2008), page 292.

God's love is first, not our love. It is His amazing and redemptive love which was given to those who do not deserve it. God loved us and sent His Son into the world to the propitiation for our sins.

There is obviously connection between 1Jn 4:10 and Jn 3:16. In both is the idea present of the Son being sent, of God's love and of salvation. But 1Jn 4:10 helps us understand and moreover strengthens what I have tried to argue above.

John is speaking of the believing community he is writing to. He is not speaking to all humans in the world. In fact in the previous context he uses the word "world" in a negative way and talks of "us" and "them" thereby distinguishing the believers.

God's love was manifested among us and we know that it was God's love. Why? Because He has given the Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We have spoken a lot of the idea of propitiation. Propitiation is the sacrifice that satisfies God's wrath and brings His favor. It is something definitive not conditional. Christ has either satisfied God's wrath and applies those benefits to us, or the wrath of God abides on us (Jn 3:36).

If it is true that John while writing this is commenting (giving thoughts, saying it in different words) on John 3:16, then we see that the audience here is limited to the believing. God's love, John says is demonstrated in the fact that the Son was the propitiation. The love of God that John is speaking of is not His general love, but His redemptive love that He speaks about. He says that the manifestation of this love is in the fact that Christ is the propitiation.

We have also argued on Jn 3:16 that it does not speak of a possible, but rather a definite atonement for "all the believing," thus what 1Jn 4:10 says about Christ the propitiatory sacrifice and what we have said on Jn 3:16 is consistent.

God's redemptive love is limited to those for whom He has sent the Son into the world, so that "all the believing" should be saved.

The interesting thing is that Jn 3:16 does support "Limited Atonement" since it says that "whoever believes in him will not perish," and we see in verse 18 that whoever doesn't believe is already condemned! Thus Christ couldn't have paid their ransom and they still had to pay for their sins in Hell. That would be unjust for God to punish Christ for their sins and then punish them again in the eternal lake of fire (If Christ's atonement was indeed Substitutionary, which I believe the Bible so teaches. See [The Atonement of the Lord Jesus was Penal Substitutionary/Vicarious](#)).

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- Here is the most famous summary of the gospel in the entire Bible. **For** connects to v. 15 and explains what happened to make it possible that someone can "have eternal life" (v. 15), that is, through believing in Christ. **God so loved the world** was an astounding statement in that context because the OT and other Jewish writings had spoken only of God's love for his people Israel. God's love for "the world" made it possible for "whoever" (v. 15) believes in Christ, not Jews alone, to have eternal life. God's love for the world was not mere sentiment but led to a specific action: he gave his only Son, which John elsewhere explains as sending him to earth as a man (v. 17) to suffer and die and thereby to bear the penalty for sins (see note on 1 John 2:2; cf. Rom. 3:25). On "only Son," see note on John 1:14, which contains the same Greek phrase. The purpose of giving his Son was to make God's great gift of eternal life available to anyone—to **whoever believes in him**, that is, whoever personally trusts in him (see note on 11:25). **Not perish** means not perish in eternal judgment, in contrast to having **eternal life**, the life of abundant joy and immeasurable blessing in the presence of God forever. Those who "believe in" Christ **have** that "eternal life" and already experience its blessings in this present time, not yet fully, but in some significant measure.

**John Gill** said about John 3:16:<sup>36</sup>

- For God so loved the world**,....The Persic version reads "men": but not every man in the world is here meant, or all the individuals of human nature; for all are not the objects of God's special love, which is here designed, as appears from the instance and evidence of it, the gift of his Son: nor is Christ God's gift to every one; for to whomsoever he gives his Son, he gives all things freely with him; which is not the case of every

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<sup>36</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible on John 3:16. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

man. Nor is human nature here intended, in opposition to, and distinction from, the angelic nature; for though God has showed a regard to fallen men, and not to fallen angels, and has provided a Saviour for the one, and not for the other; and Christ has assumed the nature of men, and not angels; yet not for the sake of all men, but the spiritual seed of Abraham; and besides, it will not be easily proved, that human nature is ever called the world: nor is the whole body of the chosen ones, as consisting of Jews and Gentiles, here designed; for though these are called the world, Joh 6:33; and are the objects of God's special love, and to them Christ is given, and they are brought to believe in him, and shall never perish, but shall be saved with an everlasting salvation; yet rather the Gentiles particularly, and God's elect among them, are meant; who are often called "the world", and "the whole world", and "the nations of the world", as distinct from the Jews; see Ro 11:12, compared with Mt 6:32. The Jews had the same distinction we have now, the church and the world; the former they took to themselves, and the latter they gave to all the nations around: hence we often meet with this distinction, Israel, and the nations of the world; on those words,

- ""let them bring forth their witness", that they may be justified, Isa 43:9 (say {b} the doctors) these are Israel; "or let them hear and say it is truth", these are "the nations of the world"."

And again {c},

- "the holy, blessed God said to Israel, when I judge Israel, I do not judge them as "the nations of the world":"
- and so in a multitude of places: and it should be observed, that our Lord was now discoursing with a Jewish Rabbi, and that he is opposing a commonly received notion of theirs, that when the Messiah came, the Gentiles should have no benefit or advantage by him, only the Israelites; so far should they be from it, that, according to their sense, the most dreadful judgments, calamities, and curses, should befall them; yea, hell and eternal damnation. "
- There is a place (they say {d},) the name of which is "Hadrach", Zec 9:1. This is the King Messiah, who is, ורך טח, "sharp and tender"; sharp to "the nations", and tender to "Israel"."

- And so of the "sun of righteousness", in Mal 4:2, they say {e},
- "there is healing for the Israelites in it: but the idolatrous nations shall be burnt by it."

And that {f}

- "there is mercy for Israel, but judgment for the rest of the nations."
- And on those words in Isa 21:12, "the morning cometh", and also the night, they observe {g},
- "the morning is for the righteous, and the night for the wicked; the morning is for Israel, and the night for "the nations of the world"."

And again {h},

- "in the time to come, (the times of the Messiah,) the holy, blessed God will bring "darkness" upon "the nations", and will enlighten Israel, as it is said, Isa 60:2."

Once more {i},

- "in the time to come, the holy, blessed God will bring the nations of the world, and will cast them into the midst of hell under the Israelites, as it is said, Isa 43:3."
- To which may be added that denunciation of theirs {k}
- "woe to the nations of the world, who perish, and they know not that they perish: in the time that the sanctuary was standing, the altar atoned for them; but now who shall atone for them?"
- Now, in opposition to such a notion, our Lord addresses this Jew; and it is as if he had said, you Rabbins say, that when the Messiah comes, only the Israelites, the peculiar favourites of God, shall share in the blessings that come by, and with him; and that the Gentiles shall reap no advantage by him, being hated of God, and rejected of him: but I tell you, God has so loved the Gentiles, as well as the Jews,
- **that he gave his only begotten Son**; to, and for them, as well as for the Jews; to be a covenant of the people, the Gentiles, the Saviour of them, and a sacrifice for them; a gift which is a sufficient evidence of his love to them; it being a large and comprehensive one, an irreversible and unspeakable one; no other than his own Son by nature, of the same essence, perfections, and glory with him; begotten by him in a way inconceivable and expressible by mortals; and his only begotten one; the object of his love and delight, and in whom he is ever well pleased; and yet, such is his love to the Gentiles, as well as Jews, that he has given him, in human nature, up, into the hands of men, and of justice, and to death itself:
- **that whosoever believeth in him**, whether Jew or Gentile,
- **should not perish**, but have everlasting life; [See comments on Joh 3:15].



## Romans 5:18-19<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, as **one trespass** led to **condemnation for all men**, so **one act of righteousness** leads to **justification and life for all men**.<sup>19</sup> For as by the **one man's disobedience** the many were made sinners, so by the **one man's obedience** the many will be made righteous.

This to me seems a pretty simply one, but it's going to be troublesome if people only quote verse 18 and you're not aware of verse 19 which clarifies verse 18.

Adam	Christ
One trespass led to condemnation for " <b>all</b> "	One act of righteousness leads to justification and life for " <b>all</b> "
One disobedience leads to " <b>the many</b> " made sinners	One obedience leads to the justification of " <b>the many</b> "

We see here two humanities, with their representatives. Adam as the representative of all his posterity (Rom 5:12-19, 1Cor 15:45-49). The Lord Jesus as the representative of the new in Him redeemed humanity (Rom 8:1; 1Cor 1:4, 30, etc...). It is important to note that in verse 19 the definite article is used to designate a specific group, that is, the believers before and after Christ which are called "the many."

### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- Rom. 5:18 The **one trespass** of Adam, as the covenantal head of the human race, brought condemnation and guilt to all people. In a similar way, Christ's **one act of righteousness** (either his death as such or his whole life of perfect obedience, including his death) grants righteousness and life to all who belong to him. **for all men**. Some interpreters have advocated universalism (the view that all will be saved) based on these verses. But Paul makes it plain in this context that only those who "receive" (v. 17) God's gift belong to Christ (see also 1:16–5:11, which indicates that only those who have faith will be justified). The wording "**as ... so**" shows that Paul's focus is not on the number in each group but on the *method* of either sin or righteousness being passed from the representative leader to the whole group: the first "all men" refers to all who are in Adam (every human being), while the second "all men" refers to all believers, to all who are "in Christ." On the translation "men," see note on 5:12.

The **John MacArthur ESV Study Bible** explains:

- Condemnation. See *not on v. 16*. **One act of righteousness**. Not a reference to a single event, but generally to Christ's obedience (cf. v. 19; Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38), culminating in the greatest demonstration of this obedience, death on a cross (Phil. 2:8). **Justification . . . for all men**. This cannot mean that all men will be saved; salvation is only for those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 1:16-17; 3:22, 28; 4:5, 13). Rather, like the word many in 5:15, Paul is using "all" with two different meanings for the sake of parallelism, a common practice in the Hebrew OT.

The **Reformation ESV Study Bible** explains:

- **5:18, 19** Paul returns to the main thrust of his analogy, namely that there is a parallel between Adam and Christ in that condemnation and justification are the direct fruits of their actions. On the basis of the actions of "one," "many" are constituted either sinners or righteous. Adam is the representative head as well as the physical root of all, and all sinned and fell when he sinned. In contrast, "by the one man's obedience" those whom Christ represents are "made righteous" in Him. Christ is their representative Head, as well as the spiritual root of the new humanity, for through His resurrection they are given new birth and a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3; Eph 2:1-7)

**John Gill** in his **Exposition of the Entire Bible**<sup>38</sup>:

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.calvinistcorner.com/all-men-saved.htm>

<sup>38</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible on John 3:16. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

- **Therefore as by the offence of one,....** Or by one offence, as before, the guilt of which is imputed to, and
- **[judgment came] upon all men to condemnation;** which word is used in a legal sense, and intends condemnation to eternal death, as appears from the antithesis in the text; for if "justification of life", means an adjudging to eternal life, as it certainly does, the judgment or guilt, which is unto condemnation, must design a condemnation to eternal death, the just wages of sin: and this sentence of condemnation comes upon all men, all the sons of Adam without exception, even upon the elect of God themselves; though it is not executed upon them, but on their surety, whereby they are delivered from it:
- **even so by the righteousness of one, [the free gift] came upon all men to justification of life;** the righteousness of Christ being freely imputed without works, as it is to all the men that belong to the second Adam, to all his seed and offspring, is their justification of life, or what adjudges and entitles them to eternal life. The sentence of justification was conceived in the mind of God from eternity, when his elect were ordained unto eternal life, on the foot of his Son's righteousness; this passed on Christ at his resurrection from the dead, and on all his people as considered in him, when they, in consequence of it, were quickened together with him; and this passes upon the conscience of a sinner at believing, when he may, as he should, reckon himself alive unto God, and is what gives him a right and title to everlasting life and glory.

What **Charles H Spurgeon** had to say about Romans 5:17-18<sup>39</sup>

- All who are in Christ are justified by Christ, just as all who were in Adam were lost and condemned in Adam. The "alls" are not equal in extent —equal as far as the person goes in whom the "alls" were found. And this is our hope — that we, being in Christ are justified because of his righteousness.

## Romans 11:32

*For God has **consigned all to disobedience**, that he may have **mercy on all**.*

This is a verse I've seen used by Universalists and obviously they take the **all's** to mean the whole human race without exception. But is this really what the verse teaches in the section of Romans known as *God's Sovereign Choice* (Rom 9-11)?

It can be reasonably seen that **all** here refers to Jews and Gentiles, but not every single one of them that has lived or will live. The earlier chapters (9-11) very well emphasize God's sovereignty in salvation. God has mercy on whom He wills (Rom 9:15), mercy only comes from God and it's entirely on depended God (Rom 9:16). It seems then very inconsistent for us to take the **all** without exception rather than **all without distinction**.

## Commentaries

A brief comment is made by the **ESV Study Bible**:

- **Rom. 11:32** The word **all** here refers to Jews and Gentiles (all without *distinction*, not all without exception). The sin and disobedience of both Jews and Gentiles is highlighted, to emphasize God's mercy in saving some among both Jews and Gentiles.

**John Gill** writes:<sup>40</sup>

- **For God hath concluded them all in unbelief,....** Both Jews and Gentiles, particularly God's elect among them: some think the metaphor is taken from the binding up of sheaves in bands; and that Jews and Gentiles are the sheaves, and unbelief the band, in which they are bound together; but the apostle is not speaking of their being together in unbelief, but as separate, first the Gentiles, and now the Jews: rather it seems to be taken from a prison, and Jews and Gentiles are represented as prisoners, and unbelief the prison, in which they are shut up by God: not that God is the author of unbelief, or of any other sin in men; he does not put it into them, or them into that, but finding them in unbelief, concludes them in it, or leaves them in such a state, and does not as yet however deliver out of it, or say to the prisoners, go forth: moreover, to be "concluded in unbelief", is the same as to be "concluded under sin", Ga 3:22; that is, to be thoroughly

<sup>39</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, C. H. Spurgeon's Expositions on Rom 5:17-18. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>40</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible on Romans 11:32. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

convinced of it; and to be held and bound down by such a sense of it in the conscience, as to see no way to escape deserved punishment, or to obtain salvation, but by fleeing to the mercy of God in Christ:

- **that he might have mercy upon all:** not upon all the individuals of Jews and Gentiles; for all are not concluded in, or convinced of the sin of unbelief, but only such who are eventually believers, as appears from the parallel text, Ga 3:22; and designs all God's elect among the Jews, called "their fulness", Ro 11:12; and all God's elect among the Gentiles, called "the fulness of the Gentiles", Ro 11:25; for whom he has mercy in store, and will bestow it on them; and in order to bring them to a sense of their need of it, and that he may the more illustriously display the riches of it, he leaves them for a while in a state of unbelief, and then by his Spirit thoroughly convinces them of it, and gives them faith to look to, and believe in, the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

Adam Clarke in his commentary said the following:<sup>41</sup>

- Verse 32. *For God hath concluded them all in unbelief* συνεκλεισεγαροθεος, God hath shut or locked them all up under unbelief. This refers to the guilty state of both Jews and Gentiles. They had all broken God's law-the Jews, the written law; the Gentiles, the law written in their hearts; see Rom 1:19; Rom 1:20; Rom 2:14; Rom 2:15. They are represented here as having been accused if their transgressions; tried at God's bar; found guilty on being tried; condemned to the death they had merited; remanded to prison, till the sovereign will, relative to their execution, should be announced; shut or locked up, under the jailer, unbelief; and there both continued in the same state, awaiting the execution of their sentence: but God, in his own compassion, moved by no merit in either party, caused a general pardon by the Gospel to be proclaimed to all. The Jews have refused to receive this pardon on the terms which God has proposed it, and therefore continue locked up under unbelief. The Gentiles have welcomed the offers of grace, and are delivered out of their prison. But, as the offers of mercy continue to be made to all indiscriminately, the time will come when the Jews, seeing the vast accession of the Gentile world to the kingdom of the Messiah, and the glorious privileges which they in consequence enjoy, shall also lay hold on the hope set before them, and thus become with the Gentiles one flock under one shepherd and bishop of all their souls. The same figure is used Rom 3:22; Rom 3:23. But the Scripture hath concluded συνεκλεισεν, locked up all under sin, that the promise, by faith of Christ Jesus, might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept, εφρουρουμεθα, we were guarded as in a strong hold, under the law; shut up, συγκεκλεισμενοι, locked up together unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. It is a fine and well chosen metaphor in both places, and forcibly expresses the guilty, helpless, wretched state of both Jews and Gentiles.

The following is said in the **Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible**:<sup>42</sup>

- **For God hath concluded them all in unbelief**, [ *sunekleisen* (G4788) *tous* (G3588) *pantas* (G3956) *eis* (G1519) *apeitheian* (G543)] - 'hath shut up all into unbelief' or 'disobedience:' our version, by rendering it "them all," leaves the impression (as Scholefield observes) that it is of Jews only that this is said; whereas the argument requires it to be understood of both the great divisions of mankind that are treated of in this chapter-hath shut up all (both Jew and Gentile) into unbelief.
- **That he might have mercy upon all** - the same "all" of whom he had been discoursing; that is, the Gentiles first, and after them the Jews (so Fritzsche, Tholuck, Olshausen, DeWette, Philippi, Stuart, Hodge). Certainly it is not 'all men without limitation' (as Meyer and Alford); for the apostle is not here dealing with individuals, but with those great divisions of mankind, Jew and Gentile. And what he here says is, that God's purpose was to shut up each of these divisions of men to the experience, first, of an unhumiliated, condemned state, without Christ, and then to the experience of His mercy in Christ.

This is said in **The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges**:<sup>43</sup>

- 32. For God, &c.] Lit. **For God did shut up the all together into disobedience, that He may compassionate the all.** We give this literal version, though barbarous as English, to elucidate the exact reference of the

<sup>41</sup> Adam Clarke, Commentary and Critical Notes. Taken from the bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>42</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>43</sup> Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

Greek. “*The all*” are “all the persons in question”; Gentiles and Jews alike, who by turns have occupied the position of aliens from the enjoyment of salvation. The Divine Sovereign has permitted each great class in turn thus to develop its own sin of rebellious unbelief, (“shutting them up into it,” as into a cage, or trap, into which they have leapt,) in order to the complete display of mercy, and only mercy, wholly apart from privilege or merit, in the salvation both of Gentiles and of Jews. Here again *mercy* is the emphatic idea.—“*Did shut up:*”—i.e. when He “cut off” the Jews: for this completed, as it were, the process of that development of unbelief which was to bring out into clear light the equal sovereignty of mercy in all cases.

- “*All*” must manifestly be taken here, as so often elsewhere, (see on ch. Rom 5:18,) with limitation. St Paul is contemplating not the whole race, but the whole *Church* in its two great elements—Gentile and Jewish. See Rom 2:8-9, for his distinct warning of a “judgment without mercy” on the impenitent and unbelieving, Gentiles and Jews alike.

## 1 Corinthians 15:22-23<sup>44</sup>

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.

Yes, in Adam all humanity spiritually died, through the inheritance of sin from our forefather Adam. He was the representative of humanity in the Garden. The phrase “**in Christ**” is used in **Rom 8:1** (c.f. Rom 6:11; 12:5; 16:7; 1 Cor 1:2), which states “*There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*”, the believers are the ones who are not condemned (Jn 3:18) thus those who “in Christ shall all be made alive” are those who are “in Christ.”

In v. 23 we see who will be made alive and it is clear from **1 Cor 6:14** (*And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power*, c.f. 15:52) that the believers are the ones whom God will raise up, not the reprobate.

### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- 1 Cor. 15:22 **in Adam all die**. See Rom. 5:12, 14–15, 17; Eph. 2:1, 5. **in Christ shall all be made alive**. See Rom. 5:17, 21; 6:4; Eph. 2:5–6. By divine appointment, Adam represented the whole human race that would follow him, and his sin therefore affected all human beings. Similarly, Christ represented all who would belong to him, and his obedience therefore affected all believers (see note on 1 Cor. 15:23).
- 1 Cor. 15:23 **at his coming**. When Christ returns, all his people from all time will receive resurrection bodies, never again subject to weakness, illness, aging, or death. Until that time, those who have died exist in heaven as spirits without bodies (see 2 Cor. 5:8; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 6:9). **Those who belong to Christ** demonstrates that the “all” in relation to Christ in 1 Cor. 15:22 does not imply universalism.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** sheds some light:

- **1 Cor. 15:22 all . . . all**. The two “alls” are alike only in the sense that they both apply to descendants. The second “all” applies only to believers (see Gal. 3:26, 29; 4:7; Eph. 3:6; cf. Acts 20:32; Titus 3:7) and does not imply universalism (the salvation of everyone without faith). Countless other passages clearly teach the eternal punishment of the unbelieving (e.g., Matt. 5:29; 10:28; 25:41, 46; Luke 16:23; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:15).

The **HCSB Study Bible**:

- 15:21-22 Paul presents a parallel of necessary effects. Through one man, **Adam**, death came to humanity. If this is ever to be reversed, it must be done so through like kind: a man. God has appointed just such a man: Jesus **Christ**, who is fully divine and fully human. Through His resurrection the promise of resurrection comes to a new humanity “in Christ.” The second occurrence of the word **all** refers to all those who are joined to Christ through faith.

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.calvinistcorner.com/all-men-saved.htm>

- 15:23 Jesus' resurrection precedes and makes certain the resurrection of **those who belong to Christ** at His coming.

Here is what **Johann Albrecht Bengel** said about 1 Cor 15:22:<sup>45</sup>

- 1Co 15:22. Πάντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν, *all die*) he says, *die*, not in the preterite, as for example, Rom 5:17; Rom 5:21, but in the present, in order that in the antithesis he may the more plainly speak of the resurrection, as even still future. And he says, *all*. Those who are in the highest degree wicked die in Adam; but Paul is here speaking of the godly, of whom *the first fruits*, ἀπαρχή, is Christ, and as these all die in Adam, so also shall they all be made alive in Christ. Scripture everywhere deals with believers, and treats primarily of their resurrection, 1Th 4:13-14 : and only incidentally of the resurrection of the ungodly.—ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, *in Christ*) These are the emphatic words in this clause. The resurrection of Christ being once established, the quickening of all is also established.—ζωοποιηθήσονται, *they shall be made alive*) He had said; *they die*, not, *they are put to death*; whereas now, not, *they shall revive*; but *they shall be made alive*, i.e. implying that it is not by their own power.

## 2 Corinthians 5:14-21<sup>46</sup>

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that **one has died for all**, therefore **all have died**;<sup>15</sup> **and he died for all**, that **those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised**.<sup>16</sup> From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;<sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ **God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation**.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.<sup>21</sup> For our sake **he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God**.

“Can it get plainer than this? Don’t you see that it says ‘*he died for all*.’” Well, we could take the “all’s” there to mean “every individual who has ever lived on this planet”, but we will lose biblically consistency.

This is going to be a little bit lengthy and that because I decided that we must deal with the clear context of the passage about Christ's death for a specific people.

The context speaks of the ministry of reconciliation which we as believers and evangelists have received to share with the world. We are to call everyone to repentance and faith in Christ.

In **verse 14** Paul says that the love of Christ controls, constrains and compels us based on the fact that Christ has died for all. But we must dig deeper to understand the meaning of the word “all” in this context.

We must illustrate what verses 14 and 15 are saying in a table:

The action	The Result
One has died for all	All have died
He died for all	“...no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised”

The death of Christ was also the death of all. How can this be if this speaks of all men without exception? For all men were already dead in sin and trespasses because of Adam (Eph 2:1-3), but this speaks of Christ substitutionary death. This is seen from the fact that Paul speaks of us being united to Christ in His death. See for example Gal 2:20 –

I have been **crucified with Christ**. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and **gave himself for me**.

<sup>45</sup> Johann Albrecht Bengel, Gnomon of the New Testament on 1 Cor 15:22. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See “[Resources](#).”

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.calvinistcorner.com/all-men-saved.htm>



Who else but the elect can say these words? Can any reprobate truly say that they were united with Christ in His death and they frustrated the purpose of His death? Because from Gal 2:20 it is clear that the result from being united with Christ in His death is to live with and for Him. So much so that Paul says that He no longer lives, because he considers himself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ (Rom 6:11). When the Lord Christ died on the cross for our sin, we also died with Him. We were united with Him in His death and that is the assurance to Paul in Rom 6:5 that we also will be united with Him in the resurrection.

Now we go back to 2 Corinthians, there the all are all who are in Him. All who are in the covenant which the Christ mediates. All whom He represents, all the elect. This is not the only time that Paul uses such a language, just take a look at a passage from 1 Corinthians 15 –

1Cor 15:22-23 For as **in Adam** all die, so also **in Christ** shall all be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who **belong to Christ**.

It is clear what Paul is saying here. No need to go crazy about the “all’s” because they are self-explanatory. What Paul is saying is clear. What he says is that in Adam all humanity which was represented by him in the Garden died (Rom 5:12ff). But in Christ all shall be made alive. There is not a single reason to believe that Paul had here in mind any other than the elect. This is seen from the those who will be resurrected. First of all, Christ was raised, but when He comes, at His Parousia, those who belong to Him. Not everyone who has ever lived. But specifically those who belong to Him, who have His Spirit in them (Rom 8:9), i.e. the elect, the Christians. They are the “all” who “shall be made alive” of verse 22. See 1 Corinthians 15:22-23, 'in Christ shall all be made alive'

So likewise in 2 Corinthians 5 Paul uses the same language. He does not mean every single human being, but all who are under the federal headship of Christ the Lord.

When He died, we died with Him, united to Him so that we may share in His resurrection and life (Gal 2:20: Rom 6:3, 8; Col 2:20; 3:3; 2Tim 2:11).

**Verse 15** gives us the purpose of His death. This is seen from the use of the ἵνα purpose clause. The ἵνα gives us the purpose and goal for a thing. Do not think that the rendering of ἵνα as “might” or “may” gives conditionality or uncertainty about a thing. The ἵνα may be translated as “that, in order that, so that.” It shows the purpose for the thing done.

The purpose of Christ's death was that the group for which He died, the “all”, may no longer live for themselves, i.e. in sin, but live for and in Him who for their sake died and was raised. Unless we want to say that God is frustrated in His purposes, which is impossible (Job 23:13; 42:2; Prov 19:21; Isa 14:27; Isa 46:10; Dan 4:35; Eph 1:11) we must accept that the group for which Christ died were the elect, i.e. the believers united with Him on the cross.

Many are the texts which speak of Christ specific and atoning death for the believers and that we will discuss when I try to present my case for Limited Atonement. But that verse 15 says that not only did the Lord Christ died for us, but He was raised for us. As He died for us and we were united with Him in His atoning death, so likewise we will share with in Him in a resurrection body like His (Rom 6:5). See above for Romans 4:25.

**In verse 17** Paul concludes based on what was said in verses 14-15 that if we indeed are in Christ, i.e. in the group of the “all”, therefore we a new creation. Each of us. We have been made new by the death of Christ. Our old stony heart was destroyed and replaced by a heart of flesh which loves God and His Law.

**Verse 18:** All this blessing that we have received is from God, and therefore not from man. It is He that has reconciled us to Himself. It is not we who have approached God and were reconciled to Him. He, the offended party has come to us thanks to the death of Christ and forgiven us and brought us into a loving relationship with Him, our Redeemer. It is He who has received us into His favor. It is a thing done by Him based on Christ's death in our behalf. God imputed our sin to Him and His righteousness to us.

Not only has God reconciled us to Christ, but He has given the ministry of reconciliation to the believers, that through them God may reconcile the world to Himself.

**Verse 19:** Paul speaks of Christ's reconciliation of the world to Himself as a past action. God was reconciling the world to Himself. He did that on the cross of Calvary. The way in which He did reconcile the world to Himself was to not count their trespasses and sins against them, i.e. forgive them of their wickedness.

Now we should pay attention to the word "world." It is here that the non-Calvinists see universal rather than particular atonement. This is the reason that I did not start the exegesis of verses 18-19 which is the subject at hand in verse 18, but went back to verse 14.

I believe that I fairly demonstrated the particularity of the death of Christ in verses 14-15. It is not for every single human being that was made. His death was particular which is the basis of this reconciliation. For God to be righteous and not count our sin against us means that He has counted them against a Substitute and punished them in Him (2Cor 5:21).

Unless we believe that Paul contradicts himself within a few sentences we must throw away the very simplistic understanding of the word world meaning the whole humanity. The same group which was made a new creation, for whom Christ died is still under discussion, but now Paul speaks in the context of evangelism. We have the message that God on the cross reconciled the world to Himself and that is the basis that we plead with people and God makes His plea through us that people should be reconciled to Him.

The use of the word "world" gauds against the error to believe that we should not preach the Gospel to anyone we do not think is elect. The message of reconciliation is to be preached to every and God will draw His elect to Christ.

That the word world is not used to mean "all humanity" may be seen from Luke 2:1; John 7:4; 12:19; 13:1; 14:17; Acts 19:27; Rom 1:8; Col 1:6; Rev 12:9; 13:3, 7-8.

The word world here means humanity all without distinction, instead of all without exception. Meaning, all people from everywhere and not all Jews or all who we think are the elect. It is proper to use the word "world" when speaking of Christ death as the Bible does that. But we must not go to the simplistic understanding which contradicts the context of the present passage. It is proper to speak of Christ died for the world as in Rev 5:9-10 –

9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every **tribe** and **language** and **people** and **nation**, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

The death of Christ is both particular and universal here. But obviously in two senses. It is particular in the sense that Christ is here spoken of to have shed His precious blood for a purpose. That purpose was to ransom people for God. To purchase them for God. It is not an "iffy" purchasing and ransom which is spoken of, but a definite one. It is to purchase people from every tribe, language, people and nation. It is not, pay attention, to ransom every tribe, language, people and nation, but to ransom people from every... Here is seen the particularity of the atonement. All those whom He has purchased for God He has in the proper time made a kingdom and priests to God. In the present time.

The universality is seen from the fact that Christ has ransomed people for God for all four corners of the world. From every place Christ has died for people and bought them for God. Those for whom He died, He will not fail to bring to be priests and a kingdom for our God.

If we see, as I said the particularity and the universality of the atonement in Rev 5, we may properly and biblically speak of Christ's death being for the whole world.

**Verse 20** in light of Rev 5:9 gives us the motivation to go and seek people for God. It is God who works through us to call His people.

**Verse 21:** We have briefly dealt with this verse above. The particularity is clear and enforces our understanding of the word “world” in verse 19. He was made sin for “our sake” the same people for whom Christ died in verses 14 and 15. So that, not maybe, perhaps, if they like it, if they so choose. No, ἵνα, in order that, for the purpose of that, so that we surely will become the righteousness of God in Him.

Thank you Lord for this great message of reconciliation that you have given us that we may have the honor to represent you in the world. Thank You that You have reconciled us to Yourself. The offended party coming to us and cleansing us from our sin and bringing us into a loving relationship with You.

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- **one has died for all, therefore all have died.** By Christ’s death, the death penalty for sin (see Gen. 2:17) has been paid for all those who trust in him (see Rom. 3:21–26; 5:6–8; 1 Cor. 15:3; Gal. 3:13), and God counts their old life as ended, thus freeing them from any future penal claims. **he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him.** As a consequence of Christ’s death, the power of sin in one’s life (see Gen. 3:1–7) has also been broken for all those who trust in Christ (cf. Rom. 6:1–14). Christ’s cross therefore frees the believer for a new way of life, exemplified by Paul himself as one that **the love of Christ controls** (see Titus 2:11–14).

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says the following:

- **2 Cor. 5:14 the love of Christ.** Christ’s love for Paul and all believers at the cross (cf. Rom. 5:6–8). Christ’s loving, substitutionary death motivated Paul’s service for him (cf. Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:19). **controls.** This refers to pressure that causes action. Paul emphasized the strength of his desire to offer his life to the Lord. **one has died for all.** This expresses the truth of Christ’s substitutionary death. The preposition “for” indicates he died “in behalf of,” or “in the place of” all (cf. Isa. 53:4–12; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:11–14). This truth is at the heart of the doctrine of salvation. God’s wrath against sin required death; Jesus took that wrath and died in the sinner’s place. Thus he took away God’s wrath and satisfied God’s justice as a perfect sacrifice (*see notes on 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 5:6–11, 18–19; 1 Tim. 2:5–6; cf. Eph. 5:2; 1 Thess. 5:10; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:24*). **therefore all have died.** Everyone who died in Christ receives the benefits of his substitutionary death (*see notes on Rom. 3:24–26; 6:8*). With this short phrase, Paul defined the extent of the atonement and limited its application. This statement logically completes the meaning of the preceding phrase, in effect saying, “Christ died for all who died in him,” or “One died for all, therefore all died” (*see notes on 2 Cor. 5:19–21; cf. John 10:11–16; Acts 20:28*). Paul was overwhelmed with gratitude that Christ loved him and was so gracious as to make him a part of the “all” who died in him.

The **HCSB Study Bible** says about 2 Corinthians 5:13-15:

- 5:13-14 Paul's opponents probably had suggested that he was religiously unbalanced (see Ac 26:24). He was "insane" in that **Christ's love** compelled him into vigorous apostolic ministry. On the other hand, his ministry among the Corinthians had never been that of a madman (1Co 2:1-5). Indeed, he had kept his "third heaven" vision private for 14 years until he mentioned it later in this letter (12:1-10). The heart of Paul's message was that the Jewish Messiah had **died** on behalf of **all** kinds of sinners (1Co 15:3). Jews as well as Gentiles were included in Jesus' substitutionary death (Rev 7:9). In union with Christ, sinners who believe the gospel have died to sin and have been raised to walk in a new way of life.
- 5:15 The phrase **those who live** refers to believers who are now spiritually alive (Eph 2:4-6). Christ's death and resurrection ministry have become the pattern for the believer's death and new-life ministry. Paul personally modeled this as well.

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#### Ephesians 1:7-10

*In him we have **redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,<sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight:<sup>9</sup> making known to us the **mystery of his will**, according to **his purpose, which he set forth in Christ**<sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to **unite all things in him**, things in heaven and things on earth.*



This is a verse (v 9) frequently used by Universalists that I've seen on the Internet. The idea is that Christ will "unite" everything in Himself, meaning, people who did not repent and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved – eventually, they may have to go to Purgatory or a "temporal hell," but in the end "Love Wins" and they are saved.

Well let's take a close look at the word "**unite**," its G346:<sup>47</sup>

- Original: ἀνακεφαλαιομαι
- Transliteration: Anakephalaiomai
- Phonetic: an-ak-ef-al-ah'-ee-om-ahee
- Definition:
  1. to sum up (again), to repeat summarily, to condense into a summary
- Origin: from G303 and G2775 (in its original sense)
- TDNT entry: 14:21,4
- Part(s) of speech: Verb

I think it is helpful to see how other translations other than the ESV have translated the verse:

**KJV:** That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might **gather together in one** all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; [*even*] in him:

**NASB:** with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the **summing up of all things** in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

**HCSB:** for the administration of the days of fulfillment — to **bring everything together** in the Messiah, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him.

**ISV:** to usher in the fullness of the times and to **gather up all things** in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth.

**NET:** toward the administration of the fullness of the times, **to head up all things** in Christ – the things in heaven and the things on earth.

- The precise meaning of the infinitive ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι (*anakephalaiōsasqai*) in v. 10 is difficult to determine since it was used relatively infrequently in Greek literature and only twice in the NT (here and Rom 13:9). While there have been several suggestions, three deserve mention: (1) "To sum up." In Rom 13:9, using the same term, the author there says that the law may be "*summarized* in one command, to love your neighbor as yourself." The idea then in Eph 1:10 would be that all things in heaven and on earth can be summed up and *made sense out of* in relation to Christ. (2) "To renew." If this is the nuance of the verb then all things in heaven and earth, after their plunge into sin and ruin, are renewed by the coming of Christ and his redemption. (3) "To head up." In this translation the idea is that Christ, in the fullness of the times, has been exalted so as to be appointed as the ruler (i.e., "head") over all things in heaven and earth (including the church). That this is perhaps the best understanding of the verb is evidenced by the repeated theme of Christ's exaltation and reign in Ephesians and by the connection to the κεφαλῇ- (*kefalh-*) language of 1:22 (cf. Schlier, *TDNT* 3:682; L&N 63.8; M. Barth, *Ephesians* [AB 34], 1:89-92; *contra* A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* [WBC], 32-33).<sup>48</sup>

We see a variety of translations of the word "*anakephalaiomai*," but one thing is certain, all things will be in/under Christ, whether that means salvation of all people or something else.

The easiest translation to understand the meaning of the verse/word seems to be the **NET**. Paul here is writing about the coming exaltation and sovereignty of the precious Lord Jesus Christ over everything created. This is further supported by other of Paul's writings about the coming reign and exaltation of the Lord Jesus like Colossians 1:16,

<sup>47</sup> BDB (Brown, Driver, Briggs). Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>48</sup> <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/Ephesians+1:6> note number 25.

where we are told “For **by him all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—**all things were created through him and for him.**” All things were created for the glory of the Lord Jesus. All authority is the Lord Jesus’ (Mt 28:18); the Father has put everything under his feet (Eph 1:22; Heb 2:8; 1Cor 15:24-28); the Lord Jesus is the head of all rule and authority (Col 2:10); everyone will bow down to Him, whether as servants or as defeated enemies (Phil 2:10).

There seems to be no reason to think that this verse refers to salvation beyond the grave, after given an amazing display of God’s predestination to salvation in the opening verses (vv 3-6), salvation by grace through faith (2:8-9). After death comes the judgment (Heb 9:27). All things will be put under His feet and they already are actually— since all authority is given to the Lord Jesus (Mt 28:18), He already is Lord both of the living and the dead (Rom 14:9) and He upholds the universe by His omnipotence (Heb 1:3).

Let’s take a look at few commentaries and see how they understand the word “*anakephalaiomai*,” shall we?

Here is what the **Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible** says:<sup>49</sup>

- **Gather together in one** , [ *anakephalaioosasthai* (G346)] - 'sum up again (in their original unity) for Himself under one head; 'recapitulate.' The 'good pleasure which He purposed' was 'to sum up all things [ *ta* (G3588) *panta* (G3956): 'THE whole range of things'] in Christ' [ *to* (G3588) *Christoo* (G5547): 'the Christ']. God sums up the whole creation in Christ, the Head of angels, with whom He is linked by His invisible nature; and of men, with whom He is linked by His humanity; of Jews and Gentiles; of the living and the dead (Eph 3:15); of animate and inanimate creation. Sin has disarranged the creature's relation of subordination to God. God gathers up all in Christ (Col 1:20). Alford, 'The Church is subordinated to Him in conscious and joyful union; those who are not His spiritually in mere subjugation, yet consciously: the inferior creatures unconsciously; - objectively, all are summed up in Him.'

The **Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges** says the following:<sup>50</sup>

- *ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ χριστῷ*, ‘to sum up the universe in the Christ.’ These words define the ultimate end of the Gracious Purpose, the ‘one far off Divine event to which the whole Creation moves.’ ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, properly a word in Rhetoric, Lat. *collectio*, describing the rapid repetition and summarizing of an orator’s points previous to his practical conclusion. St Paul uses it (Rom 13:9) of the relation between the command ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ and all the commandments of the Second Table. Strictly, therefore, the words mean “to bring together each separate element in Creation in such a way that ‘the Christ’ may be the fitting description of the whole.” This meaning helps to explain the presence of the article τῷ χριστῷ, ct. Eph 1:3, ἐν Χριστῷ. Otherwise it would be difficult not to believe that, however incorrectly in point of etymology, St Paul, in speaking ‘of bringing the universe together under one head,’ was thinking of Christ not as κεφάλαιον, but as κεφαλή, cf. Eph 1:22. A further development of the thought I owe to a note communicated by my friend Canon G. H. Whitaker: ‘Plutarch says ἡ πόλις οἰκῶν τι σύστημα καὶ κεφάλαιον οὔσα (*Cat. maj.* 454 A). Now a well-planned city explains the point of the several houses. It is an *ordered* whole. You see why the houses were placed as they were, when you see the city from a balloon. So, in a well-written article, you come not to a new summary but to a κεφάλαιον, a heading up of all the points, showing how they tell. Paragraphs that had seemed disconnected are felt now to have been all bearing one way. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” brings all the separate commandments to the unity of a great principle. Moses, Joshua, Aaron come to a point in Christ.’

## Colossians 1:19-20<sup>51</sup>

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,<sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

<sup>49</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, Brown; Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See “[Resources](#).”

<sup>50</sup> Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See “[Resources](#).”

<sup>51</sup> <http://youtu.be/E9PFb2Q4s7M?t=33m30s> James R White.

This is another one of the verses that Universalists like to use. While this document is not meant to refute Universalism, I've seen this verse used against Limited Atonement, so I thought it should be helpful if we could take a look at it and see what it teaches in its context.

I think just looking at the context will clarify that this doesn't mean "everybody will eventually be saved." Let's take a look at Colossians 1:

<sup>15</sup> *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* <sup>16</sup> *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.* <sup>17</sup> *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* <sup>18</sup> *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.* <sup>19</sup> *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,* <sup>20</sup> *and through him to **reconcile to himself all things**, whether on earth or in heaven, making **peace by the blood of his cross.*** <sup>21</sup> *And **you**, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,* <sup>22</sup> *he has now **reconciled in his body of flesh by his death**, in order to **present you holy and blameless** and above reproach before him,* <sup>23</sup> ***if indeed you continue in the faith**, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.*

First I would challenge the contextual meaning of the word "reconcile." The word doesn't have to mean the same as in every context or toward anyone. For example, God's relation to a dog or a star is obviously different than with humans. We see that Paul is addressing those "*who **once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds***" and the Lord has reconciled those to present them holy and blameless, now we can conclude that reconciliation here means a total change of character. They were alienated, hostile, but now God is working to make them holy and blameless.

If this verse indeed is talking about God reconciling every human being and every creature to Himself, that is (how some Universalists understand it), bringing everyone to Heaven then verse 23 doesn't make any sense. Because there Paul tells them that they have the responsibility of continuing in the faith! This reconciliation is not something that comes after death!

### 1 Timothy 2:1-6 & Titus 2:11<sup>52</sup>

*First of all, then, I urge that **supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings** be made for **all people**, <sup>2</sup> **for kings and all who are in high positions**, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.* <sup>3</sup> ***This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,** <sup>4</sup> **who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*** <sup>5</sup> ***For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,** <sup>6</sup> **who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.***

This is one of the "Arminian Big Three" which you will get almost in every conversation about Calvinism in real life or online. Usually verses 3-4 are just quoted to make the case that God wants to save every single individual. The question is, does "all" in context really mean "every single individual in the world"? Or is this talking about God's desire not His sovereign decree?

#### **Will of Desire interpretation**

There are some people who understand this passage and other passages like 2 Pet 3:9 to refer to God's will of desire. God's will of desire being, God's desire that people should not murder, lie, steal, commit adultery or have other gods before Him (Ex 20), but He doesn't decree that it should be done so. It is also called His *will of precept*.

So God's will of desire refers to the things that God has not decreed in His sovereign plan before the foundation of the world, yet desires. In this interpretation, God would desire that all be saved, but He has not decreed that all

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<sup>52</sup> <http://youtu.be/oQXM3POx-6w>  
<http://youtu.be/aLla5rHmpO4>  
<http://www.objectivegospel.org/the-big-three>  
[http://www.reformationtheology.com/2009/04/understanding\\_1\\_timothy\\_24\\_by.php](http://www.reformationtheology.com/2009/04/understanding_1_timothy_24_by.php)

should be saved, because He wants to show the full measure of His glory (Rom 9:22-24). I don't find this interpretation compelling and I believe the following interpretation is more compelling.

### The "all kinds of people" interpretation

The major Reformed interpretation takes the position that the word "**all**" in this context means "**all kinds of people**," not every single individual, why do we say that? Because there are times in Scripture when "**all**" is used in the sense of "every single individual in the world", but there are times which it isn't used like that, but limited according to the context.<sup>53</sup> Let's look at a few verses, shall we? The portion we're going to look at is in Titus 2. Here we see that Paul is telling Timothy to teach "sound doctrine." Then we see him list types/groups of people:

2. Older **men** are to be sober-minded...
3. Older **women** likewise...
4. so train the **young women** to love their **husbands** and **children**
6. ...urge the **younger men**
9. **Slaves**
11. For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for **all people**,
12. training us to **renounce ungodliness**...
13. waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of **our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**,
14. who **gave himself for us to redeem us** from all lawlessness and to **purify for himself a people** for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

We see that Paul in verse 11 says that salvation has been brought for *all people*, but considering the context we can safely say that it means "**all kinds of people**," since in the previous verses he was talking about kinds of people (men, women, slaves, etc.). We can reasonably say that what Paul is saying through "*all people*" is "**all kinds of people**," (as we understand that in our individualistic society) just as those kinds whom he mentioned in the passing verses. Further, verse 14 makes it clear that God has redeemed "**us**" and that Jesus has purified for Himself a people, not all people, but **a people**.

What does this have to do with **1 Tim 2:4**, anyway? Well, we see in verse 2 kinds of people ("*kings and all who are in high positions*") being mentioned. What Paul was asking Timothy to do is pray for "**all**" people. How are we to understand the "**all**" here? Did Paul mean that Timothy should pray for every single person in the world? Surely we don't think that's the case, but we see that after Paul says that Timothy should pray for "**all**" people we see in verse 2 that Paul specifies, limits, clarifies, narrows his use of the word "**all**," by saying that Timothy should pray "for kings and all who are in high position." So what Paul is saying to Timothy is this: Timothy, do not only pray for your brethren, who are those that are despised in the world, who are persecuted, who are hated, but don't forget Jesus' commandment to love our enemies. So, Timothy also pray for your persecutors that they may come to the knowledge of God, who desires to save all kinds of people, so that we may lead a peaceful life. Then it follows logically that if we accept the contextual meaning of "**all**" to mean "*all kinds of*" then the "**all**" in verse 6 also means that Jesus was a ransom for all kinds of people. Revelation 5:9 says that Jesus with His blood has ransomed a people for God from every tribe, language, people and nation; thus, Jesus has ransomed every kind of people, kings and servants, free and slaves, male and female, Jew and Gentile. Please note in Revelation 5:9, it says that our Glorious Lord ransomed with his blood **a people** for God **from** every tribe, tongue, people and nation, a specific people, not the tribes, tongues, peoples and nations.

And let us not forget the beauty of verse 5 where we are told that Jesus is the only **mediator between men and God**. A mediator is "one that mediates, especially one that reconciles differences between disputants<sup>54</sup>." Through Christ we have been reconciled to God (Col 1:21-22) and He is standing before the Father, as the Son interceding for us

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<sup>53</sup> See [Usage of the word "all", usually indicates all of a set or many depending on the context](#)

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/mediator>

(Rom 8:26, 34; Heb 7:25), He is **interceding for a specific people**, not every single individual in the world. This also brings the picture of Christ as High Priest, as seen in the book of Hebrews, He is the one pleading for His sheep to the Father.

Let's see what the Word of God says of the Lord's intercessory work. For whom does Christ intercede?<sup>55</sup>

**Heb 7:23-27** *The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office,<sup>24</sup> but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever.<sup>25</sup> Consequently, he is able to **save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.**<sup>26</sup> For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a **high priest**, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.<sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since **he did this once for all when he offered up himself.***

**Heb 9:24-28** *For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to **appear in the presence of God on our behalf.**<sup>25</sup> Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,<sup>26</sup> for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has **appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**<sup>27</sup> And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,<sup>28</sup> so **Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.***

In the book of Hebrews we see Christ's High Priestly work. We see also that Christ's intercessory work is rooted in His cross-work. He saves to the uttermost those who draw near to God, but then the question arises: Who draws near to God? The answer from Jesus' lips is recorded in John 6:44 – "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." And on their behalf does He make His intercessory work. Imagine the Risen Lord of Glory interceding for someone for whom He did not die, and for a one whom the Father had not chosen, He would fail miserably, but it's impossible for the Lord of glory to be rejected by the Father or for God to fail.

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- **1 Tim. 2:4** Evangelistic prayer for all people is rooted in the fact that God **desires all people to be saved**. It appears that Paul is countering an exclusivist tendency in the false teachers or at least their downplaying of the importance of evangelizing the Gentiles (along with their emphasis on the Jewish law). This statement figures prominently in theological disagreements over the extent of the atonement. It cannot be read as suggesting that everyone will be saved (universalism) because the rest of the letter makes it clear that some will not be saved (4:1; 5:24; 6:10; cf. Matt. 25:30, 41, 46; Rev. 14:9–11). Does that mean God desires something (all people being saved) that he cannot fulfill? Both Arminian and Calvinist theologians respond that God "desires" something more than universal salvation. Arminians hold that God's greater desire is to preserve genuine human freedom (which is necessary for genuine love) and therefore he must allow that some may choose to reject his offer of salvation. Calvinists hold that God's greater desire is to display the full range of his glory (Rom. 9:22–23), which results in election depending upon the freedom of his mercy and not upon human choice (Rom. 9:15–18). However one understands the extent of the atonement, this passage clearly teaches the free and universal offer of the gospel to every single human being; "desires" shows that this offer is a bona fide expression of God's good will. **Come to the knowledge of the truth** highlights the cognitive aspect of conversion, i.e., individuals must come to understand key truths in order to be converted. "The truth" occurs often in the Pastorals as a synonym for the gospel (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15; 4:3; 2 Tim. 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4; Titus 1:1, 14).

#### ESV Reformation Study Bible

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<sup>55</sup> See more: [Jesus intercedes only for His own](#)



- **2:1 all people.** As can be seen from the next expression (“for kings and all who are in high positions”), this does not mean “every human being,” but rather “all types of people,” whatever their station in life.
- **2:4 who desires all people to be saved.** This does not mean that God sovereignly wills every human being to be saved (i.e., that God saves everyone). It may refer to God’s general benevolence in taking no delight in the death of the wicked, or to God’s desire that all types of people (v. 1 note) be saved (i.e., God does not choose His elect from any single group).

### NLT Study Bible

- 1 Timothy 2:1 **all people:** The prayers of the false teachers and their disciples were evidently not consonant with God’s will to save all kinds of people (2:3-4).
- 1 Timothy 2:2 **all who are in authority:** Those who had the power to persecute or to protect the church (see also Rom 13:1-7; 1 Pet 2:13-17). • **live peaceful and quiet lives:** The point was not for Christians to blend in and be unnoticed, but to display the beauty of the Good News and allow the church’s mission to proceed without unnecessary complications (cp. 2 Tim 3:12; 1 Pet 3:13-17). • The word **godliness** and its cognates (also at 3:16; 4:7-8; 5:4; 6:3, 5-6, 11) sum up the beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles that accord with right and reverential knowledge of God, obedience, and authentic worship.
- 1 Timothy 2:5-6 Compact teachings, as in this passage, occur throughout the letters to Timothy and Titus (see also 3:16; 2 Tim 1:9-10; 2:8, 11-13; Titus 3:4-7). They might be adapted bits of creeds, hymns, or prayers that were known to the churches. The doctrines referenced probably relate to Paul’s trouble with the false teachers; it appears that their teaching undercut the universal appeal of the Good News and the effectiveness of the Gentile mission. The false teachers also had a deficient understanding of Jesus and his salvation.

### God’s will of desire: ESV MacArthur Study Bible:

- **2:4 desires all people to be saved.** The Greek word for “desires” is not that which normally expresses God’s will of decree (his eternal purpose), but God’s will of desire. There is a distinction between God’s desire and his eternal saving purpose, which must transcend his desires. God does not want men to sin. He hates sin with all his being (Ps 5:4; 45:7); thus, he hates its consequences – eternal wickedness in hell. God does not want people to remain wicked forever in eternal remorse and hatred of himself. Yet, God for his own glory, and to manifest that glory in wrath, chose to endure “vessels...prepared for destruction” for the supreme fulfillment of his will (Rom. 9:22). In his eternal purpose, he chose only the elect out of the world (John 17:6) and passed over the rest, leaving them to the consequences of their sin, unbelief, and rejection of Christ, (cf. Rom. 1:18-32). Ultimately, God’s choices are determined by his sovereign, eternal purpose, not his desires. *See note on 2 Pet. 3:9 the knowledge of the truth.* Meaning “to be saved.” *See note on 2 Tim 3:7*
- **2:5 there is one God.** There is no other way of salvation (Acts 4:12); hence there is the need to pray for the lost to come to know the one true God (cf. Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4; Isa. 43:10; 44:6; 45:5-6, 21, 22; 46:9; 1 Cor. 8:4,6). **Mediator.** This refers to someone who intervenes between two parties to resolve a conflict or ratify a covenant. Jesus Christ is the only “mediator” who can restore peace between God and sinners (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). **The man Christ Jesus.** The absence of the article before “man” in the Greek suggest the translation, “Christ Jesus, himself a man.” Only the perfect God-Man could bring God and man together. Cf. Job 9:32-33
- **2:6 a ransom.** This describes the result of Christ’s substitutionary death for believers, which he did voluntarily (John 10:17-18), and reminds one of Christ’s own statement in Matt. 20:28, “a ransom for many.” The “all” is qualified by the “many.” Not all will be ransomed (though his death would be sufficient), but only the many who believe by the work of the Holy Spirit and for whom the actual atonement was made. *See note on 2:9.* Christ did not pay a ransom only; he became the object of God’s just wrath in the believer’s place –he died his death and bore his sin (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). **For all.** This should be taken in two senses; 1) there are temporal benefits of the atonement that accrue to all people universally (*see note on 1 Tim. 4:10*), and 2) Christ’s death was sufficient to cover the sins of all people. Yet the substitutionary aspect of his death is applied to the elect alone (*see above and notes on 2 Cor. 5:14-21*). Christ’s death is therefore unlimited in its sufficiency, but limited in its application. Because Christ’s expiation of sin is indivisible, inexhaustible, and sufficient to cover the guilt of all the sins that will ever be committed, God can clearly offer it to all. Yet only

the elect will respond and be saved, according to his eternal purpose (cf. John 17:12). **At the proper time.** At the appropriate time for God's redemptive plan (*see note on Gal. 4:4*)

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### 1 Timothy 4:10

*For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the **Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.***

Many non-Calvinist take this verse to mean that God is trying to save all people. But, one wonders why isn't He able to complete this 'plan' of His and the answer of course is that man doesn't choose God, which we agree with, but not the part that God isn't able to fulfill His desire, because the Son paid the ransom for all whom the Father gave Him (Jn 17; Eph 5:25; Jn 6:37-40).

But still we need to deal with this verse, if we believe that the Bible is inspired there should be a consistency running through it. There are no 'Arminian' or 'Calvinist' verses, there are only God inspired verses.

First we need to look how the word 'Savior' is used in this context. The word '**soter**' (σωτήρ, G4990) has the meaning of 'savior, deliverer, preserver'<sup>56</sup> it occurs 24 times in the New Testament mostly in the sense of personal Savior (Lk 2:11; Jn 4:42; Act 5:31; Tit 2:13; 2Pe 2:20 etc...). But it is important to note the context. I'm going to argue that it means **soter** as in the sense of a *preserver, deliverer*.

Let's take a look at 1 Timothy 4. First we see in the first paragraph of 1 Timothy 4, in verses 1 through 5 Paul warns Timothy against false teachers who will teach doctrines of demons, who will lead many astray, who will forbid marriage and require abstinence from (certain) foods. Food which is given by God and made holy by His word and prayer and should be received with thanksgiving. We see here that Paul is warning Timothy against those who want to forbid certain foods (perhaps some Jews who want to follow the Torah concerning ceremonially clean foods, or some other group which I am not aware of). Here we see clearly that Paul is talking about regular life (marriage, food) and not discussing things concerning salvation of the lost with Timothy or how God has saved them from His wrath, though salvation from wrath is mentioned in verses 10b and perhaps in 16.

In the next portion of 1 Timothy 4, specifically in verses 6 through 10, Paul tells Timothy to keep this teaching, that he should not follow the false teaching, and have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Next Paul tells him that bodily training is good, but godliness is much better because it has value for this current life, but also the life to come. This is good (v9). Next we come to our 'problem' verse. In verse 10 we're told that God "is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe." What does that mean? Does it mean that He wants to save everyone from His righteous wrath? Why doesn't He then? If that is so, why does the last part of the verse says "**especially of those who believe**" and what does that mean?

We saw that the context of 1 Timothy 4 is (mostly) concerned with physical life. Things like food and marriage. Then we come to verse 10 and some of our brothers want to get the idea that God really wants to save everyone, but they don't freely choose Him, they just won't come to Him, although He has given them grace. But that is not the idea here. As I have argued above the word **soter** can be used in the sense of a **preserver** or **deliverer**. And it is best to understand the phrase "Savior of all people" to refer to the idea that God is the one who gives food to the wicked and the just, He is the one who gives us our jobs, our promotions, He is the one who brings us up and throws us down, he cares for the wicked and just, His mercy is over all His creation (Mt 5:45; Phil 4:19; 1Sm 2:6-8, Ps 145:9, etc...).

The last phrase is very interesting, "**especially of those who believe**". The Greek word for *especially* in the Greek is the word **malista** (μάλιστα, G3122) which means "especially, chiefly, most of all, above all."<sup>57</sup> Well if our non-Calvinist brothers and sisters want to assert that God tries to save everyone or wants to save everyone in what way is

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G4990&t=NASB>

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/Lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?strongs=G3122&t=NASB>

He *especially* saving those who believe then? It seems very clear to me, that in the in the first part of verse 10 “Savior of all people” means that He preserves and cares for the wicked and the just, that is made clear by the last part of verse 10 by saying that He’s the Savior “**especially of those who believe**”. He not only cares for His elect as well as the reprobate, but He saves His elect in a special manner too. He saves freely from His righteous wrath which justly falls on the wicked. The same wicked people who enjoyed God’s perseverance and mercy in their earthly life.

I think I’ve said enough. The commentaries below will say things in a better way than I could. Take a look.

#### Commentaries

**Bob Utley in You Can Understand the Bible** said:<sup>58</sup>

- **"who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers"** The title "savior" is used quite often in the Pastoral Letters (cf. 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 2 Tim. 1:10; Titus 1:3-4; 2:10-13; 3:4,6). In earlier chapters of 1 Timothy it is used of God as the Redeemer, potentially, of all mankind (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4,6; Luke 2:11; John 1:29; 4:42; Rom. 5:18-19; 2 Pet. 3:9). See full note at 2 Tim. 1:10. Possibly because of the little phrase "especially of believers" (where one would theologically expect "only") it may be used in its OT sense of Elohim, who is "protector" or "provider" of all life on earth (cf. Matt. 5:45; Acts 17:28).

The **ESV Reformation Bible** says:

- **4:10 Savior of all people.** The general call to repentance and salvation is extended to all people (Matt. 11:28). See “Definite Redemption” at John 10:15.  
**especially of those who believe.** Salvation is God’s gift, in particular to those who trust in His provision in Christ (Matt. 22:14; Rom. 8:30).

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- **1 Tim. 4:10 to this end.** The goal of Paul’s labors is that people attain “godliness” (v. 8) and its eternal “value.” **Toil and strive** is typical of Paul’s description of gospel ministry (cf. 5:17; Rom. 16:6, 12; 1 Cor. 15:10; 16:16; Gal. 4:11; Eph. 4:28). The statement that God is the **Savior of all people, especially of those who believe** could seem to teach universalism, that every person will eventually go to heaven. However, the rest of Scripture clearly denies this idea (see note on 1 Tim. 2:4). There are several other possible explanations for this phrase: (1) It means that Christ died for all people, but only those who believe in him are saved. (2) It means he is offered to all people, though not all receive him. (3) It means “the Savior of all people, namely, those who believe” (a different translation of Gk. *malista*, based on extrabiblical examples). (4) It means “the helper of all people,” taking Greek *Sōtēr*, “Savior,” to refer not to forgiveness of sins but to God’s common grace by which God helps and protects people in need. (5) It means “the Savior of all kinds of people, not Jews only but both Jews and Greeks.” In any case, the emphasis is on God’s care for the unsaved world, and in the flow of the letter Paul is stressing once more (cf. 2:3–5) that God’s will that people would be saved is the basis of the universal mission (cf. Matt. 28:19–20). On God as “Savior,” see note on 2 Tim. 1:8–10.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** provides a commentary about this verse:

- **1 Tim. 4:10 hope.** Believers are saved in hope and live and serve in light of that hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7; see note on Rom. 5:2). Working to the point of exhaustion and suffering rejection and persecution are acceptable because believers understand they are doing God’s work—which is the work of salvation. That makes it worth all of the sacrifices (Phil. 1:12–18, 27–30; 2:17; Col. 1:24–25; 2 Tim. 1:6–12; 2:3–4, 9–10; 4:5–8). **the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.** Paul is obviously not teaching universalism, that all people will be saved in the spiritual and eternal sense, since the rest of Scripture clearly teaches that God will not save everyone. Most will reject him and spend eternity in hell (Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 20:11–15). Yet, the Greek word translated “especially” must mean that all people enjoy God’s salvation in some way like those who believe enjoy his salvation. The simple explanation is that God is the Savior of all people, only in a temporal sense, while of believers in an eternal sense. Paul’s point is that while God graciously delivers believers from sin’s condemnation and penalty because he was their substitute (2 Cor. 5:21), all people

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<sup>58</sup> Bob Utley, *You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series* (NT). Taken from the Bible software The Word. See [“Resources.”](#)

experience some earthly benefits from the goodness of God. Those benefits are: 1) common grace—a term that describes God’s goodness shown to all mankind universally (Ps. 145:9) in restraining sin (Rom. 2:15) and judgment (Rom. 2:3–6), maintaining order in society through government (Rom. 13:1–5), enabling man to appreciate beauty and goodness (Ps. 50:2), and showering him with temporal blessings (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:15–17; 17:25); 2) compassion—the broken-hearted, loving pity that God shows to undeserving, unregenerate sinners (Ex. 34:6, 7; Ps. 86:5; Dan. 9:9; Matt. 23:37; Luke 19:41–44; cf. Isa. 16:11–13; Jer. 48:35–37); 3) admonition to repent—God constantly warns sinners of their fate, demonstrating the heart of a compassionate Creator who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 18:30–32; 33:11); and 4) the gospel invitation—salvation in Christ is indiscriminately offered to all (Matt. 11:28–29; 22:2–14; John 6:35–40; Rev. 22:17; cf. John 5:39–40). God is, by nature, a saving God. That is, he finds no pleasure in the death of sinners. His saving character is revealed even in how he deals with those who will never believe, but only in these four temporal ways. *See notes on 1 Tim. 2:6.*

The **HCSB Study Bible** explains:

- The statement that Jesus is the **Savior of everyone, especially of those who believe** may seem to teach universalism, the belief that every person will eventually go to heaven regardless of whether they accept Christ. But the rest of Scripture clearly denies this idea. The Greek word translated here as "especially" expresses the sense of "particularly." The point is not that Jesus saves everybody and then saves believers even more. Rather, Jesus is the Savior for all—all who believe. Further, "everyone" pictures the trans-national scope of the gospel. Thus Christ is the "Savior" of people from every race and nation.

#### **HCSB Study Bible Word Study:**

##### **soter**

Greek Pronunciation	[soh TAYR]
HCSB Translation	Savior
Uses in 1 Timothy	3
Uses in the NT	24
Focus passage	1 Timothy 4:10

Outside the NT, the title *soter* (*savior, deliverer*) was applied to deserving men, leading officials, rulers, or deities (e.g., of Roman emperors Julius Caesar, Nero, and Vespasian). The term had connotations of "protector," "deliverer," "preserver," or "savior." In the NT, *soter* refers exclusively to Jesus Christ and to God the Father, with a focus on their saving, delivering character as expressed through their actions. As *Savior*, Christ grants repentance and forgiveness of sin (Ac 5:31), protects and saves the church (Eph 5:23), will come again to deliver His people from this world (Php 3:20), has made possible the outpouring of the Spirit (Titus 3:6), has abolished death (2Tim 1:10), and has authority in His kingdom (2Pe 1:11). God is "the *Savior* of everyone, especially of those who believe" (1Tim 4:10), and "wants everyone to be saved" (1Tim 2:4). He manifested His love in His saving acts toward the church (Titus 3:4), He poured out the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:6), and He deserves praise and adoration (Jd 25).

What **Matthew Henry** said about 1 Timothy 4:8-10:<sup>59</sup>

- II. The encouragement which we have to proceed in the ways of godliness, and to exercise ourselves to it, notwithstanding the difficulties and discouragements that we meet with in it. He had said (v. 8) *that it is profitable for all things, having the promise of the life* which now is. But the question is, Will the profit balance the loss? For, if it will not, it is not profit. Yes, we are sure it will. Here is another of Paul's faithful sayings, worthy of all acceptance—that all our labours and losses in the service of God and the work of religion will be abundantly recompensed, so that though we lose for Christ we shall not lose by him. *Therefore we labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God*, v. 10. Observe,
  1. Godly people must labour and expect reproach; they must do well, and yet expect at the same time to suffer ill: toil and trouble are to be expected by us in this world, not only as men, but as saints.

<sup>59</sup> Matthew Henry, Whole Bible Commentary, taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

2. Those who labour and suffer reproach in the service of God and the work of religion may depend upon the living God that they shall not lose by it. Let this encourage them, *We trust in the living God*. The consideration of this, that the God who has undertaken to be our pay-master is the living God, who does himself live for ever and is the fountain of life to all who serve him, should encourage us in all our services and in all our sufferings for him, especially considering that he is the *Saviour of all men*. (1.) By his providences he protects the persons, and prolongs the lives, of the children of men. (2.) He has a general good-will to the eternal salvation of all men thus far that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. He desires not the death of sinners; he is thus far the Saviour of all men that none are left in the same desperate condition that fallen angels are in. Now, if he be thus the Saviour of all men, we may hence infer that much more he will be the rewarder of those who seek and serve him; if he has such a good-will for all his creatures, much more will he provide well for those who are new creatures, who are born again. He is the Saviour of all men, but *especially of those that believe*; and the salvation he has in store for those that believe is sufficient to recompense them for all their services and sufferings. Here we see, [1.] The life of a Christian is a life of labour and suffering: *We labour and suffer*. [2.] The best we can expect to suffer in the present life is reproach for our well-doing, for our work of faith and labour of love. [3.] True Christians trust in the living God; for cursed is the man that trusts in man, or in any but the living God; and those that trust in him shall never be ashamed. *Trust in him at all times*. [4.] God is the general Saviour of all men, as he has put them into a salvable state; but he is in a particular manner the Saviour of true believers; there is then a general and a special redemption.

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### Hebrews 2:9-10<sup>60</sup>

*But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might **taste death for everyone**.<sup>10</sup> For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in **bringing many sons to glory**, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

“**Taste death for everyone**,” if we understand this to refer to every single individual then the logical conclusion is Universalism, which has lots of biblical problems. So let us dig a little deeper in the context of this verse.

The question is— If **everyone** (pas, πᾶς, G3956, “all, any, every, the whole”) in verse 9 is meant to be taken as in “*every single person without exception*,” then we have a problem on our hands. The problem is that the passage would then mean that everyone will be saved, or that Christ has atoned for the sins of everyone, even those in Hell. It will totally destroy the picture of Christ being the mediator/intercessor/High Priest of **His people** in Hebrews chapters 9 and 10. Interceding for a **specific people** whom He has perfected.

Let us now consider the surrounding passages. In verse 10 we see that that the Lord Jesus has brought “**many sons to glory**.” If the “**everyone**” of verse 9 is to be taken as “*every single individual without exception*” then verse 10 should’ve read something like: “*bringing all to glory*” or “*brining all sons to glory*.” “**Many sons**” has a limitation, it does not refer to every single individual. We read further in Hebrews 2:11-13

- For he who sanctifies and **those who are sanctified** all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them **brothers**,<sup>12</sup> saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”<sup>13</sup> And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Behold, I and the **children God has given me**.”

Who are being sanctified? We’re told in Heb 10:14 “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified,” those are Christians, people who have put their faith in Him, those for whom He intercedes (Heb 7:25). “**Children God has given me**” echoes John 6, specifically verses 37-39.

### Commentaries

ESV Study Bible explains:

- **Heb. 2:9 But we see him**, that is, Jesus. At this point all interpreters agree that the focus of the passage is Jesus (cf. notes on vv. 7, 8). The phrase **little while** and the sequence of events in vv. 7–8 (cf. Ps. 8:5–6)

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<sup>60</sup> <http://youtu.be/m6sRICZCWDY>



demonstrate that, after first being **made lower than the angels**, Jesus was subsequently **crowned** and exalted. While Jesus' sufferings indicated his humiliation and subjection, his **suffering of death** was also the reason for his being crowned with **glory and honor**. Jesus tasted **death** as a work of God's grace done on behalf of **everyone** (i.e., all who follow him; Heb. 9:15, 28; 10:39). **Jesus**. This is the first mention of Jesus' name in Hebrews (see 3:1; 4:14; etc.; "Christ" first appears in 3:6). "Crowned with glory and honor" echoes the same phrase used in 2:7. Though the human race generally did not fulfill God's plan to put everything on earth under man's feet (vv. 6–8), there is one man who is fulfilling God's great plan for human beings, and that is Jesus.

- **Heb. 2:10 he, for whom and by whom all things exist.** This is God the Father, who acts to "make perfect" the "founder of their salvation" (Jesus). **many sons.** The followers of the one unique Son of God are now also called "sons," for they are adopted into the glory of the newly redeemed human family (see "brothers," vv. 11–12; and "children," v. 13; also 12:5–8). **founder.** The Greek can designate either an originator or a leader (see 12:2). **salvation.** See 1:14 and 2:3. **suffering.** Especially Jesus' suffering of death (v. 9, see vv. 14–18). The concept of making **perfect** is applied elsewhere in Hebrews both to Jesus himself (5:9; 7:28) and to his work in sanctifying his followers (10:14; 12:23). In saying that Jesus was made perfect, the author is not suggesting that Jesus was sinful (cf. 4:15; 7:26) but that as he lived his life, his maturity and experience deepened, yet always with full obedience to the Father. As a human being, he needed to live his life and obey God (which he did perfectly) to become the perfect sacrifice for sins.
- **Heb. 2:11 he who sanctifies.** Jesus makes his people holy through his blood (13:12). **those who are sanctified.** Jesus' true followers, who are made holy by his sacrifice (10:10, 14; 13:12). Some commentators think **one source** is a reference to the common humanity shared by Jesus and those being saved (see 2:12–18), or to their common descent from Abraham. Others think that the "one source" is God the Father. **That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers.** Since they share a common descent (or, since God is their common Father), they are members of the same family, and therefore brothers.

#### ESV Reformation Study Bible

- **2:9 we see him.** Jesus has the crown of glory and honor. It must now be shown that He received it as a man, and so can satisfy the words of the psalm quoted.
- **made lower.** The expression can refer to status or to time (that is, "a little later," Luke 22:58; Acts 5:34). If it refers to time, it indicates the temporary character of Jesus' humiliation.
- **taste death for everyone.** Here, "everyone" must be understood in the light of the context and of the results of Jesus' death described elsewhere in Hebrews. It refers to the "many sons" whom God brings to glory (v. 10), whom Jesus calls "brothers" (v. 11). Those for whom Jesus tasted death were made holy and perfect once for all by His sacrifice (10:10, 14), their consciences cleansed from acts that lead to death (9:14), so they are freed from the fear of death (2:14, 15). By contrast, there are those (even within Christian congregations) who do not trust the Son but subject Him to ridicule (6:6). For them, "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment" (10:26, 27). Thus "everyone" here includes all those (but only those) who persevere in trusting Jesus (3:6, 14).

John Gill said the following about the phrase "for everyone/man":<sup>61</sup>

- **that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man;** that is, Christ was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man, and assuming a body frail and mortal, that he might die for his church and people: to "taste death", is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings; [See comments on Mt 16:28] and signifies the truth and reality of his death, and the experience he had of the bitterness of it, it being attended with the wrath of God, and curse of the law; though he continued under it but for a little while, it was but a taste; and it includes all kinds of death, he tasted of the death of afflictions, being a man of sorrows all his days, and a corporeal death, and what was equivalent to an eternal one; and so some think the words will bear to be rendered, "that he by the grace of God might taste of every death"; which rendering of the words, if it could be established, as it is agreeable to the context, and to the analogy of faith, would remove all pretence of an argument from this place, in favour of the universal scheme: what moved God to make him lower than the angels, and deliver him up to death, was not any anger towards him, any

<sup>61</sup> John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

disregard to him, or because he deserved it, but his "grace", free favour, and love to men; this moved him to provide him as a ransom; to preordain him to be the Lamb slain; to send him in the fulness of time, and give him up to justice and death: the Syriac version reads, "for God himself through his own grace tasted death for all"; Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead, and that not for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word "man" is not in the original text, it is only *υπερ παντος*, which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered "for the whole"; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the Saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, "for everyone"; for everyone of the sons God brings to glory, Heb 2:10 for everyone of the "brethren", whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, Heb 2:11 for everyone of the members of the "church", in the midst of which he sung praise, Heb 2:12 for every one of the "children" God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, Heb 2:13 and for everyone of the "seed" of Abraham, in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, Heb 2:16.

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## 2 Peter 2:1

But **false prophets** also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even **denying the Master who bought them**, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

This I think is the strongest passage that non-Calvinists bring against Definite Atonement, yet it is not only against Definite Atonement but the Perseverance of the Saints. But notice that the passage is not directly addressing the atonement, there are a lot of clear passages that are on the atonement, just think of Heb 7-10, therefore we must guard upon the weight we put on this text since it was not written to address the atonement directly.

I do not think that I will be able to give a definite explanation of this passage, but I will try my best to give a consistent exegesis of it with what the rest of the Bible says about the atonement.

The "but" connects this verse with the previous discussion about the prophecies of old. Just as false prophets arose among the congregation of Israel, so likewise false prophets will rise among the believers. They would bring false doctrine that would be destructive not only for them, but also for those who believe their doctrine. The KJV says "damnable heresies." They will go so far as even to deny the Master who bought them.

What we need to do is find 1) who the Master is, 2) what it means to be the Master and 3) what is the nature of this buying.

Credit must be given where credit is due. I've been greatly helped by the following articles though they do not all arrive at the same conclusion that I do:

- [Gary D. Long – Redemption in II Peter 2:1](#)
- [Daryl Wingerd - Thinking and Speaking Biblically About the Death of Christ: Appendix 2](#)
- [Jim Ellis – Agorazo in 2 Peter 2:1](#)
- [Thomas R. Schreiner – “Problematic Texts” for Definite Atonement in the Pastoral and General Epistles](#)
- [John MacArthur – False Teachers Bought By God](#)
- [Chris - Limited Atonement and 2 Peter 2:1](#)

### Who is the Master?

Some Reformed men have said that the Master being spoken of here is God the Father. The word used for master is the Greek *δεσπότης* which means "an absolute ruler." The word is found 10 times in the NT and it refers to –

- The Father - Lk 2:29; Acts 4:24; 2Tim 2:21; Rev 6:10
- The Lord Jesus - Jude 1:4
- Non-theological - 1Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9; 1Pet 2:18

The idea that by "Master" God the Father is referred to is contradicted by the parallel in Jude –

*Jude 1:4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and **deny our only Master** and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

There is no question that Jude relied a lot on Peter and this is one of the many parallels between these two writers.

In both passages you have people who were designated for condemnation and deny the Master. The Master (δεσπότην) spoken of here is also the Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore seeing this clear parallel between the two passages, we must conclude that the Lord Jesus is being referred to here and not the Father specifically.

### **Master – Soteriological or not?**

What does it mean that the Lord Jesus is the Master of these heretics? Does it mean that He is their Savior? Is it soteriological?

That Christ is Lord over all creation is clear from the Bible (e.g. Mt 28:18-19; Rom 14:9; Phil 2:10-11), so in this sense He is **the absolute ruler and owner of everything**, believers and unbelievers alike. The word *despotes* is never used in the NT to speak of God or Christ as Savior, therefore this raises a reason for me to reconsider if this passage speaks of soteriology. This word is never used of Christ as Mediator in the only place where it is again used (Jude 1:4). Moreover it is interesting to see the source from which Peter is drawing on here –

*Deut 32:5-6 KJV They have corrupted themselves, their spot [is] not [the spot] of his children: [they are] a perverse and crooked generation. 6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? [is] not he **thy father [that] hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?**<sup>62</sup>*

The word translated bought is a different word than the one in 2Pet 2:1 with the idea of “to procure for oneself, to get, gain, acquire”.<sup>63</sup> Verse 6 speaks of God's ownership of Israel by virtue of Him being their Creator (and the Creator of everyone else). He is the one who formed them as a nation and also as individuals and they are foolish to rebel against Him. They ought to love and obey Him with all their being. They are indebted to Him for every blessing.

God did not pay anything to acquire them, indeed the ESV and other translations translate the word there with "created" instead of bought because that is the sense given in the context.

To further strengthen the fact that Peter alludes to the Deut 32:5-6 text and has it in mind is that he alludes to verse 5 in 2Pet 2:13 when he says they are blemishes/spots. Do not also forget the fact that Peter begins by speaking of those who were not really God's children who nevertheless were bought in the sense of Deut 32:6.

Therefore I conclude on the basis of the allusion to Deut 32:5-6 and the use of the word *despotes* instead of *kurios* or *soter* that the context that Peter is painting is not soteriological.

### **Agorazo**

The first controversy was over to whom the word *despotes* was referring and what does it mean. But now we turn our attention to the word translated “bought.”

Let us first notice that there is nothing here of something that is hypothetical. By that I mean that these false teachers were truly and actually bought by Christ. It was not that atonement was made for them yet they rejected it and did not accept it (though I believe that the atonement is not the present context). Whatever the nature of this “buying” is, Peter describes them as bought.

It is more controversial to understand the intended meaning of the word *agorazo* here than it is to understand who the *despotes* is. Thayer's Greek Definitions (G59) says the following:

- Original: ἀγοράζω
- Transliteration: Agorazo
- Phonetic: ag-or-ad'-zo
- Definition:

1. to be in the market place, to attend it

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<sup>62</sup> The ESV says “created”. See <http://biblehub.com/hebrew/7069.htm>  
<sup>63</sup> LSJ Gloss, <http://studybible.info/strongs/G2932>

- 2. *to do business there, buy or sell*
- 3. *of idle people: to haunt the market place, lounge there*
- *Origin: from G58*
- *TDNT entry: 03:04,2*
- *Part(s) of speech: Verb*

The word has the basic meaning of “to buy in the market place.” It is used 30 times in the NT, most of those in a normal, non-theological sense.

- Non-soteriological - Mt 13:44, 46; 14:15; 21:12; 25:9-10; 27:7; Mk 6:36-37; 11:15; 15:46; 16:1; Lk 9:13; 14:18-19; 17:28; 22:36; Jn 4:8; 6:5; 13:29; 1Cor 7:30; Rev 3:18; 13:17; 18:11
- Soteriological - 1Cor 6:20; 7:23; Rev 5:9; 14:3-4

These are 29 of its uses within the NT, 24 of those are of non-soteriological nature. It is used among other things of buying fields (Mt 13:44) and buying food (Mt 14:15). Thus, the primary use of the word is that of non-soteriological or theological nature. But it is used 5 times in a soteriological context wherein the price for buying is mentioned in the context. The only disputed reference is in 2Pet 2:1.

Let us note something that is important about the word. The word does not speak merely of Christ paying the ransom by His blood (if that is what the Universal Redemptionists want to say), but that He also possesses that which He has bought. Meaning, the word *agorazo* does not merely refer to the paying of the price, but the possession of that for which the price was paid. For example, when buying a field, one does not merely pay the price, but there is naturally a change in ownership and possession of the field (Mt 13:44). The word does not merely refer to the laying down of the price, but also the possession of the thing bought. If therefore the Universal Redemptionists want to say that Christ has bought all men without exception including the false teachers, then they need to explain how they can have Christ as their Master and owner and yet the text says that they were made to be destroyed (2Pet 2:12). Or to put it in other words: How can Christ lose those who are under His headship, or those for whom He intercedes and mediates (as that is the continuation of His once for all time sacrifice)? If the response is in line of anything about Christ as their Sovereign Creator and that they owe Him obedience and love by nature that He is Lord of all then that leads to the position that the passage is not soteriological. But if they maintain that they were bought by the blood of Christ to be saved then they need to explain among others Heb 13:12 with Heb 10:14 (Heb 7:25; Jn 10:28-29) and how Christ’s mediation and intercession can fail (Heb 8:6-13; 9:15; 7:25; 10:14)?.

With that in mind, let us turn to the soteriological usage of the word. When the word is used soteriologically the price is always mentioned in the context.

Two of those references are found in Paul where the word “price” is used to speak of Christ’s blood. In Rev 5:9 the price mentioned is “his blood.” In Rev 14:3-4 from the reference to the Lamb with whom they were standing on Mount Zion and the previous description of Him being slain for them (Rev 5:9) the price for redemption is assumed both in the present context and also as a whole in the book. Not only that, but the chapter itself is soteriological in nature.

Now considering the text of 2Pet 2:1, there is no mention of what the price was by which the false teachers were bought, when all other places the price is either explicitly or implicitly mentioned. It is also interesting to notice the way in which Peter speaks of us being ransomed by Christ blood clearly:

*1Pet 1:18-19 knowing that you were **ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but **with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.*

Notice the way in which Peter clearly speaks of soteriology. But notice also that he uses a different word than *agorazo*. The word used is *lutroo* which is thus defined:

- *Original: λυτρόω*
- *Transliteration: Lutroo*
- *Phonetic: loo-tro'-o*
- *Definition:*

1. *to release on receipt of ransom*

2. to redeem, liberate by payment of ransom

- a. to liberate
- b. to cause to be released to one's self by payment of a ransom
- c. to redeem
- d. to deliver: from evils of every kind, internal and external

- Origin: from G3083

- TDNT entry: 09:49,5

- Part(s) of speech: Verb

The word is also found in Titus 2:14 and Lk 24:21 in a soteriological sense. In fact *agorazo* is not even used by Peter at all. The only way by which we can determine how Peter is using the word is to examine the context and also the source from which he is drawing. We have already considered Deut 32:5-6 and different yet interchange word used there. The context from which Peter is drawing is not soteriological. The price by which the false prophets were bought is absent. The word *agorazo* is only used by Peter here, though there is an another word which he used in His previous letter to speak of spiritual redemption (*lutroo*), which is not used in 2 Peter at all.

Therefore, 1) if the word *despotes* is nowhere used in the NT to speak of God as Savior/Mediator; 2) Peter uses a different word to speak of spiritual redemption clearly which is not found here; 3) the absence of the price for *agorazo*, and 4) the non-soteriological use of "buying" in Deut 32:5-6 leads me to conclude that this passage is not speaking of soteriology, but something else.

### The Non-Soteriological Interpretation

I don't want to give you the idea that I am trying to understand the text on its own. I don't think that's the way of exegesis. I believe a text is to be understood within its context and also within the context of the whole Bible. Plus, I follow the *analogia fidei* principle: clear passages first and then obscure passages. 2 Peter 2:1 is by no means clear and if it to be taken in a "straightforward" manner it generates problems elsewhere in our theology. We need to harmonize and not make the Bible a mish-mash. If the Apostle wanted to speak about the false teachers being bought by Christ the Savior's blood, then he certainly knew how he could communicate that to his audience as he did previously (1Pet 1:18-19).

Let us not forget that this passage was not put down to say anything about the atonement. What the passage speaks about is the apostasy of the false teachers and their dangerous heresies (1Jn 2:19). It is not a discussion on the extent of the atonement. Therefore it is desperate if non-Reformed folk would want to spend much time speaking about this text all the while there are other texts which are designed to speak of the atonement and Christ's work (Hebrews 7-10).

Since we have ruled out the soteriological view, therefore now we must explain what the passage is speaking about. We have already spoken of the connection between the present text and Deut 32:5-6 where "bought" is used in the sense of create and own, therefore this passage teaches that Christ has aquired, created and bought all people without exception including these false teachers. They are owned by the Lord in the sense that He is the One who has created them and to whom they by nature they owe their thanks, worship and adoration. Therefore, interpreting the text this way gives it the sense:

*"There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying **the sovereign Lord who created**<sup>64</sup> them and bring upon themselves swift destruction."*<sup>64</sup>

If some object that the word found in the LXX is not *agorazo*, then the answer would be that Peter was not citing, but alluding to the text and since these words are synonymous he was free to choose from both, there is therefore no radical difference between the two words.

The word Peter uses is *ἀγοράζω* (*agorazō*), which means, basically, "to buy." The LXX uses it in 1 Chronicles 21:24 where the Hebrew uses the word *קָנָה* (*qanah*), meaning "to get, acquire, create, buy, possess." The word used by the Septuagint in Exodus 15:16 and Deuteronomy 32:6 is *κτάομαι* (*ktaomai*), which means, "to acquire, get, or procure a thing for one's self, to possess," and is often used to refer to

<sup>64</sup> Dr. Gary D. Long - Redemption in II Peter 2:1 <http://www.the-highway.com/2Pet2.1.html>



something acquired at a price--a purchase. And sure enough, the Hebrew word used in those places is, again, qanah.

So agorazō and ktaomai are, indeed, largely synonymous. In many cases they can be used interchangeably, being used by the translators of the Septuagint to translate the same Hebrew word. Since Peter is hearkening back to the Old Testament, but not quoting the LXX, he's free to choose between these two Greek words to communicate the point.<sup>65</sup>

### Other Possible Interpretation

One possible interpretation is what has been called the *Christian Charity View*. By this is meant that we take the false teachers at their word. They claim to be Christians, we take them at their word even though they are not. Similar to 1Jn 2:19.

Support of this may be found in verses 18-22, they appear to be living the Christian life, but deep within they are wolves, they are false. Thus, if they professed to be Christian then that naturally meant that they were bought by Christ's blood.

But the difficulty within this view is the meaning of the words *despotes* and *agorazo* in this context.

Other interpretation similar to the Christian Charity View is called the *Temporal Deliverance View*. Those who hold to this view maintain that they were bought in the sense that they belonged to the Christian fellowship and thus like the Christian Charity View, they were taken at their word that they belonged to the Lord. Support of this position may be found in verses 20-21. To be in the congregation of the people of God, the false teachers are in a sense set apart and sanctified (yet not soteriologically) from worldliness as they are within a group which seeks to avoid that which is displeasing to God. In this sense they were bought and set apart and they later denied that profession.

### Difficulties With the Soteriological Interpretation

What if Christ did actually shed His blood for those false teachers? The difficulties found with this view include that 1) Christ is unable to save those for whom He died; 2) they were ordained to condemnation yet bought by Christ; 3) they are owned, acquired and bought by Christ; 4) Peter uses different language to speak of spiritual redemption.

Scripture as we saw above when I tried to make the case for Definite Redemption presents an atonement and a Savior that is perfect to save, without human assistance or addition to His perfect work. Christ purpose in dying was to truly and actually, not hypothetically redeem and free those for whom He died and Scripture presents Him as just doing that, without failure. If we say Christ substitutionarily even for the false teachers who will not come to saving faith, then we cannot escape that His work fails. As mediation and intercession is merely the continuation of His once for all time sacrifice, so then we must conclude that He fails even in His mediation and intercession on behalf of those for whom He died. But that is impossible (Heb 7:25; 8:6-13; 9:15; Rom 8:34).

Why would Christ die for those of whom it is said that they "long ago were designated for this condemnation" (Jude 1:4) and "Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep" (2Pet 2:3). So, they are ordained for condemnation, yet Christ dies to try to save them? Does that make a lick of sense? Some have said, I don't understand how they can say that, that Christ died for all so that no man may have an excuse and that they might justly be condemned for their sin of unbelief. But Romans 1:18ff speaks of no such thing.

You must admit that is pretty weird for Christ to die in order to save those "who long ago were designated for this condemnation." They are further described as "like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed" and yet Christ died to save them although they were born to be caught and destroyed? Give me a break.

If people still maintain that the context is soteriological then they must explain how Christ has bought and owns those false teachers. The word *agorazo* has within it not merely the laying down of the price, but also the possession of the thing bought. Thus, if Universal Redemptionists want to maintain that Christ died substitutionarily for these false teachers who were ordained for condemnation and born to be caught and destroyed, then they have to explain

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<sup>65</sup> Chris - Limited Atonement and 2 Peter 2:1 [www.theopologetics.blogspot.nl/2011/06/irresistible-grace-and-false-prophets.html](http://www.theopologetics.blogspot.nl/2011/06/irresistible-grace-and-false-prophets.html)

in what way they are owned by Christ. If I buy a book from a store, the book is no longer in the possession of the store, but it is mine. The owners have changed. How or in what way is Christ the owner of these false prophets?

Peter perfectly knows how to speak of our spiritual redemption, yet he does not do so here (1Pet 1:18-19). He speaks of our spiritual redemption with no unclear terms mentioning the price and everything, yet here he is silent about that. The word *agorazo* is furthermore not used by Peter anywhere else and therefore we are dependent upon the context to understand the intended meaning of the word.

## Conclusion

I don't imagine that I have given a definite and concrete interpretation, but I believe that I have provided a good defense why this passage is not soteriological and does not speak of Christ's blood being shed and yet He failing to redeem those for whom His blood was shed. And provided some difficulties that I see with the soteriological interpretation.

The interpretation that I have presently provided seems most consistent with the Biblical testimony I believe.

Now some commentaries.

### ESV Study Bible:

- **2 Pet. 2:1** Peter describes the false teachers. **secretly**. They will subvert the truth by surreptitiously bringing **destructive heresies** into the church. These heresies will be contrary to what Christ and the apostles laid down as foundational doctrines (cf. Eph. 2:20–22), resulting in spiritual ruin rather than life. The false teachers will even deny the truth about the **Master** (Jesus Christ) **who bought them**. Peter apparently uses the language of redemption (“bought them”) here in the same way that he describes the counterfeit “salvation” of the false teachers at the end of ch. 2: that is, they claimed to be “redeemed” and “saved” because they were part of the church, but their apostasy showed that they were not truly believers. Another interpretation is that Christ’s death paid the penalty for their sins (“bought them”) but God did not apply this payment to them because they rejected Christ.

### ESV Reformation Study Bible:

- **2:1 heresies**. The Greek term at one time referred to groups or sects in a neutral sense (cf. “sect,” Acts 24:5). It was used by Paul of divisive groups (1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20), and it came to denote the specific teachings of such groups. Here, teachings regarding Christian conduct are probably in view—conduct that placed the teachers under judgment (v. 3; 3:7).
- **denying the Master who bought them**. Peter is not saying Christians can lose their salvation (John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:28–30), but is describing the false teachers in terms of their own profession of faith (vv. 20, 21). By teaching and practicing immorality they despise the lordship of Christ and prove their profession to be false (1 John 2:3, 4, 19).
- Though the phrase “the Master who bought them” is taken by some to mean that Christ’s substitutionary death applies to all rather than to the elect only (see “Definite Redemption” at John 10:15), Peter’s concern here is to highlight the responsibility of the false teachers rather than to advance a theory of the Atonement. With their claim to be redeemed by Christ, their “sensuality” (v. 2) brings particular dishonor on Christ and His sacrifice for sin.

### ESV MacArthur Study Bible:

- **2:1 false prophets**. Peter described false teachers in detail in this chapter so that Christians would always recognize their characteristics and methods. The greatest sin of Christ-rejecters and the most damning work of Satan is misrepresentation of the truth and its consequent deception. Nothing is more wicked than for someone to claim to speak for God to the salvation of souls when in reality he speaks for Satan to the damnation of souls (cf. Deut. 13:1-18; 18:20; Jer. 23; Ezek. 13; Matt. 7:15; 23:1-36; 24:4-5; Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 11:13-14; Gal. 3:1-2; 2 Tim. 4:3-4). **among the people**. “The people” is used in the NT of Israel (cf. Acts 26:17, 23). Peter’s point, though, is that Satan has always endeavored to infiltrate groups of believers with the deceptions of false teachers (cf. John 8:44). Since Eve, he has been in the deceit business (see notes on 2 Cor. 11:3-4). **secretly bring in destructive heresies**. The false parade themselves as Christian pastors, teachers, and evangelists (cf. Jude 4). “Heresies” means self-designed religious lies that lead to division and faction (cf.

1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20). The Greek word for “destructive” basically means damnation. This word is used six times in this letter and always speaks of final damnation (2 Pet. 2:1-3; 3:7, 16). This is why it is so tragic when a church makes a virtue out of the toleration of unscriptural teachings and ideas in the name of love and unity (see 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 3:9-11). **denying the Master.** This phrase exposes the depth of the crime and guilt of the false teachers. This unusual Greek word for “Master” or “Lord” appears 10 times in the NT and means one who has supreme authority, whether human authority or divine authority. Peter here warns that false prophets deny the sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ. Though their heresies may include the denial of the virgin birth, deity, bodily resurrection, and second coming of Christ, the false teachers’ basic error is that they will not submit their lives to the rule of Christ. All false religions have an erroneous Christology. **who bought them.** The terms that Peter used here are more analogical than theological, speaking of a human master over a household. The master bought slaves, and the slaves owed the master allegiance as their sovereign. (For an OT parallel, see Deut. 32:5-6, where God is said to have bought Israel, though they rejected him.) Doctrinally, this analogy can be viewed as responsibility for submission to God, which the false teachers had refused. Beyond this, they are probably claiming that they were Christians, so that the Lord had bought them actually and personally. With some sarcasm, Peter mocks such a claim by writing of their coming damnation. Thus, the passage is describing the sinister character of the false teachers who claim Christ, but deny his lordship over their lives. **swift destruction.** This refers to either physical death or judgment at the return of Christ (Prov. 29:1; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).

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## 2 Peter 3:8-9<sup>66</sup>

*But do not overlook this one fact, **beloved**, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not slow to **fulfill his promise** as some count slowness, but is **patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish**, but that **all should reach repentance**.*

This along with 1Tim 2:3-4 is one of the most cited passages against Limited Atonement. The claim is as is with 1Tim 2:4 that God does not want or wish that anyone should perish. He really wants everyone to come to repentance. As we said above on 1Tim 2:4 so now we repeat: there are two wishes of God involved here, one stronger than the other. He really wants to save everyone, yet His stronger/higher desire is that people have libertarian free will and by their libertarian free will come to choose Him.

We can directly see the stress laid by Arminians and some (I believe, inconsistent) Calvinists which fall back as with 1Tim 2:4 to the “will of desire interpretation” upon reading “any” and “all” in the text. I don’t think that is necessary.

Let’s first realize who the audience is. In verses 1 and 8 they are called “beloved” which Peter does not call anyone other than the believers. Out of the eight times that it is used the only time it does not refer to believers (2Pet 1:17) is when Peter quotes the words of the Father to the Son. All the other seven references are to the believers to whom he was writing (1Pet 2:11; 4:12; 2Pet 3:1, 8, 14, 15, 17). 1 Peter 3:1 points back to the previous letter wherein they are addressed as “elect exiles” (1Pet 1:1). The recipients of the letter and the audience of Peter are elect believers.

What is the promise of the Lord? This promise concerns His Parousia which the scoffers scoff at. God the Father is patient in not sending the Son yet, because after the Son comes there will be no second chances. God is slow to anger and long suffering “toward you.” The object of God’s patience are the believers.

I think it is perfectly clear that Peter was writing to those who professed the name of Christ and not only professed knew Christ. Notice the object of God’s patience, it is not the “any” or the “all”, but specifically “you” - the beloved, the believers. The ὑμᾶς (*humas*) in the verse is plural, Peter is speaking to the beloved collectively. He is not speaking to the person reading the letter, but to the congregation to whom he under inspiration wrote. As the beloved are the believers, so the text is actually saying that God does not wish any of the believers perish until they should reach repentance. Rather than undermine Calvinism, this verse supports it, but I’m getting ahead of myself.

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.objectivegospel.org/the-big-three>

As the verse continues we come to that "any" part. Does the audience of the verse now at once change? Does the "any" and the "all" now become any of all humans without exception? What reason do we have to think of this? We have already argued that the object of God's patience and long suffering are the beloved and not all men without exception. Therefore, how does it make sense to say that God is long suffering toward the believers, but not wishing any man without exception to perish, but all without exception come to repentance? Doesn't it seem consistent to maintain the same group throughout the verse, i.e. the believers, God's elect (1Pet 1:1)? The Universal Redemptionist interpretation cuts the flow of the passage in half. In the one half Peter is speaking about the believers, but then he switches to speak of all men without exception although the object of God's patience are the believers on which is based the fact that God is not willing that they perish and should come to repentance.

The object or group under discussion is the plural "you" of the beloved believers, therefore naturally the "any" and "all" are to be understood as "any of you" and "all of you." God is not willing that any of the believers, i.e. the elect should perish, but should come to repentance. This supports the perfect work of the Son on behalf of the elect rather than undermine it (Jn 6:37-40). Christ will lose none for whom He died and will bring them to repentance and faith. If God were to sent Christ back then, then all of us would not have existed and thus would not have been saved and brought into communion with the Triune God. But He is patient and He delays the Son's Parousia for the sake of the elect and them being brought into the Kingdom.

This is the consistent reading of the passage. It may be illustrated thus in a table:

<b>The Object of God's Patience</b>	is patient toward "you"
<b>What God Does Not Want</b>	not wishing that any should perish
<b>The Purpose for God's Patience</b>	but that all should reach repentance

What of the word "wishing"? Some think that this word like "desires" in 1Tim 2:4 supports the "will of desire" view. God desires that all be saved, but He has a higher purpose, namely the manifestation of His wrath and grace. This idea fails for the same reason that it failed in 2Tim 2:4. God does whatever He pleases. If He pleased to save all people, therefore all would have been saved. But since not all will be saved, therefore He has not desired the salvation of all without exception.

The word for wishing is defined as:

- Original: βούλομαι
- Transliteration: Boulomai
- Phonetic: boo<sup>1</sup>-lom-ahee
- Definition:
  1. to will deliberately, have a purpose, be minded
  2. of willing as an affection, to desire
- Origin: middle voice of a primary verb
- TDNT entry: 11:29,1
- Part(s) of speech: Verb<sup>67</sup>

I believe it would be wrong to speak of 2Pet 3:9 expressing an unfulfilled desire within God. The word "wishing" may be translated with "willing" as in the KJV or "wanting" as in the HCSB. The word does not carry within it an idea of unfulfilled desire or a lower desire than something else. Neither does the word wish actually. The word is used in James 1:18 to speak of God's will which regenerated us and made us born again. Is the will and desire of God frustrated somehow? That which God wills and wishes happens (e.g. Job 23:13; 42:2; Ps 115:3).

Therefore there is no reason to hold to the will of desire interpretation as the context is clear about the audience whom Peter is addressing are the believers and it is consistent with the flow of the passage.

<sup>67</sup> Thayer's Greek Definitions, G1014.

An objection raised against the idea that this passage teaches universal redemption or God's desire to save all people without exception may be leveled to the effect: What do we do when God wills people to perish?

We are faced with that even in the present context. Notice in chapters 2 and 3 the "they's" used to distinguish the false prophets and scoffers from the beloved. Peter tells us that "the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (2Pet 3:7), yet two verses later he tells us that God is willing that all people without exception including those ungodly whose destruction awaits them by fire? Does that make sense to you? God is willing to destroy the ungodly, yet at the same time He is willing that they not perish and come to repentance. Certainly this further supports the case that the audience of 2Pet 3:9 are the elect.

Furthermore, we have already considered 2Pet 2:1 let us look how these false prophets are described.

2Pet 2:3 And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Jude 1:4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Does it make sense to say that God wills the repentance of those whom He has long ago designated for condemnation? It doesn't to me at least. Moreover they are described as being "like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed", but God does not actually will their destruction?

2Pet 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment,

He keeps them under punishment, yet He desires that they repent? They were made "for the day of disaster" (Prov 16:4) yet God does not desire their destruction, but their repentance? For more see **God's sovereignty in Reprobation.**

All these are reason which make the passage inconsistent if interpreted with the scope of all men without exception. Therefore the sense of the passage could be given thus:

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you [the beloved], not wishing that any [of you] should perish, but that all [of you] should reach repentance.

#### Commentaries

John MacArthur says the following in the **ESV MacArthur Study Bible**:

- **2 Pet. 3:9 not slow.** That is, not loitering or late (cf. Gal. 4:4; Titus 2:13; Heb. 6:18; 10:23, 37; Rev. 19:11). **patient toward you.** "You" is the saved, the people of God. He waits for them to be saved. God has an immense capacity for patience before he breaks forth in judgment (cf. 2 Pet. 3:15; Joel 2:13; Luke 15:20; Rom. 9:22; 1 Pet. 3:15). God endures endless blasphemies against his name, along with rebellion, murders, and the ongoing breaking of his law, waiting patiently while he is calling and redeeming his own. It is not impotence or slackness that delays final judgment; it is patience. **not wishing that any should perish.** The "any" must refer to those whom the Lord has chosen and will call to complete the redeemed, i.e., the "you." Since the whole passage is about God's destroying the wicked, his patience is not so he can save all of them, but so that he can receive all his own. He can't be waiting for everyone to be saved, since the emphasis is that he will destroy the world and the ungodly. Those who do perish and go to hell, go because they are depraved and worthy only of hell and have rejected the only remedy, Jesus Christ, not because they were created for hell and predetermined to go there. The path to damnation is the path of a non-repentant heart; it is the path of one who rejects the person and provision of Jesus Christ and holds on to sin (cf. Isa. 55:1; Jer. 13:17; Ezek. 18:32; Matt. 11:28; 23:37; Luke 13:3; John 3:16; 8:21, 24; 1 Tim. 2:3–4; Rev. 22:17). **all should reach repentance.** "All" (cf. "you," "any") must refer to all who are God's people who will come to Christ to



make up the full number of the people of God. The reason for the delay in Christ's coming and the attendant judgments is not because he is slow to keep his promise, or because he wants to judge more of the wicked, or because he is impotent in the face of wickedness. He delays his coming because he is patient and desires the time for his people to repent.

The **ESV Reformation Study Bible** explains:

- **3:9 as some count slowness.** See v. 4. **patient . . . all should reach repentance.** Peter's Christian readers must realize that the apparent delay of divine judgment is a sign of God's forbearance and mercy toward them, particularly toward the believers in their midst who have been confused and misled by the false teachers. The repentance in view, for the sake of which God delays judgment, is that of God's people rather than the world at large. God is not willing that any of His elect should perish (John 6:39).

The **HCSB Study Bible** explains:

- **3:9** The Lord has not yet returned, says Peter, because He is **patient with you, not wanting any to perish**. "You" is variously interpreted as a reference to the letter's Christian recipients (identified in 1:1) or else more broadly as all people. In chapter 1 "you" and "your" both refer back to the recipients identified in 1:1 (see 1:2,4,5,8,10,11,12,13,15,16,19,20). Peter's later use of "dear friends," (3:1,8,14,17) seems also to point back to those identified in 1:1.

What **Matthew Henry** said about 2 Peter 3:9:<sup>68</sup>

- That what men count slackness is truly long-suffering, and that to us-ward; it is giving more time to his own people, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world, many of whom are not as yet converted; and those who are in a state of grace and favour with God are to advance in knowledge and holiness, and in the exercise of faith and patience, to abound in good works, doing and suffering what they are called to, that they may bring glory to God, and improve in a meetness for heaven; for God is not willing that any of these should perish, but that all of them should come to repentance. Here observe, 1. Repentance is absolutely necessary in order to salvation. Except we repent, we shall perish, Luke 13:3; Luke 13:5. 2. God has no delight in the death of sinners: as the punishment of sinners is a torment to his creatures, a merciful God does not take pleasure in it; and though the principal design of God in his long-suffering is the blessedness of those whom he has chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth, yet his goodness and forbearance do in their own nature invite and call to repentance all those to whom they are exercised; and, if men continue impenitent when God gives them space to repent, he will deal more severely with them, though the great reason why he did not hasten his coming was because he had not accomplished the number of his elect. "Abuse not therefore the patience and long-suffering of God, by abandoning yourselves to a course of ungodliness; presume not to go on boldly in the way of sinners, nor to sit down securely in an unconverted impenitent state, as he who said (Matt. xxiv. 48), My Lord delayeth his coming, lest he come and surprise you;"

Here is what **John Gill** said:<sup>69</sup>

- **but is longsuffering to us-ward:** not to all the individuals of human nature, for the persons intended by us are manifestly distinguished from "some men" in the text, and from scoffers, mocking at the promise of Christ's coming, in the context, 2Pe 3:3; and are expressly called beloved, 2Pe 3:1; and God's longsuffering towards them is their salvation, 2Pe 3:15, nor is it true of all men, that God is not willing that any of them should perish, and that everyone of them should come to repentance, since many of them do perish in their sins, and do not come to repentance, which would not be the case, if his determining will was otherwise; besides, a society or company of men are designed, to which the apostle himself belonged, and of which he was a part; and who are described, in his epistles, as the elect of God, called out of darkness, into marvellous light, and having obtained like precious faith with the apostles; and must be understood either of God's elect among the Jews, for Peter was a Jew, and they were Jews he wrote to; and then the sense is, that the delay of Christ's coming is not owing to any slackness in him, but to his longsuffering to his elect among the Jews,

<sup>68</sup> Matthew Henry, Whole Bible Commentary, taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>69</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

being unwilling that any of that number among them should perish, but that all of them repent of their sins, and believe in him; and therefore he waits till their conversion is over, when a nation shall be born at once, and they that have pierced him look on him and mourn, and so all Israel shall be saved; or rather of the elect in general, whether among Jews or Gentiles, upon whom the Lord waits to be gracious, and whose longsuffering issues in their conversion and salvation. And upon account of these the Lord stays his coming till their number is complete in the effectual calling; and for their sakes he is longsuffering to others, and bears with a wicked world, with the idolatry, superstition, heresy, profaneness, and impiety, with which it abounds; but when the last man that belongs to that number is called, he will quickly descend in flames of fire, and burn the world, and the wicked in it, and take his chosen ones to himself. The Alexandrian copy reads, "for you", or your sakes; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions. A passage somewhat like to this is met with in a book of the Jews {f}, esteemed by them very ancient.

"God prolongs or defers his anger with men; and one day, which is a thousand years, is fixed, besides the seventy years he delivered to David the king.--And he does not judge man by his evil works which he continually does, for if so, the world would not stand; but the holy blessed God defers his anger with the righteous, and the wicked, that they may return, by perfect repentance, and be established in this world, and in the world to come."

And it is an observation of theirs {g}, that when God is said to be "longsuffering", it is not written ארך אפים, but ארך אפים, intimating, that he is longsuffering both to the righteous and the wicked; but then he bears with the latter, for the sake of the former: compare with this passage Re 6:9;

- **not willing that any should perish;** not any of the us, whom he has loved with an everlasting love, whom he has chosen in his Son, and given to him, and for whom he has died, and who are brought to believe in him. These, though they were lost in Adam, did not perish; and though in their own apprehensions, when awakened and convinced, are ready to perish; and though their peace, joy, and comfort, may perish for a while, and they may fear a final and total perishing; yet they shall never perish as others do, or be punished with everlasting destruction: and that this is the will of God, appears by his choice of them to salvation; by the provisions of grace for them in an everlasting covenant; by the security of their persons in the hands of Christ; by sending his Son to obtain salvation for them, and his Spirit to apply it to them; and by his keeping them by his power, through faith, unto salvation.
- **But that all should come to repentance;** not legal, but evangelical, without which all must perish; and which all God's elect stand in need of, as well as others, being equally sinners; and which they cannot come to of themselves, and therefore he not only calls them to it, in his word, and by his spirit and grace, but bestows it upon them; he has exalted Christ at his own right hand, to give it to them; and repentance is a grant from him, a free gift of his grace; and the Spirit is sent down into their hearts to work it in them, to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh; without which, whatever time and space may be given, or means afforded, even the most awful judgments, the greatest mercies, and the most powerful ministry, will be of no avail.
- {f} Zohar in Gen. fol. 83. 3. {g} T. Hieros, Taanith, fol. 65. 2. T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 50. 2.

## 1 John 2:1-2<sup>70</sup>

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. <sup>2</sup> He is the **propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.***

Obviously one can feel the weight of these words. The passage speaks of Christ the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. It is not that He is the propitiation for our sins, but the whole world. Obviously, the point of contentions is on the meaning of the phrase "whole world" in the context.

We agree that "whole world" can mean all creatures, all humans or creation (Job 34:13; Mt 16:26; Rom 3:19). But what about the times that it does not? First let us see that the phrase "whole world" does not necessarily mean

<sup>70</sup> A.W. Pink, The Sovereignty of God, pp. 293-298

“every single human being on the planet”, in fact it refers more to the world as a place rather than the people (aside from Rom 3:19 perhaps, see Job 34:13; Isa 27:6; Mt 16:26; 24:14; 26:13; Rev 3:10; 12:9; 16:14).

That the phrase does not mean all people without exception is seen from its use by John in chapter 5.

1John 5:19 We know that we are from God, and **the whole world** lies in the power of the evil one.

Does "whole world" here include the believers also? The word κεῖται is translated here "lies" and it means "is held in subjection." (Thayer's Greek Definitions, G2749) It shows that the whole world is under the control of the devil.

Well if "whole world" means all people without exception then it would mean that the believers are also held in subjection to the devil. Are we ready to give into that? That is contrary even to the present context.

While the "whole world" lies "in the power of the evil one" we are "in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." We are in Christ and His power, not the devil's, therefore this would mean that the believers are not included in the phrase "whole world."

The previous verse says of the one born from God that "God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him." Therefore, the "whole world" of 1Jn 5:19 cannot include within it those born of God, i.e. the believing – the elect. Furthermore, the believers have overcome the world and the evil one (1Jn 2:13-14; 1Jn 4:3-4; 1Jn 5:4-5).

We have thereby not demonstrated what "whole world" means in 1Jn 2:2, but we have demonstrated that the idea that whole world means all humanity without exception is a *a priori* assumption and not something proven from the text.

The phrase (ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου) is composed of the word κόσμος and ὅλος. Both words in the dative are found in Rom 1:8 –

Rom 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in **all the world**.

Wow, so the faith of the believers in the Roman church was known by every individual and every country even prior to the close of the first century after Christ?

No one in daily reading this passage will think that it means that all people without exception are speaking of the faith of the Romans, or that people in every nation in the world are speaking of the faith of the believers. Rather, the idea we get is that the faith of the Romans has spread abroad quickly to many churches and other countries, and by no means it means in every single country or to every single person. See also Col 1:26 the phrase is slightly different in the Greek (παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ), though with the same meaning.

As we said above and as we will always say: context determines what the word world means.

John is giving encouragement to believers that they will find forgiveness in the Lord Jesus. If anyone sins and confesses their sins, God is just and faithful to cleanse us (1Jn 1:9). He is just because He has punished Christ in our place for our sins. Thus, God is not throwing our sin under the rug, rather He has already punished them in the Substitute. He is faithful, because He is will that His children be saved and have fellowship with Him and receive the benefits of Christ's cross.

John is writing so that the believers won't sin and won't live in sin. But even if they do, they must realize that there is an Advocate on our behalf.

The word παράκλητος is used 5 times in the writings of John (Jn 14:6, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1Jn 2:1), it is only here that it refers to the Lord Jesus, all the other instances in the Gospel they refer to the Holy Spirit. The word means:

1. summoned, called to one's side, esp. called to one's aid

- a. one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate
- b. one who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor<sup>71</sup>

The Lord Jesus as our advocate, defender and the friend in time of sin goes before the Father and pleads for our forgiveness and restoration on the basis of His perfect once for all time work.

Intercession and mediation is part of the priestly work. The Lord intercedes on behalf of and pleads for the people for whom He offered His sacrifice much like in John 17.

Christ's intercessory work is perfect and limited to the believers (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 9:24). John speaks of us having an advocate, not everyone. It is the believers who have Christ as their Parakletos. The unbelieving will not come to Christ as their advocate as they are enemies of His and do not desire Him unless the Father draws them to Him (Rom 3:11; Jn 6:44).

The fact that we have Christ as our Advocate is based in that He is the "propitiation for our sins." It is because He has made satisfaction to the wrath that was against us that He is our Advocate and now applies the benefits of the cross to us in time of need and sin.

It is Christ alone the propitiation. Christ's sacrifice was meant to take away sin (see above). The question at hand is: Did Christ appease the wrath of God or not?

If He did and the phrase "whole world" means all people without exception, then God will not count anyone's sin against them and all will be forgiven on the basis of Christ's appeasement of God's wrath against all humanity. But if Christ the spotless sacrifice did not appease the wrath of God on behalf of every single individual, then it explains the fact why people must still try to "appease" God's wrath and pay for their sins in hell.

Propitiation is limited to those who believe (Rom 3:26). But that in turn does not mean that Christ has propitiated God on behalf of every single individual and now they must receive that propitiation. The reason that it is wrong is because it does not trust in the finished work of Christ on our behalf, and gives man reason to boast.

If Christ has propitiated the Father on behalf of everyone and to receive the propitiation we must repent and believe, it puts the "difference making" within man and not God (1Cor 1:30). If Christ has satisfied the wrath of God on behalf of X in the same way Y, and X believes while Y does not believe then the difference was in man and not God. There is something that X can boast about that made him different than Y.

No true Christian boasts in his salvation, neither will I claim that Arminians think that they saved themselves or have a reason to boast. But what I'm trying to argue is that their position as I laid it out above, that propitiation is made on behalf of everyone yet we have to believe for it to be effected is true, then man does in this scenario have a reason to boast. Though Arminians as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ will not boast in their salvation.

Second, that would not make the propitiation actually the satisfaction of divine wrath, rather possibly upon the fulfilling of a condition. That is why I began our discussion of the atonement first by arguing for a substitutionary atonement.

How are we then to understand this passage? I believe that John is saying that Christ satisfied God's wrath on behalf of those to whom he is writing, but not only those but on behalf of all kinds of people from all over the world.

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<sup>71</sup> Thayer's Greek Definitions, G3875.

Okay, that's a big assertion, let's try to prove it. First let us notice the parallel between John 11:51-52 and the present passage. I believe again as John was commenting on Jn 3:16 in 1Jn 4:7-10, so likewise it appears that here he has in mind Jn 11:49-52.

After the resurrection of Lazarus and the Jews witnessing that, they were all the more motivated to get rid of the Lord Jesus. So they gathered together to form their plans against our Lord. They are afraid that Jesus would stir riots or cause trouble with the Romans so that the Jews will be punished and they would be taken out of the land (Jn 11:48). As they were arguing and speaking, the high priest stood up and spoke the last word:

John 11:49-50 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. 50 Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."

Caiaphas said it is better to get rid of one person, i.e. Jesus, rather than to see Rome destroying the whole Jewish nation. It was better for Jesus to die for or instead of the people and not the people perish.

It is interesting what Caiaphas is saying here, though he is saying it with a different intent, yet the Sovereign spoke even through this wicked man:

John 11:51-52 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that **Jesus would die for the nation**, 52 and **not for the nation only**, but also to gather into one the **children of God who are scattered abroad**.

It was God who spoke through Caiaphas and it was God who predestined the cross (Acts 2:23; 4:26-27). Obviously the stress for the present purpose is upon "die for the nation." Does this mean that Christ would die for the whole Jewish nations, even for Caiaphas himself?

I don't think that is the aim of what John is trying to say here. There is a limiter within the passage, the limiter is found in verse 52, it is "the children of God." The children of God from the Jewish nation and also from the Gentiles (Jn 10:14-16).

Christ did not die for Jews alone, but also for non-Jews also, since His death is the ransom for the redemption of sinners. But notice how His death is connected with the gathering of the children of God. It does not speak of gathering all people, rather it is specific. It only speaks about the children of God.

Jesus died so that He would gather all the children of God, all His sheep into one fold (Jn 10:14-16; Eph 2:11-22).

"The children of God" is what limits the intent, not the power of the atonement, since He died to gather and He will not fail to gather. The phrase thus also limits the scope of the atonement. For why would Christ die for one whom He does not want to gather, or one whom the Father has not given Him, or one who is not destined to be a child of God?

Now we will demonstrate the connection with 1Jn 2:2 which is plain to see –

1 John 2:2	John 11:51-52
He is the <b>propitiation for our sins</b> ,	...he prophesied that Jesus would <b>die for the nation</b> ,
and <b>not for ours only</b>	and <b>not for the nation only</b> ,
but also for the <b>sins of the whole world</b> .	but also to <b>gather</b> into one the <b>children of God who are scattered abroad</b> .

Seeing that the scope in John 11 is limited to the "children of God" which was the basis of this text; propitiation is something definite spoken on behalf of the believers; intercession is a perfect work based on the sacrifice offered whole world cannot but mean the world of believers. It refers to Christ being the propitiation for "people...from every tribe and language and people and nation" which may properly called whole world and world.



It is because we believe the Savior's work is perfect and complete that we must guard His perfect, finished and definite atonement on behalf of everyone whom the Father intended to save.

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- 1 John 2:2 **Propitiation** (Gk.hilasmos) here means “a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath and turns it to favor,” and that is also the meaning of the English word “propitiation.” (See note on Rom. 3:25.) As the perfect sacrifice for sin, Jesus turns away God’s wrath (see also 1 John 4:10). **For the sins of the whole world** does not mean that every person will be saved, for John is clear that forgiveness of sins comes only to those who repent and believe the gospel (see 2:4, 23; 3:10; 5:12; cf. John 3:18; 5:24). But Jesus’ sacrifice is offered and made available to everyone in “the whole world,” not just to John and his current readers.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** explains:

- **Propitiation.** C.f. 4:10. The word means “appeasement” or “satisfaction.” The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross satisfied the demands of God’s holiness for the punishment of sin (cf. Rom. 1:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph 2:3). So Jesus propitiated or satisfied God. **For the sins of the whole world.** This is a generic term, referring not to every single individual, but to mankind in general. Christ actually paid the penalty only for those who would repent and believe. A number of Scripture indicates that Christ died for the world (John 1:29; 3:16; 6:51; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb 2:9). Most of the world will be eternally condemned to hell to pay for their own sins, so they could not have been paid for by Christ. The passages that speak of Christ’s dying for the whole world must be understood to refer to mankind in general (as in Titus 2:3-4). “World” indicates the sphere, the beings toward whom God seeks reconciliation and has provided propitiation. God has mitigated his wrath on sinners temporarily, by letting them live and enjoy earthly life. In that sense, Christ has provided a brief, temporal propitiation for the whole world. But he actually satisfied fully the wrath of God eternally only for the elect who believe. Christ’s death in itself had unlimited and infinite value because he is Holy God. Thus his sacrifice was sufficient to pay the penalty for all the sins of all whom God brings to faith. But the actual satisfaction and atonement was made only for those who believe (cf. John 10:11, 15; 17:9, 20; Acts 20:28; Rom 8:32, 37; Eph 5:25). The pardon for sin is offered to the whole world, but received only by those who believe (cf. 1 John 4:9, 14; John 5:24). There is no other way to be reconciled to God.

The **HCSB Study Bible** says:

- Jesus' perfect obedience and sacrificial death satisfied God's just demand for sin to be punished ( **propitiation**). But His punishment was for others, not for Himself. The phrase **for those of the whole world** does not mean the salvation of all people. It does mean that, in keeping with God's promise to bless all the nations through Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:3), Jesus' saving death extends the offer of salvation to all nations.

What **Matthew Henry** said about 1 John 2:1-2<sup>72</sup>

- By the plea he has to make, the ground and basis of his advocacy: And he is the propitiation for our sins, v. 2. He is the expiatory victim, the propitiatory sacrifice that has been offered to the Judge for all our offences against his majesty, and law, and government. In vain do the professors of Rome distinguish between and advocate of redemption and an advocate of intercession, or a mediator of such different service. The Mediator of intercession, the Advocate for us, is the Mediator of redemption, the propitiation for our sins. It is his propitiation that he pleads. And we might be apt to suppose that his blood had lost its value and efficacy if no mention had been made of it in heaven since the time it was shed. But now we see it is of esteem there, since it is continually represented in the intercession of the great advocate (the attorney-general) for the church of God. He ever lives to make intercession for those that come to God through him. 4. By the extent of his plea, the latitude of his propitiation. It is not confined to one nation; and not particularly to the ancient Israel of God: He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only (not only for the sins of us Jews, us that are Abraham's seed according to the flesh), but also for those of the whole world (v. 2); not only for the past, or us present believers, but for the sins of all who shall hereafter believe on him

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<sup>72</sup> Matthew Henry, Whole Bible Commentary, taken from the Bible software The Word. See “[Resources](#).”

or come to God through him. The extent and intent of the Mediator's death reach to all tribes, nations, and countries. As he is the only, so he is the universal atonement and propitiation for all that are saved and brought home to God, and to his favour and forgiveness.

This is what **John Gill** said:<sup>73</sup>

- **And he is the propitiation for our sins**,.... For the sins of us who now believe, and are Jews:
- **and not for ours only**; but for the sins of Old Testament saints, and of those who shall hereafter believe in Christ, and of the Gentiles also, signified in the next clause:
- **but also for [the sins] of the whole world**; the Syriac version renders it, "not for us only, but also for the whole world"; that is, not for the Jews only, for John was a Jew, and so were those he wrote unto, but for the Gentiles also. Nothing is more common in Jewish writings than to call the Gentiles **עלמא**, "the world"; and
- **כל העולם**, "the whole world"; and **אומות העולם**, "the nations of the world" {l}; [See comments on John 12:19]; and the word "world" is so used in Scripture; see Joh 3:16; and stands opposed to a notion the Jews have of the Gentiles, that **אין להן כפרה**, "there is no propitiation for them" {m}: and it is easy to observe, that when this phrase is not used of the Gentiles, it is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense; as when they say {n},
- "it happened to a certain high priest, that when he went out of the sanctuary, **כולי עלמא**, "the whole world" went after him;"
- which could only design the people in the temple. And elsewhere {o} it is said,
- **אמלע ילwk**, "the "whole world" has left the Misna, and gone after the "Gemara";"
- which at most can only intend the Jews; and indeed only a majority of their doctors, who were conversant with these writings: and in another place {p},
- **אמלע ילwk**, "the whole world" fell on their faces, but Raf did not fall on his face;"
- where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, it is said {q}, when
- **ר. שמואל בן גמליאל** entered (the synagogue), **כולי עלמא**, "the whole world" stood up before him;"
- that is, the people in the synagogue: to which may be added {r},
- "when a great man makes a mourning, **כולי עלמא**, "the whole world" come to honour him;"
- i.e. a great number of persons attend the funeral pomp: and so these phrases, **כולי עלמא לא פליגי**, "the whole world" is not divided, or does not dissent {s}; **כולי עלמא סברי**, "the whole world" are of opinion {t}, are frequently met with in the Talmud, by which, an agreement among the Rabbins, in certain points, is designed; yea, sometimes the phrase, "all the men of the world" {u}, only intend the inhabitants of a city where a synagogue was, and, at most, only the Jews: and so this phrase, "all the world", or "the whole world", in Scripture, unless when it signifies the whole universe, or the habitable earth, is always used in a limited sense, either for the Roman empire, or the churches of Christ in the world, or believers, or the present inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only, Lu 2:1; and so it is in this epistle, 1Jo 5:19; where the whole world lying in wickedness is manifestly distinguished from the saints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and therefore cannot be understood of all the individuals in the world; and the like distinction is in this text itself, for "the sins of the whole world" are opposed to "our sins", the sins of the apostle and others to whom he joins himself; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whose sins Christ is a propitiation as for theirs: so that this passage cannot furnish out any argument for universal redemption; for besides these things, it may be further observed, that for whose sins Christ is a propitiation, their sins are atoned for and pardoned, and their persons justified from all sin, and so shall certainly be glorified, which is not true of the whole world, and every man and woman in it; moreover, Christ is a propitiation through faith in his blood, the benefit of his propitiatory sacrifice is only received and enjoyed through faith; so that in the event it appears that Christ is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind; add to this, that for whom Christ is a propitiation he is also an advocate, 1Jo 2:1; but he is not an advocate for every individual person in the world; yea, there is a world he will not pray for Joh 17:9, and consequently is not a propitiation for them. Once more, the design of the apostle in these words is to comfort his "little children" with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin through weakness and inadvertency; but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation not only for the sins of the apostles and other saints, but for

<sup>73</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

the sins of every individual in the world, even of these that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances to argue rather against, than for themselves, and conclude that seeing persons might be damned notwithstanding the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that this might, and would be their case. In what sense Christ is a propitiation, [See comments on Ro 3:25]. The Jews have no notion of the Messiah as a propitiation or atonement; sometimes they say {w} repentance atones for all sin; sometimes the death of the righteous {x}; sometimes incense {y}; sometimes the priests' garments {z}; sometimes it is the day of atonement {a}; and indeed they are in the utmost puzzle about atonement; and they even confess in their prayers {b}, that they have now neither altar nor priest to atone for them; [See comments on 1Jo 4:10].

It's interesting to see how **John Calvin** saw this Scripture:<sup>74</sup>

- **2 And not for ours only** He added this for the sake of amplifying, in order that the faithful might be assured that the expiation made by Christ, extends to all who by faith embrace the gospel.
- Here a question may be raised, how have the sins of the whole world been expiated? I pass by the dotages of the fanatics, who under this pretense extend salvation to all the reprobate, and therefore to Satan himself. Such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation. They who seek to avoid this absurdity, have said that Christ (63) suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect. This solution has commonly prevailed in the schools. Though then I allow that what has been said is true, yet I deny that it is suitable to this passage; for the design of John was no other than to make this benefit common to the whole Church. Then under the word all or whole, he does not include the reprobate, but designates those who should believe as well as those who were then scattered through various parts of the world. For then is really made evident, as it is meet, the grace of Christ, when it is declared to be the only true salvation of the world.
- "It seems to me that the Apostle is to be understood as speaking only of all those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, over the whole world." — Doddridge. — Ed.

### Savior of the world verses (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14)

**Jn 4:42** *They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the **Savior of the world**."*

**1 Jn 4:14** *And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the **Savior of the world**.*

A lot of Christians take the word '**world**' to mean all without exception, rather than all without distinction. Somehow with the above passages they want to understand the word '**world**' to mean everyone without exception rather than everyone without distinction. "People for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9) is pretty much the world. But notice it's not every single one. The commentaries bellow will shed some light on the above verses.

The **ESV Study Bible** says:

- **John 4:41–42 Savior of the world.** Not just of Jews. Jesus' large-scale harvest among the Samaritans marks the first indication of the universal scope of his saving mission (cf. 10:16; 11:51–52). The early church engaged in a Samaritan mission as well (Acts 8:4–25). Hence the pattern of Jesus' mission according to John—from Judea (Nicodemus, John 3:1–15), to Samaria (4:1–42), to the Gentiles (4:46–54; cf. 12:20–33)—anticipates the post-Pentecost mission of the early church (cf. Acts 1:8).
- **1 John 4:14 we have seen and testify.** This was particularly and uniquely true for apostles like John, who were Jesus' hand-picked witnesses. By extension and through faith, all subsequent believers testify to the same truths. **Savior** occurs in John's writings only here and in John 4:42.

The **HCSB Study Bible** says:

- **4:41–42** As others had done (1:40–41,45), the woman brought people to Jesus so they could see for themselves. Ultimately, it was on the basis of a personal encounter with Jesus that they believed. His large harvest among the Samaritans marked the first sign of the universal scope of His saving mission (10:16; 11:51–52). The early church also undertook a Samaritan mission (Ac 8:4–25; cp. Ac 1:8). In fact, the pattern of Jesus' mission from Judea (Nicodemus, Jn 3), to Samaria (Jn 4), to the Gentiles (vv. 46–54; cp. 12:20–33), anticipated the post-Pentecost mission of the early church (Ac 1:8).

<sup>74</sup> John Calvin, Calvin's Complete Commentary. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

- **4:14** Like the "we" of the opening verses of 1 John, this **we** refers to John and other apostles. Few if any of John's readers would have actually **seen** Jesus in the flesh.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says:

- **4:42 Savior of the world.** This phrase occurs also in 1 John 4:14. This verse constitutes the climax to the story of the woman in Samaria. The Samaritans themselves became another in a series of witnesses in John's Gospel that demonstrated the identity of Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. This episode represents the first instance of cross-cultural evangelism (Acts 1:8).

### *The usage of "whoever," and "anyone"*

- A common objection against a particular redemption is to quote passages in which men are invited to believe, and then infer that man must have a free will and that Christ died for all men without exception. There are many "whoever" passages: "whoever believes" (Jn. 3:16; 11:26; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; Ac. 10:43, etc.); "whoever confesses" (Lk. 12:8); "whoever receives Me" (Mk. 9:37); "whoever will come after Me" (Mk. 8:34). Isaiah's prophetic invitation is often quoted: "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters" (55:1). The idea that the gospel is offered to all; therefore, God is trying to save all; or therefore, Christ died for all is an assumption. The gospel is to be preached to "all nations" (Mt. 28:19) and "to every creature" (Mk. 16:15) because God has His elect in every nation (Rev. 5:9). No one knows who is elect and who isn't; the gospel must be offered to all without exception. Jesus said, "many are called but few are chosen" (Mt. 22:14). Christ encouraged Paul to preach the gospel in Corinth; "for I have many people in this city" (Ac. 18:10). It is true that whoever believes in Christ will be saved, but the Bible teaches that some believe and others do not believe because of the electing choice of the Father and the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. God makes those dead in sins and unable, alive and able (Eph. 2:1). The unwilling are made willing. "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn. 6:44).<sup>75</sup>

### *John Owen's case for a Limited Atonement<sup>76</sup>*

The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either:

1. All the sins of all men.
2. All the sins of some men, or
3. Some of the sins of all men.

In which case it may be said:

1. That if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so, none are saved.
2. That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world, and this is the truth.
3. But if the first be the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins?

You answer, "Because of unbelief."

- I ask, is this unbelief a sin, or is it not?<sup>77</sup> If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for all their sins!"

### *Usage of the word "all", usually indicates all of a set or many depending on the context*

**Jer 13:19** The cities of the Negeb are shut up, with none to open them; **all Judah** is taken into exile, **wholly taken into exile**. (see Jer 39:9-10)

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/limitedatonement.html>

<sup>76</sup> John Owen, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ, Chapter III

<sup>77</sup> Jn 16:8-9 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> concerning **sin, because they do not believe in me;**

**Mt 2:3-4** When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and **all Jerusalem** with him; and assembling **all the chief priests** and **scribes** of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

**Mt 3:5** Then Jerusalem and **all Judea** and **all the region** about the Jordan were going out to him,

**Mt 5:11** “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and **utter all kinds of**<sup>78</sup> **evil** against you falsely on my account.

**Mt 10:21-22** Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,<sup>22</sup> and you will be **hated by all** for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

**Mk 1:5** And **all the country of Judea** and **all Jerusalem** were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.<sup>79</sup>

**Lk 3:21** Now when **all the people were baptized**, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened,

**Jn 4:29** “Come, see a man who told me **all that I ever did**. Can this be the Christ?”

**Jn 8:2** Early in the morning he came again to the temple. **All the people came to him**, and he sat down and taught them.

**Acts 2:17** ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will **pour out my Spirit on all flesh**, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

**Acts 10:12** In it were **all kinds of** animals and reptiles and birds of the air. (“kinds of” is not in the Greek text)

**Acts 10:39** And we are witnesses of **all that he did** both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree,

**Acts 17:21** Now **all the Athenians** and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.

**Acts 21:27-28** When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him,<sup>28</sup> crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is **teaching everyone everywhere** against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”

**Acts 22:14-15** And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;<sup>15</sup> for you will be **a witness for him to everyone** of what you have seen and heard.’<sup>80</sup>

**Acts 26:4** “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is **known by all the Jews**.

**1Cor 6:12** “**All things** are lawful for me,” but **not all things** are helpful. “**All things** are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.<sup>81</sup>

*Usage of the word “world”, usually means “many” or “all of a set or group”*

**Lk 2:1** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that **all the world should be registered**.

**Jn 6:33** For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and **gives life to the world**.”

**Jn 7:4** For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, **show yourself to the world**.”

**Jn 12:19** So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the **world has gone after him**.”

**Jn 13:1** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of **this world** to the Father, having **loved his own who were in the world**, he loved them to the end.

<sup>78</sup> “Kinds of” is not found in the Greek text.

<sup>79</sup> Luke 7:30 but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

<sup>80</sup> NASB “For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.”

<sup>81</sup> 1 Cor 6:9-11 lists sins that people who practice those will not inherit eternal life.



**Jn 14:17** even the **Spirit of truth**, whom **the world cannot receive**, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

**Jn 16:8-11** And when he comes, he will **convict the world** concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> concerning judgment, because the **ruler of this world** is judged.

**Acts 19:27** And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom **all Asia and the world worship.**"

**Rom 1:8** First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because **your faith is proclaimed in all the world.**<sup>82</sup>

**Col 1:3-6** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, as indeed **in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing**—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth<sup>83</sup>

**Rev 12:9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the **deceiver of the whole world**— he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

**Rev 13:3** One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and **the whole earth** marveled as they **followed the beast.**

**Rev 13:7-8** Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, <sup>8</sup> and **all who dwell on earth will worship it**, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

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<sup>82</sup> ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ (all the world) is also used in Mt 26:13 and there it is translated as "the whole world."

<sup>83</sup> The Gospel was not preached in the whole world literally at the time Colossians was written, which is around 62 AD. And the Gospel is still not preached to the whole world, if by "whole world" we mean every single individual living or nation.

## Irresistible Grace, Victorious Grace, Effectual Calling of the Spirit<sup>84</sup>

This is the belief that God is able to raise the spiritually dead sinner to life. This is an act of *efficient* grace. When God chooses to bring on of his elect to spiritual life, it is an act of similar to when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead: just as Lazarus was incapable of resisting the power of Christ in raising him from the dead, so too the dead sinner is incapable of resisting the power of God that raises him to spiritual life. This is *not* to say that men have not resisted God's grace. This doctrine speaks specifically to the grace that brings regeneration, not to individual acts of sin committed by believers or unbelievers.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to the outward general call to salvation, which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected. However, the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call, the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of these to whom it is extended.<sup>86</sup>

### General verses about Effectual Calling

**Ps 110:3** *Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments; from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.*

**Mt 16:15-17** *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"*<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, "You are the **Christ, the Son of the living God.**"<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not **revealed this to you, but my Father** who is in heaven.

**Lk 10:21-22** *In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have **hidden these things from the wise** and understanding and **revealed them to little children**; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will."*<sup>22</sup> *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and **anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.**"*

**Jn 6:37-40** *All that the **Father gives me will come to me**, and whoever comes to me **I will never cast out.***<sup>38</sup> *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*<sup>39</sup> *And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day.*<sup>40</sup> *For this is the will of my Father, that **everyone who looks on the Son** and believes in him should have **eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

**Jn 6:44-46** *No one can come to me unless the **Father who sent me draws him**. And **I will raise him up** on the last day.*<sup>45</sup> *It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has **heard and learned from the Father comes to me***<sup>87</sup>—<sup>46</sup> *not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.*

**Acts 5:31** *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to **give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.***

**Acts 11:16-18** *And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'*<sup>17</sup> *If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"*<sup>18</sup> *When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also **God has granted repentance that leads to life.**"*

**Acts 13:46-48** *And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles."*<sup>47</sup> *For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, "**I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.**"*<sup>48</sup> *And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and **as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.***

<sup>84</sup> I believe that Irresistible Grace is the logical conclusion to Unconditional Election, so, many of the verses for Unconditional Election apply also for Irresistible Grace, since God has set to save His elect, who can annul His purpose? (Isa 14:27)

<sup>85</sup> James White, *The Potter's Freedom* (New Revised Edition 2009) p. 40

<sup>86</sup> "The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented" Ed. 2, pp. 7.

<sup>87</sup> Isa 54:13

**Acts 16:13-15** And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. <sup>14</sup> One who heard us was a woman named **Lydia**, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was **a worshiper of God**. The **Lord opened her heart** to pay attention to what was said by Paul. <sup>15</sup> And after **she was baptized**, and **her household as well**, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

**Rom 8:29-30** For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he **predestined** he also **called**, and those whom he **called** he also **justified**, and those whom he **justified** he also **glorified**.

**Rom 9:15** For he says to Moses, "I will have **mercy on whom I have mercy**, and I will have **compassion on whom I have compassion**." <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on **God, who has mercy**.

**Rom 11:25-29** Lest you be wise in your own sight, I do not want you to be unaware of this mystery, brothers: a **partial hardening has come upon Israel**, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And in this way **all Israel will be saved**, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"<sup>88</sup>; <sup>27</sup> "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins."<sup>89</sup> <sup>28</sup> As regards the **gospel, they are enemies** for your sake. But as regards **election, they are beloved** for the sake of their forefathers. <sup>29</sup> For the **gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable**.

**Eph 2:8-9** For by **grace you have been saved through faith**. And **this is not your own doing**; it is the **gift of God**, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

### *The metaphor of 'being made alive' and being 'born again'*

**Jn 1:11-13** He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did **receive him**, who **believed in his name**, he gave the right to become **children of God**, <sup>13</sup> who were **born**, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but **of God**.

**Jn 3:3-8** Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God**."<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born of water and the Spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

**Jn 5:21** For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the **Son gives life to whom he will**.

**Rom 6:3-4** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were **baptized into his death**? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as **Christ was raised from the dead** by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life**.

**Col 2:13-15** And you, who were **dead in your trespasses** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, **God made alive together with him**, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

**2Cor 5:17** Therefore, if **anyone is in Christ**, he is a **new creation**. The **old has passed away**; behold, the **new has come**.

**Titus 3:4-7** But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup> **he saved us**, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but **according to his own mercy**, by the washing of **regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit**, <sup>6</sup> whom **he poured out on us** richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> so that being justified by his grace we might become **heirs according to the hope of eternal life**.

**Jas 1:18** Of **his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

**1Pet 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has **caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an **inheritance** that is imperishable,

<sup>88</sup> C.f. Ps 14:7; Ps 53:6; Isa 59:20-21; Jn 4:22; Heb 8:8-12

<sup>89</sup> C.f. Isa 27:9; Rom 9:4; Heb 8:12

undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by **God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**1Jn 5:1** Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been **born of God**, and everyone who **loves the Father** loves whoever has been **born of him**.

### *The work of God the Holy Spirit*

**Rom 8:14** For all who are **led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

**Eph 1:13** In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, <sup>14</sup> who is the **guarantee of our inheritance** until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

**Eph 4:30** And do not grieve the **Holy Spirit of God**, by whom you were **sealed for the day of redemption.**

**1Cor 2:9-12** But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"— <sup>10</sup> these things **God has revealed to us through the Spirit**. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup> Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the **Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.**

**1Cor 3:16** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that **God's Spirit dwells in you?**

**1Cor 6:9-11** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the **sexually immoral**, nor **idolaters**, nor **adulterers**, nor men who practice **homosexuality**, <sup>10</sup> nor **thieves**, nor the **greedy**, nor **drunkards**, nor **revilers**, nor **swindlers** will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And **such were some of you**. But you were **washed**, you were **sanctified**, you were **justified** in the name of the Lord **Jesus Christ** and by the **Spirit of our God**.

**1Cor 12:3** Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and **no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit.**

**1Cor 12:8-11** For to one is given **through the Spirit** the utterance of **wisdom**, and to another the utterance of **knowledge** according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another **gifts of healing** by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of **miracles**, to another **prophecy**, to another the ability to **distinguish between spirits**, to another various kinds of **tongues**, to another the **interpretation of tongues**. <sup>11</sup> All these are empowered by **one and the same Spirit**, who **apportions to each one individually as he wills.**

**2Cor 3:5-6** Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but **our sufficiency is from God**, <sup>6</sup> who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the **Spirit gives life.**

**2Cor 3:17-18** Now the **Lord is the Spirit**, and where the **Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom**. <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being **transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. **For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**

### *Why some people don't receive the Gospel*

**Jn 10:25-26** Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, <sup>26</sup> but you do not believe because **you are not among my sheep.**

**Jn 12:37-40** Though he had **done so many signs** before them, they still **did not believe** in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" <sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, <sup>40</sup> "He has **blinded their eyes** and **hardened their heart**, lest they see with their eyes, and **understand with their heart**, and turn, and I would heal them."

More in "Total depravity, Radical corruption" & "Sovereignty over the reprobate."

## Examination of Resistible Grace verses

### Definition of Irresistible Grace

"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51). This passage, which is often used in an attempt to refute the biblical doctrine of irresistible grace, actually supports it. Notice the condition of the persons who are doing the resisting: their hearts and ears are uncircumcised, which is the Bible's way of saying they are unregenerate or unspiritual. A person in this condition will always resist the outward call of the gospel. The Holy Spirit may convict them of sin and work to show them their need to Christ, but as long as they remain unregenerate, their hearts will remain closed to Christ. Irresistible grace does not mean that whenever the Spirit works He is irresistible. Rather, it means that while His promptings are always resisted by the dead in sin, He can make the gospel irresistible when He opens their spiritually blind eyes, when he opens their deaf ears and turns their heart of stone to a heart of flesh. He quickens us while we are dead, which is no work of man. As Ephesians 2:5 says, "Even when we were dead in our trespasses, [He] made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved."<sup>90</sup>

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### Matthew 23:37<sup>91</sup> & Luke 13:34

***"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"***

Too often the meaning of "**Jerusalem**" is assumed to be everyone living in Jerusalem. Rather than maybe only some group. Or the "**not willing**" group was the one being gathered. This is one of the "Arminian Big Three" passages.

Here is what **Dr. James R. White** said in his excellent book "The Potter's Freedom" in response to Dr. Norman Geisler:<sup>92</sup>

- CBF [Chosen But Free] offers no in-depth exegesis of this passage. Instead, we are given two sentences that summarize Geisler's interpretation of it:
  - Also, Matthew 23:37 affirms emphatically that Jesus desired to bring the Jews who rejected Him into the fold but could not because they would not. He cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, *but you were not willing.*" God's grace is not irresistible on those who are unwilling.
- We first note that "irresistible grace" is a reference to God's sovereign regeneration of His elect: any other use of the phrase is in error. Hence, it would seem to be that Dr. Geisler is promoting the following ideas regarding this text: 1) that Jesus *wanted* to save the Jews to whom (or about whom) He was speaking in this passage; 2) That though this was Christ's desire He *could not* fulfill His desire; 3) Christ could not bring these Jews into the fold because they "would not." The conclusion then is, God's grace is dependent upon the will of man. If a man is willing, God's grace will prevail. But grace cannot change the will of man.
- Of course, these assertions that are not given with any interpretational foundation. No exegesis is offered, just conclusions. How Dr. Geisler arrived at these conclusions, we are not told. Later we are informed that it is the "plain meaning" of the text, and are asked rhetorically, "What could be more clear: God wanted all of them, even the unrepentant, to be saved."
- This verse is then used in conjunction with 1 Timothy 2:4 and 2 Peter 3:9 as evidence that it is God's *desire* to save every single man, woman and child on earth. But is that what this passage is teaching? Let's provide an exegetical interpretation of the passage and compare it with the presentation in CBF.
- The first fact to ascertain in examining any passage of Scripture is it's *context*. This passage comes in the midst of the proclamation of judgment upon the leaders of the Jews. Matthew 23 contains the strongest denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees in all of the Gospels.

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<sup>90</sup> [http://www.monergism.com/directory/link\\_category/Doctrines-of-Grace/Irresistible-Grace--Effectual-Calling/](http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/Doctrines-of-Grace/Irresistible-Grace--Effectual-Calling/)

<sup>91</sup> For a thorough discussion see John Gill, The Cause of God and the Truth, Section 25. See "[Resources](#)," c.f. <http://www.objectivegospel.org/the-big-three>

<sup>92</sup> James R White, The Potter's Freedom: A defense of the reformation and a rebuttal to Norman Geisler's Chosen but Free, pp. 136-139



- Who, then, is “Jerusalem”? It is assumed by Arminian writers that “Jerusalem” represents individual Jews who are, therefore, capable of resisting the work and will of Christ. But upon what warrant do we leap from “Jerusalem” to “individual Jews”? The context would not lead us to conclude that this is to be taken in a universal sense. Jesus is condemning the Jewish leaders, and it is to them that he refers here. This is clearly seen in that:
  1. It is to the leaders that God sent prophets;
  2. It was the Jewish leaders who killed the prophets and those sent to them;
  3. Jesus speaks of “your children,” differentiating those to whom He is speaking from those that the Lord desired to gather together.
  4. The context refers to the Jewish leaders, scribes and Pharisees.
- A vitally important point to make here is that the one the Lord desired to gather are *not* the ones who “were not willing”! Jesus speaks to the leaders *about* their children that they, the leaders, would not allow Him to “gather.” Jesus was not seeking to gather the leaders, but their children. This one consideration alone renders the passage useless for the Arminian seeking to establish freewillism. The “children” of the leaders would be Jews who were *hindered* by the Jewish leaders from hearing Christ. The “you would not” then is referring to the same men indicated by the context: the Jewish leaders who “were unwilling” to allow those under their authority to hear the proclamation of the Christ. This verse, then, is speaking to the same issues raised earlier in Matthew 23:13:
  - But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people, for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.
- John Gill added this insight:
  - That the persons whom Christ would have gathered are not represented as being unwilling to be gathered; but their rulers were not willing that they should. The opposition and resistance to the will of Christ. were not made by the people, but by their governors. The common people seemed inclined to attend the ministry of Christ, as appears from the vast crowds which, at different times and places, followed him; but the chief priests and rulers did all they could to hinder the collection of them to him; and their belief in him as the Messiah, by traducing his character, miracles, and doctrines, and by passing an act that whosoever confessed him should be put out of the synagogue; so that the obvious meaning of the text is the same with that of verse 13, where our Lord says, Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in; and consequently is no proof of men’s resisting the operations of the Spirit and grace of God, but of obstructions and discouragements thrown in the way of attendance on the external ministry of the word.<sup>93</sup>

Here is **John Gill** in his commentary on Matthew 23:37:<sup>94</sup>

- **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,....** The metropolis of Judea, the seat of the kings of Judah, yea, the city of the great king; the place of divine worship, once the holy and faithful city, the joy of the whole earth; wherefore it was strange that the following things should be said of it. The word is repeated to show our Lord's affection and concern for that city, as well as to upbraid it with its name, dignity, and privileges; and designs not the building of the city, but the inhabitants of it; and these not all, but the rulers and governors of it, civil and ecclesiastical; especially the great sanhedrim, which were held in it, to whom best belong the descriptive characters of killing the prophets, and stoning them that were sent by God unto them; since it belonged to them to take cognizance of such who called themselves prophets, and to examine, and judge them, and, if false, to condemn them {h}; hence that saying of Christ, Lu 13:33 which goes before the same words, as here, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem": and who are manifestly distinguished from their "children": it being usual to call such as were the heads of the people, either in a civil or ecclesiastic sense, "fathers", and their subjects and disciples, "children": besides, our Lord's discourse throughout the whole context is directed to the Scribes and Pharisees, the ecclesiastic guides of the people, and to whom the civil governors paid a special regard.

<sup>93</sup> John Gill, The Cause of God and Truth, section 25 point 4. See [“Resources”](#)

<sup>94</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See [“Resources.”](#)

- **Thou that killest the prophets;** that is, with the sword, with which the prophets in Elijah's time were slain by the children of Israel, 1Ki 19:10 and which was one of the capital punishments inflicted by the Jewish sanhedrim {i}; and also that which follows was another of them.
- **And stonest them which were sent unto thee;** as particularly Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, before mentioned. The Jews themselves are obliged to own, that this character belongs to them: say {k} they,
- "when the word of God shall come, who is his messenger, we will honour him. Says R. Saul, did not the prophets come, והרגנום, "and we killed them", and shed their blood, and how shall we receive his word? or how shall we believe?"
- And a celebrated writer of their's, on those words {}, "but now murderers", has this note;
- "they have killed Uriah, they have killed Zechariah."
- **How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!** Christ here speaks as a man, and the minister of the circumcision, and expresses an human affection for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and an human wish, and will for their temporal good; which he very aptly signifies by the hen, which is a very affectionate creature to its young, and which it endeavours to screen from danger, by covering with its wings. So the "Shekinah" with the Jews is called, צפרא קדישא, "the holy bird" {m}; and that phrase, לחסות תחת כנפי השכינה, "to betake one's self, or to come to trust under the wings of the Shekinah", is often used {n} for to become a proselyte to the true religion, and worship of God, as Jethro, and Ruth the Moabitess did. An expression much like to this here is used by an apocryphal writer of 2 Esdras:
- "I gathered you together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings: but now, what shall I do unto you? I will cast you out from my face." (2 Esdras 1:30)
- It seems to be a simile much in use with that people. Our Lord is to be understood not of his divine will, as God, to gather the people of the Jews internally, by his Spirit and grace, to himself; for all those whom Christ would gather, in this sense, were gathered, notwithstanding all the opposition made by the rulers of the people; but of his human affection and will, as a man, and a minister, to gather them to him externally, by, and under the ministry of his word, to hear him preach; so as that they might be brought to a conviction of, and an assent unto him as the Messiah; which, though it might fall short of faith in him, would have been sufficient to have preserved them from temporal ruin, threatened to their city and temple, in the following verse. Instances of the human affection, and will of Christ, may be observed in Mr 10:21 which will of his, though not contrary to the divine will, but subordinate to it, yet not always the same with it, nor always fulfilled: whereas his divine will, or his will as God, is, always fulfilled: "who hath resisted his will?" this cannot be hindered, and made void; he does whatsoever he pleases: and further, that this will of Christ to gather the Jews to himself, is to be understood of his human, and not divine will, is manifest from hence, that this will was in him, and expressed by him at certain several times, by intervals; and therefore he says, "how often would I have gathered", c. whereas the divine will is one continued, invariable, and unchangeable will, is always the same, and never begins or ceases to be, and to which such an expression is inapplicable and therefore these words do not contradict the absolute and sovereign will of God, in the distinguishing acts of it, respecting the choice of some persons, and the leaving of others. And it is to be observed, that the persons whom Christ would have gathered, are not represented as being unwilling to be gathered; but their rulers were not willing that they should, and be made proselytes to him, and come under his wings. It is not said, "how often would I have gathered you, and you would not!" nor, "I would have gathered Jerusalem, and she would not"; nor, "I would have gathered thy children, and they would not"; but, "how often would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not!" Which observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage in favour of free will. Had Christ expressed his desire to have gathered the heads of the people to him, the members of the Jewish sanhedrim, the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the Jews: or had he signified how much he wished, and earnestly sought after, and attempted to gather Jerusalem, the children, the inhabitants of it in common, and neither of them would not; it would have carried some appearance of the doctrine of free will, and have seemed to have countenanced it, and have imputed the non-gathering of them to their own will: though had it been said, "they would not", instead of, "ye would not", it would only have furnished out a most sad instance of the perverseness of the will of man, which often opposes his temporal, as well as his spiritual good; and would rather show it to be a slave to that which is evil, than free to that which is good; and would be a proof of this, not in a single person only, but in a body of men. The opposition and resistance to the will of Christ were not made by the people, but by their

governors. The common people seemed inclined to attend his ministry, as appears from the vast crowds, which, at different times and places, followed him; but the chief priests, and rulers, did all they could to hinder the collection of them to him, and their belief in him as the Messiah; by traducing his character, miracles, and doctrines, and by menacing the people with curses, and excommunications, making a law, that whoever confessed him should be turned out of the synagogue. So that the plain meaning of the text is the same with that of Mt 23:13 and consequently is no proof of men's resisting the operations of the Spirit and grace of God; but only shows what obstructions and discouragements were thrown in the way of attendance on the external ministry of the word. In order to set aside, and overthrow the doctrine of grace, in election, and particular redemption, and effectual calling, it should be proved that Christ, as God, would have gathered, not Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it only, but all mankind, even such as are not eventually saved, and that in a spiritual, saving way and manner, to himself; of which there is not the least intimation in this text: and in order to establish the resistibility of the grace of God, by the perverse will of man, so as to become of no effect; it should be shown that Christ would have savingly converted persons, and they would not be converted; and that he bestowed the same grace upon them, he does bestow on others, who are converted: whereas the sum of this passage lies in these few words, that Christ, as man, out of a compassionate regard for the people of the Jews, to whom, he was sent as the minister of the circumcision, would have gathered them together under his ministry, and have instructed them in the knowledge of himself, as the Messiah; which if they had only notionally received, would have secured them, as chickens under the hen, from impending judgments, which afterwards fell upon them; but their governors, and not they, would not; that is, would not suffer them to receive him, and embrace him as the Messiah. So that from the whole it appears, that this passage of Scripture, so much talked of by the Arminians, and so often cited by them, has nothing to do with the controversy about the doctrines of election and reprobation, particular redemption, efficacious grace in conversion, and the power of man's free will. This observation alone is sufficient to destroy the argument founded on this passage, in favour of free will.

- {h} Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 5. {i} lb. c. 7. sect. 1. {k} R. Isaac Arama in Gen. xlvii. apud Galatin. Arcan. Cath. ver. l. 3. c. 5. {l} Jarchi in Isa. i. 21. {m} Zohar in Numb. fol. 106. 3. & Imre binah in ib. {n} Tzeror Hammor, fol. 77. 4. & 115. 2. Vid. Targum in Ruth ii. 12. Zohar in Exod. fol. 28. 3. & 29. 2.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says the following:

- **Matt. 23:37 would I . . . you would not!** God is utterly sovereign and therefore fully capable of bringing to pass whatever he desires (cf. Isa. 46:10)—including the salvation of whomever he chooses (Eph. 1:4–5). Yet, he sometimes expresses a wish for that which he does not sovereignly bring to pass (cf. Gen. 6:6; Deut. 5:29; Ps. 81:13; Isa. 48:18). Such expressions in no way suggest a limitation on the sovereignty of God or imply any actual change in him (Num. 23:19). But these statements do reveal essential aspects of the divine character: he is full of compassion, sincerely good to all, desirous of good, not evil—and therefore not delighting in the destruction of the wicked (Ezek. 18:32; 33:11). While affirming God's sovereignty, one must understand his pleas for the repentance of the reprobate as well-meant appeals—and his goodness toward the wicked as a genuine mercy designed to provoke them to repentance (Rom. 2:4). The emotion displayed by Christ here (and in all similar passages, such as Luke 19:41) is obviously a deep, sincere passion. All Christ's feelings must be in perfect harmony with the divine will (cf. John 8:29)—and therefore these lamentations should not be thought of as mere exhibitions of his humanity.
- **Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.** There is great tenderness in these words, as seen in the imagery of a hen with chickens. This outpouring of divine compassion foreshadows his weeping over the city as he approached it for the final time (19:41). Clearly, these are deep and sincere emotions (*see note on Matt. 9:36*). **would I have . . . you would not.** Lit., "I willed, but you willed not." Christ's repeated expressions of grief over the plight of Jerusalem do not diminish the reality of his absolute sovereignty over all that happens. Nor should the truth of divine sovereignty be used to depreciate the sincerity of his compassion. *See note on Matt. 23:37.*

*"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, **you always resist the Holy Spirit**. As your fathers did, so do you.*

Calvinists, have no problem with this passage at all. Dead sinners **always** resist the Spirit of God. But when Spirit comes to regenerate, for the purpose of salvation, the dead sinner is made alive and willing, with no resistance.

This is what the **ESV Study Bible** says:

- **Acts 7:51** Stephen concluded with a direct attack on Israel for rejecting the Messiah. While this may seem harsh, Luke will soon say that Stephen was "full of the Holy Spirit" (v. 55; cf. 6:10, 15) and he was no doubt led by the Spirit, who knew the hearts of Stephen's listeners, to make this accusation. Using the language of the OT he accused them of being stiff-necked (see Ex. 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut. 9:6, 13), uncircumcised in heart and ears (Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4, 6:10, 9:26; Ezek. 44:7, 9), and resisting the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10). In fact, the repeated rejection of God's will is the point of his story, justifying the charge that prophets also made against the nation.

**John Gill** comments on this:

- **Ye stiffnecked**,.... Or "hard necked", the same with קשה עורף, which is a character frequently given of this people, Ex 32:9 and elsewhere, and is expressive of their obstinacy, stubbornness and refractoriness; who would not submit their necks to the yoke of God's law, and be obedient to his commands:
- **and uncircumcised in heart and ears**; for though they had the mark of circumcision in their flesh, of which they boasted; yet they had not the true circumcision of the heart; their hearts were not circumcised to fear and love the Lord, nor their ears to hear the word of the Lord and the Gospel of Christ; so that notwithstanding their confidence in carnal privileges, they were uncircumcised persons:
- **ye do always resist the Holy Ghost**; the resistance made by these persons was not to the Spirit of God in them, of which they were destitute, but to the Spirit of God in his ministers, in his apostles, and particularly in Stephen; nor to any internal operation of his grace, but to the external ministry of the word, and to all that objective light, knowledge, evidence, and conviction that it gave of Jesus's being the Messiah: and such who resist Christ's ministers, resist him, and such who resist him, may be said to resist his Holy Spirit; and the word here used signifies a rushing against, and falling upon, in a rude and hostile way, and fitly expresses their ill treatment of Christ and his ministers, by falling upon them and putting them to death: which is the resistance here designed, as appears by the following verse: so that this passage is no proof of the resistance of the Holy Spirit, and the operations of his grace in conversion, when he is in men, and acts with a purpose and will to convert them; since it does not appear that he was in these persons, and was acting in them, with a design to convert them; and if he was, it will be difficult to prove that they so resisted, and continued to resist, as that they were not hereafter converted; since it is certain that one of them, Saul, was really and truly converted, and how many more we know not. Though it will be allowed, that the Holy Ghost in the operations of his grace upon the heart in conversion may be resisted, that is, opposed; but not so as to be overcome or be hindered in, or be obliged to cease from, the work of conversion, insomuch that may come to nothing:
- **as your fathers did, so do ye**; or as "your fathers were, so are ye"; as they were stiffnecked, self-willed, obstinate, and inflexible, so are ye; as they were uncircumcised in heart and ears, so are ye; and as they resisted the Spirit of God in his prophets, so do ye resist him in the apostles and ministers of the Gospel.

The following is said by **Matthew Henry** about the phrase "You do always resist the Holy Ghost":<sup>96</sup>

- They, like their fathers, were not only not influenced by the methods God took to reform them, but they were enraged and incensed against them: *You do always resist the Holy Ghost*. 1. They resisted the Holy Ghost speaking to them by the prophets, whom they opposed and contradicted, hated and ridiculed; this seems especially meant here, by the following explication, *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?* In persecuting and silencing those that spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost they resisted the Holy Ghost. Their fathers resisted the Holy Ghost in the prophets that God raised up to them, and so did

<sup>95</sup> C.f. John Gill, The Cause of God and Truth, section 33. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>96</sup> Matthew Henry, Whole Bible Commentary on Acts 7:51-53. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

they in Christ's apostles and ministers, who spoke by the same Spirit, and had greater measures of his gifts than the prophets of the Old Testament had, and yet were more resisted. 2. They resisted the Holy Ghost striving with them by their own consciences, and would not comply with the convictions and dictates of them. God's Spirit strove with them as with the old world, but in vain; they resisted him, took part with their corruptions against their convictions, and rebelled against the light. There is that in our sinful hearts that always resists the Holy Ghost, a flesh that lusts against the Spirit, and wars against his motions; but in the hearts of God's elect, when the fulness of time comes, this resistance is overcome and overpowered, and after a struggle the throne of Christ is set up in the soul, and every thought that had exalted itself against it is brought into captivity to it, 2Cor 10:4; 2Cor 10:5. That grace therefore which effects this change might more fitly be called *victorious grace* than *irresistible*.

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## Preservation of the Saints<sup>97</sup>

Some prefer saying “the preservation of the saints” to emphasize that this is the work of God: others use the phrase “eternal security” to emphasize the impossibility of God’s perfect work of salvation being undone. But whatever one calls it, it is the belief that when Christ save one of His elect, he will not fail to keep that saved person throughout life and bring them safely in to His presence. It is, in short, the belief that Christ is able to save perfectly.<sup>98</sup>

All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit, are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of almighty God, and thus persevere to the end.<sup>99</sup>

*If God brings you to it, He will get you through it*

**Ps 138:8** *The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.*

**Ecc 3:14** *I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him.*

**Isa 46:3-4** *“Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; <sup>4</sup> even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.*

**1Cor 1:4-9** *I give thanks to my God always for you because of the **grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus,** <sup>5</sup> that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who **will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>9</sup> **God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.***

**Col 3:3-4** *For **you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.** <sup>4</sup> When **Christ who is your life** appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

**Phil 1:6** *And I am sure of this, that **he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.***

**2Tim 4:18** *The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and **bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom.** To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

**1Pet 1:3-5** *Blessed be the **God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!** According to **his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,** <sup>4</sup> to an **inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,** <sup>5</sup> who **by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.***

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<sup>97</sup> I have used Preservation instead of Perseverance as the first title because of the doctrine teaches that God is the one who works in us and also that it does not destroy the TULIP acrostic. For the Perseverance of the Saints see “Perseverance of the Saints.”

<sup>98</sup> James White, *The Potter’s Freedom* (New Revised Edition 2009) p. 40

<sup>99</sup> “The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented” Ed. 2, pp. 7-8.



### *None of Christ's sheep will be lost—ever!*

**Jn 6:39-40** And this is the **will of him who sent me**, that I should **lose nothing of all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that **everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

**Jn 10:27-29** **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.** <sup>28</sup> **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.** <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.**

**Rom 8:35-39** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things **we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, **nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Eph 1:13-14** In him you also, when you **heard the word of truth**, the gospel of your salvation, and **believed in him**, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, <sup>14</sup> who is the **guarantee of our inheritance** until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory.**

**Eph 4:30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were **sealed for the day of redemption.**

**Heb 7:25** Consequently, he is able to **save to the uttermost those who draw near to God** through him, since he **always lives to make intercession for them.**

**Heb 10:14** For by a **single offering** he has **perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

### *God causes His sheep to persevere in the faith*

**Jn 15:16** **You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you** that you should go and **bear fruit** and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

**1Cor 6:11** And such were some of you. But **you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**1Cor 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, **I worked harder** than any of them, **though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.**

**Eph 2:10** For we are his **workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

**Phil 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, <sup>13</sup> for it is **God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**1Thess 5:23-24** Now may the **God of peace himself sanctify you completely**, and may your whole **spirit and soul and body be kept blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you is **faithful; he will surely do it.**

**Heb 13:20-21** Now may the **God of peace** who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the **blood of the eternal covenant**, <sup>21</sup> **equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight**, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Jude 24-25** Now to him who is **able to keep you from stumbling** and to **present you blameless** before the presence of his glory with great joy, <sup>25</sup> to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

## Examining Falling from Grace Verses

### My Presuppositions

- **Jn 10:27-29** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*<sup>28</sup> **I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.**<sup>29</sup> *My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.*<sup>100</sup>
- **1Jn 2:19** *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.*

Those among many others which are mentioned in this section about the Preservation of the Saints.

There are many verses which those who reject the doctrine of the Preservation of the Saints/Eternal Security, can point out. But a lot of them are just warnings or addressed to believers and non-believers alike. Those are not indicators that people, who know the Lord and are known by the Lord can be snatched from His hand. So, I can't address every such verse and provide commentary on it, but I've tried to collect the most important verses used against the doctrine of the Preservation of the Saints.

### Matthew 24:24 & Mark 13:22

*For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.*

*For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect.*

This is a similar passage to **Revelation 3:5**, just because the passage says if it is possible the false christs will lead the elect astray it doesn't mean that it will happen, since the Lord Jesus says that *no one is able to snatch His sheep* out of His hand and the Father's hand (Jn 10:27-29).

#### Commentaries

The following is said in the **ESV Study Bible** about Mark 13:22:

- **Mark 13:22** The tribulation (v. 19) is accompanied by **false christs and false prophets** (on testing false prophets, see notes on Matt. 7:15–20; 9:34; 1 John 4:1). They **lead astray** by performing **signs and wonders** (cf. the actions of the Antichrist in 2 Thess. 2:3, 7–12; 1 John 2:18). Unlike Scripture, signs and wonders are not clear indicators of God's presence and will. Jesus' remark that even **the elect** (see note on Matt. 22:14) could be led astray emphasizes the stunning character of the false prophets' miracles. But God will protect his own, so that they will not believe in a false messiah or prophet.

The **ESV Reformation Study Bible** on Matthew 24:24:

- **24:24 if possible.** Although the false prophets try to deceive the elect, there is no real possibility that they will succeed. God will keep the elect secure in His love (Rom. 8:31–39; cf. John 10:28, 29). See "Perseverance of the Saints" at Rom. 8:30.

Here is what **John Calvin** said about Matthew 24:24:<sup>101</sup>

- *So that even the elect (if it were possible) will be led into error.* This was added for the purpose of exciting alarm, that believers may be more careful to be on their guard; for when such unbounded freedom of action is allowed to *false prophets*, and when they are permitted to exert such powers of deceiving, those who are careless and inattentive would easily be entangled by their snares. Christ therefore exhorts and arouses his disciples to keep watch, and at the same time reminds them that there is no reason for being troubled at the strangeness of the sight, if they see many persons on every hand led away into error. While he excites them to solicitude, that Satan may not overtake them in a state of sloth, he gives them abundant ground of confidence on which they may calmly rely, when he promises that they will be safe under the defense and protection of God against all the snares of Satan. And thus, however frail and slippery the condition of the godly may be, yet here is a firm footing

<sup>100</sup> Similar statement in Jn 10:27-29.

<sup>101</sup> John Calvin, Calvins Complete Commentary. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

on which they may stand; for it is not possible for them to fall away from salvation, to whom the Son of God is a faithful guardian. For they have not sufficient energy to resist the attacks of Satan, unless in consequence of their being

- the sheep of Christ, which none can pluck out of his hand,
  - (Joh 10:28.)
  - It must therefore be observed, that the permanency of our salvation does not depend on us, but on the secret election of God; for though our salvation *is kept through faith*, as Peter tells us, (1Pe 1:5,) yet we ought to ascend higher, and assure ourselves that we are in safety, because the Father hath given us to the Son, and the Son himself declares, that
  - none who have been given to him shall perish (Joh 17:12).
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### Romans 14:15 & 1 Corinthians 8:11

*For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, **do not destroy the one for whom Christ died.***

*And so by your knowledge this **weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died.***

#### Commentaries

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** on Romans 14:15 says the following:

- **Rom. 14:15 grieved.** The Greek word refers to causing pain or distress. A weak believer may be hurt when he sees a brother do something he believes is sinful. But still worse, the strong believer may cause his weaker brother to violate his own conscience (cf. 1 Cor. 8:8–13). **love.** See notes on 1 Cor. 13:1–13. Love will ensure that the strong Christian is sensitive and understanding of his brother's weaknesses (1 Cor. 8:8–13). **destroy.** This refers to complete devastation. In the NT, it is often used to indicate eternal damnation (Matt. 10:28; Luke 13:3; John 3:16; Rom. 2:12). In this context, however, it refers to a serious devastation of one's spiritual growth (cf. Matt. 18:3, 6, 14). **one for whom Christ died.** Any Christian (cf. 1 Cor. 8:11).

This is what **John Gill** said about Romans 14:15:<sup>102</sup>

- **But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat,....** The apostle proceeds to give reasons why, though he was so fully persuaded that nothing was unclean of itself, and so he, and any other of the same persuasion, might lawfully eat anything; yet they should forbear, and not make use of this liberty; because if a brother should be grieved by it, that is, either should be concerned and troubled at it inwardly, both because the person that eats is thought by him to have transgressed a command of God, and because he himself is not only despised as a weak brother, but as if he was a "judaizing" Christian, and walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Gospel; or else should be emboldened thereby to eat, and so wound and defile his weak conscience; or be so galled and offended at it, as to stumble and fall off from his profession of Christianity, and withdraw his communion, as judging there is nothing in it, no regard being had to the law of God:
- **now walkest thou not charitably;** this is a breach of the rule of charity or brotherly love; such an one is a brother, and though a weak one, yet he is to be loved as a brother, and to be charitably walked with: true charity, or love, vaunts not itself over, nor is it puffed up against a weak brother; nor is it unconcerned for his peace, but bears with his weaknesses, and forbears the use of things grieving to him:
- **destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.** This is to be understood, not of eternal destruction, that can never be thought to be either in the will or power of any man; such a degree of malice can never arise in the heart of any, to wish for, desire, or take any step towards the eternal damnation of another; and could any thing of this kind be among the men of the world, yet surely not among brethren of the same faith, and in the same church state; and were there any so wicked as to desire this, yet it is not in their power to compass it, for none can destroy eternally but God; see Mt 10:28; besides, it is not reasonable to suppose, that eternal damnation should follow upon eating things indifferent, or be caused by an offence either given or taken through them; moreover, though such as only think themselves, or profess themselves, or are only thought by others to be such, for whom Christ died, may be eternally destroyed, yet none of those can, for whom Christ really died; for they are his special people, his peculiar friends, his own sheep, his body the

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<sup>102</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

church, which can never perish; and he, by dying, has procured such blessings for them, such as a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, peace with God, and eternal life, which will for ever secure them from destruction: besides, should anyone of them be destroyed, the death of Christ would be so far in vain, nor would it appear to be a sufficient security from condemnation, nor a full satisfaction to the justice of God; or God must be unjust, to punish twice for the same fault: but this is to be understood of the destruction of such a man's peace and comfort, which is signified by grieving, stumbling, offending, and making him weak; and the words are a fresh reason, why they that are strong in the faith of Christian liberty, should nevertheless forbear the use of it, to preserve the peace of a weak brother; which is a matter of importance, and the rather to be attended to, since it is the peace of one that belongs to Christ, whom he has so loved as to die for, and therefore should be the object of the regard and affections of such as believe in Christ and love him.

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### Galatians 4:8-11

*Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods.<sup>9</sup> But now that you have come to **know God**, or rather to **be known by God**, how can you **turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world**, whose slaves you want to be once more?<sup>10</sup> You observe days and months and seasons and years!<sup>11</sup> I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain.*

This is not a reference to one losing their faith, but turning back to the old covenant along with the new covenant, that is, following the Mosaic Law. That's one of the things that the epistle to the Galatians was concerned about.

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- **Gal. 4:9 To know God ... to be known by God** implies a personal relationship with God. **elementary principles**. See note on v. 3.
    - **Gal. 4:3 elementary principles**. Both here and in v. 9 the expression refers to the elementary principles the Galatians previously followed, which for Jews would be the Mosaic law and for Gentiles the basic concepts of their pagan religions. But the additional overtones of demonic bondage in this phrase should not be ignored; they were, in terms of their mind-set and life situation, under a legalistic system and **enslaved**, and Paul explains in v. 8 that this enslavement was “to those that by nature are not gods.” Legalistic superstition and demonic domination are closely linked.
  - **Gal. 4:10 Days and months and seasons and years** were all part of the ceremonial laws of the Mosaic covenant (cf. Lev. 23:5, 16, 28; 25:4). To require Christians to follow such OT laws is to forfeit the gospel of justification by faith alone, in Christ alone. This also clearly implies that Christians are no longer under the Mosaic covenant. Some see “days” in this verse as evidence that the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath commandment was also part of the ceremonial law that Christians, under the new covenant, no longer need to follow (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Col. 2:16–17). Others believe that the weekly Sabbath command is not temporary but goes back to God's pattern in creation (Ex. 20:8–11) and that this verse relates only to other days of rest in the Jewish festal calendar.
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### Galatians 5:1-4<sup>103</sup>

*For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.<sup>2</sup> Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.<sup>3</sup> I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law.<sup>4</sup> You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have **fallen away from grace**.*

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** sheds some light upon this passage:

- **Gal. 5:1 Christ has set us free** from Jewish ceremonial laws and regulations (see note on 2:11–12) but not from obedience to God's moral standards (5:14–6:1).

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<sup>103</sup> C.f. <http://www.gotquestions.org/fall-from-grace.html>

- **Gal. 5:2** The Galatians may have thought that requiring circumcision would not make much difference, but Paul knows that if they require obedience to any one part of the Mosaic law for justification, then they are committed to obeying all of it perfectly for their justification (v. 3), something none of them can do (cf. 3:10–11, 21). Therefore he says, **if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.**
- **Gal. 5:4 severed from Christ ... fallen away from grace.** Paul is not discussing here the question of whether a genuine believer can lose his or her salvation. He is only saying that people who may once have made a profession of faith, if they now are truly seeking to be **justified by the law**, must not really have a relationship with Christ and have fallen away from the grace that was offered and available to them.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says the following:

- **Gal. 5:4 severed from Christ . . . fallen away from grace.** The Greek word for “severed” means “to be separated,” or “to be estranged.” The word for “fallen” means “to lose one’s grasp on something.” Paul’s clear meaning is that any attempt to be justified by the law is to reject salvation by grace alone through faith alone. Those once exposed to the gracious truth of the gospel, who then turn their backs on Christ (Heb. 6:4–6) and seek to be justified by the law are separated from Christ and lose all prospects of God’s gracious salvation. Their desertion of Christ and the gospel only proves that their faith was never genuine (cf. Luke 8:13–14; 1 John 2:19). **justified.** See notes on Gal. 2:16 and Rom. 3:24.

The **ESV Reformation Study Bible** puts it in this way:

- **5:4 fallen away from grace.** That is, they would be renouncing God’s grace by no longer relying on it. Those who are chosen in Christ will be kept from such a renunciation of the gospel, and Paul continues to have confidence that his warning will be heeded (v. 10). There may be those, however, who appear to us to be true members of Christ who will abandon the gospel (Rom. 11:22; 1 John 2:19). Scripture admonishes us, therefore, to be “diligent to make your calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10) by living in a way that demonstrates the reality of the Spirit’s presence within us (5:16–6:10; Heb. 10:26, 27; 2 Pet. 1:5–11).

## 1 Timothy 4:1-5

*Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times **some will depart from the faith** by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons,<sup>2</sup> through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,<sup>3</sup> who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.<sup>4</sup> For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,<sup>5</sup> for it is made holy by the word of God and prayer.*

### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- **1 Tim. 4:1** The means by which the **Spirit ... says** is not made clear. It may have been something the Holy Spirit revealed directly to Paul (cf. Acts 20:29–30) or a prophecy that came through others. **expressly.** **Explicitly,** clearly. The **later times** (Gk. hysterois kairois) in view here clearly include Timothy’s day (see the similar phrase in 2 Tim. 3:1). As is typical in the NT, “later times” refers to the time that began with the outpouring of the Spirit after the work of Christ. Those who hold to the false teaching **depart from the faith**, which shows that this teaching is outside the bounds of true Christianity. Furthermore, the source of the error is demonic, for these teachers follow **deceitful spirits**. The false teaching and resultant apostasy are no surprise. God said this would happen, so his church should not panic but should carry on in faithfulness (see 2 Tim. 2:17–19).

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** explains:

- **1 Tim. 4:1 the Spirit expressly says.** Paul repeats to Timothy the warning he had given many years earlier to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:29–30). The Holy Spirit through the Scriptures has repeatedly warned of the danger of apostasy (cf. Matt. 24:4–12; Acts 20:29–30; 2 Thess. 2:3–12; Heb. 3:12; 5:11–6:8; 10:26–31; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 John 2:18; Jude 18). **in later times.** The period from the first coming of Christ until his return (Acts 2:16–17; Heb. 1:1–2; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 2:18). Apostasy will exist throughout that period, reaching a climax shortly before Christ returns (cf. Matt. 24:12). **depart from the faith.** Those who fall prey to the false teachers will abandon the Christian faith. The Greek word for “depart” is the source of the English word



“apostatize,” and refers to someone moving away from an original position. These are professing or nominal Christians who associate with those who truly believe the gospel, but defect after believing lies and deception, thus revealing their true nature as unconverted. *See notes on 1 John 2:19 and Jude 24.* **deceitful spirits.** Those demonic spirits, either directly or through false teachers, who have wandered away from the truth and lead others to do the same. The most defining word to describe the entire operation of Satan and his demons is “deception” (cf. John 8:44; 1 John 4:1–6). **teachings of demons.** Not teaching about demons, but false teaching that originates from them. To sit under such teaching is to hear lies from the demonic realm (Eph. 6:12; James 3:15; 2 John 7–11). The influence of demons will reach its peak during the tribulation (2 Thess. 2:9; Rev. 9:2–11; 16:14; 20:2–3, 8, 10). Satan and demons constantly work the deceptions that corrupt and pervert God’s word.

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### 1 Timothy 1:18-20<sup>104</sup>

*Timothy, my son, I am giving you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies previously made about you, so that by them you may strongly engage in battle, <sup>19</sup> holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, <sup>20</sup> among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** says:

- **1 Tim. 1:19** This represents a singular pronoun in Greek and refers to **a good conscience**. The false teachers, **rejecting** their consciences, plowed ahead in their sin. **shipwreck of their faith**. This most likely refers to the false teachers who claimed to be believers but had fallen away from the faith they initially professed, thereby showing they were never truly converted (cf. 1 John 2:19).
- **1 Tim. 1:20 Hymenaeus.** A false teacher also mentioned in 2 Tim. 2:17. **handed over to Satan**. Refers to being put out of the church (i.e., excommunication). See note on 1 Cor. 5:5. This language highlights the importance and protection of church membership, since being put out of the church leaves one more exposed to Satan. **may learn not to blaspheme**. If the false teachers repent, they may still be saved; church discipline is motivated by love, with the hope that the one disciplined will turn back to the Lord. There is no explicit indication that the false teachers directly uttered evil statements about God (“blasphemed”). However, to misrepresent God’s truth is to speak ill of him.
  - **1 Cor. 5:5 Deliver this man to Satan** probably refers to removing him from the church, since those outside of the church are in Satan’s realm (Luke 4:5–6; Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19).

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** explains:

- **1 Tim. 1:19 faith . . . faith.** The first is subjective and means continuing to believe the truth. The second is objective, referring to the content of the Christian gospel. **a good conscience.** *See note on v. 5.* shipwreck. A good conscience serves as the rudder that steers the believer through the rocks and reefs of sin and error. The false teachers ignored their consciences and the truth, and as a result, suffered shipwreck of the Christian faith (the true doctrine of the gospel), which implies severe spiritual catastrophe. This does not imply loss of salvation for a true believer (*see notes on Rom. 8:31–39*), but likely indicates the tragic loss that comes to the apostate. They had been in the church, heard the gospel, and rejected it in favor of the false doctrine defined in 1 Tim. 1:3–7. Apostasy is a turning away from the gospel, having once known it. *See notes on Heb. 2:3–4; 3:12–19; 6:1–8; 10:26–31.*

The **HCSB Study Bible** sheds some light on this:

- 1:19 The phrase **shipwreck of their faith** is strong language. It refers to someone who once professed faith but has now destroyed it, showing they were never truly converted.
  - 1:20 **Delivered... to Satan** is a typical way of referring to excommunication, or being put out of the church (1Co 5:5). This language highlights the importance and protection of church membership since being put out of the fellowship makes a person more vulnerable to Satan.
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<sup>104</sup> A more in-depth examination is available in John Gill’s *The Cause of God and Truth*, section 44. See “[Resources](#).”

## 1 Timothy 5:15

For some have already **strayed after Satan**.

### Commentaries

John Gill in his commentary says:<sup>105</sup>

- **For some are already turned aside after Satan.** Meaning some of those younger widows, whom the apostle knew, and had observed to have departed from the faith they first professed, and turned their backs on Christ, and gave themselves up to carnal lusts and pleasures, and an idle and impure life and conversation, walked according to the course of this world, and the prince of it, by whom they were led captive at his will; for so everyone that apostatizes from a profession of Christ, and follows either false teachers, and their doctrines, as the Gnostics, that condemned marriage, or any sinful and impure way of life, may be said to turn aside after Satan; and as that apostle knew this to be fact, from his own observation, he therefore gives the above advice.
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## 1 Timothy 6:9-12

But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that **some have wandered away from the faith** and pierced themselves with many pangs. 11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** says the following about vv 9-10:

- **1 Tim. 6:9–10** What is condemned here is the **desire to be rich**, not material things per se when rightly used for the glory of God. The desire to be rich leads one to **fall into temptation**. This in turn results in the **love of money**, which Paul identifies as **a root of all kinds of evils** (v. 10). The connection between false teaching and the desire to be rich has been a problem from the church's very beginning. **wandered away from the faith**. The warning is not simply that "love of money" is harmful but that this has led some to deny the faith, showing themselves to be unbelievers (cf. 1:19).

The **HCSB Study Bible** says the following:

- 6:9-10 What is condemned here is **harmful desires**, not the possession of things. The warning is not simply that **love of money** can be harmful, but that this **craving** has led some people to deny the faith and show themselves to be unbelievers.
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## Hebrews 3:12-13

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

### Commentaries

John Gill writes:<sup>106</sup>

- **Take heed, brethren**,.... This exhortation is grounded upon the state and case of their ancestors before given, as a warning and caution to the then present Hebrews; and whom the apostle styles "brethren", to show that he had no hard thoughts of them, and that his jealousy was a godly one, and not an evil suspicion; and may teach us that all exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs should be given in love:

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<sup>105</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

<sup>106</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible on Hebrews 3:12. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See "[Resources](#)."

- **lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief;** or such an evil heart, in which unbelief prevails, and is predominant: there is in every man, whether a profane sinner, or an hypocritical professor, an evil heart, and an unbelieving one; and there is unbelief in regenerate persons, which when cherished and encouraged by them is a great evil, and should be avoided; and this sin is aggravated by the many instances of God's grace, and by the many declarations of it, and by the exceeding great and precious promises God has made, and by the great discoveries of his love to their souls in times past: and this sin, when it gets ahead, has a very great influence on the heart, to make it evil; and unbelief was the first sin of man, at least it very early appeared; it is the mother sin, and puts persons upon every sin; it defiles the conscience, hardens the heart, renders the word unprofitable, unfit for duty and makes men unstable, and therefore to be shunned; and especially because of the dreadful effect following:
- **in departing from the living God;** that is, from Christ, who is the Son over his own house, and whose voice is to be heard; for of no other is the apostle speaking in the context; and who is not only the Son of the living God, but he is himself the living God; he is life in himself, and is the fountain and author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal. This is mentioned to exalt the person of Christ, the apostle and high priest of our profession; and to discover the greatness and heinousness of the sin of such as depart from him and his Gospel, and to deter men from it: there is a final and total departure from Christ, from his Gospel and ordinances, from his people, and from a former profession of faith, which is never to be found in true believers; for they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; but there is a partial departure, and for a while, which they are liable to, and is attended with bad effects to them, and should be guarded against: saints should take heed of themselves, and of their hearts, and of the unbelief of them, that they do not in the least depart from Christ, by letting go their hold of him, or by a non-exercise of faith upon him; and this should be the care and concern of every individual member of the church, and at all times; unbelief is very dishonourable to God and Christ; contradicts the word and promises of God; is uncomfortable to the saints; it is a sin that very easily besets, and is very provoking to God, and is highly resented by him.

**Bob Utley** has a different interpretation of Hebrews 3:12, he writes:<sup>107</sup>

- **"an unbelieving heart"** This describes a believer who deserts the living God. A believing heart is one that continues firm to the end (cf. Heb. 3:14 and chapter 11). The phrase "unbelieving heart" reflects a Hebrew idiom "heart of unbelief" (cf. Heb. 4:6), as does "fall away," which reflects the Hebrew *shuv* ("return" or "turn").
- **"that falls away from the living God"** This is an aorist active infinitive. This verb is the source of our English word "apostasy." This is addressing a developing faithlessness (it is the opposite of Heb. 3:14). To whom does this passage relate: (1) believing Jews or (2) unbelieving Jews? The use of "brothers" in Heb. 3:1 and the added phrase "partakers of a heavenly calling" and "brothers" in Heb. 3:12 demand that it refer to believers.
- What then is the warning relating to: (1) salvation or (2) faithfulness? In context it seems to refer to faithfulness; Jesus was faithful, they must be faithful. Hebrews views the Christian life from the end (cf. Heb. 3:14), not the beginning (like Paul).
- The "falling away" of Heb. 3:13 must relate to continual faith and faithfulness. The Israelites had faith, but not functioning, obedient faith. They rejected God's promise of the land flowing with milk and honey by accepting the spies' report (cf. Numbers 13-14), not their belief in God. In this context "falling away" does not mean "falling from faith," but "falling from faithfulness"! However, both are required for a healthy faith. See note at Heb. 3:16-18.
- God always comes to us in a covenant relationship. We must respond in faith and faithfulness. The Sovereign God has allowed us to participate in our initial decision and on-going discipleship. The author of Hebrews is difficult to follow because
  1. he uses rabbinical logic and hermeneutics
  2. he is addressing two groups
    - a. believing Jews
    - b. unbelieving Jews
  3. he views Christian assurance and victory from the criteria of faithfulness as well as faith

<sup>107</sup> Bob Utley, You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series (NT). Taken from the Bible software The Word. See ["Resources."](#)

4. he focuses on faithfulness to the end (cf. Heb. 4:14; chapter 11). He views the Christian life from its conclusion, not its beginning.

- The phrase "the living God" is a play on God's covenant name YHWH, which is from the Hebrew verb "to be" (cf. Exod.3:14). See Special Topic: Names for Deity at Heb. 2:7. These readers were not rejecting YHWH, but the irony is that rejecting the gospel of Jesus Christ is, in fact, a rejection of YHWH (cf. 1 John 5:9-12).
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### Hebrews 6:4-6<sup>108</sup>

*For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,<sup>6</sup> and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.*

This is clearly the most difficult passage concerning the Preservation of the Saints, so much commentary will be provided to help understand this passage of Scripture.

#### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** explains:

- Heb. 6:4–8 This passage has been subject to substantially different interpretations. The central debate concerns whether the descriptions of vv. 4–5 (e.g., “enlightened,” “tasted the heavenly gift,” “shared in the Holy Spirit,” “tasted of the goodness of the word of God”) depict people who were once true Christians. (1) Some argue these phrases do describe true Christians, implying that Christians can “fall away” and lose their salvation (cf. note on 3:14, however, indicating a fundamental difficulty with this view). Nonetheless, most who advocate this view hold that some who backslide can still return to Christian faith, thus limiting 6:4–6 to hardened cases of apostasy in which it is “impossible ... to restore them again to repentance” (vv. 4, 6). (2) Most argue, however, that although these people may have participated fully in the Christian covenantal community (where they experienced enlightened instruction in the Word of God, where they saw public repentance occur, and where the Holy Spirit was at work in powerful ways), when such people do “fall away” it is clear that they are not true Christians because they have not made a true, saving response to the gospel, resulting in genuine faith, love, and perseverance (vv. 9–12). Significantly, they are like land that received much rain but bore no good fruit, only “thorns and thistles” (v. 8). They may have participated outwardly in the Christian community and they even may have shared in the blessings of Christian fellowship; but, like the seed that fell on rocky ground in the parable of the sower, “they have no root” (Mark 4:17) and they “fall away” when faced with persecution. (3) Another view is that the warnings are addressed to true believers, and though they will never completely fall away, the warnings are still the means that God uses to challenge them to persevere in their faith and so to preserve those whom the Lord has chosen. (4) A fourth view is that the “falling away” described in Heb. 6:6 has to do with loss of heavenly rewards. In any case, though the author recognizes that there may be a few in the congregation who fit the description of vv. 4–8, in general he does not think it to be true as a whole of the congregation to which he is writing, for he says, “yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation” (v. 9).

**John MacArthur** explains in the **ESV MacArthur Bible**:

- **Heb. 6:4 enlightened.** They had received instruction in biblical truth, which was accompanied by intellectual perception. Understanding the gospel is not the equivalent of regeneration (cf. 10:26, 32). In John 1:9 it is clear that enlightening is not the equivalent of salvation. Cf. Heb. 10:29. tasted the heavenly gift. Tasting in the figurative sense in the NT refers to consciously experiencing something (cf. 2:9). The experience might be momentary or continuing. Christ’s “tasting” of death (2:9) was obviously momentary and not continuing or permanent. All men experience the goodness of God, but that does not mean they are all saved (cf. Matt. 5:45; Acts 17:25). Many Jews, during the Lord’s earthly ministry, experienced the blessings from heaven he brought—in healings and deliverance from demons, as well as eating the food he created miraculously (John

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<sup>108</sup> A more in-depth examination is available in John Gill’s *The Cause of God and Truth*, section 50. See “[Resources](http://www.gotquestions.org/Hebrews-6.html).” <http://www.gotquestions.org/Hebrews-6.html>

6). Whether the gift refers to Christ (cf. John 6:51; 2 Cor. 9:15) or to the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 1:12), experiencing either one was not the equivalent of salvation (cf. John 16:8; Acts 7:51). shared in the Holy Spirit. See notes on Heb. 2:4. Even though the concept of partaking is used in 3:1; 3:14; and 12:8 of a relationship that believers have, the context must be the final determining factor. This context in 6:4–6 seems to preclude a reference to true believers. It could be a reference to their participation, as noted above, in the miraculous ministry of Jesus, who was empowered by the Spirit (see notes on Matt. 12:18–32; cf. Luke 4:14, 18), or in the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8), which obviously can be resisted without experiencing salvation (cf. Acts 7:51).

- **Heb. 6:5 tasted.** See note on v. 4. This has an amazing correspondence to what was described in 2:1–4 (see notes there). Like Simon Magus (Acts 8:9–24), these Hebrews had not yet been regenerated in spite of all they had heard and seen (cf. Matt. 13:3–9; John 6:60–66). They were repeating the sins of those who died in the wilderness after seeing the miracles performed through Moses and Aaron and hearing the voice of God at Sinai.
- **Heb. 6:6 fallen away.** This Greek term occurs only here in the NT. In the LXX, it was used to translate terms for severe unfaithfulness and apostasy (cf. Ezek. 14:13; 18:24; 20:27). It is equivalent to the apostasy in Heb. 3:12. The seriousness of this unfaithfulness is seen in the severe description of rejection within this verse: they re-crucify Christ and treat him contemptuously (see also the strong descriptions in 10:29). Those who sinned against Christ in such a way had no hope of restoration or forgiveness (cf. 2:2–3; 10:26–27; 12:25). The reason is that they had rejected him with full knowledge and conscious experience (as described in the features of 6:5–6). With full revelation they rejected the truth, concluding the opposite of the truth about Christ, and thus had no hope of being saved. They can never have more knowledge than they had when they rejected it. They have concluded that Jesus should have been crucified, and they stand with his enemies. There is no possibility of these verses referring to losing salvation. Many Scripture passages make unmistakably clear that salvation is eternal (cf. John 10:27–29; Rom. 8:35, 38, 39; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:4–5). Those who want to make this verse mean that believers can lose salvation will have to admit that it would then also say that one could never get it back again. See Introduction: Interpretive Challenges.

#### The ESV Reformation Study Bible says:

- **6:4 once been enlightened.** That is, had the knowledge of God disclosed in the gospel message (10:26; John 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:4–6) and publicly confessed in baptism. In early Christian writings, conversion and baptism were sometimes termed “enlightenment.” The Greek word for “once” is prominent in Hebrews. It is used in connection with the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ in 10:2, 10.
- **tasted the heavenly gift.** Some see here a reference to participation in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Or the phrase could be paired with “enlightened” as a broad description of apparent conversion.
- **shared in the Holy Spirit.** They had some experience with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but it is not necessary to conclude that regeneration is specifically intended.
- **6:5 powers of the age to come.** Most obviously, the signs and wonders that accompanied the introduction of the gospel (2:4 note).
- **6:6 if they then fall away.** There is a kind of falling away that is irreversible (1 John 5:16). Christian salvation is final (10:4), and the decision to reject it, if made at a certain level, cannot be reversed. According to 1 John 2:19, anyone who makes such a decision was not really a member of the household of faith, although they may have seemed to be. Judas Iscariot is the clearest example of someone who participated in the coming of the kingdom, but did not enter it (Matt. 26:47–49; cf. Matt. 7:21–23). This warning is not to encourage speculation about whether others are irretrievably lost, but urges us to cling closely to the Savior ourselves. See “The Unpardonable Sin” at Mark 3:29.
- **crucifying once again the Son of God.** By renouncing their faith in Christ they declare that Christ’s cross is not a holy sacrifice for others’ sins, but the deserved execution of a guilty criminal (10:29). Such apostates have returned to a point where the Cross does nothing but condemn them as accomplices in murder (Acts 18:5, 6).
- There is an analogy between the once-for-all character of Christ’s sacrifice for sin and the believer’s symbolic participation in that crucifixion through baptism (v. 4 note). Christ’s sacrificial death cannot be repeated. In the same way, the believer’s participation in His death, sealed by baptism (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12), cannot be withdrawn and then repeated.



- **contempt.** The apostasy described in ch. 6 is not a matter of private, internal doubt. It is the forceful, complete, and public rejection of a faith once confessed. As such, it has bad effects for others as well as for the apostate (12:15).

The **HCSB Study Bible** says the following on Hebrews chapter 6 in general:

- 6:4-20 Verses 6-9 have been the subject of much debate. There are several possible interpretations regarding the author's intentions and the identity of those **who have fallen away**. First, some say those who had "fallen away" were genuine Christians who had forsaken Jesus and reverted to Judaism. A second view says they were hearers who had understood the gospel but had not become true believers. A third interpretation identifies the **things connected with salvation** as sanctification rather than justification. A fourth interpretation holds that the writer is speaking about apostasy as a possibility rather than a reality.
- The first interpretation neglects the author's claim that he was speaking in a rhetorical way and was **confident of the better things** regarding his readers. The second interpretation must overcome the language of conversion ( **those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the Holy Spirit, and who tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age**). These phrases indicate something beyond a mere hearing of the gospel. The third interpretation does not adequately deal with the fact that the apostate cannot renew his repentance once he has chosen the way of faithlessness.
- Because of problems with the first three views, the fourth interpretation—that the author was speaking of an unfulfilled possibility rather than a concrete reality—seems most acceptable. Indeed, he used the warning against apostasy as a rhetorical means to call his readers to **demonstrate the same diligence** they had shown before. He was confident of something better than apostasy in their lives because he saw their prior love for Christ and faithful service in His name. The author was not detailing a doctrine of apostasy; he was calling his readers to progress toward maturity. Every succeeding statement promotes this goal. Like Abraham, who obtained the promise of God **after waiting patiently**, the readers should **seize the hope** before them because God has **guaranteed** His promise with an **oath**. And because Jesus has entered the **inner sanctuary** of God's presence, the Christian has a sure and firm **anchor** for the soul. There is not a hint of wavering in the author's voice about either God's will or the final outcome for his "dear friends."

Since God has blessed us with so many resources I will provide yet another one from **Bob Utley**:<sup>109</sup>

- **6:4-6a "have once been. . .have tasted. . .have been made. . .have tasted. . .falling away"** All of these participles are aorists, while Heb. 6:6b begins a series of present tense verbs. These are such strong statements. The meaning seems to be clear: they knew God on some level, but they rejected full faith in Christ. However, two contextual issues need to be examined: (1) the presence of three groups ("us" [vv. 1-3], "those" [vv. 4-8], "you" [vv. 9-12]) and (2) the Jewish nature of the doctrines in Heb. 6:1-2. These point toward a synagogue in which believing and unbelieving Jews worshiped and studied together. The unbelieving Jews have clearly seen the power, glory, and truth of the gospel in the Scriptures and in the testimony and changed lives of their believing friends.
- There seem to be two warnings in Hebrews: (1) to the believing Jews to take their public stand with the persecuted church and not turn back to Judaism and (2) to the unbelieving Jews to embrace Christ. In many ways the first warning is unique to this book, but the second is very similar to the unpardonable sin of the Pharisees in the Gospels and the sin unto death of the false teachers in 1 John.
- **6:5 "the powers of the age to come"** Another example of the lost involved in the power of the age to come is in Matt. 7:21-23. They had power without the necessary personal relationship. This same thing could be said of Judas Iscariot (in the Gospels), Simon Magnus (in Acts), and the false teachers (cf. 1 John 2:18-19).
- See special topic at Heb. 1:2.
- **"have fallen away"** This is an aorist active participle. This is the theological climax of the Greek sentence that begins in Heb. 6:4. See Special Topic: Apostasy at Heb. 3:12.
- **6:6**  
**NASB "and then"**  
**NKJV "if"**

<sup>109</sup> Bob Utley, You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series (NT). Taken from the Bible software The Word. See ["Resources."](#)

**NRSV, TEV** "and then"

**NJB** "And yet in spite of this"

- There is a disagreement among Greek scholars whether this is a mild conditional structure or a consistent parallel structure from verse 4. Those who insist on a conditional structure do so for the theological purpose of asserting that verse 6a is a hypothetical situation. However, all these grammatical features imply that all have occurred.
  1. the repetitive pattern of aorist participles (been enlightened, tasted, shared, tasted and fell away)
  2. the repetitive use of "kai" (and) with the last three
  3. the one accusative masculine plural article in Heb. 6:4 which relates to all the participles of verses 4-6

**NASB, TEV,**

**NJB** "impossible"

**NKJV, NRSV** "impossible"

- The term appears in Heb. 6:4, but the larger context includes Heb. 6:6. This is the Greek term *dunatos* (able) with the alpha privative (unable). These two terms are used with the connotation of what God does and does not do! It is used in the Greek Papyri found in Egypt of (1) men not strong enough to work and (2) witnesses unable to testify. It is used four times in Hebrews.
  1. impossible to renew them again to repentance (6:4)
  2. impossible for God to lie (6:18)
  3. impossible for OT sacrifices to save (10:4)
  4. without faith it is impossible to please God (11:6)
- In each case the term means impossible. Therefore, it is surprising that Lowe and Nida's *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament* says "In Heb. 6.4 the use of *adunaton* seems to be an instance of hyperbole in view of the warnings against apostasy (see Heb. 5.11-6.12). Therefore, one may translate *adunaton* in Heb. 6.4 as 'it is extremely difficult to'" (p. 669). This seems more theological than lexical when all other uses of the word in Hebrews demand "impossible."
- The reluctance to take this term literally is because it leads to the theology of "once out always out" if this refers to believers abandoning their faith. Those denominational groups that teach apostasy also preach repentance and reinstatement. This text seems to depreciate this position.
- In many ways the historical setting is the key to the interpretation.
  1. two groups addressed (believing and non-believing Jews)
  2. one group (believing Jews who have not matured and are now contemplating returning to Moses)
- This is a similar heresy to the Judaizers in Galatians who were tempted to trust in OT rites (plus Christ). Paul asserts that they had fallen from grace (cf. Gal. 5:4).
- **"renew"** See Special Topic following.
- **SPECIAL TOPIC: Renew (ANAKAINÔSIS)**
- **"they again crucify to themselves"** The Greek compound (*anastauroô*) can mean "crucify" (or "nail up," this intensified form is in JB, NEB and Moffatt translations) or "crucify again" (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEB, NJB, NIV translations). *The Greek-English-Lexicon of the New Testament* by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, says "in extra-biblical Greek this term always means *crucify*" (p. 61). Tertullian used this passage to assert that post baptismal sins were not forgivable.
- The early Greek Fathers understood this context and the compound with *ana* to demand "crucify again," which is followed by the majority of modern English translations. How does this relate theologically to apostasy? It implies believers; however, if the intensified form "personally nail up" is followed, then unbelievers are possibly the referent. Interpreters must allow the text, not their theological biases or theological systems, to speak. This text is so difficult to interpret definitively. Often we think we know what it should or should not mean before we struggle with
  1. the book as a whole
  2. the four warnings specifically
  3. the specific context
- However one interprets these texts, the warnings are serious!
- **"put Him to open shame"** This term is used in Matt. 1:19 for Joseph's not wanting to publicly disgrace Mary. How would this relate to the context? It may simply refer to Jesus' initial crucifixion as "public shame" without the implied "again."

## Hebrews 10:26-29<sup>110</sup>

*For if we **go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,<sup>27</sup> but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.<sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.<sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has **trampled underfoot the Son of God**, and has **profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified**, and has **outraged the Spirit of grace?***

### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** provides a long commentary on this portion:

- **Heb. 10:26–27 sinning deliberately.** Willfully sinning and refusing to repent. **after receiving.** The author refers especially to people within the Christian community, who have thus heard the **truth**. The fact that they “go on sinning deliberately even after receiving **knowledge** of the truth” indicates that the people in view are not (and never were) genuine believers; that is, these are people who have never genuinely embraced the gospel in a way that has resulted in a life of faith, obedience, and the bearing of fruit. **no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.** This could refer to the inability of willful, unrepentant sinners to be restored (see 6:4–6), or more likely to the fact that there is no place for them to turn for forgiveness outside of Christ’s sacrifice—which they have rejected. **judgment.** All people face judgment (see 9:27–28), and apart from Christ’s sacrifice his **adversaries** receive eternal damnation. These verses, then, function as a means used by God to call genuine Christians to faith, obedience, and perseverance; and, if there is no evidence of fruit in one’s life, to challenge such people to give fearful consideration as to whether they are in fact genuine believers.
- **Heb. 10:28–29** These verses argue from the lesser to the greater (cf. 2:1–4; 9:14). In the Mosaic law, the death penalty comes upon those who blaspheme God or who worship other deities (e.g., Lev. 24:13–16; Deut. 17:2–7), so in the superior new covenant the expectation of judgment would be even stronger. How much worse punishment ... will be deserved by the one who ... ? The description that follows is of a person who has deliberately, consciously, and persistently deserted “the living God” (cf. Heb. 3:12; 10:31; 12:22), renouncing Christ and the community of faith (6:4–8). It is a description of outright apostasy, involving a person who has done three specific things: (1) trampled underfoot the Son of God, (2) profaned the blood of the covenant, and (3) outraged the Spirit of grace. Such rejection of the knowledge of the truth (10:26) through willful disobedience is tantamount to trampling upon God’s Son, reckoning his blood to be defiled, and insulting the Spirit who has offered such grace; the one who does this deserves eternal judgment (v. 27). Some have argued that the statement by which he was sanctified (Gk. *hagiazō*, “set apart,” “sanctify”) indicates that the person in view here was a true believer (see note on 3:14, however, indicating a fundamental difficulty with this view). Given the immediate context, it seems most likely that “he was sanctified” should be understood in the sense of someone who had been “set apart” or identified as an active participant in the Christian community of believers, but who has subsequently committed apostasy by renouncing his identification with other believers, by denying the “knowledge of the truth” that he had heard, and by repudiating the work and the person of Christ himself. Such a person’s apostasy is thus evidence that his identification with the Christian community was only superficial and that he was not a genuine believer. Another view is that the author is confident that the grave warning in these verses will be the means by which those who are truly elect will be braced to persevere in faith and obedience, and so to be saved (see note on 6:4–8).

The following is said in the **ESV MacArthur Study Bible**:

- **Heb. 10:26 we.** The author is speaking rhetorically. In v. 39, he excludes himself and genuine believers from this category. **sinning deliberately.** The Greek term carries the idea of deliberate intention that is habitual. The sin is rejecting Christ deliberately. These are not isolated acts. According to the Mosaic legislation, such acts of deliberate, premeditated sin required exclusion from the congregation of Israel (cf. Num. 15:30–31) and from its worship (cf. Ex. 21:14). Such sins also excluded the individual from sanctuary in the cities of refuge (cf. Deut. 19:11–13). **knowledge.** The Greek term denotes specific knowledge, not general spiritual knowledge (cf. Heb. 6:4; cf. 1 Tim. 2:4). Though the knowledge was not defective or incomplete, the application of the knowledge was certainly flawed. Judas Iscariot is a good example of a disciple who had no

<sup>110</sup> A more in-depth examination is available in John Gill’s *The Cause of God and Truth*, section 51. See “[Resources](#).”

lack of knowledge, but lacked faith and became the arch-apostate. **no longer.** See note on Heb. 6:6. The apostate is beyond salvation because he has rejected the only sacrifice that can cleanse him from sin and bring him into God's presence. To turn away from that sacrifice leaves him with no saving alternative. This is parallel to Matt. 12:31 (see note there).

- **Heb. 10:27 fearful expectation.** The judgment is certain to happen, so it engenders fear. **judgment, and a fury of fire.** The description is similar to that in Isa. 26:11 and Zeph. 1:18 (cf. 2 Thess. 1:7–9). Ultimately, such judgment is that of eternity in the lake of fire (cf. Matt. 13:38–42, 49–50). **adversaries.** Actual opposition against God and toward the program of God in salvation (see notes on Phil. 3:18–19).
- **Heb. 10:28** Cf. Deut. 17:2–7.
- **Heb. 10:29 How much worse punishment . . . ?** There will be degrees of punishment in hell. This is also clearly indicated in Matt. 11:22–24 (see notes there). **spurned.** Lit., “trample under foot.” In the ancient Near East one of the gestures used to show contempt for someone was to “lift up the foot” against or toward them (cf. Ps. 41:9). To walk on top of someone or something was a more extreme gesture showing utter contempt and scorn (cf. 2 Kings 9:33; Isa. 14:19; Mic. 7:10; Zech. 10:5). Such contempt demonstrates a complete spurning of Christ as Savior and Lord. **profaned.** To reckon Christ's blood as something unclean is the same thing as saying that it is defiled (see note on Heb. 9:13) and implies that Christ was a sinner and a blemished sacrifice. Such thinking is truly blasphemous. **blood of the covenant.** See notes on 9:14–15. Christ's death inaugurated or ratified the New Covenant. **sanctified.** This refers to Christ, in that he was set apart unto God (cf. John 17:19). It cannot refer to the apostate, because only true believers are sanctified. See Introduction: Interpretive Challenges. **outraged the Spirit of grace.** See notes on Heb. 6:4 and 9:14. Compare “a spirit of grace” (Zech. 12:10). Rejecting Christ insults the Spirit who worked through him (Matt. 12:31–32) and who testifies of him (John 15:26; 16:8–11).

The **ESV Reformation Study Bible** explains:

- **10:26 sinning deliberately.** Christians who claim to be sinless are self-deluded (1 John 1:8), and those who sin should not despair of grace (4:16; 1 John 2:1, 2). The willful sin here is abandoning one's confession altogether, trampling the Son underfoot, treating His sacrificial blood as unclean, and insulting God's gracious Spirit (6:6 note; 10:29). The seriousness of the charge is indicated by its willfulness (cf. Num. 15:30) and the measure of knowledge or enlightenment it refuses (cf. Heb. 6:4; 10:32).
- **no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.** Since God has set aside the Levitical system of animal sacrifices (v. 9), those who abandon their confession of trust in Christ have nowhere to turn for forgiveness.
- **10:28 set aside the law of Moses.** That is, turned from God to idols (Deut. 17:2–7).
- **10:29** This argument, from the law as the lesser to the gospel as the greater, is also found in 2:2, 3. If contemptuous violation of the law given through Moses the servant (3:5) warranted the punishment of death, then scorn for the Son of God (1:2, 3; 3:6; 6:6; 2 Pet. 2:1), His sacrificial blood (9:20; cf. Ex. 24:8; Mark 14:24), and the Spirit of grace through whom He offered Himself (9:14) deserves nothing less than “a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (v. 27).

A very thorough exposition is provided by **John Gill**:<sup>111</sup>

- **For if we sin wilfully,....]** Which is not to be understood of a single act of sin, but rather of a course of sinning; nor of sins of infirmity through temptation, or even of grosser acts of sin, but of voluntary ones; and not of all voluntary ones, or in which the will is engaged and concerned, but of such which are done on set purpose, resolutely and obstinately; and not of immoral practices, but of corrupt principles, and acting according to them; it intends a total apostasy from the truth, against light and evidence, joined with obstinacy.
- **After that we have received the knowledge of the truth;** either of Jesus Christ, or of the Scriptures, or of the Gospel, or of some particular doctrine, especially the principal one, salvation by Christ; of which there may be a notional knowledge, when there is no experimental knowledge; and which is received not into the heart, but into the head: and whereas the apostle speaks in the first person plural, we, this is used not so much with regard to himself, but others; that so what he delivered might come with greater weight upon them, and be more readily received by them; when they observed he entertained no hard thoughts or

<sup>111</sup> John Gill, Exposition of the Entire Bible on Hebrews 10:26-29. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See “[Resources](#).”

jealousies of them, which would greatly distress the minds of those that were truly gracious. Moreover, the apostles use this way of speaking, when they do not design themselves at all, but others, under the same visible profession of religion, and who belonged to the same community of believers; see 1Pe 4:3 compared with Ac 22:3. Besides, these words are only hypothetical, and do not prove that true believers could, or should, or do sin in this manner: to which may be added, that true believers are manifestly distinguished from these persons, Heb 10:38,

- **there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins**; meaning, not typical sacrifice; for though the daily sacrifice ought to have ceased at the death of Christ, yet it did not in fact until the destruction of Jerusalem; but the sacrifice of Christ, which will never be repeated; Christ will die no more; his blood will not be shed again, nor his sacrifice reiterated; nor will any other sacrifice be offered; there will be no other Saviour; there is no salvation in any other, nor any other name whereby we must be saved. These words have been wrongly made use of to prove that persons sinning after baptism are not to be restored to communion again upon repentance; and being understood of immoral actions wilfully committed, have given great distress to consciences burdened with the guilt of sin, committed after a profession of religion; but the true sense of the whole is this, that after men have embraced and professed the truths of the Gospel, and particularly this great truth of it, that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men by his blood and sacrifice; and yet after this, against all evidence, all the light and convictions of their own consciences, they wilfully deny this truth, and obstinately persist in the denial of it; seeing there is no more, no other sacrifice for sin, no other Saviour, nor any salvation in any other way, the case of these men must be desperate; there is no help for them, nor hope of them; for by this their sin they shut up against themselves, in principle and practice, the way of salvation, as follows.
- **But a certain fearful looking for of judgment**,.... Either of some outward visible judgment in this life, which sometimes falls on such persons; or of the particular judgment which immediately follows after death; or of the universal judgment, after the resurrection, and the dreadful sentence of condemnation which will then pass, and be immediately executed; and which will be done by Christ, and according to truth, and in strict justice; it is certain, and there will be no escaping it, for it will be general. Now there is in this life an expectation in men of a future judgment, and in wicked men it is a fearful one; it is dreaded by them, and more especially in such men before described, when their consciences are awakened; it is a very dreadful one, inexpressibly so:
- **and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries**; which is to be understood, not of the fire of purgatory, for this is after judgment, that is pretended to be before it; this devours, that only purges, according to the Papists; this is for adversaries, that, as is supposed, is for friends: but perhaps some fiery judgment, expressive of the wrath and indignation of God, such as befell Sodom and Gomorrah, the two sons of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the men that rose up with Korah against Moses and Aaron: or rather the fire of hell, which is not corporeal and material, but is the wrath of God let down into the conscience; which shows the vile nature of sin, the strictness of God's justice, and the intolerableness of future punishment: and this is said to "devour the adversaries"; not only open ones, but secret, underhanded enemies, as the word here signifies; as such apostates are, before described, to God, and Christ, and the Spirit; to the Gospel, its doctrine, discipline, and ordinances; and to the children of God, and to the power of godliness in them: and with the fire of God's wrath they shall be devoured; not so as to be annihilated, but shall be eternally destroyed, both soul and body; that is, everlastingly punished, or punished with everlasting destruction.
- **He that despised Moses' law**,.... By breaking it wilfully, and presumptuously, for which there was no sacrifice; meaning the law which Moses was the minister of not the author; and it respects the whole body of laws given by him, from God; and is instanced in for the sake of the comparison between him and Christ, and between the law and the Gospel, and for the illustration of the case in hand. Now one that transgressed that law, either in whole, or in part, by denying it entirely, or by breaking any particular precept of it presumptuously,
- **died without mercy**; a corporeal death; there was no atonement nor sacrifice for him, nor pity to be shown him, De 13:8.
- **Under two or three witnesses**; who "stood by", or were present, as the Arabic version renders it, when the transgression was committed; or that "accused him", as the Ethiopic version; that were witnesses against him, and plainly and fully proved the fact, De 17:6.



- **Of how much sorer punishment,....** Than a mere corporeal death, which was the punishment inflicted on the transgressors of the law of Moses.
- **Suppose ye;** the apostle appeals to the Hebrews themselves, and makes them judges of what punishment
- **shall he be thought worthy;** who is described as follows:
- **who hath trodden under foot the Son of God:** this seems to be a stronger expression than crucifying him again, Heb 6:6 and is to be understood, not of what was in fact committed, but in will by persons; who, could they have had their will of him, would have pulled him from his throne, and trampled upon him: it is a phrase expressive of the utmost scorn, contempt, and ill usage; and which such are guilty of, who deny his deity, and eternal sonship; who render him useless in his offices, undervalue his sacrifice, despise his righteousness, and strip him of the glory of his person, office, and grace. And this is aggravated by his being the Son of God who is thus used, who became the son of man for the sake of men, is superior to men, and equal with God:
- **and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing;** or "common thing"; putting it upon a level with the blood of a bullock, or at most counting it *איך דכלנש*, "as that of another man"; as the Syriac version renders it; yea, reckoning it as unclean and abominable, as the blood of a very wicked man: this is aggravated by its being "the blood of the covenant"; of the covenant of grace, because that is ratified and confirmed by it, and the blessings of it come through it; and from sanctification by it: either of the person, the apostate himself, who was sanctified or separated from others by a visible profession of religion; having given himself up to a church, to walk with it in the ordinances of the Gospel; and having submitted to baptism, and partook of the Lord's supper, and drank of the cup, "the blood of the New Testament", or "covenant": though he did not spiritually discern the body and blood of Christ in the ordinance, but counted the bread and wine, the symbols of them, as common things; or who professed himself, and was looked upon by others, to be truly sanctified by the Spirit, and to be justified by the blood of Christ, though he was not really so: or rather the Son of God himself is meant, who was sanctified, set apart, hallowed, and consecrated, as Aaron and his sons were sanctified by the sacrifices of slain beasts, to minister in the priest's office: so Christ, when he had offered himself, and shed his precious blood, by which the covenant of grace was ratified, by the same blood he was brought again from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power; and being set down at God's right hand, he ever lives to make intercession, which is the other part of his priestly office he is sanctified by his own blood to accomplish. This clause, "wherewith he was sanctified", is left out in the Alexandrian copy:
- **and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace;** by denying his being, deity, and personality; despising his powerful operations as enthusiasm; treating his extraordinary gifts as illusions; and ascribing his miracles to Satan, and representing the Gospel dictated by him as a fable, or a lie: and this is aggravated by his being "the spirit of grace"; the author, giver, and applier of all grace to the saints; and who therefore ought not to be in the least slighted, but highly esteemed and honoured; nor will such affronts go unpunished.

### James 5:19-20

*My brothers, if anyone among you **wanders from the truth** and someone brings him back,<sup>20</sup> let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

#### Commentaries

This is what the **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says:

- **James 5:19 if anyone among you.** This introduces a third category of people in the church (cf. vv. 13–14)—those professing believers who have strayed from the truth. **wanders from the truth.** Apostatizes from the faith they once professed (cf. Heb. 5:12–6:9; 10:29; 1 John 2:19). Such people are in grave danger (James 5:20), and the church must call them back to the true faith.
- **James 5:20 sinner.** Cf. 4:8. A word used to describe the unregenerate (cf. Prov. 11:31; 13:6, 22; Matt. 9:13; Luke 7:37, 39; 15:7, 10; 18:13; Rom. 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:9, 15; 1 Pet. 4:18). James has in mind here those with dead faith (cf. James 2:14–26), not sinning, true believers. **wandering.** Those who go astray doctrinally (James 5:19) will also manifest an errant lifestyle, one not lived according to biblical principles. **save his soul from death.** A person who wanders from the truth puts his soul in jeopardy. The "death" in view is not physical death, but eternal death—eternal separation from God and eternal punishment in hell (cf. Isa. 66:24; Dan. 12:2; Matt. 13:40, 42, 50; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43–49; 2 Thess. 1:8–9; Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:11–15; 21:8). Knowing how high the stakes are should motivate Christians to aggressively pursue such people. **cover a multitude of**

**sins.** See Ps. 5:10. Since even one sin is enough to condemn a person to hell, James' use of the word "multitude" emphasizes the hopeless condition of lost, unregenerate sinners. The good news of the gospel is that God's forgiving grace (which is greater than any sin; Rom. 5:20) is available to those who turn from their sins and exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8–9).

The **ESV Study Bible** says the following:

- **James 5:19** The righteous saints must be vigilant in spotting anyone who wanders from the truth, namely, by not living in accord with the word of truth (1:18) as enunciated in this letter. Right belief is exhibited in right living (1:19–27).
- **James 5:20 save his soul from death.** Not physical death (cf. 1 Cor. 11:30) but spiritual death (cf. 1 John 5:16–17). Timely intervention (see Gal. 6:1; Heb. 3:13) will "save his soul" and bring forgiveness from God. The person who saves the sinner in this case is the person who restores the one who has fallen. Ultimately, of course, only the Lord saves a person. The one who restores the person will **cover** the many **sins** of the one who had strayed, for the one who returns from the way of error receives forgiveness. Again, only God can cover sin, but Christians can be agents of God's forgiveness.

A thorough discussion is provided by **Bob Utley**.<sup>112</sup>

- **5:19 "my brethren"** See notes at James 1:2 and 1:9.
- **"if"** This is a third class conditional contingent on two actions: (1) one believer strays and (2) another believer is willing to help.
- **"strays from the truth"** The straying has both doctrinal and moral aspects (cf. Heb. 5:2; 2 Pet. 2:2). The term "strays" comes from a Greek word from which we get the English "planet." As the ancients watched and mapped the night sky, they saw that certain "stars" did not follow a regular orbit. We know these today as our solar system's planets. They called them "the wanderers."  
The grammatical form of the verb is aorist passive subjunctive. The AORIST speaks of wandering. The passive voice is used to assert that the subject is being acted upon. Most translations translate it as a middle or active (NASB, NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB, and NIV). The passive idea is found in *The Twentieth Century New Testament* and the translation by Henry Alford. The passive voice was replacing the middle voice in Koine Greek (cf. A. T. Robertson's *Studies in the Epistle of James* p. 196 (footnote #6). This may explain James 4:7 and 10 as well.  
Believers wander (1) by willfulness; (2) by the trickery of false teachers (cf. Eph. 4:14); and (3) under the influence of the demonic (cf. Eph. 4:14). The exact cause is not the issue, but the need for confession, repentance, prayer, and the help of other believers.
- **"one turns him back"** Believers have a responsibility to help one another (cf. 2 Cor. 2:7; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:32; 2 Thess. 3:15).
- **5:20**  

NASB, NKJV	"let him know"
NRSV	"you should know"
TEV	"remember this"
NJB	"he may be sure"

This is a present active imperative. It is an idiom for confidence in the following statement.
- **"turns"** It is significant that the Greek word *epistrephô* is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term for "repentance" (*shuv*). Since Israel was considered the people of God, this "turning" was viewed as "turning back" to God or the renewing of a previous relationship. That same sense is reflected in this text in James.
- **"he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death."** In context this refers to (1) the supposed connection between sin and sickness in James 5:15 or (2) the message of the whole book about warnings related to covenant responsibilities.
  - Our systematic theology tends to interpret passages like this (i.e., James 5:19-20) in "acceptable" ways. The fact remains this is a shocking warning written to Christians. Sin causes death, physical

<sup>112</sup> Bob Utley, *You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series (NT)*. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See ["Resources."](#)

death, spiritual death, eternal death. Unconfessed sin is a powerful and beguiling enemy. Flee from it. Confess it!

- There is an interesting and insightful footnote in *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, published by IVP:
    - "Neither James nor the rest of the New Testament is concerned to answer the speculative question 'How could a Christian who had eternal life lose it?' All of the theological answers given are based on various theological assumptions and either deny the meaning of the various texts (such as 'The Christian does not really die eternally, but simply loses his or her reward') or explain the texts according to their theological beliefs (such as the Calvinist 'They appeared to be Christian, but their lack of perseverance shows that they were not really regenerate,' or the Arminian 'Yes, people can fall away from the faith and be lost'). James, like all New Testament writers, is not interested in theological neatness, but in pastoral concern. He simply sees the situation (a Christian on the wrong way), recognizes the danger (death) and goes to the rescue, rather than ask how it fits into his theology. So while theological responses are appropriate in their place, we ought not to expect a New Testament writer to select among them" (p. 708).
  - **"cover a multitude of sins"** This refers to the forgiving of the wanderer's sins! Possibly this is related to Ps. 32:1; 85:2; Pro. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8 (a Semitic truism or proverb) or 1 Cor. 13:7 where love refuses to see faults in others. Christians love wounded Christians. The spiritual battle has casualties, but also reclamations.
  - At this point let us discuss the application of this context to today. It appears from James 5:15 that James expected physical restoration. Does that imply that all of the early Jewish believers were healed? If so, how did they die? Verses 19-20 may have been the theological assurance that even those who died had their sins forgiven and possessed eternal life.
  - Bible-believing believers believe in God's miraculous presence, care, provision, and healing! The mystery is when, where, how, and who is to be involved and why physical healing often does not occur. Our biblical world-view asserts God's love, power, and sovereignty even amidst suffering, sickness, persecution, and death. Faith lives even when the body dies. Let us keep on praying, believing, confessing, anointing, encouraging, and loving each other.
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## Revelation 2:4-5

*But I have this against you, that you have **abandoned the love you had at first**. <sup>5</sup> Remember therefore **from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first**. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*

### Commentaries

The **ESV Study Bible** says the following:

- **Rev. 2:4–5 the love you had at first.** One interpretation is that Ephesus had lost its early love for Christ. Another interpretation is that Ephesian believers had lost love for one another and needed to revive the compassionate **works you did at first**. Many interpreters think both are in view, since love for Christ and love for one another are related (cf. Mark 12:29–31; 1 John 4:20). **Remove your lampstand** means that both in the near future and when Christ returns, they would lose their status as a church and Christ would treat them like apostate Israel.

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says:

- **Rev. 2:4 abandoned the love you had at first.** To be a Christian is to love the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:21, 23; 1 Cor. 16:22). But the Ephesians' passion and fervor for Christ had become cold, mechanical orthodoxy. Their doctrinal and moral purity, their undiminished zeal for the truth, and their disciplined service were no substitute for the love for Christ they had forsaken.
- **Rev. 2:5 remove your lampstand.** God's judgment would bring an end to the Ephesian church.

**Bob Utley** sheds some light on this:<sup>113</sup>

- **2:4**

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<sup>113</sup> Bob Utley, *You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series (NT)*. Taken from the Bible software The Word. See ["Resources."](#)

NASB, NKJV	"you have left your first love"
NRSV	"you have abandoned the love you had at first"
TEV	"you do not love me now as you did at first"
NJB	"you have less love now than formerly"

- There have been several theories as to what this meant.
  1. TEV and Charles Williams translations assume it means love for Christ.
  2. James Moffatt assumed it means love for one another.
  3. Hershell Hobbs in his commentary assumed it means love for the lost.
  4. J. B. Phillips in his translation combined all of the above.
  5. Some think it is related to the problem of second generation believers (cf. Jdgs. 2: 7-10).
  6. Some see it as a loveless church of cold orthodoxy (cf. 1 Corinthians 13).
- **2:5 "remember"** This is a present active imperative meaning "always keep in mind." Believers are often admonished to remember their previous condition in sin and their new position in the grace and mercies of God through Christ.
- **"from which you have fallen"** This is a perfect active indicative. Leaving their "first love" had become a settled condition of neglect!
- **"repent and do the deeds you did at first"** These are two aorist active imperatives. Notice the church as a whole is called on to make a decisive repentance (cf. 2 Chr. 7:14) and to become active in its love for Christ, for each other, and for the lost.
- Repentance is crucial for a faith relationship with God (cf. Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 20:21). The Hebrew term meant a change of actions, while in Greek it meant a change of mind. Repentance is a willingness to change from one's self-centered existence to a life informed and directed by God. It calls for a turning from the priority and bondage of the self. Basically it is a new attitude, a new worldview, a new master. Repentance is God's will for every fallen child of Adam, made in His image (cf. Ezek. 18:21,23,32 and 2 Pet. 3:9).
  - The NT passage which best reflects the different Greek terms for repentance is 2 Cor. 7:8-12.
    1. *lupç*, "grief" or "sorrowing" Rev. 2:8 (twice), Rev. 2:9 (thrice), Rev. 2:10 (twice), Rev. 2:11
    2. *metamelomai*, "after care," Rev. 2:8 (twice), Rev. 2:9
    3. *metanoëô*, "repent," "after mind," Rev. 2:9, 10
- The contrast is between a false repentance (*metamelomai*, cf. Judas, Matt. 27:3 and Esau, Heb. 12:16-17) and a true repentance (*metanoëô*, cf. Peter, John 21:15-23; Matt. 26:75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62).
  - True repentance is theologically linked to
    1. Jesus' preaching on the conditions of the New Covenant (cf. Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3,5)
    2. the Apostolic sermons in Acts (kerygma, cf. Acts 3:16,19; 20:21)
    3. God's sovereign gift (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18 and 2 Tim. 2:25)
    4. perishing (cf. 2 Pet. 3:9)
- Repentance is not optional!
- **"or else I am coming to you"** This is a common theme in this book; Christ is coming soon (cf. Rev. 1:2,3; 2:5,16; 25; 3:3,11). In the OT the coming of God could bring blessing or judgment. In this context Christ was coming to discipline His church (cf. 1 Pet. 4:17)! Therefore, it has a temporal, as well as eschatological, orientation.
- **"and will remove your lampstand out of its place"** The lampstand symbolizes the entire church. This may have involved the removal of Christ's presence and blessing. The entire congregation was not facing apostasy, but the loss of their effective ministry. This also applies to the churches of Pergamum (cf. Rev. 2:16); Thyatira (cf. Rev. 2:22-23); Sardis (cf. Rev. 3:3); and Laodicea (cf. Rev. 3:19). It is possible that each of these churches were affected by a Nicolaitan type of false teaching which promoted compromise with pagan culture.

### Revelation 3:5<sup>114</sup>

*The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will **never blot his name out of the book of life.** I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.*

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.gty.org/resources/bible-qna/bq6211/blotted-out-of-the-book-of-life>

Some have said that just because the text says that Jesus will not blot out the names of those that conquer that He will blot out other names, which is incorrect.

#### Commentaries

The **ESV MacArthur Study Bible** says:

- **Rev. 3:5 conquers.** All true Christians (see note on 2:7). **book of life.** A divine journal records the names of all those whom God has chosen to save and who, therefore, are to possess eternal life (13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; 22:19; cf. Dan. 12:1; Luke 10:20). Under no circumstances will he erase those names (see note on Phil. 4:3), as city officials often did of undesirable people on their rolls.
  - **Rev. 2:7 one who conquers.** According to John's own definition, to be an overcomer is to be a Christian (see note on 1 John 5:4; cf. Rev. 2:11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). **tree of life.** True believers enjoy the promise of heaven (see notes on 22:2; Gen. 2:9).
    - **1 John 5:4 overcomes.** John clearly defines who these overcomers are: they are all who believe that Jesus is God's Son, and all that means. The overcomers are believers—all of them (cf. 2:13). The word for "overcomes" or "overcomer" comes from a Greek word meaning "to conquer," "to have victory," "to have superiority" or "conquering power." The word reflects a genuine superiority that leads to overwhelming success. The victory is demonstrable; it involves overthrowing an enemy so that the victory is seen by all. Jesus also used this word to describe himself (John 16:33). Because of believers' union with Christ, they too partake in his victory (Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14). The word "overcomes" in the original language conveys the idea that the believer has continual victory over the world.

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### Perseverance of the Saints<sup>115</sup>

**Mt 10:21-22** Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, <sup>22</sup> and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the **one who endures to the end will be saved**.

**Mt 24:12-13** And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the **one who endures to the end will be saved**.

**Lk 8:15** As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, **hold it fast** in an honest and good heart, and **bear fruit** with patience.

**Jn 15:5-6** I am the vine; you are the branches. **Whoever abides in me** and I in him, he it is that **bears much fruit**, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

**Jn 15:8-10** By this my Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit** and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup> **If you keep my commandments**, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

**Acts 13:43** And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

**Acts 14:21-22** When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, **encouraging them to continue in the faith**, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

**1Cor 15:58** Therefore, my beloved brothers, **be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord**, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

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<sup>115</sup> This section shows us that the believers are also active in their perseverance, but we've already seen that God is the one who preserves us. The verses are taken from "The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented" Ed. 2, pp. 150-3.



**1Cor 16:13-14** Be watchful, **stand firm in the faith**, act like men, be strong. <sup>14</sup> Let all that you do be done in love.

**2Cor 13:5** **Examine yourselves**, to see whether you are in the faith. **Test yourselves**. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—**unless indeed you fail to meet the test!**

**Gal 6:9** And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season **we will reap, if we do not give up**.

**Phil 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**, <sup>13</sup> for it is **God who works in you**, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**Phil 3:12-14** Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but **I press on** to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and **straining forward to what lies ahead**, <sup>14</sup> **I press on** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

**Col 1:21-23** And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, <sup>23</sup> **if indeed you continue in the faith**, stable and steadfast, **not shifting** from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister.

**Heb 3:12-14** **Take care**, brothers, lest there be in any of you an **evil, unbelieving heart**, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But **exhort one another** every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have come to share in Christ, **if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end**.

**Heb 10:23** Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

**Heb 10:36-39** For you have need of endurance, so that **when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised**. <sup>37</sup> For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; <sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of **those who have faith and preserve their souls**.

**Heb 12:1-3** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us**, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

**Jas 1:12** Blessed is the man who **remains steadfast** under trial, for **when he has stood the test** he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

**2Pet 1:10-11** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to **confirm your calling and election**, for **if you practice these qualities you will never fall**. <sup>11</sup> For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**1Jn 2:3-6** And by this we know that we have come to know him, **if we keep his commandments**. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> **whoever says he abides in him** ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

**1Jn 2:19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, **they would have continued** with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us.

**1Jn 2:28** And now, little children, **abide in him**, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

### *How the Saints Persevere<sup>116</sup>*

**Mt 7:24-27** “Everyone then who **hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

**Lk 9:62** Jesus said to him, “**No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.**”

**1Cor 9:24-27** Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So **run that you may obtain it.** <sup>25</sup> Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. <sup>26</sup> So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. <sup>27</sup> But **I discipline my body and keep it under control**, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

**Heb 2:1-4** Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, <sup>3</sup> how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, <sup>4</sup> while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

**Heb 10:26-31** For **if we go on sinning deliberately** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the **one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God**, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**Heb 13:15-21** Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that **acknowledge his name.** <sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to **do good** and to **share what you have**, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. <sup>17</sup> Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. <sup>18</sup> Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. <sup>19</sup> I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. <sup>20</sup> Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, <sup>21</sup> **equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us** that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**1Jn 5:18** We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but **he who was born of God protects him**, and the evil one does not touch him.

**2Jn 9 1:9** Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. **Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.**

**Rev 14:12** Here is a call for the **endurance of the saints**, those who **keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.**

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<sup>116</sup> Taken from “The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented” pp. 153-5. Not all Scripture from there are quoted.

# Sovereignty over all Creation, God rules over all, God's universal government

## General verses about the Sovereignty of God over everything

**Isa 29:16** You turn things upside down! Shall the **potter be regarded as the clay**, that the thing made should say of its maker, "**He did not make me**"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "**He has no understanding**"?

**Isa 43:20-21** The wild **beasts will honor me**, the jackals and the ostriches, for **I give water in the wilderness**, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, <sup>21</sup> the **people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise**.

**Isa 45:9-10** "Woe to him who **strives with him who formed him**, a pot among earthen pots! Does the **clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?'** or 'Your work has no handles'? <sup>10</sup> Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' or to a woman, 'With what are you in labor?'"

**Isa 64:8** But now, O LORD, you are our Father; **we are the clay**, and **you are our potter**; we are all the work of your hand.

**Rom 9:19-21** You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" <sup>20</sup> But **who are you, O man, to answer back to God?** Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> **Has the potter no right over the clay**, to make out of the same lump one vessel for **honorable use** and another for **dishonorable use**?

**1Tim 6:13-16** I charge you in the presence of **God, who gives life to all things**, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, <sup>14</sup> to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> which he will display at the proper time—he who is the blessed and **only Sovereign**, the **King of kings** and **Lord of lords**, <sup>16</sup> who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be **honor** and **eternal dominion**. Amen.

## God's sovereign plan, decree, will, purpose

**Gn 41:32** And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the **thing is fixed by God**, and **God will shortly bring it about**.

**Nm 23:19** God is not man, that he should **lie**, or a son of man, that he should **change his mind**. Has he **said**, and **will he not do it?** Or has he **spoken**, and **will he not fulfill it?**

**2Kg 19:25-26** "Have you not heard that **I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass**, that you should turn fortified cities into heaps of ruins, <sup>26</sup> while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown.

**Job 9:12** Behold, he snatches away; **who can turn him back?** Who will say to him, '**What are you doing?**'

**Job 11:10** If he passes through and imprisons and summons the court, **who can turn him back?**

**Job 12:13-25** "With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. <sup>14</sup> If he **tears down**, **none can rebuild**; if he **shuts a man in**, **none can open**. <sup>15</sup> If he **withholds the waters**, **they dry up**; if he **sends them out**, they **overwhelm the land**. <sup>16</sup> With him are strength and sound wisdom; **the deceived and the deceiver are his**. <sup>17</sup> He leads counselors away stripped, and judges he makes fools. <sup>18</sup> He **looses the bonds of kings** and binds a waistcloth on their hips. <sup>19</sup> He leads priests away stripped and overthrows the mighty. <sup>20</sup> He deprives of speech those who are trusted and takes away the discernment of the elders. <sup>21</sup> He pours contempt on princes and loosens the belt of the strong. <sup>22</sup> He uncovers the deeps out of darkness and brings deep darkness to light. <sup>23</sup> He **makes nations great**, and **he destroys them**; he **enlarges nations**, and **leads them away**. <sup>24</sup> He **takes away understanding** from the chiefs of the people of the earth and makes them wander in a trackless waste. <sup>25</sup> They grope in the dark without light, and **he makes them stagger** like a drunken man.

**Job 23:13-14** But **he is unchangeable**, and who can turn him back? **What he desires, that he does**. <sup>14</sup> For **he will complete what he appoints for me**, and many such things are in his mind.

**Job 42:2** "I know that you can do all things, and that **no purpose of yours can be thwarted**.

**Ps 33:10-12** The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he **frustrates the plans of the peoples**. <sup>11</sup> The **counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations**. <sup>12</sup> Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

**Ps 115:3** Our God is in the heavens; **he does all that he pleases**.

**Ps 135:6** *Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.*

**Prov 16:4** *The LORD has made **everything for its purpose**, even the wicked for the day of trouble.*

**Isa 14:27** *For the **LORD of hosts has purposed**, and **who will annul it**? His **hand is stretched out**, and **who will turn it back**?*

**Isa 37:21-29, 36-38** Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning **Sennacherib king of Assyria**,<sup>22</sup> this is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him: “‘She despises you, she scorns you— the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you— the daughter of Jerusalem.’<sup>23</sup> “‘Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! 24 By your servants you have **mocked the Lord**, and you have said, With **my many chariots I have gone up the heights of the mountains**, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest.<sup>25</sup> **I dug wells** and drank waters, to **dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt**.<sup>26</sup> “‘Have you not heard that **I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins**,<sup>27</sup> while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown.<sup>28</sup> “‘I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me.<sup>29</sup> Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.’<sup>36</sup> And the angel of the LORD went out and **struck down 185,000** in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies.<sup>37</sup> Then **Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh**.<sup>38</sup> And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, **his sons, struck him down with the sword**. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

**Isa 41:4** *Who has performed and done this, **calling the generations from the beginning**? I, the LORD, the **first**, and with the **last**; I am he.*

**Isa 41:21-24** Set forth your case, says the LORD; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.<sup>22</sup> Let them bring them, and tell us what is to happen. **Tell us the former things**, what they are, that we may consider them, that we may know their outcome; or **declare to us the things to come**.<sup>23</sup> Tell us what is to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; **do good**, or **do harm**, that we may be dismayed and terrified.<sup>24</sup> Behold, you are nothing, and your work is less than nothing; an abomination is he who chooses you.

**Isa 43:13** *Also henceforth I am he; there is **none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back**?”*

**Isa 44:28** *who says of **Cyrus**, ‘**He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose**’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”*

**Isa 45:20-21** “Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save.<sup>21</sup> Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! **Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old?** Was it not I, the LORD? And there is **no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior**; there is none besides me.

**Isa 46:8-11** Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors,<sup>9</sup> remember the former things of old; for **I am God, and there is no other**; I am God, and there is none like me,<sup>10</sup> **declaring the end from the beginning** and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘**My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose**,’<sup>11</sup> calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. **I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.**

**Isa 55:10-11** “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,<sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, **but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.**

**Lam 2:17** *The **LORD has done what he purposed**; he has **carried out his word**, which he **commanded long ago**; he has thrown down without pity; he has made the enemy rejoice over you and exalted the might of your foes.*



**Rom 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good<sup>117</sup>, for those who are called according to his purpose.

**Eph 1:11-12** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works<sup>118</sup> all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.

**Jas 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

**Jas 4:13-15** Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— <sup>14</sup> yet **you do not know what tomorrow will bring**. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. <sup>15</sup> Instead you ought to say, “**If the Lord wills**, we will live and do this or that.”

**2 Pet 1:20-21** knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For **no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**.

## God sustains the Universe

**Neh 9:6** You are the LORD, you alone. You have **made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.**

**Acts 17:26-28** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having **determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place**, <sup>27</sup> that **they should seek God**, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually **not far from each one of us**, <sup>28</sup> for “**In him we live and move and have our being**”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed **his offspring**.”

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

**1Cor 15:27** For “**God has put all things in subjection under his feet**.” But when it says, “all things are put in subjection,” it is plain that he is excepted who **put all things in subjection under him**.

**Col 1:15-17** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup> For **by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him**. <sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and **in him all things hold together**.

**Heb 1:3** “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he **upholds**<sup>119</sup> **the universe by the word of his power**. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

## Kingship belongs to the Lord, He reigns, He is supreme over all

**Dt 32:8** When the **Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God**.

**1Ch 16:31** Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, “**The LORD reigns!**”

**1Ch 29:11-12** Yours, O LORD, is the **greatness** and the **power** and the **glory** and the **victory** and the **majesty**, for **all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours**. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and **you are exalted as head above all**. <sup>12</sup> Both **riches** and **honor come from you, and you rule over all**. In your hand are **power** and **might**, and in your hand it is to make **great** and to **give strength to all**.

**2Ch 20:6** and said, “O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? **You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations**. In your hand are power and might, so that **none is able to withstand you**.

**Ps 10:16** The **LORD is king forever** and ever; the nations perish from his land.

**Ps 22:28** For **kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations**.

<sup>117</sup> Alt reading “God works all things together for good”

<sup>118</sup> Ἐνεργούντος = works, brings about.

<sup>119</sup> Φέρων (pheron) = carry, bear, uphold (Jn 2:8, Lk 5:18, 2 Tim 4:3). Jesus is continually carrying along all things in the universe by the world of his power.



**Ps 47:2** For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, **a great king over all the earth.**

**Ps 47:8** **God reigns over the nations;** God sits on his holy throne.

**Ps 66:6-7** He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot. There did we rejoice in him, <sup>7</sup> **who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—** let not the rebellious exalt themselves. — Selah

**Ps 99:1** **The LORD reigns;** let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

**Ps 103:19** The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and **his kingdom rules over all.**

**Jer 27:5** “It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have **made the earth**, with the **men** and **animals** that are on the earth, and **I give it to whomever it seems right to me.**

**Dan 2:21-22** He **changes times and seasons;** he **removes kings** and **sets up kings;** he **gives wisdom** to the wise and **knowledge** to those who have understanding; <sup>22</sup> he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

**Dan 4:17** The sentence is by the decree of the watchers, the decision by the word of the holy ones, to the end that the living may know that the **Most High rules the kingdom of men** and **gives it to whom he will** and sets over it the lowliest of men.’

**Dan 4:34-35** At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever for his dominion is an **everlasting dominion**, and his **kingdom endures from generation to generation;** <sup>35</sup> all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and **he does according to his will** among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

**Jn 19:11** Jesus answered him, “You would have **no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

**Rom 13:1-2** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is **no authority except from God**, and those that exist have been **instituted by God.** <sup>2</sup> Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

**Rev 4:11** “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive **glory** and **honor** and **power**, for **you created all things**, and by **your will they existed and were created.**”

## God is sovereign over life and death, sickness and health

**Gen 4:25** And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, “**God has appointed for me another offspring** instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.”

**Gen 6:17** For behold, **I will bring a flood** of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. **Everything that is on the earth shall die.**

**Gen 18:14** **Is anything too hard for the LORD?** At the **appointed time** I will return to you, about this time next year, and **Sarah shall have a son.**”

**Gen 20:17-18** Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, and also healed his wife and female slaves so that **they bore children.** <sup>18</sup> For the **LORD had closed all the wombs** of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

**Gen 30:2** Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of **God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?**”

**Ex 4:11** Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him **mute**, or **deaf**, or **seeing**, or **blind?** Is it not I, the LORD?”

**Lv 14:33-35** The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, <sup>34</sup> “When you come into the land of Canaan, which I give you for a possession, and **I put a case of leprous disease in a house** in the land of your possession, <sup>35</sup> then he who owns the house shall come and tell the priest, ‘There seems to me to be some case of disease in my house.’”

**Dt 10:22** Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the **LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven.**

**Dt 32:39** “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I **kill** and I make **alive**; I **wound** and I **heal**; and **there is none that can deliver out of my hand**.

**Ruth 4:13** So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the **LORD gave her conception**, and she bore a son.

**1Sm 1:5** But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the **LORD had closed her womb**.

**1Sm 2:6-8** The **LORD kills** and brings to **life**; he **brings down** to Sheol and **raises up**.<sup>7</sup> The **LORD makes poor** and makes **rich**; he brings **low** and he **exalts**.<sup>8</sup> He **raises up** the poor from the dust; he **lifts the needy** from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the **LORD's**, and on them he has set the world.

**2Sm 12:15** Then Nathan went to his house. And the **LORD afflicted** the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and **he became sick**.

**1Ki 13:24-28** And as he went away **a lion met him on the road and killed him**. And his body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body. 25 And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown in the road and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet lived. 26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, “It is the man of God who disobeyed the word of the **LORD**; therefore the **LORD has given him to the lion**, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word that the **LORD spoke to him**.” 27 And he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” And they saddled it. 28 And he went and found his body thrown in the road, and the donkey and the lion standing beside the body. **The lion had not eaten the body or torn the donkey**.

**2Ki 8:1** Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, “Arise, and depart with your household, and sojourn wherever you can, for the **LORD has called for a famine**, and it will come upon the land for seven years.”

**Job 1:21** And he said, “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The **LORD gave**, and the **LORD has taken away**; blessed be the name of the **LORD**.”

**Job 12:7-10** “But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;<sup>8</sup> or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you; and the fish of the sea will declare to you.<sup>9</sup> Who among all these does not know that the hand of the **LORD** has done this?<sup>10</sup> **In his hand is the life** of every living thing and the **breath of all mankind**.

**Job 14:4-6** Who can **bring a clean thing out of an unclean**? There is not one.<sup>5</sup> Since his **days are determined**, and the **number of his months is with you**, and **you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass**,<sup>6</sup> look away from him and leave him alone, that he may enjoy, like a hired hand, his day.

**Job 34:14-15** If he should set his heart to it and **gather to himself his spirit and his breath**,<sup>15</sup> **all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust**.

**Ps 104:3-4** He lays the beams of his chambers on the **waters**; he makes the **clouds** his chariot; he rides on the wings of the **wind**;<sup>4</sup> he makes his messengers **winds**, his ministers a **flaming fire**.

**Ps 105:24** And the **LORD made his people very fruitful** and made them **stronger** than their foes.

**Ps 127:3** Behold, **children are a heritage from the LORD**, the fruit of the womb a reward.

**Ps 139:13-16** For you formed my inward parts; you **knitted me together** in my mother's womb.<sup>14</sup> I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance; **in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me**, when as yet there was none of them.

**Ecc 5:18-20** Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the **few days of his life that God has given him**, for this is his lot.<sup>19</sup> Everyone also to whom **God has given wealth and possessions and power** to enjoy them, and to **accept his lot** and rejoice in his toil—this is the **gift of God**.<sup>20</sup> For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

**Isa 42:5-7** Thus says God, the **LORD**, who **created the heavens** and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who **gives breath to the people** on it and **spirit to those who walk in it**:<sup>6</sup> “I am the **LORD**; I have **called you**

*in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,<sup>7</sup> to **open the eyes that are blind**, to **bring out the prisoners from the dungeon**, from the prison **those who sit in darkness**.*

**Isa 54:16-17** Behold, I have created the **smith** who blows the fire of coals and produces **a weapon for its purpose**. I have also created the **ravager to destroy**;<sup>17</sup> no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, declares the LORD.”

**Ezk 5:17** I will send **famine** and **wild beasts** against you, and they will rob you of your children. **Pestilence** and **blood** shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword upon you. I am the LORD; I have spoken.”

**Ezk 14:19-20** “Or if I send a **pestilence** into that land and **pour out my wrath upon it with blood**, to **cut off from it man and beast**,<sup>20</sup> even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.

**Ezk 18:4** Behold, **all souls are mine**; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

**Heb 9:27-28** And just as it is **appointed for man to die once**, and after that comes judgment,<sup>28</sup> so Christ, having been offered once to **bear the sins of many**, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to **save those who are eagerly waiting for him**.

### God is sovereign over prosperity and poverty, exaltation and bringing down

**Gn 39:3** His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the **LORD caused all that he did to succeed** in his hands.<sup>4</sup> So **Joseph found favor** in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and **put him in charge of all** that he had.<sup>5</sup> From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the **LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake**; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field.

**Gn 39:22-23** And the keeper of the prison **put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners** who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it.<sup>23</sup> The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the **LORD was with him**. And **whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed**.

**Gn 45:7-9** And **God sent me** before you to **preserve for you a remnant on earth**, and to keep alive for you many survivors.<sup>8</sup> So **it was not you who sent me here, but God**. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and **lord of all his house** and ruler over all the land of Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, **God has made me lord of all Egypt**. Come down to me; do not tarry.

**Gn 50:20** As for you, **you meant evil** against me, but **God meant it for good**, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

**Dt 8:17-18** Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’<sup>18</sup> You shall remember the LORD your God, for **it is he who gives you power** to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

**Ps 75:6-7** For not from the east or from the west and not from the wilderness comes lifting up,<sup>7</sup> but it is God who executes judgment, **putting down one and lifting up another**.

**Ps 105:16-17** When he summoned a **famine** on the land and **broke all supply of bread**,<sup>17</sup> **he had sent a man** ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

**Ps 113:7-8** He **raises the poor** from the dust and **lifts the needy** from the ash heap,<sup>8</sup> to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.<sup>120</sup>

**Ps 147:6** The LORD **lifts up the humble**; he **casts the wicked** to the ground.

**Isa 40:22-24** It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;<sup>23</sup> who **brings princes to nothing**, and **makes the rulers of**

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<sup>120</sup> C.f. 1Sm 2:6-8; Ps 107:41

**the earth as emptiness.** <sup>24</sup> Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

**Isa 58:11** And the **LORD will guide you** continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and **make your bones strong**; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

**Ezk 17:24** And all the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD; **I bring low** the high tree, and **make high** the low tree, **dry up** the green tree, and **make the dry tree flourish**. I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it. <sup>121</sup>

**Lk 1:51-53** He has shown strength with his arm; he has **scattered the proud** in the thoughts of their hearts; <sup>52</sup> he has **brought down** the mighty from their thrones and **exalted** those of humble estate; <sup>53</sup> he has **filled the hungry** with good things, and the **rich he has sent away empty**.

## God is sovereign over good and ill, peace and war

**Gn 35:5** And as they journeyed, a **terror from God fell** upon the cities that were around them, so that they **did not pursue the sons of Jacob**.

**Gen 41:25-32** Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; **God** has revealed to Pharaoh **what he is about to do**. <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one. <sup>27</sup> The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine. <sup>28</sup> It is as I told Pharaoh; **God** has shown to Pharaoh **what he is about to do**. <sup>29</sup> There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, <sup>30</sup> but after them there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will consume the land, <sup>31</sup> and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. <sup>32</sup> And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is **fixed by God**, and **God will shortly bring it about**.

**Dt 2:25** This day **I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on the peoples** who are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

**Dt 2:30** But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the **LORD your God hardened his spirit** and made **his heart obstinate**, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day.

**Jos 11:20** For it was the **LORD's doing to harden their hearts** that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

**Judg 7:22** When they blew the 300 trumpets, the **LORD set every man's sword against his comrade** and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

**Ru 1:20** She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the **Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me**.

**2Ch 17:10** And the **fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms** of the lands that were around Judah, and they **made no war** against Jehoshaphat.

**Job 2:10** But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we **receive good** from God, and **shall we not receive evil?**" In all this **Job did not sin with his lips**.

**Ps 46:9** He **makes wars cease** to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

**Prov 21:31** The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the **victory belongs to the LORD**.

**Ec 7:14** In the **day of prosperity** be joyful, and in the **day of adversity** consider: **God has made the one as well as the other**, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

**Isa 31:1-3** Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many and in horsemen because they are very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the LORD! <sup>2</sup> And yet **he is wise** and **brings disaster**; he **does not call back his words**, but will **arise against the house of the evildoers** and against the helpers of those who work iniquity. <sup>3</sup> The Egyptians are man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the **LORD stretches out his hand**, the **helper will stumble**, and he who is **helped will fall**, and they will all **perish together**.

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<sup>121</sup> The trees are a reference either to Israel or all the nations



Isa 45:5-7 I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; I **equip you**, though you do not know me, <sup>6</sup> that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. <sup>7</sup> I form **light** and **create darkness**, I make **well-being** and **create calamity**<sup>122</sup>, I am the LORD, who does all these things.

Lam 3:37-38 Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? <sup>38</sup> Is it not from the **mouth of the Most High that good and bad** come?

Ezk 14:17-18 "Or if I **bring a sword** upon that land and say, Let a sword pass through the land, and I **cut off from it man and beast**, <sup>18</sup> though these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered.

Ezk 14:21 "For thus says the Lord GOD: How much more when I **send upon Jerusalem** my four disastrous acts of judgment, **sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence**, to **cut off from it man and beast**!

Amos 3:6 Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? **Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?**

Jn 3:27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless **it is given him from heaven**.

1Pet 4:19 Therefore let those who **suffer according to God's will** entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

## God is sovereign over the affairs of the nations

Ex 6:7 I will **take you to be my people**, and **I will be your God**, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Dt 7:6-8 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your **God has chosen you** to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup> **It was not because you were more in number** than any other people that the **LORD set his love on you and chose you**, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is because the **LORD loves you** and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Dt 10:14-15 Behold, to the LORD your **God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it**. <sup>15</sup> Yet the **LORD set his heart in love** on your fathers and **chose their offspring** after them, **you above all peoples**, as you are this day.

Dt 14:2 For you are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the **LORD has chosen you** to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Dt 32:6 Do you thus repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? Is not he your father, who **created you**, who **made you and established you**?

Dt 32:8 When the **Most High gave to the nations their inheritance**, when **he divided mankind**, **he fixed the borders** of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.

Job 12:23-25 He **makes nations great**, and he **destroys them**; he **enlarges nations**, and **leads them away**. <sup>24</sup> He **takes away understanding from the chiefs** of the people of the earth and **makes them wander in a trackless waste**. <sup>25</sup> They grope in the dark without light, and he **makes them stagger like a drunken man**.

Isa 41:2-4 Who **stirred up one from the east** whom victory meets at every step? He **gives up nations before him**, so that he tramples kings underfoot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow. <sup>3</sup> He pursues them and passes on safely, by paths his feet have not trod. <sup>4</sup> Who has performed and done this, **calling the generations from the beginning**? I, the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.

Acts 17:26 And he made **from one man every nation** of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having **determined allotted periods** and the **boundaries** of their dwelling place.

<sup>122</sup> Ra (רעה, H7451) = evil, disaster, woe, calamity (Gen 2:9; Gen 6:5; Gen 13:13; Ps 34:14; Isa 5:20; Isa 59:7).



## God is sovereign over inanimate creation

**Ex 14:21** Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the **LORD drove the sea back** by a strong east **wind** all night and **made the sea dry land**, and the **waters were divided**.

**Dt 11:4** and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots, how he **made the water of the Red Sea flow over them** as they pursued after you, and how the **LORD has destroyed** them to this day,

**Job 26:12** By his power he **stilled the sea**; by his understanding he shattered Rahab.

**Job 37:6-13** For to the snow he says, ‘**Fall on the earth**,’ likewise to the downpour, his mighty downpour.<sup>7</sup> He seals up the hand of every man, that all men whom he made may know it.<sup>8</sup> Then the beasts go into their lairs, and remain in their dens.<sup>9</sup> From its chamber comes the whirlwind, and cold from the scattering winds.<sup>10</sup> By the **breath of God ice is given**, and the broad waters are frozen fast.<sup>11</sup> **He loads the thick cloud with moisture**; the **clouds scatter his lightning**.<sup>12</sup> They turn around and around **by his guidance**, to **accomplish all that he commands** them on the face of the habitable world.<sup>13</sup> Whether for correction or for his land or for love, **he causes it to happen**.<sup>123</sup>

**Ps 78:26** He **caused the east wind to blow** in the heavens, and by his power he **led out the south wind**;

**Ps 65:6-7** the one who by his strength established the mountains, being girded with might;<sup>7</sup> who **stills the roaring of the seas**, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples

**Ps 104:14** You **cause the grass to grow** for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth.

**Ps 135:6-12** **Whatever the LORD pleases, he does**, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.<sup>7</sup> He it is who **makes the clouds rise** at the end of the earth, who makes **lightnings for the rain** and brings forth the **wind** from his storehouses.<sup>8</sup> He it was who **struck down the firstborn of Egypt**, both of man and of beast;<sup>9</sup> who in your midst, O Egypt, sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh and all his servants;<sup>10</sup> who **struck down many nations** and killed mighty kings,<sup>11</sup> Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan,<sup>12</sup> and gave their land as a heritage, a heritage to his people Israel.

**Ps 148:7-14** Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps,<sup>8</sup> **fire and hail, snow and mist**, stormy **wind fulfilling his word**!<sup>9</sup> **Mountains** and all **hills**, fruit **trees** and all cedars!<sup>10</sup> **Beasts** and all **livestock**, **creeping** things and flying **birds**!<sup>11</sup> **Kings** of the earth and all **peoples, princes** and all **rulers** of the earth!<sup>12</sup> Young **men** and **maidens** together, **old men** and **children**!<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for **his name alone is exalted**; his **majesty is above earth and heaven**.<sup>14</sup> He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the LORD!

**Job 38:32** Can you **lead forth a constellation** in its season, and guide the Bear with her satellites?<sup>124</sup> (NASB)

**Job 38:12** Have you **commanded the morning** since your days began, and **caused the dawn to know its place**.

**Isa 40:26** Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, **calling them all by name**, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power **not one is missing**.

**Jer 14:22** Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can **bring rain**? Or can the heavens **give showers**? Are you not he, O LORD our God? We set our hope on you, for **you do all these things**.

**Jonah 1:4** But the **LORD hurled a great wind** upon the sea, and there was a mighty **tempest** on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up.

**Jonah 4:6** Now the **LORD God appointed a plant** and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant.

**Mt 5:43-45** “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you,<sup>45</sup> so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he **makes his sun rise** on the evil and on the good, and **sends rain** on the just and on the unjust.

<sup>123</sup> C.f. Job 38:22-30

<sup>124</sup> The ESV reads: “Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season, or can you guide the Bear with its children?”

**Mt 6:30** But if **God so clothes the grass** of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

**Mt 8:27** And the men marveled, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even **winds and sea obey him**?"

**Mt 21:19-20** And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the **fig tree withered at once**.<sup>20</sup> When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?"

## God is sovereign over animals

**Nm 22:28** Then the **LORD opened the mouth of the donkey**, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

**1Kg 17:4-6** You shall drink from the brook, and **I have commanded the ravens** to feed you there."<sup>5</sup> So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan.<sup>6</sup> And the **ravens brought him bread and meat** in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

**Job 38:39-41** "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,<sup>40</sup> when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in their thicket?<sup>41</sup> Who provides for the raven its prey, when **its young ones cry to God for help**, and wander about for lack of food?"

**Ps 29:9** The voice of the **LORD makes the deer give birth** and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

**Ps 104:27-29** These all look to you, to **give them their food** in due season.<sup>28</sup> When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.<sup>29</sup> When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you **take away their breath, they die** and return to their dust.

**Ezk 14:15-16** If **I cause wild beasts** to pass through the land, and they **ravage it**, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts,<sup>16</sup> even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord GOD, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.

**Ezk 32:4** And I will cast you on the ground; on the open field I will fling you, and **will cause all the birds** of the heavens to settle on you, and **I will gorge the beasts** of the whole earth with you.

**Dan 6:22** My God sent his **angel and shut the lions' mouths**, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

**Jonah 1:17** And the **LORD appointed a great fish** to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

**Jonah 2:10** And the **LORD spoke to the fish**, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

**Jonah 4:7** But when dawn came up the next day, **God appointed a worm** that attacked the plant, so that it withered.

**Mt 6:26** Look at the **birds** of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly **Father feeds them**. Are you not of more value than they?

**Mt 10:29-30** Are not two **sparrows** sold for a penny? And **not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father**.<sup>30</sup> But even the **hairs of your head are all numbered**.

## God is sovereign over "random" or "chance" events

**Ex 21:12-13** "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death.<sup>13</sup> But if he did not lie in wait for him, but **God let him fall into his hand**, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee.

**1Kg 22:34** But a certain man **drew his bow at random** and **struck the king** of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and carry me out of the battle, for I am wounded."

**Prov 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap, but its **every decision is from the LORD**.

**Jonah 1:7** And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot **fell on Jonah**.

**Lk 1:9** according to the custom of the priesthood, he was **chosen by lot** to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

**Acts 1:24-26** And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show **which one of these two you have chosen** <sup>25</sup> to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." <sup>26</sup> And they cast **lots** for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

*Saul, the first king of Israel was ordained by God as king and chosen by Lot*

**1Sam 10:1** Then Samuel took a flask of **oil and poured it on his head** and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be **prince over his people Israel**? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage.

**1Sam 10:17-24** Now Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah. <sup>18</sup> And he said to the people of Israel, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' <sup>19</sup> But today you have rejected your God, who saves you from all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said to him, '**Set a king over us.**' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your **tribes** and by your thousands." <sup>20</sup> Then Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of **Benjamin was taken by lot**. <sup>21</sup> He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by its clans, and the clan of the **Matrites was taken by lot**; and **Saul the son of Kish was taken by lot**. But when they sought him, he could not be found. <sup>22</sup> So they inquired again of the LORD, "Is there a man still to come?" and the LORD said, "Behold, he has hidden himself among the baggage." <sup>23</sup> Then they ran and took him from there. And when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. <sup>24</sup> And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see **him whom the LORD has chosen**? There is none like him among all the people." And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

**1Sam 12:13** And now behold the **king whom you have chosen**, for whom you have asked; behold, the LORD has set a king over you.

# God is sovereign over and in the lives of men

## General verses

**Gen 24:14, 50-51** Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be **the one whom you have appointed** for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."<sup>125</sup> **50** Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The **thing has come from the LORD**; we cannot speak to you bad or good. **51** Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, **as the LORD has spoken.**"

**1Sm 10:9** When he turned his back to leave Samuel, **God gave him another heart.** And all these signs came to pass that day.

**Ps 4:8** In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for **you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.**

**Ps 33:13-15** The LORD looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; <sup>14</sup> from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, <sup>15</sup> he who **fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.**

**Ps 37:39** The **salvation of the righteous is from the LORD**; he is their **stronghold in the time of trouble.**

**Ps 55:22** Cast your burden on the LORD, and **he will sustain you**; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

**Ps 57:2** I cry out to God Most High, to God who **fulfills his purpose for me.**

**Job 23:13-14** But **he is unchangeable**, and who can turn him back? **What he desires, that he does.** <sup>14</sup> For **he will complete what he appoints for me**, and many such things are in his mind.

**Isa 49:15** "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet **I will not forget you.**

**Jer 10:23** I know, O LORD, that the **way of man is not in himself**, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps.

**Ezra 1:1-2** In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the **LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus** king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: <sup>2</sup> "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the **God of heaven**, has **given me all the kingdoms of the earth**, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

**Ezra 1:5** Then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, **everyone whose spirit God had stirred** to go up to rebuild the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem.

**Ezra 7:6** this **Ezra went up from Babylonia.** He was a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses that the LORD, the God of Israel, had given, and the king granted him all that he asked, **for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.**

**Ezra 7:9** For on the first day of the first month he began to **go up from Babylonia**, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, **for the good hand of his God was on him.**

**Ezra 7:27-28** Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who **put such a thing as this into the heart of the king**, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem, <sup>7</sup> and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty officers. **I took courage, for the hand of the LORD my God was on me**, and I **gathered leading men** from Israel to go up with me.

**Ezra 8:18** And **by the good hand of our God on us**, they **brought us a man of discretion**, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebiah with his sons and kinsmen, 18;

**Ezra 8:31** Then we departed from the river Ahava on the twelfth day of the first month, to **go to Jerusalem.** The **hand of our God was on us**, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambushes by the way.

**Neh 2:7-8** And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, <sup>8</sup> and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the **king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.**

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<sup>125</sup> Also in Gen 24:44

**1Cor 7:17** Only let each person **lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him**, and to which **God has called him**. This is my rule in all the churches.

**Heb 13:6** So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; **I will not fear; what can man do to me?**”

**1Pet 4:19** Therefore let those who **suffer according to God's will** entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

## God gives us our needs

**Dt 8:16** **who fed you in the wilderness with manna** that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.

**Mt 6:11** Give us this day our **daily bread**

**Phil 4:19** And my God will **supply every need** of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

## God's guidance, grace, blessing

**Ps 37:23** **The steps of a man are established by the LORD**, when he delights in his way;

**Prov 16:1** The plans of the heart belong to man, but the **answer of the tongue is from the LORD**.

**Prov 16:9** The heart of man plans his way, but the **LORD establishes his steps**.

**Prov 20:24** **A man's steps are from the LORD**; how then can man understand his way?

**Prov 21:1** **The king's heart** is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; **he turns it wherever he will**.

**Isa 41:13** For I, the LORD your God, **hold your right hand**; it is I who say to you, “Fear not, **I am the one who helps you.**”

**Jer 10:23** I know, O LORD, that the **way of man is not in himself**, that **it is not in man who walks to direct his steps**.

**1Cor 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, **I worked harder** than any of them, though **it was not I, but the grace of God** that is with me.

**1Cor 15:57** But thanks be to God, who **gives us the victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2Cor 2:14** But thanks be to **God**, who in Christ always **leads us in triumphal procession**, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

**2Cor 8:16** But thanks be to **God**, who **put into the heart of Titus** the same earnest care I have for you.

**Gal 1:15-16** But when he who had **set me apart before I was born**, and who **called me by his grace**,<sup>16</sup> was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone;

**Eph 1:3-6** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places,<sup>4</sup> even as he **chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be **holy and blameless** before him. In love<sup>5</sup> **he predestined us for adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,<sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which **he has blessed us** in the Beloved.

**Eph 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which **God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them**.

**Phil 2:12-13** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**,<sup>13</sup> for it is **God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure**.

**Heb 13:20-21** Now may the **God of peace** who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the **blood of the eternal covenant**,<sup>21</sup> **equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight**, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**2Pet 1:3-4** His divine power has **granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him who **called us to his own glory and excellence**,<sup>4</sup> by which **he has granted to us his precious and very great promises**, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.



## God uses His angels to serve His people

**Ex 23:20** *"Behold, I send an **angel** before you to **guard you** on the way and to **bring you to the place that I have prepared**.*

**Ps 91:11** *For he will **command his angels** concerning you to **guard you** in all your ways.*

**Ps 103:20** *Bless the LORD, O you his **angels**, you mighty ones who **do his word, obeying the voice of his word!***

**Dan 6:22** *My God sent his **angel** and **shut the lions' mouths**, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."*

**Mt 26:53** *Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve **legions of angels?***

**Heb 1:13-14** *And to which of the **angels** has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"<sup>126</sup>? <sup>14</sup> Are they not all **ministering spirits** sent out to serve for the **sake of those who are to inherit salvation?***

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<sup>126</sup> C.f. Ps 110:1

## God is even sovereign over evil & sin

### General verses

**Jdg 14:1-4** Samson went down to Timnah, and at Timnah he saw one of the **daughters of the Philistines**.<sup>2</sup> Then he came up and told his father and mother, “I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah. Now get her for me as my wife.”<sup>3</sup> But his father and mother said to him, “Is there not a woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you must go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she is right in my eyes.”<sup>4</sup> His father and mother did not know that **it was from the LORD**, for he was seeking an opportunity against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines ruled over Israel.

**2Sm 16:10-11** But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is **cursing because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David,’** who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’”<sup>11</sup> And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let **him curse, for the LORD has told him to.**”

**2Ki 6:32-33** Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. Now the king had dispatched a man from his presence, but before the messenger arrived Elisha said to the elders, “Do you see how this murderer has sent to take off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold the door fast against him. Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?”<sup>33</sup> And while he was still speaking with them, the messenger came down to him and said, “**This trouble is from the LORD!** Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?”

**2Ki 7:5-7** So they arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians. But when they came to the edge of the camp of the Syrians, behold, there was no one there. **6 For the Lord had made the army of the Syrians hear the sound of chariots and of horses, the sound of a great army,** so that they said to one another, “Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to come against us.”<sup>7</sup> So **they fled away** in the twilight and abandoned their tents, their horses, and their donkeys, leaving the camp as it was, and fled for their lives.

**Isa 45:5-7** I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; **I equip you**, though you do not know me,<sup>6</sup> that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other.<sup>7</sup> **I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity**<sup>127</sup>, I am the LORD, who does all these things.

**Ezk 14:9-11** And if the **prophet is deceived** and speaks a word, **I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him** and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.<sup>10</sup> **And they shall bear their punishment**—the punishment of the prophet and the punishment of the inquirer shall be alike—<sup>11</sup> that the house of Israel may no more go astray from me, nor defile themselves anymore with all their transgressions, but that they may be my people and I may be their God, declares the Lord GOD.”

**Dan 5:18-23** O king, the **Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty**.<sup>19</sup> And because of the greatness that **he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages** trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.<sup>20</sup> But when his **heart was lifted up** and his **spirit was hardened** so that he dealt proudly, he was **brought down from his kingly throne**, and his glory was taken from him.<sup>21</sup> He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.<sup>22</sup> And you his son, **Belshazzar**, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this,<sup>23</sup> but you have **lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven**. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the **God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.**

### God was sovereign over the Lord Jesus' crucifixion

**Lk 22:22** For the **Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!**”

<sup>127</sup> Ra = evil, disaster, woe, calamity (Gen 2:9; Gen 6:5; Gen 13:13; Ps 34:14; Isa 5:20; Isa 59:7).

**Acts 2:22-23** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the **definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you crucified and killed by the hands of **lawless men**.

**Acts 4:26-28** The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’—<sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,<sup>28</sup> to **do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place**.

**Isa 53:10** Yet **it was the will of the LORD to crush him**; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an **offering for guilt**, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

## Satan, Judas, Jesus & God’s Sovereignty

**Zech 11:12-13** Then I said to them, “If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” And they weighed out as my wages **thirty pieces of silver**.<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD said to me, “Throw it to the potter”— the **lordly price at which I was priced by them**. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD, to the potter.

**Mt 26:20-25** When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve.<sup>21</sup> And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, **one of you will betray me**.”<sup>22</sup> And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”<sup>23</sup> He answered, “He who has **dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me**.<sup>24</sup> The **Son of Man goes as it is written of him**, but **woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed!** It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”<sup>25</sup> Judas, who would betray him, answered, “**Is it I, Rabbi?**” He said to him, “You have said so.”

**Lk 22:3-6** Then **Satan entered into Judas** called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve.<sup>4</sup> He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.<sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.<sup>6</sup> So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

**Jn 13:2-4** During supper, when the **devil had already put it into the heart of Judas** Iscariot, Simon’s son, **to betray him**,<sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,<sup>4</sup> rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.

**Jn 13:18** I am not speaking of all of you; **I know whom I have chosen**. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, ‘He who **ate my bread has lifted his heel against me**.’<sup>128</sup>

**Jn 13:26-27** Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it.” So when he had **dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas**, the son of Simon Iscariot.<sup>27</sup> Then **after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him**. Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.”

**Jn 17:12** While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the **son of destruction**, that the **Scripture might be fulfilled**.

**Acts 1:15-20** In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said,<sup>16</sup> “Brothers, the **Scripture had to be fulfilled**, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David **concerning Judas**, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.<sup>17</sup> For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.”<sup>18</sup> (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.<sup>19</sup> And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)<sup>20</sup> “For it is written in the Book of Psalms, “**‘May his camp become desolate, and let there be no one to dwell in it’**; and “**‘Let another take his office.’**”

## Satan, Peter and Jesus’ Sovereignty

**Jn 13:38** Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have **denied me three times**.”<sup>129</sup>

**Lk 22:31-34** “Simon, Simon, behold, **Satan demanded to have you**, that he might sift you like wheat, Luke<sup>32</sup> but **I have prayed for you** that your faith may not fail. And **when you have turned again**, strengthen your brothers.”<sup>33</sup> Peter said to

<sup>128</sup> Ps 41:9

<sup>129</sup> Mt 26:33-35; Mk 14:29-31; Lk 22:33-34.

him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." <sup>34</sup> Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you **deny three times that you know me.**" <sup>130</sup>

## God was sovereign in the life of Joseph

**Gn 37:4-8** But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they **hated** him and **could not speak peacefully** to him. <sup>5</sup> Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup> He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup> Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." <sup>8</sup> His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they **hated him even more** for his dreams and for his words.

**Gn 37:20** Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams."

**Gn 45:5-8** And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for **God sent me** before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> And **God sent me before you** to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So **it was not you who sent me here, but God**. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

**Gn 50:20** As for you, **you meant evil** against me, but **God meant it for good**, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

**Ps 105:16-17** When he summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, <sup>17</sup> he had **sent a man ahead of them, Joseph**, who was sold as a slave.

## God was sovereign over David's punishment for adultery

**2Sm 12:11** Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, **I will raise up evil against you** out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'

<sup>131</sup>

**2Sm 16:5-8** When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came **he cursed continually**. <sup>6</sup> And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. <sup>7</sup> And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man!" <sup>8</sup> The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood."

**2Sm 16:11** And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for **the LORD has told him to**.

## God was sovereign of David's sinful census

**2Sm 24:1** Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and **he incited**<sup>132</sup> **David against them**, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

**2Sm 24:10** But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "**I have sinned** greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

**1Ch 21:1** Then **Satan** stood against Israel and **incited David** to number Israel.

<sup>130</sup> It's very important here to remember that Satan couldn't get hold of Peter if it wasn't for Jesus' permission, much like Job's story. The second important thing is that Jesus prays and doesn't say "if you return," but "**when** you return." Since Peter was one of those whom the Lord Jesus had chosen, the Lord Jesus preserved him.

<sup>131</sup> Fulfilled in 2Sm 16:22 "So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel."

<sup>132</sup> *Sûth* (סוּת, H5496) = to incite, allure, instigate

## God was sovereign in raising adversaries against Solomon

**1Kg 11:14** And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal house in Edom.

**1Kg 11:23** God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah.

## God was sovereign over Job's life and tragedy

**Job 1:12** And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. **Only against him do not stretch out your hand.**" So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

**Job 1:13-15** Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, <sup>14</sup> and there came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, <sup>15</sup> and the **Sabeans** fell upon them and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

**Job 1:17-19** While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "The **Chaldeans** formed three groups and made a raid on the camels and took them and struck down the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you." <sup>18</sup> While he was yet speaking, there came another and said, "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, <sup>19</sup> and behold, a **great wind** came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it **fell upon the young people, and they are dead**, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

**Job 1:21-22** And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. **The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away**; blessed be the name of the LORD." <sup>22</sup> In all this Job **did not sin or charge God with wrong**.

**Job 2:10** But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we **receive good** from God, and **shall we not receive evil?**" In all this **Job did not sin with his lips**.

**Job 42:11** Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for **all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him**. And each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold.

## God sovereignly restrains some people from evil

**Gn 20:6** Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was **I who kept you from sinning against me**. Therefore I did not let you touch her.

**Gn 35:5** And as they journeyed, a **terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them**, so that they **did not pursue the sons of Jacob**.

**Dt 2:25** This day **I will begin to put the dread and fear of you on the peoples** who are under the whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you and shall tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

**2Ch 17:10** And the **fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms** of the lands that were around Judah, and they **made no war against Jehoshaphat**.



## God is sovereign over the reprobate

### General verses about God's sovereignty over unbelievers

**Jdg 3:12** And the people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the **LORD strengthened Eglon** the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done what was evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Jdg 7:22** When they blew the 300 trumpets, the **LORD set every man's sword against his comrade** and against all the army. And the army fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath.

**1Sm 2:25** If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the **will of the LORD to put them to death**.

**2Sm 17:14** And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the **LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel**, so that the **LORD might bring harm upon Absalom**.

**2Kg 18:25** Moreover, is it without the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The **LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.**"

**2Kg 19:7** Behold, **I will put a spirit in him**, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and **I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.**"

**2Kg 19:25-26** "Have you not heard that **I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old** what now **I bring to pass**, that you should turn fortified cities into heaps of ruins,<sup>26</sup> while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown.

**2Kg 24:2-4** And the **LORD sent against him** bands of the **Chaldeans** and bands of the **Syrians** and bands of the **Moabites** and bands of the **Ammonites**, and **sent them against Judah to destroy it**, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servants the prophets.<sup>3</sup> Surely **this came upon Judah at the command of the LORD**, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done,<sup>4</sup> and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD would not pardon.

**2Ch 10:14-15** King Rehoboam spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions."<sup>15</sup> So the **king did not listen** to the people, for **it was a turn of affairs brought about by God** that the LORD might fulfill his word, which he spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.<sup>133</sup>

**2Ch 15:5-6** In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.<sup>6</sup> They were broken in pieces. Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, **for God troubled them with every sort of distress**.

**2Ch 21:16** And the **LORD stirred up** against Jehoram the anger of the Philistines and of the Arabians who are near the Ethiopians.

**2Ch 22:7** But it was **ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah** should come about through his going to visit Joram. For when he came there, he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the **LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab**.

**2Ch 25:16, 20** But as he was speaking, the king said to him, "Have we made you a royal counselor? Stop! Why should you be struck down?" So the prophet stopped, but said, "I know that **God has determined to destroy you**, because you have done this and have not listened to my counsel."<sup>20</sup> But **Amaziah would not listen**, for **it was of God**, in order that he might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they had sought the gods of Edom.

**Isa 19:14** The LORD has mingled within her **a spirit of confusion**, and they will make **Egypt stagger** in all its deeds, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit.

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<sup>133</sup> C.f. 1Kg 12:15

**Isa 30:27-28** Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with his **anger**, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of **fury**, and his tongue is like a **devouring fire**; <sup>28</sup> his breath is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck; to **sift the nations** with the **sieve of destruction**, and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray.

**Isa 37:5-7** When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, <sup>6</sup> Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the young men of the king of Assyria have reviled me.’ <sup>7</sup> Behold, **I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor** and return to his own land, and **I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.**”

**Isa 37:21-29, 36-38** Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning **Sennacherib king of Assyria**, <sup>22</sup> this is the word that the LORD has spoken concerning him: “She despises you, she scorns you— the virgin daughter of Zion; she wags her head behind you— the daughter of Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> “Whom have you mocked and reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes to the heights? Against the Holy One of Israel! <sup>24</sup> By your servants you have **mocked the Lord**, and you have said, With **my many chariots I have gone** up the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon, to cut down its tallest cedars, its choicest cypresses, to come to its remotest height, its most fruitful forest. <sup>25</sup> **I dug wells** and drank waters, to **dry up with the sole of my foot all the streams of Egypt**. <sup>26</sup> “Have you not heard that **I determined it long ago? I planned from days of old what now I bring to pass, that you should make fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins**, <sup>27</sup> while their inhabitants, shorn of strength, are dismayed and confounded, and have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. <sup>28</sup> “I know your sitting down and your going out and coming in, and your raging against me. <sup>29</sup> Because you have raged against me and your complacency has come to my ears, I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth, and I will turn you back on the way by which you came.’ <sup>36</sup> And the angel of the LORD went out and **struck down 185,000** in the camp of the Assyrians. And when people arose early in the morning, behold, these were all dead bodies. <sup>37</sup> Then **Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned** home and lived at Nineveh. <sup>38</sup> And as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, **his sons, struck him** down with the sword. And after they escaped into the land of Ararat, Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

**Isa 44:28** who says of **Cyrus**, ‘**He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose**’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”

**Ezk 14:9** And if the prophet is deceived and speaks a word, **I, the LORD, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him** and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

**Ezk 20:25-26** Moreover, I gave them **statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life**, <sup>26</sup> and **I defiled them** through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that **I might devastate them**. I did it that **they might know that I am the LORD**.

**Rom 9:13** As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but **Esau I hated**.”

**Rom 9:19-23** You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?” <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?” <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for **dishonorable use**? <sup>22</sup> What if God, **desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power**, has endured with much patience **vessels of wrath prepared for destruction**, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—

**Rev 13:7-8** Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, <sup>8</sup> and **all who dwell on earth will worship it**, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

**Rev 17:8** The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth **whose names have not been written** in the book of life from the foundation of the world **will marvel to see the beast**, because it was and is not and is to come.

**Rev 17:16-17** And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate and naked, and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire, <sup>17</sup> for **God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose** by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, **until the words of God are fulfilled**.

## God gives the reprobate blind eyes, deaf ears and hardened hearts

**Dt 29:2-4** And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "You have seen all that the LORD did **before your eyes** in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, <sup>3</sup> the great trials that **your eyes saw**, the signs, and those great wonders. <sup>4</sup> But to this day the **LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.**

**Isa 6:9-10** And he said, "Go, and say to this people: "'Keep on **hearing, but do not understand**; keep on **seeing, but do not perceive.**' <sup>10</sup> **Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.**"

**Isa 29:9-10** Astonish yourselves and be astonished; **blind yourselves** and be blind! Be drunk, but not with wine; stagger, but not with strong drink! **Isa 29:10** For the LORD has **poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes** (the prophets), and **covered your heads** (the seers).

**Isa 44:18-20** They know not, nor do they discern, **for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand.** **Isa 44:19** **No one considers,** nor is there **knowledge or discernment** to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" **Isa 44:20** He feeds on ashes; **a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself** or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

**Isa 63:17** O LORD, why do **you make us wander from your ways** and harden our heart, **so that we fear you not?** Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.

**Isa 64:7** There is **no one who calls upon your name**, who rouses himself to take hold of you; **for you have hidden your face from us, and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.**

**Mt 11:25-26** At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that **you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children;** <sup>26</sup> yes, Father, for **such was your gracious will.**

**Mt 13:13-14** This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "'You will indeed **hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.**" <sup>134</sup>

**Mk 4:11-12** And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, <sup>12</sup> so that "they may indeed **see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.**" <sup>135</sup>

**Jn 12:37-40** Though he had **done so many signs** before them, they still **did not believe** in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" <sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, <sup>40</sup> "He has **blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them.**"

**Rom 11:7-8** What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The **elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened,** <sup>8</sup> as it is written, "**God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day.**" <sup>136</sup>

## God hardens whomever He wills

**Dt 2:30** But Sihon the king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him, for the **LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate**, that he might give him into your hand, as he is this day.

**Jos 11:18-20** Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. <sup>19</sup> There was **not a city that made peace** with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle. <sup>20</sup> For it was the **LORD's doing to harden their hearts** that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

<sup>134</sup> C.f. Isa 6:9-10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27;

<sup>135</sup> C.f. Isa 6:9, Jn 9:39, Acts 28:26, Dt 29:4

<sup>136</sup> C.f. Deut 29:4; Isa 29:10; Isa 43:8; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2; Matt 13:14; Eph 4:18

**Ps 105:25** He **turned their hearts to hate his people**, to deal craftily with his servants.

**Isa 63:17** O LORD, **why do you make us wander from your ways and harden our heart**, so that we fear you not? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your heritage.

**Jn 10:25-26** Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, <sup>26</sup> but **you do not believe because you are not among my sheep**.

**Jn 12:37-40** Though he had **done so many signs** before them, they still **did not believe** in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" <sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, <sup>40</sup> "He has **blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see** with their eyes, and **understand with their heart**, and turn, and I would heal them."

**Rom 9:15-18** For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So then **it depends not on human will** or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that **I might show my power in you**, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and **he hardens whomever he wills**.

**Rom 9:22-24** What if God, desiring to **show his wrath** and to **make known his power**, has endured with much patience **vessels of wrath prepared for destruction**, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— <sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

## God was sovereign over Pharaoh

### God hardened Pharaoh

**Ex 4:21** And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But **I will harden his heart**, so that he will not let the people go.

**Ex 7:3-4** But **I will harden Pharaoh's heart**, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, <sup>4</sup> Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.

**Ex 9:12** But the **LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh**, and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

**Ex 10:1** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for **I have hardened his heart** and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them,

**Ex 10:20** But the **LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not let the people of Israel go.

**Ex 10:27** But the **LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he would not let them go.

**Ex 11:10** Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, and the **LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart**, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land.

**Ex 14:4** And **I will harden Pharaoh's heart**, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

**Ex 14:8** And the **LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh** king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly.

**Ex 14:17** And **I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians** so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen.

**Ps 105:25** He **turned their hearts to hate his people**, to deal craftily with his servants.

### Pharaoh hardened his heart

**Ex 8:15** But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, **he hardened his heart** and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

**Ex 8:32** But **Pharaoh hardened his heart** this time also, and did not let the people go.

**Ex 9:34** But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and **hardened his heart**, he and his servants.



## Pharaoh's heart was hardened

**Ex 7:13** Still **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said

**Ex 7:14** Then the LORD said to Moses, "**Pharaoh's heart is hardened**; he refuses to let the people go.

**Ex 7:22** But the magicians of Egypt did the same by their secret arts. So **Pharaoh's heart remained hardened**, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

**Ex 8:19** Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But **Pharaoh's heart was hardened**, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

**Ex 9:7** And Pharaoh sent, and behold, not one of the livestock of Israel was dead. But the **heart of Pharaoh was hardened**, and he did not let the people go.

**Ex 9:35** So the **heart of Pharaoh was hardened**, and he did not let the people of Israel go, just as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

## Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart?

**Ex 9:16** But for this purpose I have raised you up, to **show you my power**, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.<sup>137</sup>

**Ex 14:17** And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and **I will get glory** over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen.

## God was sovereign over Assyria, the rod of His anger

**Isa 10:5-6** Ah, Assyria, the **rod of my anger**; the **staff in their hands is my fury!**<sup>6</sup> Against a godless nation I **send him**, and against the people of my wrath I **command him**, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

**Isaiah 10:12-13** When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will **punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria** and the boastful look in his eyes.<sup>13</sup> For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.

**Isa 10:15-16** Shall the **axe** boast over him who hews with it, or the **saw** magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a **rod** should wield him who lifts it, or as if a **staff** should lift him who is not wood!<sup>16</sup> Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors, and under his glory a burning will be kindled, like the burning of fire.

**Isa 14:24-27** The LORD of hosts has sworn: "**As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,**<sup>25</sup> that **I will break the Assyrian** in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot; and his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden from their shoulder."<sup>26</sup> This is the **purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth**, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.<sup>27</sup> For the **LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?**

## God was sovereign over Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylong

**Jer 25:9** behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for **Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them** against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. **I will devote them to destruction**, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation.

**Jer 25:12** Then after seventy years are completed, **I will punish the king of Babylon** and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for **their iniquity**, declares the LORD, making the land an everlasting waste.

**Jer 27:5-8** "It is **I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth**, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and **I give it to whomever it seems right to me.**<sup>6</sup> Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him.<sup>7</sup> **All the nations shall serve him** and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes. Then many nations and great

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<sup>137</sup> Rom 9:17



kings shall make him their slave. <sup>8</sup> ““But if **any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar** king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, **I will punish that nation** with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand.

## God will be sovereign over Gog and Israel in the future

**Ezk 38:4** And **I will turn you** about and put hooks into your jaws, and **I will bring you out**, and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed in full armor, a great host, all of them with buckler and shield, wielding swords.

**Ezk 38:10-12** “Thus says the Lord GOD: On that day, thoughts will come into your mind, and **you will devise an evil scheme** <sup>11</sup> and say, ‘I will go up against the land of unwalled villages. I will fall upon the quiet people who dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having no bars or gates,’ <sup>12</sup> to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and the people who were gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell at the center of the earth.

**Ezk 38:16** **You will come up against my people Israel**, like a cloud covering the land. In the latter days **I will bring you against my land**, that the nations may know me, when through you, O Gog, I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

**Ezk 38:17-19** “Thus says the Lord GOD: Are you he of whom I spoke in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel, who in those days prophesied for years that **I would bring you against them?** <sup>18</sup> But on that day, the day that Gog shall come against the land of Israel, declares the Lord GOD, my wrath will be roused in my anger. <sup>19</sup> For in my **jealousy** and in my **blazing wrath** I declare, On that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel.

**Ezk 38:21-23** **I will summon a sword against Gog** on all my mountains, declares the Lord GOD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. <sup>22</sup> With **pestilence** and **bloodshed** **I will enter into judgment with him**, and I will rain upon him and his hordes and the many peoples who are with him **torrential rains** and **hailstones, fire and sulfur**. <sup>23</sup> So **I will show my greatness** and **my holiness** and **make myself known** in the eyes of many nations. **Then they will know that I am the LORD.**

## God is even sovereign over evil spirits/demons

**Jdg 9:23** And **God sent an evil spirit** between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, and the leaders of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech, <sup>24</sup> that the violence done to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who strengthened his hands to kill his brothers.

**1Sm 16:14** Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a **harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him**.<sup>138</sup>

**1Kgs 22:19-23** And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; <sup>20</sup> and the LORD said, ‘Who will **entice Ahab**, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another. <sup>21</sup> Then **a spirit** came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ <sup>22</sup> And the LORD said to him, ‘By **what means?**’ And he said, ‘I will go out, and will be a **lying spirit** in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And he said, ‘**You are to entice him, and you shall succeed**; go out and do so.’ <sup>23</sup> Now therefore behold, the **LORD has put a lying spirit** in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has declared disaster for you.”

**2Kg 19:7** Behold, **I will put a spirit in him**, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and **I will make him fall by the sword in his own land**.”

**Ps 78:49** He let loose on them his burning **anger, wrath, indignation, and distress**, a company of **destroying angels**.

**Isa 37:5-7** When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, <sup>6</sup> Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the young men of the king of Assyria have reviled me. <sup>7</sup> Behold, **I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor** and return to his own land, and **I will make him fall by the sword in his own land**.”

**Jude 1:6** And the **angels** who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has **kept in eternal chains** under gloomy darkness **until the judgment** of the great day—

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<sup>138</sup> C.f. 1Sam 18:10; 19:9

## God is sovereign over the reprobate's condemnation

**Jn 3:18** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever **does not believe is condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

**1Thess 5:9-10** For **God has not destined us for wrath**, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him.

**2Thess 2:11-12** Therefore **God sends them a strong delusion**, so that they may **believe what is false**, <sup>12</sup> in order **that all may be condemned** who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

**1Pet 2:6-8** For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>7</sup> So the **honor is for you who believe**, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," <sup>8</sup> and "A **stone of stumbling**, and a rock of offense." They **stumble** because they disobey the word, as they were **destined to do**.

**2Pet 2:12** But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, **born to be caught and destroyed**, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction,

**2Pet 2:4-14** For if **God did not spare angels** when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; <sup>5</sup> if he **did not spare the ancient world**, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; <sup>6</sup> if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he **condemned them to extinction**, making them an example of **what is going to happen to the ungodly**; <sup>7</sup> and if he rescued righteous Lot, greatly distressed by the sensual conduct of the wicked <sup>8</sup> (for as that righteous man lived among them day after day, he was tormenting his righteous soul over their lawless deeds that he saw and heard); <sup>9</sup> then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to **keep the unrighteous under punishment** until the day of judgment, <sup>10</sup> and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. Bold and willful, they do not tremble as they blaspheme the glorious ones, <sup>11</sup> whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not pronounce a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord. <sup>12</sup> But **these, like irrational animals**, creatures of instinct, **born to be caught and destroyed**, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be **destroyed in their destruction**, <sup>13</sup> suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. <sup>14</sup> They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

**Jude 4** For certain people have crept in unnoticed who **long ago were designated for this condemnation**, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and **deny our only Master and Lord**, Jesus Christ.

## God softens the wicked

**Gn 39:2-4** The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a **successful man**, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. <sup>3</sup> His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the **LORD caused all that he did to succeed** in his hands. <sup>4</sup> So **Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him**, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.

**Ps 106:46** He caused them to be pitied by all those who held them captive.

**Dan 1:9** And **God gave Daniel favor** and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs,

**Jer 24:7** I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.

**Ezra 1:1-2** In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the **LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus** king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: <sup>2</sup> "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the **God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth**, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

**Ezra 6:22** And they kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the LORD had made them joyful and had **turned the heart of the king of Assyria** to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

**Ezra 7:27** Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who **put such a thing as this into the heart of the king**, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem



## Resources

### General Resources used

- Wayne Grudem; Systematic Theology Chapter 16 – God’s Providence
- A.W. Pink; Sovereignty of God
- R.C. Sproul; What is Reformed Theology?
- David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, S. Lance Quinn; The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented
- James R White; Potter's Freedom: A Defense of the Reformation and the Rebuttal of Norman Geisler's Chosen But Free
- ESV Study Bible ([www.esvbible.org](http://www.esvbible.org))
- ESV MacArthur Study Bible
- ESV Reformation Study Bible (<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/reformation-study-bible/toc/>)
- NLT Study Bible (<http://www.nltstudybible.com>)
- HCSB Study Bible ([www.mystudybible.com](http://www.mystudybible.com))

### Verses

- Nathan Pitchford, What the Bible says about the Doctrines of Grace, [http://www.monergismbooks.com/pdfs/doctrines\\_of\\_grace\\_003.pdf](http://www.monergismbooks.com/pdfs/doctrines_of_grace_003.pdf)
- <http://www.monergism.com/calvinsimfactsheet.html>
- <http://www.puritanboard.com/f48/scriptures-supporting-gods-full-providence-sovereign-ordination-all-events-5966/>
- <http://www.godlikeproductions.com/forum1/message1480609/pg1>
- <http://embracedbytruth.com/God/Providence/God%20is%20Sovereign.htm>
- <http://www.calvinistcorner.com/verses-gods-sovereignty.htm>
- [http://www.albatrus.org/english/theology/sovereignty/sovereignty\\_of\\_god\\_verses.htm](http://www.albatrus.org/english/theology/sovereignty/sovereignty_of_god_verses.htm)

### Commentaries

- John Calvin - <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/commentaries.i.html>
- John Gill - <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/>
- John Gill, The Cause of God and Truth - [http://grace-ebooks.com/library/John%20Gill/JG\\_Cause%20of%20God%20and%20Truth%20The.pdf](http://grace-ebooks.com/library/John%20Gill/JG_Cause%20of%20God%20and%20Truth%20The.pdf)
- Bob Utley, You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series (NT) - [http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/new\\_testament\\_studies/written\\_commentaries.htm](http://www.freebiblecommentary.org/new_testament_studies/written_commentaries.htm)
- Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete) - <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/>
- Johann Albrecht Bengel, Gnomon of the New Testament - <http://www.studylight.org/com/jab/>
- Adam Clarke, Commentary and Critical Notes - <http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/>
- Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges - <http://www.studylight.org/com/cgt/>
- Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible - <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/jamieson-fausset-brown/>

### The Word software resources

- The software can be downloaded from - <http://www.theword.net/index.php?article.download&l=english>
- Various modules can be download from - <http://www.wordmodules.com/>

#### Modules for the commentaries used

- Calvin - <http://www.wordmodules.com/the-word-modules/file/207-works-of-john-calvin/>
- Gill - <http://www.wordmodules.com/the-word-modules/file/286-works-of-john-gill/>

- Utley - <http://www.wordmodules.com/the-word-modules/file/735-utley-bob-you-can-understand-the-bible-study-guide-commentary-series-nt-13-vols/>
- Henry – by default in The Word.
- Bengel - <http://www.wordmodules.com/the-word-modules/file/16-bengel-john-gnomon-of-the-nt-commentary-dictionary-5-vols/>
- Clarke - <http://www.wordmodules.com/the-word-modules/file/198-adam-clarkes-1810-1825-commentary-and-critical-notes-on-the-bible/>