

# Impartial Grace

## New Testament

The Prophecies Fulfilled

James Barnes

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## INTRODUCTION

Mr. Salisbury asks "what does it mean for Him (God) to be 'all in all?'" It is not a rhetorical question. If Christ's death does not reconcile all to the Father; that is, if Christ's death does not save all, then Satan wins and Christ fails. To believe Christ does not save all exalts Satan. Mr. Salisbury asks these questions. "Does every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil.2:11) because God is really like Nebuchadnezzar (Dan.3), forcing all into submission without respect to the desire of their heart?"

We know the story of Nebuchadnezzar. He was a King of Babylon. He brought Daniel and three other young Hebrew men into his Court. We know from scripture that Daniel was able to interpret the King's dreams and subsequently was made a man of importance in the Babylonian kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar thought highly of himself. He thought himself to be "god." He built a statue of his likeness and demanded all men bow in subjection to that idol. Daniel's companions, the three young Hebrew men, refused. Nebuchadnezzar declared that any person refusing to bow to his idol would be burned alive in a pit. The three young men were judged for disobeying Nebuchadnezzar's edict. The king wanted Daniel's companions to repent and bow to the idol. These young men were given opportunity to recant their commitment to their God, our God, and to bow before the idol of the king. They would not. We know how their testimonies continue. A fiery pit was built and the flames of the pit were the hottest they could be made to be. Guards standing near the pit were consumed by the fire's heat. The three young Hebrew men were thrown into that fire. Nebuchadnezzar looked into the fiery pit and he saw a Fourth man with them. Daniel's companions were protected from the destruction caused by the fire.

Is God like Nebuchadnezzar? The answer is certainly not. Nebuchadnezzar was rebuked. He was defeated by the Incarnate Christ standing in a fire to rival hell's flames. God is not loathsome. He is benevolent. His mercies are fresh every day. His mercies are grace upon grace. God is a consuming fire. His fire is a refining fire. He is love.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Nebuchadnezzar ruled with fear. God rules with love. All the ills of the world are conquered in His love. Nebuchadnezzar used his power and authority to coerce people to worship an idol made to look like him. Jesus Christ is not an idol and He does not require symbols or grand statues to demonstrate His power and authority. Nebuchadnezzar was a temporal man. His life ends. Christ Jesus is life and His life never ends. Nebuchadnezzar sought to force his kingdom to bow to his likeness. Not so with the True King. The most sinful will see Jesus and recognize Him. The most sinful will experience the King's grace, mercy and ultimately His love. He will indeed become "all in all."

Pastor Dan Held helps us distinguish between fear and love. He writes, "We can place our faith in fear, which is rooted in our desire to receive, or else we can place our faith in love, which is rooted in our need to give."<sup>1</sup> We live lives often struggling with conflicts between fear and love. "Our desires conflict with our needs." Love conquers all! Pastor Held concurs, "I believe love is the solution to the universal problem of fear. That's where my own mind now chooses to place my faith after 71 years of arguing back and forth internally between my body's fear and my soul's love. And that's why I believe in Jesus." Pastor Held confirms what we know intuitively. "Jesus was the master of love." Love is "a universal need we all have."

Hate is rooted in fear. Fear is defeated by faith in Christ and faith in God's love. It is enjoyable living a life in which I criticize far less and give glory to God far more. Rather than fear I experience His will more often and more completely. "Be a Christian doing rather than a human being." I am no longer quick to hate or to judge. That does not mean that my flesh does not rise up and rebel. I still sin and often the sin is because of my prideful judgment of another. Pastor Held is right to say about love; "It is a universal need we all have." It is a universal need that is fulfilled in Christ Jesus. Universal reconciliation is a doctrine acknowledging God's immutable, relentless love. It is Impartial Grace.

Malachi closes the Old Testament history, but its history is not dead. The doctrine of Impartial Grace is defined in those sacred scriptures. The OT scriptures declare God is Sovereign over all that He creates. He is love and He is immutable. He is a disciplining Father. He has a plan, in fact, He is the plan of salvation. New Testament scriptures lean on what is old to usher in the new. The doctrine of Impartial Grace is affirmed in it.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

The period of time from the closing of Malachi to the opening of the New Testament is called “The 400 Years of Silence.” The scholars at the “Got Questions” website provide a brief history of those 400 years. Israel may not have heard directly from God in those centuries, but there can be little doubt Israel was not ignored by Him. Israel was occupied by Greeks, Egyptians and lastly by the Roman Empire. Non-Jewish persons occupied the positions of authority and ruled as directed. The Jewish faith was watered down or abridged by authoritarians. Traditions took the place of sound instruction. “Got Questions” explains <sup>2</sup>:

Between the time of Malachi and the coming of the Messiah, several prophecies were fulfilled, including the 2,300 days of desecration between 171 and 165 B.C. (Daniel 8:14). However, the people did not put to good use either the fulfilled prophecies nor the 400 years the nation was given to study Scripture, to seek God (Psalm 43-44), and to prepare for the coming Messiah. In fact, those years blinded and deafened the nation to the point where most of the Jews could not even consider the concept of a humble Messiah (Zechariah 9:9; Isaiah 6:10; John 12:40).

The Gospels give accounts of Christ Jesus unsettling the traditional authorities and expressing the Truth to the people. The Gospels give account of Divine love being explained, but rejected by the traditionalist authoritarians. Theirs are the doctrines established to elevate themselves over others and to establish personal kingdoms. Theirs are religious edicts passed with the blessing of sitting governments.

Christ Jesus sets the record straight.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: MATTHEW

What do you think? If a man has one hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine, go to the mountains, and seek that which has gone astray? If he finds it, most certainly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. Even so ***it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*** (Matthew 18:12-14, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

We find the same account of Christ's words in Luke 15. The shepherd seeks the lost until he finds them. The shepherd puts the lost one on his shoulders and rejoices. The account in Luke states, "I have found my sheep which was lost."

The Twelve Disciples were concerned about the status of people in the Kingdom. Their motivation was self serving. They ask Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Our Lord draws a child close to Himself and speaks of the child's place in the Kingdom. The child is innocent and has not yet been corrupted by the ways of the flesh. The child is loved unconditionally by the Father Who created him. Then Jesus speaks to the love of the Father and of the Shepherd. Jesus gives us insight to the measure of God's love for His people. Jesus declares the Shepherd will leave 99 of His flock unprotected, but safe to seek out the one member of His flock which is lost.

In our Heavenly Father's eyes His creation is loved. His love is not withheld from some, it is love for all. God's perfect love is not overwhelmed by His wrath. In fact, His eternal and Divine love overwhelms all wrath. His wrath and His anger are satisfied when Christ was crucified for the sin of the world?

The Shepherd does not stop searching for the "lost one." Mr. Sprenger points out in his editorial comments that Jesus does find the lost one as Scripture says. "When" the Shepherd finds the lost one He carries him home. The lost one is the subject of great rejoicing at the Shepherd's home. "There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

His mercy is fresh every day. He loves us and then we love Him. He created us in His image and He loves His creation. His love for His creation does not change because His creation hates its Creator. He loves the rebellious and His patience is immeasurable. "Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is the Christ to the glory of God the Father." We are all His "little ones" and "...it is not His will that any of these little ones perish." It is good to give glory to God Who gives life abundantly. We are all His sheep and He will lose none of His flock. This is "The Blessed Hope." This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: MARK

For *everyone will be salted with fire*, and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt. (Mark 9:49, emphasis added)

These words from Christ Jesus. When He says everyone will be salted with fire He means to say “everyone will be salted with fire.” No one can escape this Holy Judgment. “Everyone will be salted with fire.” The good, the evil, everyone. The baptized, the heathens, the God fearing and the atheist; all will be salted with fire. To be salted is to be preserved. God is fire; an all-consuming fire. His is a fire of renewal. His is the fire that cuts away sin. His is the fire that circumcises the hearts of all men. His is the fire that burns away dross.

I rather think it an honor to be called so as to be salted by fire; Holy fire and preserved for a holy ministry. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment requires that only a few are “salted with fire.” That doctrine requires that most will suffer a different kind of fire; a punishing, tormenting fire. The fire that cleans and heals is a holy fire. The fire that burns away sin is a holy fire.

“Everyone will be salted with fire.” That is Good News. It is “The Blessed Hope.” This is Impartial Grace.

He said to them, “Go into all the world, and *preach the Good News to the whole creation.*” (Mark 16:15, emphasis added)

“Go into all the world.” Gather yourselves and prepare to carry the gospel “into all the world.” Jesus commands the gospel be presented “to the whole creation.” Jesus intends the “whole creation” hear His Gospel. There are many who have died and did not hear the Gospel while alive. Missionaries have worked diligently since the time of Paul's journeys spreading the Gospel, yet not everyone in Jerusalem heard the gospel. There are remote places on the earth today that have not heard the Word of God or His Gospel. There are some alive today that will die and not hear the Gospel of Christ. Even so, Jesus intends the “whole creation” to hear the Gospel including those who died before hearing it.

“Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord.” Everyone will know Jesus. Everyone will repent and acknowledge Him. The commandment to “...proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation...” is a Christian work in progress. God is love and He will reconcile all to Himself. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: LUKE

There were shepherds in the same country staying in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. Behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. The angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of ***great joy which will be to all the people***. For there is born to you, this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:8-11, emphasis added)

Shepherds in a field are blessed by an up close and personal birth announcement. It's a beautiful story and it is Truth. It is Truth revealed to us. Shepherds were in a field tending their flock. An angel appeared and the glory of the Lord was all around them. The shepherds were frightened, not just shaken, but “filled with great fear.” The angel spoke to the shepherds saying, “a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord” is born. The Truth is the “good news of great joy will be for all the people.” This great news of a savior born is not for just a few who choose Him or even for only those chosen by Him. This great news of a savior born is “for all the people.” Our free will does not trump the “good news of great joy that will be for all people.” What is the “good news?” It is that a Savior is born? What is the great joy? It is that a Savior is born. “Good news” and “great joy” are for “all the people.” Who is excluded from this “great joy?” Who is excluded from the “good news?” No one.



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Adam Clarke is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century theologian. He took forty years to complete a commentary on the Bible. He was Methodist and was opposed to Calvinism. He did not believe in predestination, but in the free will of a man to choose to believe. Dr. Clarke writes these verses are applied "to the Jews first and then to the human race."<sup>3</sup> It is a blessing to the whole world. He says, "The good news is to you, – and not to yourselves exclusively, for it is to all people, to all the inhabitants of this land, and to the inhabitants of the whole earth."

John Calvin preaches predestination. According to Calvin's doctrine God has determined before the foundations of the earth who will and who will not be saved. Those not saved are not chosen and consequently will endure eternal torment. Parenthetically a theology exists that is centered on Dr. Calvin's teaching; Calvinism. Dr. Calvin describes this verse "which will be to all people."<sup>4</sup> The angel is speaking directly to the shepherds in the field. "The message of salvation he brings is of wider extent." Dr. Calvin assures his audience the blessing given by the angel is joy "common to all people, because it was indiscriminately offered to all." He then goes on to explain, "God invites all indiscriminately to salvation through the Gospel, but the ingratitude of the world is the reason why this grace, which is equally offered to all, is enjoyed by few."

It is unfortunate Dr. Calvin adds, "When the angel says that this joy shall be to all the people, he (Luke) speaks of the chosen people only." Dr. Calvin is adding to the scriptural text. The offer of joy is "common" to all. He declares the Jews deprived themselves of the joy of knowing Christ because of "their unbelief." Dr. Calvin also states that Gentiles are not grateful for the gift of saving grace and therefore God's gift of grace will be "...enjoyed by few." Dr. Calvin writes, "When the angel says that this joy shall be to all the people, he speaks of the chosen people only."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Albert Barnes is a Presbyterian Pastor, Preacher, Author and Scholar. He is widely held in high regard. He prepared a commentary entitled “Albert Barnes Notes On The New Testament.”<sup>5</sup> His sermons have been published and many can be read online. In one sermon he spoke to the serious condition of the world. He says, “When I look on a world of sinners and sufferers-upon death-beds and graveyards – upon the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer for ever: when I see my friends, my family, my people, my fellow citizens when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger-and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet he does not do so, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it.”

Dr. Barnes may have been conflicted and thoroughly sorrowful for what he believed was to be the fate of many people he loved. About these verses he tells us “the gospel will bring peace.” All of the chaos and confusion, strife and violence will be brought to end. “Jesus came to make peace.” Dr. Barnes tells us Christ accomplished His work. He brings peace “by reconciling the world to God by His atonement.” Second, Christ gives the mind of the sinner peace in the freedom and comfort of knowing his place in Christ is secure. Third, Christ brings peace “by diffusing the principles of universal peace among nations.” Christ causes mankind to see each other not as enemies, but as brothers. He leads us to see our neighbors in need and striving to help them. There is an absence of self. Lastly, Christ brings peace as “all nations will be brought under the influence of the gospel...and the world will be filled with peace.”

Dr. Barnes is seemingly advocating universal reconciliation in this commentary.

Take only the plain meaning of the text, “I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David *a Savior*, who is Christ the Lord.” Take nothing from these words and add nothing to them. Drs. Clarke, Calvin and Barnes are notable men. They are strong and eminently educated. Their knowledge is grand compared to my own and many others in the world. However, their interpretations and commentaries do not seem to be in agreement with the plain meaning of these scriptures.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Allow this reiteration of these verses. This is the testimony of the birth of Christ Jesus. Shepherds tending their flocks at night are overtaken by the glory and light of the Angel of the Lord. The shepherds, I think naturally so, are deeply frightened. The Angel of the Lord calms their fear and declares the Gospel to the lowly shepherds. The Gospel is "for all people." The whole world, all of creation, is impacted by the Good News. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." A Savior of the whole world is born. The Christ is born. His Name is Jesus which means "God Saves." There are no distinctions in this Gospel between those who believe He is the Christ and those who do not. There are no distinctions in these verses about the Gospel between those who heard the Good News and those who have not. It is the will of God that none be lost that all are saved.

These verses build a sermon leading to hope for all who have ever been created or who will be created. The doctrine of universal reconciliation teaches we have a King. He is Christ. The most heinous man will be reconciled to Him Who created him. This is Impartial Grace.

Jesus said, "***Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing.***" (Luke 23:34, emphasis added)

Mr. Sprenger reminds us, "This incredible request by Jesus, together with His suffering and death on the cross for the sins of the world, becomes the ultimate picture and the eternal symbol of the heart and intention of God toward lost humanity." Let us also be reminded Christ's obedience to death on a cross was determined before the foundation of the world.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Christ Jesus suffered humiliating and torturous punishment at the hands of His people and of the government. A few days earlier a crowd greeted Him as He entered into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey's colt. The crowd cheered and sang "Hosanna" to Him and made His path into the city a path of victory on palm fronds. The Temple leaders; that is the Sanhedrin; the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots and other factions, turned away from their Messiah and whipped the crowd into hating their King. Trickery and false testimony were used to persuade the people to convict Him of blasphemy. Pontius Pilate was a weak Governor over Israel and of Jerusalem. His interests were self serving. He wanted to keep his position and status. He judged the King and found no crime to punish, but he listened instead to the voices of the Sanhedrin and those voices of the people chanting, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!" Christ stood convicted and sentenced. Christ Jesus carried a cross to Calvary. The people He loved spit at Him and cursed Him. He was mercilessly mocked. All of this abuse laid on Him over a few hours time. "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."

Sing praise to heaven and give honor to Christ the King. He forgives those who hate Him. He forgives those who follow corrupted men. He forgives corrupted men. He forgives all men. Jesus came into the world to forgive the sin of the world, all of the sins of the world. The men and women who championed His betrayal and those who exercised their hatred of Him upon His body are forgiven. Can we say the Father of the Son refused to give to His Son what His Son seeks? "Father forgive them...!" This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: JOHN

*All things were made through him*, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:3, emphasis added)

The Son is The Father's grace. Grace made us and grace saves us. Christ Jesus is Grace. God is merciful to all because of the Father's Grace. The doctrine of Impartial Grace demonstrates God's capacity for mercy. This doctrine demands we believe God's mercy is "over all." We are all wonderfully made. We are all His creation. We will be reconciled to Him. This is "The Blessed Hope." This is Impartial Grace.

***The true light that enlightens everyone*** was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world didn't recognize him. (John 1:9-10, emphasis added)

Jesus Christ is the Light. He "...gives light to everyone...." His Light isn't given only to this group or that; this nation or that; this man or that man. His light is in everyone. Everything created is created by Him. His Spirit is given to everyone. When we die our spirit returns to Him Who gave it. "The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world." God's love is for everyone and He puts His Spirit into everyone. It is God's will that all be saved. God is Sovereign!

Lee Salisbury posits the thought, "If the doctrine of 'eternal punishment' is true, then..." scriptures like these we have been discussing "cannot be accepted at face value." If the doctrine of eternal conscious torment is true, then "God's ability to regenerate the spirit of man and to fulfill His own word is limited by the heartbeat of man." That is a profound statement. The verses stand alone. They do not require any references to other scriptures to support them. They are true and reliable on their face.

Pride has led us to this place. We have denied God's power when we say He is unable to reconcile and to restore a man's (mankind, Adam) spirit. We have denied God's promise when we say He is unable or unwilling to keep His promise. Pride has led us to this place. Lord help me to shed my pride. Help us all to see You in a Light that is all-consuming fire, love, mercy. Lead us to preach. Amen.

The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God ***who takes away the sin of the world!***" (John 1:29, emphasis added)

Mr. Sprenger tells us, "'The 'sin' is in the singular, indicating the complete removal of the 'sin principle', or sin itself with all of its consequences, not just the individual acts of sin." Sin is removed from the world. All sin over all time over the whole of His creation is taken away from the world. There is not a sin that is not forgiven except one and that is to withhold forgiveness from another. The unforgiving will not be forgiven. Who when standing before Him will be able to withhold forgiveness? I dare say no one.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

John describes Him as the Lamb of God. It will be this Lamb that will shed blood to take away the sin of the world. The blood of this Lamb is God's plan for the salvation of the world. It is His will that all be saved. Is there any other way to understand this scripture? Jesus is the Lamb of God. He "takes away the sin of the world!" He does not take away sin because a prayer was said. He does not take away sin because of any ritual. He came to take away the sin of the world.

These verses simply understood declare that all sin is a matter of the past. All sin of the world is taken away. The blood shed is saving grace. The blood shed is mercy without limits. The blood shed is love. The blood shed is God's blood. His Son's blood shed for the forgiveness of sin. All sins are forgiven. God is love in this Light. Jesus died for the sin of all. It was ordained before the foundations of the earth. His love is infinite and completely merciful. Not one of His sheep will be lost.

John the Baptist fulfills the prophecy regarding Christ Jesus by this declaration. "Behold! THE LAMB OF GOD takes away the sin of the world." No confession, no conditions, nothing other than the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. This is Impartial Grace.

And, according as Moses exalts the serpent in the wilderness, thus must the Son of Mankind be exalted, that everyone believing on Him should not be perishing, but may be having life eonian. For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him should not be perishing, but may be having life eonian. For God ***does not dispatch His Son into the world that He should be judging the world, but that the world may be saved through Him.*** He who is believing in Him is not being judged, yet he who is not believing has been judged already, for he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

Now ***this is the judging:*** that the light has come into the world, and men love the darkness rather than the light, for their acts were wicked. For everyone who is committing bad things is hating the light and is not coming to the light, lest his acts may be exposed. ***Now he who is doing the truth is coming to the light that his acts may be made manifest, for they have been wrought in God.*** (John 3:14-21 (Concordant Literal Version), emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

All of the world is loved. He creates all the world and He loves His creation. Jesus is the Light and men who believe in the Light are drawn to Him. Those men who choose to remain in darkness avoid the Light and are not drawn to Him. Believers believe and their reward is age enduring life even while in this temporal world. A man who believes is living with the Lord even as the Lord sits at the right hand of the Father. A man who does not believe does not have the desire to come out of the darkness.

God did not send His Son to condemn the world. His Son came to save it. He was not sent to save some as God saves all. What is the judgment?

The world loves to live in the darkness. The world wants the darkness so as to keep secrets hidden from the light. The Light exposes the darkness of the world. The evil of men is seen clearly because the Light of Christ shines on all men. The Light of the world is the Judgment! Christ is Judgment.

Christ Jesus is given by the Father to suffer a horrendous death by crucifixion. Christ Jesus is obedient to His Father. It is God Who gives salvation to the world through the gift of His Son's shed blood. Christ did not come to judge, but to save. Believers and unbelievers, all men, fall short of the glory of God. An act of true unfettered, unconditional love is necessary for the reconciliation of all to the Father. That act is in the life, the ministry, the death, the burial, and ultimately the resurrection of Christ Jesus. He is Judgment!

All that we do is known by the Father and is worked out in us through His Son. Good is exposed in the Light. Evil seeks to stay in the darkness so as not to be exposed. That is the judging. All sin is committed in darkness. The judging is in the exposing.

This is the Good News; Christ Jesus sacrifices Himself for the sin of the world; even those sins hidden in darkness. Christ Jesus is God's Judgment!

Men who choose to stay in the darkness are condemned, to what? Jesus does not say any man is ever condemned to eternal conscious torment. In fact, the Holy Word of God leads us to believe that every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord to the Glory of the Father. The Judgment loves relentlessly and endlessly. This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

They said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of your speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, ***the Savior of the world.***” (John 4:42, emphasis added)

These words from the mouths of Samaritans. The Samaritans are a people group particularly disdained by Jews. After a few days with Christ they realize He is the Savior of the Jews and the Savior of the Samaritans. He is “the Savior of the world.”

The Pharisees during the time of Christ cannot see Christ as their Savior *AND* as the Savior of the world. The Pharisees hated Jesus. They did all they could to convince others that Jesus is a criminal and a blasphemer. Their belief is God is their Savior and only they are saved by God. It is an unpleasant correlation to make, but the advocates of eternal conscious torment have this in common with the Pharisees. They do not see Christ as their Savior *AND* as the Savior of the world. This verse confirms universal reconciliation. This is Impartial Grace.

Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, “*I am the light of the world.* He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.”

The Pharisees therefore said to him, “You testify about yourself. Your testimony is not valid.”

Jesus answered them, “Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you don’t know where I came from, or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. ***I judge no one.*** Even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me. It’s also written in your law that the testimony of two people is valid. I am one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me.”

They said therefore to him, “Where is your Father?”



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Jesus answered, "You know neither me, nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." Jesus spoke these words in the treasury, as he taught in the temple. Yet no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. Jesus said therefore again to them, "I am going away, and you will seek me, and you will die in your sins. Where I go, you can't come."

The Jews therefore said, "Will he kill himself, that he says, 'Where I am going, you can't come'?"

He said to them, "You are from beneath. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world. I said therefore to you that you will die in your sins; ***for unless you believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.***"

They said therefore to him, "Who are you?"

Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you. However he who sent me is true; and the things which I heard from him, ***these I say to the world.***" (John 8:12-26, emphasis added)

Jesus declares in terms certain that He "...is the light of the world." His light is not a light for Jews only. His is a light for all. Christ Jesus is speaking to the leadership of the Jewish people. The Pharisees are a learned fellowship. They fancy themselves above the masses of Jews living at the time. In this exchange with the Pharisees Christ Jesus tells them they do not see the Light. The Pharisees are of the world. They rest in their flesh. They find comfort in what they believe they know. Christ Jesus tells them they will die in their sins because of Whom they do not know.

The Pharisees, at least those who are attending this exchange, will die and be placed in their graves. They will die and many traditionalists believe these Pharisees will forever suffer in a place their orthodoxy calls hell. Christ Jesus is the authority preaching to these Pharisees on this day. He says nothing to them about eternal conscious torment. He says only that they will die in their sins. Those dying or dead in their sins are not excluded or cast-off. Sinful men will "bend their knee" to the Lord. The unrepentant will "confess Jesus is Lord" and the Father will be glorified. God is love. God is truth. God is immutable. "Yahweh is good to all men." This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Jesus answered them, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it. He who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life. If anyone serves me, let him follow me. Where I am, there will my servant also be. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? 'Father, save me from this time?' But for this cause I came to this time. Father, glorify your name!"

Then there came a voice out of the sky, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The multitude therefore, who stood by and heard it, said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

Jesus answered, "This voice hasn't come for my sake, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world. Now the prince of this world will be cast out. ***And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.***" (John 12:23-32, emphasis added)

Lee Salisbury and many others ask, "Did Jesus tell a lie when He said, '*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me.*'"?

Our Christ uses an analogy to describe how He will die and bring all men into reconciliation with God. Through Christ's death and His resurrection God makes the way to reconciliation with Him complete. Christ's obedience to death on the Cross saves all. He said He came to absolve the sin of the world. We read in these verses Christ's admonition to set aside personal desires for the sake of meeting the needs of others. By our selfless service to others we bring glory to the Son. Serving others with a selfless heart brings heavenly blessings.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Jesus tells us His "soul is troubled." He knows that soon He will be taken captive, persecuted, mocked, humiliated, beaten and convicted of crimes based in false testimonies from those He loves. Our Christ calls out to the Father. The Son acknowledges His purpose. Christ asks that the Father's Name be glorified; not His own, but His Father's Name be glorified. The Father audibly answers that indeed He has honored His Name and will do so again. Others with Jesus heard God's response. Some tried to rationalize the voice of God as thunder or as the voice of an angel. Jesus sets them straight telling them that the Father spoke aloud for their benefit.

Christ goes on to declare that the Father's judgment on the world is at hand. The Ruler of this world is not Satan as some suggest. The Ruler of this world is Christ Jesus and it is Christ Jesus being cast out. Men are rejecting Him and He is soon to be crucified and placed in a grave.

It is important to allow yourself to be a critical thinker. Do not be quick to follow the traditions of current and predominant theologies. Jesus says, "...if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." Does He say anything more than that? He was lifted up from the earth when He was hung on the cross to die. That part of the equation is satisfied. The second part of the promise is that He "*will draw all men to Myself.*" He does not say He will draw only a few. He does not say, "I will draw Augustinians (Calvinists) to Myself." He does not say, "I will draw Arminians to Myself." He does not say, "I will draw only believers to Myself."

Charles Spurgeon is known as a great preacher and his sermons are highly respected. A sermon message entitled "Christ Lifted Up"<sup>6</sup> can be viewed in its entirety at the Blue Letter Bible website. Dr. Spurgeon opens this sermon remarking, "It was an extraordinary occasion upon which the Saviour uttered these words." Dr. Spurgeon's words are an understatement considering what is soon to transpire. Jesus is soon to be falsely accused. He is soon to be ridiculed and mocked. He is soon to suffer unimaginable indignities. Those who profess to love Him on one day will express their disgust of Him on another. Some will heap "Hosanna upon Hosanna" and in a few days will shout "Crucify Him!"

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Dr. Spurgeon points us to verse 31 (John 12:31). "Now is the judgment of the world." He points out that the Greek word for "judgment" here is better translated "crisis." Jesus is declaring, "Now is the crisis of the world." Dr. Spurgeon declares this to be the "great turning point of all the world's history." The sermon offered by Dr. Spurgeon exposes the truth of scripture and he teaches about Christ's crucifixion. Christ is glorified in the crucifixion. The Father is glorified in the crucifixion. "Christ looked upon His crucifixion as the completion of all His work, and therefore looked upon it as an exaltation." We are reminded that Jesus took the vinegar and said, "It is finished." Dr. Spurgeon says, "And, then it was finished."

His work is accomplished. It is finished. It is complete, but only for believers. Dr. Spurgeon was convinced unbelievers are to be eternally consciously tormented for their failure to believe. He preaches Christ's love for all, but cannot bring himself to accept that Christ does indeed love all. It is folly to try to discern Dr. Spurgeon's heart. There is conflict though. On one side is the need to preach God's all-consuming love. On the other is the need to preach the price to be paid for rejecting His Gospel.

Dr. Spurgeon teaches Christ will draw men to Himself as a trumpet call. A call to alert. A call to come to hear the proclamation to be read aloud. "Now, my brethren, part of the attractive power of the gospel lies in the attracting people to hear it. You cannot expect people to be blessed by the preaching of the gospel if they do not hear it."

It is Christ Jesus Who says, "And I...will draw all men to Myself." Mr. Sprenger adds, "This is as clear a statement on the subject as any in scripture, a promise made by Christ Himself! These are the words of the Savior! He is describing the kind of death He will bear for the sake of the world. He is to be crucified. His blood is to be shed. This to 'draw all men to...' Himself."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

There are countless commentaries defining God's Holy Word. Many men and institutions honorably strive to honestly treat interpretations of language and history. The "Pulpit Commentary" was produced in the late nineteenth century by renowned leaders of the Anglican Church. Their commentary describes this verse eloquently and passionately. They write, "He is 'the greatest Person' and influences the lives of all. He is the Son of God. He is the eternal Word. He is fully human and fully God."<sup>7</sup> The Pulpit Commentary teaches that it is Christ Jesus Who is our means to the Father. It is Christ Jesus Who "makes the greatest sacrifice for all." It is Christ Jesus Who "is the Incarnate Word Who lays down His life for our salvation." Christ Jesus is proof that God is love. His "sacrifice is the greatest act of love by the greatest Person to have ever lived.... His sacrifice is the only sufficient way to reconciliation and it is the only efficient means to accomplish God's plan for all."

The drawing is complete. Its glory is overwhelming. The authors of this commentary conclude Christ's sacrifice is "glorious triumph." "The greatest sinners sunk in the deepest sin" are touched by Christ. These great sinners hold within them "the deadliest enmity against God and virtue." These are sinners who are "backed up by the mightiest spiritual opponents of God...." Even so, Jesus says, "...I will draw all men...."

The Pulpit Commentary tells us that Christ's act of love that draws all men to Himself is complete and whole. Men, including the most vile of men, are drawn "...unto faith in Him, unto his character and likeness, unto his position and society. The drawing will be most complete; hence the glory of the influence – his triumph."

The commentary given by the Pulpit Commentary's authors regarding John 12:32 is correct. It preaches all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. It preaches that the Christ's sacrifice is perfect and in complete harmony with God's infinite love. He is love. It is God's will that no man perish. There is a judgment of fire, a refining fire. That fire is restorative not punitive. Christ's sacrifice purposely draws all men to Himself. God, through Christ's obedience, provides the Way to be saved and ultimately to be reconciled to Himself. This is God's promise. His Son, Jesus, Whose Name means "God is salvation" will not lose even one of those given to Him by the Father.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Jesus was speaking to a crowd when God spoke for all to hear. Some heard God's voice commending Jesus. Others heard thunder. Jesus explains that what the people heard was for their benefit. Then Jesus describes the manner of His death. He tells the people why. "And I, if I should be exalted out of the earth, shall be drawing all to Myself. (CLV)" There were no denominations then. No cries for reformation of the church are known to exist at the time Jesus said these words. There is nothing to contradict. When Jesus was lifted up on the Cross at Calvary He then drew all mankind to Himself. He didn't draw just a few men who believed they were chosen. He didn't draw just a few men who believed they had the foresight to choose to believe the Gospel. He "...will be drawing all to..." Himself. All men! This is Impartial Grace.

I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in the darkness. ***If anyone listens to my sayings, and doesn't believe, I don't judge him.*** For I came not to judge the world, but ***to save the world.*** He who rejects me, and doesn't receive my sayings, has one who judges him. ***The word*** that I spoke, the same ***will judge him in the last day.*** For I spoke not from myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. ***I know that his commandment is eternal life.*** The things therefore which I speak, even as the Father has said to me, so I speak." (John 12:46-50, emphasis added)

Jesus is not the Judge. He says He is not. He tells us He came to save the world. He saves those who have never prayed or taken communion. He saves those who do not live in the western world. He saves all men despite their traditions. He came "...to save the world." Jesus says, "His commandment is eternal life." Universal reconciliation teaches all men are reconciled to the Father through the Son. "Yahweh is good to all."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Jesus is addressing men who cannot see and who refuse to believe. Those folks will be judged “in the last day” by the Word that is spoken. What will that word be? God caused these words to be written. “Every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father.” The Word of God is our Judgment!. These verses do not include a caveat that says those who reject His words or continue in rebellion of Him will be not be saved and consequently condemned to eternal conscious torment. Jesus says, “And I know that His commandment is eternal life.” We should all reach out to God and in His Spirit sing praises. “His commandment is eternal life.”

All life leads to an eternal fellowship with God in heaven. God does not will that any be lost. He wills that all be saved. He says He will reconcile all men to Himself. This is Impartial Grace.

Jesus answered them, “Do you now believe? Behold, the time is coming, yes, and has now come, that you will be scattered, everyone to his own place, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you have oppression; but cheer up! ***I have overcome the world.***” (John 16:31-33, emphasis added)

Jesus is explaining to His Disciples and to us what He is to take upon Himself for the sake of the world. His friends, His chosen Disciples, will abandon Him. Judas will betray Him. All the others will run from Him when He is confronted by the Temple guard. He is never alone for the Father is always with Him. He does nothing of His own volition. He only does the will of His Father. In death the Father will be with Him. In His ascension the Father is with Him. His friends will soon be witness to His persecution, prosecution, conviction and His death. But, He says, “...take heart....” Do not be afraid. Be of courage. Hold on to this: “...I have overcome the world.”

He commands His flock to “cheer up” in the face of the terror that is coming. He already knew the outcome, for He says, “I have overcome the world.” His love for all is manifest in His sacrificial death for the “sin of the world.” This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Jesus said these things, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may also glorify you; even as ***you gave him authority over all flesh, he will give eternal life to all whom you have given him.*** This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ. (John 17:1-3, emphasis added)

Jesus Christ is preparing for His upcoming trial, conviction and execution. He tells His Father that He is prepared for the time of His tribulation. Jesus knows His Father's sacrifice is great and that only glory will come from it. The Father has given to His Son authority over all flesh. His Son is given Divine authority to give eternal life to all He is Sovereign over. This scripture fits seamlessly with other scriptures that declare "every knee shall bow" and "every tongue confess" that He is Lord. His Kingship brings glory to the Father Who then shares that glory with His Son. This is Impartial Grace.

Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; ***that the world may believe that you sent me.*** (John 17:20-21, emphasis added)

These verses are remarkably simple to understand, but traditions blur their simplicity. Jesus speaks these words. He is praying first for the Disciples and then for the world. He prays in submission to the Father. Christ Jesus asks the Father to cause unity with Him in those people who believe because of the testimonies given by the Disciples. He asks of the Father to let all who believe to find ourselves in Him. A common purpose in our hearts is to tell the world about Christ being the First Born Son of God and His impact on our lives.

The doctrine of universal reconciliation teaches Christ's atonement is sufficient for all the world. Every other doctrine of its type insists Christ's atoning work applies only to some. Those doctrines teach His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension is sufficient only for those who believe. These doctrines diminish Christ's authority and weaken His Gospel. "Yahweh is good to all men." Impartial Grace confirms the truth of His Word.



When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, ***"It is finished."*** He bowed his head, and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30, emphasis added)

Concrete. Absolute. In Christ Jesus... "It is finished."

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: ACTS

Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before, ***whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God spoke long ago by the mouth of his holy prophets.*** (Acts 3:19-21, emphasis added)

Peter and John are at the Temple preparing to enter for worship. At the gate is a lame man. He is placed there every day seeking alms. Peter approaches the lame man who reaches out as if expecting a coin or some other gift. Peter tells the man that he has no money to give, but that the gift of the Holy Spirit will be his. "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out...." Peter reached out with his right hand and lifted the man from his mat to his feet. The man did repent and he danced with joy and from that moment always praising the Lord.

Peter, by way of the Holy Spirit of God, healed that man. Peter was being confronted by a number of Jews. He was challenged by the Pharisees. Peter points out their role in the sacrifice of the Lamb. The Pharisees turned over the "Author of life" and chose to pardon a murderer. Peter preaches to the crowd that has gathered to see the miracle in the formerly lame man. He lays out how Jesus is their Messiah. He tells them of their blame for demanding the life of Barabbas be spared and violently demanding the Life of Jesus be taken. The accusation is clear, "...You killed Him...."

Peter declared the lame man's healing was by the power of Christ Jesus; the same Messiah they demanded be hung on a cross. Then Peter says something remarkable, benevolent and demonstrative of God's love. "Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But the things which God announced by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled" (verses 17 and 18.) The people are forgiven. They are not forever lost. They cannot be held accountable for their horrendously violent hearts. They did not know what they were doing. Jesus said, "It is finished!"

The doctrine of universal reconciliation complements God's relentless love. The Lord Christ Jesus obediently gave His precious Life "to draw all men to Himself." Heaven does not hold Him. He is alive and lives in the hearts of men. There will come a moment when He causes "the restoration of all things." He reigns now. He is the King of Kings. His subjects will be all the men He restores to Himself and He will draw all men to Himself.

"Repent!," Peter says. "Repent." Why? So "that your sins may be blotted out...." Whose sins? The sins of mankind generally, but certainly the sins of the Sanhedrin specifically.

Belief in Christ Jesus is a "time of refreshing." It is a time for a life of peace. Repent and be at peace. Christ is in heaven, but a time will come when He returns "...for the restoring of all things which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets long ago." What was spoken by the prophets that speaks to the restoration of all things? There would be One Who comes to restore all things to the Father. He comes to restore all things, not some, but all things. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: ROMANS

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Therefore as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned. For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not charged when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those whose sins weren't like Adam's disobedience, who is a foreshadowing of him who was to come. But the free gift isn't like the trespass. ***For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.*** The gift is not as through one who sinned: for the judgment came by one to condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses to justification. For if by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; so much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ. ***So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life.*** For as through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one, many will be made righteous. The law came in besides, that the trespass might abound; but where sin abounded, grace abounded more exceedingly; ***that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*** (Romans 5:12-21, emphasis added)

Lee Salisbury asks us to consider how the doctrine of eternal conscious torment exalts Satan. "Did the first Adam's offense unto condemnation and death for all accomplish 'much more' than the last Adam's free gift of grace unto justification for all (Romans 5:15)?" Satan is the cause of sin in the world. He deceived Eve and then Adam with a lie and Adam sinned. The penalty for Adam's transgression against his Father falls on every human. The penalty is physical death. God creates each and every one of us in the wombs of our mothers. At birth, though, we are born into a sinful world.

Review verses 15 and 18 closely. We are given a comparison. One man's sin causes the death of "many" men. The grace of our Almighty God, by way of His Judgment, Christ Jesus, overwhelms "many" men. The comparison is that Adam's offense, his transgression, causes the physical death for "all mankind" and that through God's Judgment, Christ Jesus, "all mankind" is justified. Adam brought sin into the world affecting "all men." Jesus' act of obedience to His Father's command brings salvation to "all men."

“The many” in verse 15 must include every human created and that the “many” later in that verse must include every human created. Any other interpretation or conclusion gives Satan power over mankind. This power is more consuming than Christ's death for our reconciliation. If the “all” who are condemned by Adam's transgression is different or greater than the “all” justified and brought to righteousness, then Satan is the victor. He will have a “super-abounding” affect on God's creation. Satan will have the upper hand. Christ's power to save “all” is diminished to something less than Satan's power to deceive “all.”

Adam Clarke is a well known Bible scholar. He took 40 years to complete a commentary on the Bible. His work is widely accepted and is often used to explain God's Word. Here he says of Romans 5:18 <sup>8</sup> “Through the disobedience of Adam, a sentence of condemnation to death, without any promise or hope of a resurrection, passed upon all men; so, by the obedience of Christ unto death, this one grand righteous act, the sentence was so far reversed, that death shall not finally triumph, for all shall again be restored to life”. Everyone dies eventually. Dr. Clarke says, “The mercy of God, in Christ Jesus, shall have its due also.... The whole human race shall be raised to life at the great day. Thus both justice and mercy are magnified; and neither is exalted at the expense of the other.”

“All” in one place must mean “all” in the second place. “The many” meaning all in one place must mean all in the second place. Universal reconciliation does not alter the meaning of “all” or “many.” The doctrine elevates God's mercy and justice to the benefit of all. God's will cannot be expunged from the record of His Word. God is love. His mercy will be shown to all. “Every knee will bow...” one day. All will acknowledge Him and Satan will suffer his fate. We should not lift up the evil one. Adam sinned and by his act of disobedience all mankind was cursed to work the ground and to physically die. Adam disobeyed God's commandment. Since, Adam, death reigned.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

John MacArthur is renowned as a Biblical scholar, teacher of Holy Scripture, Pastor of a well established church. Dr. MacArthur, however, does not agree that “all” means “all” in the context of these verses. According to Dr. MacArthur and most other traditional orthodox scholars the first “many” in verse 15 means “all mankind,” but the “many” that Christ's sacrifice impacted is not “all mankind.” In verse 18 the condemnation is to “all men,” but the reconciliation to Himself is not to “all men.”

Dr. MacArthur preached a sermon, “Death Through Adam Life Through Christ.”<sup>9</sup> on this subject particularly. He preaches Adam and Christ Jesus “made the most monumental impact on human life.” These men “affected the whole of the human race for time and eternity.” Each man performed separate, but single acts that impacted the whole of humanity. Dr. MacArthur teaches, “Adam brought death and Christ brought life.”

Dr. MacArthur is convincing that Adam's transgression in the Garden is the cause of sin in the world and that sin is a part of every human God creates. Dr. MacArthur's point of view is that “...sin entered the world, the cosmos of man's existence, the system of creation, as we know it, through one man.” That one man, Adam, “...introduced sin to mankind.” Dr. MacArthur preaches, “...Sin entered into the human realm through Adam. By one man, sin entered the world.”

Dr. MacArthur expounds on death being imputed to all mankind from the moment of Adam's transgression. He elaborates how sin was transferred from our mothers and we were conceived with sin. Babies are born with sin. Dr. MacArthur is consistent in this point. Because of Adam's transgression sin entered the world as we know it and death reigns.

Dr. MacArthur describes Paul's intent in these verses. Dr. MacArthur says, “What he's talking about here is the impact of one man, Adam, on everybody. And he says the fact that that one man, Adam, by one act affected everybody is a type or a picture of Christ by one act affecting everybody.” Christ's life, death on the cross, His burial, His resurrection and His ascension into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father does indeed affect “everybody.”

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Dr. MacArthur preaches that “many” does not really mean “many” and that “all” does not really mean “all.” Dr. MacArthur tells more about Paul's intended meaning. “He has just presented the fact that Jesus Christ, by his one work of death and resurrection on the cross and through the open tomb has impacted all who believe.” A qualifier has been added. “All who believe,” is added and that addition takes away from the true impact of Christ's sacrifice “...for the sins of the many.”

Dr. MacArthur's message to his audience that day is “precisely what Paul wants you to understand. That while you no more are responsible for that act which produced your death; you are no more responsible for that act which produces your salvation and your life. That's a gift. That's a gift. In verse 15 he says, a free gift. Isn't like the transgressions.” The sin of Adam and salvation gift of Christ are certainly not the same, but the application to mankind are. At least, they should be.

Dr. MacArthur says Paul is “making an analogy here.” He says Paul “uses ‘many’ and ‘all’ ...throughout this text for literary contrast purposes and sometimes ‘many’ means ‘all’ and sometimes ‘all’ means ‘many.’”

Is Dr. MacArthur speaking for Paul? Was Paul using a literary device as Dr. MacArthur preaches?

I love Dr. MacArthur and I am especially fond of his preaching style. I appreciate that he values preaching by exposition “one verse at a time.” I am highly appreciative of his scholarly position. He is in my view a Scholar's Scholar. However, I cannot accept the distinctions he derives here.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

The Blue Letter Bible Institute provides a website with multiple Bible translations and Bible commentaries. They provide the King James Bible with Strong's Numbers.<sup>10</sup> Many theological scholars use Strong's notes to aid their understanding of words translated from Greek to English. Strong's Notes are trusted far and wide as authoritative and true. In Romans 5:15 the word "many" carries the Strong's Number G4183 in both places the word is used. Strong's defines this word "many" as "Including the forms from the alternate *pollos*; (singular) much (in any respect) or (plural) many; neuter (singular) as adverb largely; neuter (plural) as adverb or noun often, mostly, largely: - abundant, + altogether, common, + far (passed, spent), (+ be of a) great (age, deal, -ly, while), long, many, much, oft (-en [-times]), plenteous, sore, straitly. Compare G4118, G4119."

Please note the Greek word used here to signify "many" as translated into English is the same in both instances. Paul is not employing "a literal device" as Dr. MacArthur suggests?

In Romans 5:18 the word "all" carries the Strong's Number G3956. Strong's defines these occurrences of "all" as "Including all the forms of declension; apparently a primary word; all, any, every, the whole: - all (manner of, means) always (-s), any (one), X daily, + ever, every (one, way), as many as, + no (-thing), X throughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever."

Please note the Greek word used here to mean "all" as translated into English is the same in both instances. Again, Paul is not using a literary device here?

Mr. Salisbury asks a question referenced earlier, "Did the first Adam's offense unto condemnation and death for all accomplish 'much more' than the last Adam's free gift of grace unto justification for all (Ro.5:15)?"

Knowing what you now know, how will you answer the question? Did Adam's act of disobedience condemn more to eternal torment than Christ, The Last Adam, will save? Is Adam, a created man, of greater consequence than our Lord, Christ Jesus? Did Satan defeat Christ?

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

This is Impartial Grace. Adam sinned. He was disobedient and his disobedience had a terrible effect on all men. The "Second Adam," Who is Christ Jesus, has "...the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness...." He gives the gift of salvation "...and life for all men." Christ Jesus makes all men righteous. Adam, which means mankind, sinned and all men are born and subsequently die. All men live in the world and possess a propensity to sin. Christ Jesus died and His Father forgives the sins of mankind. "Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord." All men will be drawn to Him. Not one will be lost.

The sins of the world are inferior to the grace upon grace given by our Father. Sin abounds and grace abounds greater still. Is there any person grace cannot conquer? Is there even one person who will deny the love of God? "Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord...." It is to His glory. "God is salvation." That is the meaning of His Name. His Word is true. The Good News is that Jesus Christ gives an "...abundance of grace." The Good News does not discriminate. Jesus gives to all. He gives us all "...the free gift of righteousness...."

Only Jesus is able to resolve the "one trespass that led to the condemnation for all men." Condemnation for sin is removed and is replaced by "one act of righteousness." God is Love. He is just. His justice is in His love. The Christ's "one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men." This is "The Blessed Hope" and it is Impartial Grace.

For the creation waits with eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For ***the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.*** (Romans 8:19-21, emphasis added)

Creation waits. The earth and all that God created on it waits. The universe and the angels wait. Their expectation is to see "...the sons of God." Mankind waits "with eager longing" for the plan of God to manifest itself. God's creation is "...subjected to futility." In their own counsel and under their own power the "...sons of God..." are unable to comprehend the unveiling. God purposely made mankind unable to comprehend the "...revealing the sons of God."



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Who are the sons of God whom He subjected to futility? What is the revealing of the sons of God? The Anglican Pulpit commentary suggests those waiting in expectation for the revealing includes "all mankind. These are men who have professed faith in Christ Jesus and it includes all other men who have not. Believers are not set apart."<sup>11</sup> The sons of God are men. They are mankind! They are a part of the whole of creation. When the sons of God reject vain glory and quit kicking against the goads, God will remove futility from their hearts. All creation waits with hope for the revealing of the sons of God! "...in hope that the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of decay into the liberty of the glory of the children of God "

We are "the creation." Each and every person ever created or to ever be created will be placed into lives of futility. No person ever wanted to be put in such a state of hopelessness. Creation does not choose to be placed in life to be hopeless. God's love for His creation is never ending and all-consuming. Mankind is held in a state of futility until God reveals His purpose to them.

God consigned all to sin. He placed in all of His creation a desire to find its way to Him. In creation's efforts to control their existence they experience futility. In their desire to create for themselves a humanly sovereign way they experience greater futility. Why? So that all the earth, all creation, will see, recognize and realize His infinite mercy. He subjected all to sin so He could bless all with salvation. God places us in this position of futility. He allows us to flail in stormy waters and to swim against the currents. He lets us make choices that are contrary to Him. He lets us live lives of futility. God wants us to see Him as our Lord, Savior, King. He wants us to see the key to living that sets "creation free." A time will come when every element of creation would "free itself from its bondage to corruption...." God's creation is subjected to futility and it is God's desire that creation frees itself in Him.

For ***if the rejection of them is the reconciling of the world***, what would their acceptance be, but life from the dead? (Romans 11:15, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

It is the Jewish nation that rejected Christ Jesus. He came as their Messiah and they did not see it. Paul tells us that in this rejection there is "...the reconciling of the world...." Reconciliation to Whom? The world is reconciled to God. Scripture says it is so! Read Colossians chapter one. The promise of God's Holy Word: "...all things are reconciled to Him." The leadership of the Israelites rejected their Messiah. They taught those they led to oppose the Son of God. They plotted against Him. They contrived to accuse Him. All that they did in their conspiracy to silence the Word of God was known by God and manifested by God. Because His chosen people rejected their Messiah, God has reconciled to the world to Himself.

Let us never forget "...every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...." It is glorious beyond anything we could ever dream for ourselves. "...Their acceptance...will mean...life from the dead...." These verses preach redemption and give glory to God Who planned it before the beginning of what we construe as time. In the same way God planned that Jesus would be betrayed and rejected by His chosen people. He also has planned that all will be made new; that He planned "...life from the dead." This is Impartial Grace.

For I don't desire you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you won't be wise in your own conceits, that ***a partial hardening has happened to Israel***, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in,.... (Romans 11:25, emphasis added)

The hearts of God's chosen nation were inclined to themselves. Their "god" was within themselves. The people of Israel had rejected their Savior. That "hardening" of their hearts is a long term spiritual problem. Their "hardening" hearts will find relief when "the fullness of the Gentiles has come in."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Israel rejects the Son of God and God is leaving Israel to its own. Israel will truly see peace only when the King is revealed from Heaven. When all have been reconciled to Him the hardness of all hearts will be relieved. All will be Israel. All will have been grafted in. The hearts of His children are never fully hardened against Him. There is only "...partial hardening...." The glory of God will be fully known. We know what to look for. It is not a mystery to us. All of God's creation will be made new. Gentile and Jew; one in Christ our King. This is Impartial Grace.

For ***God has shut up all to disobedience, that he might have mercy on all.*** Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? "Or who has first given to him, and it will be repaid to him again? (Romans 11:32-36, emphasis added)

Israelite, Assyrian, Babylonian, Greek, Roman, Christian and all other religious acolytes are "...consigned to disobedience...." No person has been exempted from God's judgment. Why? Precisely as scripture declares; "...that He might have mercy on all." God purposely leaves us to sin. He ordains it. He takes an active role in consigning each of His creation to disobedience; that is, to sin. He does not passively let us meander into sin. He delivered us to sin. Why? "That He might have mercy on all." Every person, beginning with Adam, has been "shut up to disobedience." Is there any person ever created in the wombs of their mothers who has not been disobedient? Not one!

We can argue if God is active or passive in our being consigned to disobedience. We have to agree, though that all persons ever created have been consigned to sin. What is it to be consigned? It is to be formally handed over. It is to be committed by another. In this case God formally gave every created being over to disobedience; that is, to sin. Every person has been committed to sin by God. Why? "...That He might have mercy on all."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

One man might declare that God chose him for salvation. Another man might declare that he had the foresight to choose God and salvation. These are common theological doctrines in Christian denominations and congregations today. These theological ideas are opposed to scripture and to one another. "All" men are judged to be guilty. Chosen or choosing does not matter a wit. God already judged the chosen one and the choosing one. "For He has shut up all men to disobedience...." God's mercy on all will be known by all.

Let us focus on this, "God is love." We "love because He loved us first." We preach God's mercy is beyond measure. That is the Gospel that saves. That is the Gospel preached. This is "The Blessed Hope."

Theologians debate the meanings of texts and find proofs for their theologies and traditions. Impartial Grace does not dispute the plain meaning of scripture. The doctrine opposes the conclusion some are destined for eternal conscious torment and that God is glorified by that. The plain meaning of scripture supports Impartial Grace.

God creates all things. There is nothing that is created that was not created by Him. He is in all things. All to His glory. This is Impartial Grace.

For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. ***To him be the glory for ever!*** Amen. (Romans 11:36, emphasis added)

"All things" means precisely that. There are no divisions. There is nothing that can be excluded in "all things." "All things" is absolute. It is "all things." All things are from Him. There is not a creature that does not have its origin in Him. All things are created through His command and by His power. Greatest of all that can be said is that all things are His. All things are committed to Him by His power. He is sovereign over all things and He is love. There is not a created being able to supplant His authority.

The doctrine of Impartial Grace preaches the absolute glory of God. Other doctrines of this nature preach God is glorified by billions and billions of His creation in hell. Those doctrines create a place of eternal conscious torment in their traditions. Those doctrines insist Hell exists and that God maintains it specifically to contain and to punish the rebellious.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

God is love. He is indeed the Creator of “all things.” All things come from Him. All things exist only because of His will. All things are His. The most vile man will be reconciled to God. That is the message that is the Gospel. God is love.

For God *locks up all* together in stubbornness, that ***He should be merciful to all.*** (Romans 11:32, Concordant Literal Version, emphasis added)

There is not a distinction to be made. His Word should not be questioned. We should be serious when contemplating it. “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”

Every person is disobedient and God is sovereign over every thing. Impartial Grace teaches, as Scripture tells us, every person will experience His mercy. The doctrine elevates God's mercy. This is Impartial Grace.

Who are you who judge another's servant? To his own lord he stands or falls. Yes, ***he will be made to stand, for God has power to make him stand.*** (Romans 14:4, emphasis added)

This is not a rhetorical question. It deserves an answer. Christian friends agree that no Christian should judge anyone anywhere at any time. Believers are convinced that God's Word is true and that none of us are capable of giving reasonable, favorable judgment about others. I confess that I have judged others. Generally, I judged them according to a standard I built. That is hardly reasonable and surely not fair. I was ignorant. Worse I was arrogant. I have been forgiven and God remembers those sins no more. Amen. It is difficult enough living my own life and to glorify God. I have to stand before God and give account for my life. That's enough! God will hold me up. He will give me the strength to weather all that my life is subjected to. His plan is to be my plan. His will to be my will.

There should be no allowance made on my part to judge the behavior of any other person. That is what this scripture is admonishing. Further, it is incumbent on me to know that God will hold all men up. He has the power. He has the intent. It is His will that none should perish. This is the Gospel preached. Do not judge. It is as simple as that. Know that God will lift you up and that He will lift up even your enemy. It is a Gospel that preaches God is love.

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you despise your brother? For ***we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*** For it is written, “***‘As I live,’ says the Lord, ‘to me every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess to God.’***” (Romans 14:10-11, emphasis added)

First we are asked why we assume the authority we take for ourselves. “Who are you to judge...?” We are asked to explain the cause of our judgment on our brother or the cause of our hatred for him. The questions apply guilt to us. These are questions causing introspection. If I pass judgment on others, then I am condemning them to a fate of my creation. If I pass judgment on others, then I am hateful of them. Neither of these are characteristics I want to possess. Christ Jesus teaches, “You will be judged by the measure you use to judge others.”

The Lord our God will judge all men. As a consequence of His judgment “...every knee shall bow...” and “...every tongue shall confess to God.” Confess what? Their sin! All men will confess. All men will repent. All men will be reconciled to Him. This is the message of “The Blessed Hope.” This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: 1 CORINTHIANS

But if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or stubble; each man’s work will be revealed. For the Day will declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself will test what sort of work each man’s work is. If any man’s work remains which he built on it, he will receive a reward. ***If any man’s work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, but as through fire.*** (1 Corinthians 3:12-15, emphasis added)

Our lives and the ways we live them are our work. These verses teach that the foundation of all life is in Christ Jesus. A man's work is demonstrated by the strength of his structure.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

The stronger and more precious structures will be known by what remains after they have been subjected to fire. What fire? That would be the glorious fire of God. That would be the sanctifying fire of His love. God is a consuming fire. The remnant after the fire earns rewards for their builders. Every work will be subjected to the fire. The dross will be burned away and what remains brings glory to God. Some structures will leave no remnant. Those builders will have lost almost everything, if not everything, but those builders are not lost. They are saved. There is a fire to endure, but it is not a fire of eternal torture or punishment. It is a fire of restoration.

A. T. Robertson describes the condition of an evangelical man whose house is built of stubble and hay. He calls it a “tragedy of a fruitless life.”<sup>12</sup> Everything the good Christian preacher taught was not built on a solid foundation and was built with substandard material. “His sermons were empty.” His audience did not grow in Christ or in God’s Holy Word. “It is a picture of a wasted life.” No man came forward. No man gave testimony. No man was saved. “There are no souls in heaven as the result of his toil for Christ.” The one whose work left no impression on any other is reconciled to our Father by our Father’s grace just the same. It is mercy upon mercy, grace upon grace, that the one who did nothing is counted as the Father’s.

I pray my life has not been empty and that my work will leave a remnant; that God is glorified in some way. I know the sins of my life have been forgiven and that He remembers them no more. I pray that my life is not “...the picture of a wasted life.” All men are builders and our work has value in God’s sight. It is God Who subjects the work of all men to fire. No man’s work is excused and no man’s work will be overlooked. This is “The Blessed Hope.”

The doctrine of universal reconciliation does not exclude any man from God’s judgment. Rather, all men will be judged by God. We believe the most wretched man “...he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.” All men are builders and all men will experience God’s fire. This is Impartial Grace.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, are to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, ***that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*** (1 Corinthians 5:4-5, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Paul is pointing out a wicked man and his wicked behavior. He is declaring to the good people in the Corinthian church that this wicked man must be put out of their assembly. The “banishing” is lovingly ordered. It is loving on two levels. First, the church in Corinth has become arrogant and lax. They have tolerated the abhorrent behavior of this man and have done nothing to stop it. By acting to remove the bad actor the church itself will be better. Second, the man's behavior, being exposed, will be no longer tolerated and he will repent. Paul writes that the church in Corinth is to cut this man loose; to hand him over to Satan. Cutting the wicked man loose the church will improve and the man's spirit will be saved. The church will not prosper as long as he remains. That's true in every local congregation. As long as evil is present the local assembly will not prosper fully. Even wicked men in wicked churches may lose their flesh to Satan, but their spirits are not lost. Ecclesiastes 12:7 states, “And the soil returns onto the earth just as it was, And the spirit, it returns to the One, Elohim, Who gave it.” The wicked man, removed from the church or not, will not see his spirit tormented forever.

God is love and God does not condemn any of His creation to eternal conscious torment. That does not mean there will not be a purifying fire as we discussed earlier. Ask yourself this, “If that wicked man in the Corinthian congregation knew Jesus, had confessed his sins including the inappropriate relationship he was having with his step-mother, repented for a time, but continued in that sin anyway, has he lost God's grace?” Will he experience God's wrath forever because he failed?” Care should be taken when answering that question. There is no one who can testify that he has not sinned. Can anyone say he has not sinned since his day of grace?

The doctrine of universal reconciliation praises God because of His mercy and because of the intensity of His love for His creation. He loves even those who hate Him. It is because God's love is complete and because He is our Father we strive to better our relationship with Him. The worst son is the “prodigal son.” The “last becomes first....” This is Impartial Grace.

But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, ***and the head of Christ is God.*** (1 Corinthians 11:3, emphasis added)



But ***let a man examine himself***, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy way eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he doesn't discern the Lord's body. (1 Corinthians 11:28-29, emphasis added)

The salient point to be taken in this is that the "...head of every man is Christ...." Scripture does not segregate Jews from Samaritans, Assyrians from Babylonians, the Catholic Church from the Reformed church. Scripture simply says "the head of every man is Christ...." The chapter closes with an admonition to make sure all conflicts are resolved before taking communion. Examine yourself. Repent. When the examination is done and all personal and internal conflicts are resolved, take the bread and take the wine. Christ is the head of every man.

Universal reconciliation declares all persons will be reconciled to Him even though some people continue their rebellion up to death. The doctrine teaches His death on the Cross is sufficient for all men. Other doctrines of this ilk are judgments of men. Opposing doctrines give Divine authority, ostensibly by the Word God, to eternally torment those who continue in their rebellion against Him. It is prominent traditionalist theology that claims that those not believing as the traditionalist does are destined to eternal conscious torment. Orthodoxy consigns the unrepentant rebel to unending and increasing in tortures in a place set aside especially for them by God. It is a judgment of men by men. We should all take care not to bring judgment on ourselves by judging others.

Love is patient and is kind; love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud, doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil; doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ***bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.*** But where there are prophecies, they will be done away with. Where there are various languages, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be done away with. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Mr. Sprenger reiterates, "Love never fails. God is love. His love cannot fail." He rightfully states that losing "even one would mean that love failed to find and save that one." Consider that thought. Universal reconciliation agrees completely with His Word. Advocates of doctrines opposed to Impartial Grace insist millions, if not billions, of people are consigned to hell by our heavenly Father. Those doctrines are incongruent. "His plan, His purpose, His desire, and His nature has always been and always will be love for His creation!"

Examine Mr. Sprenger's proposition and assess its truth. If even one of God's creation is condemned to eternal conscious torment it means God was unable to persuade that one man. God, Who is love, failed to save just that one man. Compound that failure and apply billions and billions of mankind to this assessment. Many, perhaps most, of these tortured souls were never introduced to the Gospel. These are men blindly led. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment requires these people be condemned. It does not matter that they never heard the Gospel. They never had a chance to confess their belief much less know to Whom they were confessing.

The Concordant Literal Version translates this phrase as "Love is never lapsing." The King James Version tells us "charity never faileth." The English Standard Version translates God's Word, "Love never ends." There is not a moment love does not exist. Love is over all else and like God never ends. God is love. Moreover, love accomplishes what it sets out to. It never fails.

God is love and love never fails. That is the Gospel preached. All will be reconciled to Him. It is a promise. He declares that it is "His will that all men be saved." Love prevails over sin. Mercy and grace are abundant, death is eventually put to death. God is going to be "All in all."

Paul, by the hand of God's Spirit, provides us the definition of love. This definition of love is God's attribute and we strive to live in it. God does not put upon His creation expectations that He does not fulfill. These verses describe and define the nature of God's love for His creation. God knew when He created each of us that we would fail His expectation. He knew before He blew His breath into the first created man. He knew Adam's Fall and the consequences of the Fall before He gave Adam life. "...Love endures all." "God is love." "He will be all in all."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

It is the character of God to love all. It is He Who committed all to sin. His character is diminished terribly by the doctrines opposing His absolute, relentless love. The character of God is to reconcile all to Himself. God is the Father and Creator of all. God will make all things new. He loves all and He will be our "all in all." It is "The Blessed Hope." It is clear. Christ Jesus says, "...I will draw all men to Myself." He does not qualify "all." Neither should we! This is Impartial Grace.

Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable. But now Christ has been raised from the dead. He became the first fruits of those who are asleep. ***For since death came by man, the resurrection of the dead also came by man. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*** But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then those who are Christ's, at his coming. Then the end comes, when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power. ***For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*** The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For, "He put all things in subjection under his feet." But when he says, "All things are put in subjection", it is evident that he is excepted who subjected all things to him. When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, ***that God may be all in all.*** (1 Corinthians 15:18 – 28, emphasis added)

Christ Jesus is the first fruits. His resurrection from the dead is proof that all will be resurrected. Adam's sin caused a universal physical death. Christ's resurrection universally restores life. Jesus is the only Man ever resurrected from the grave and remains alive. He is seated at the right hand of the Father at this moment. Those of us in Christ at the time of our respective deaths will be raised to life when the trumpet sounds His return. Those who fail to believe will be raised in life before the judgment seat. During this judgment "every knee will bow" and proclaim Jesus as their Lord. Further, Jesus will eventually give over His Kingdom to His Father. Each and every of His enemies will be defeated. The last enemy being death itself. Death is defeated, therefore life reigns. It must be so. Everything is subjected to Him; EVERYTHING. Christ then surrenders His position to the Father. Christ, however, is not subjected to the Father as He, too, is God.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

These verses are profound and define the doctrine of universal reconciliation. They are worthy of reiterated points and more discussion. His love is over all He has created. I believe He will be "all in all." Adam sinned and there was The Fall. We all know of the story of Adam's poor and even deadly choice when he took the fruit from Eve and ate it. Because of that single event now all men are created by God, but subject to sin within. Adam caused physical death in all men.

We all know the testimony of Christ Jesus and His Holy Word. Christ was buried in a grave. After three days He was resurrected. Because of this divine act, resurrection is now the condition of all created men. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Is there an argument to be made here that only those chosen by God or only those who have chosen God are saved? "...In Christ shall all be made alive."

What is the ultimate end? God will be "all in all." How does He accomplish that? I reiterate. It's not hard to see that "all things" will be given to Christ Jesus. He will give "all things" to His Father Who created "all things." All things are in Christ. All things are in the Father. He is "all in all." These verses support themselves. The Gospel is in these verses. Adam's sin causes all to die. Christ Jesus is the cause of all life...all will be made alive! All die because of Adam. All live because of Christ.

There is not a person created who is not subjected to Christ and consequently subjected to the Father. Who is the Creator of all things? His Sovereignty over all things has never ceased and in the same way His love conquers all. The clear meaning of scripture is this; Adam sinned and consequently came physical death. Jesus comes to end the curse of physical death. Under Christ Jesus all of those who are deceased will be raised to life. There is an order in the resurrection of the dead. First, Himself, then those who He owns, then at the end all are resurrected and given to God the Father. Jesus Christ defeated every known rule, tradition, law, and authority. He is King. There is nothing to hinder our love for Him. "Every knee will bow" and "every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

God has placed everything...all things...under the authority of Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus declared Himself that He does nothing that is not the will of the Father. Christ's authority is under the Father's authority. For what purpose? So that "God may be all in all." What does it mean "that God may be all in all?"

But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: ***"Death is swallowed up in victory."*** (1 Corinthians 15:54, emphasis added)

Mr. Sprenger remarks, "'The last enemy to be destroyed is death' (I Cor 15:26).... This refers to all death, both physical death and spiritual death. Then the only thing that shall remain is...Life!" Paul is deliberately explaining the meaning of resurrected life. He preaches about fruit having to die to yield its seed and the seed having to die and to be brought back to life to produce more of that kind of fruit. He explains how to distinguish between the flesh of men and the various kinds of flesh of others of God's creation.

Glory in all things is God's glory. Glory comes from heaven and from the earth. The glory from heaven is different from the glory that comes from the earth. The planets all have their own, yet different, kind of glory. Each star's glory is different from all the other stars in the heavens. It will be that way when all are resurrected. Perhaps our flesh will be different. The glory we exude to God is different, too. Each child of God dies an earthly death. The flesh of the earth is transformed to the flesh of heaven. The glory we once showed was earthly and is shed for heavenly glory. Earthly flesh dies and it is raised to live eternally with the Anointed King.

Adam was fashioned by God and he "...became a living being (v.45)...." Christ Jesus gives a life giving spirit. Adam's flesh is bound by earth. His spirit "...returned to God Who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7)." God's only begotten Son is not bound to earth. He is Emmanuel; God with us. He is Jesus; God saves. God is with us and He saves us. "We shall all be changed...(v.51)." First the dead will be raised from their graves and their bodies will no longer be made of earthly flesh, but of heavenly flesh. Their glory will no longer be earthly glory, but heavenly glory. Those who remain will have perishable bodies changed to imperishable bodies. Then, "death is swallowed up by Victory." The end of death! There is nothing eternal in death. It has been defeated.

The Pulpit Commentary cited earlier provides this insight. “What a glorious change awaits humanity!” The body is raised from its grave. It is “a more glorious resurrection—a resurrection of the human soul from the false, the unrighteous, the impure, to the true, the right and the holy—a resurrection, thank God, taking place every day in the world....”

All men will be resurrected and eventually all of creation will be reconciled to Him. These verses do not divide people who believe in Christ Jesus from those who do not. These verses point to all mankind being changed from earthly flesh to heavenly flesh. They point to a change in the kind of glory all men express. The most vicious man who seldom gave glory will now give heavenly glory. The saintliest woman will be transformed with a heavenly, imperishable body. The worst and the best are redeemed and all are reconciled to Him. After all, it is His will that none should perish. “A glorious change awaits humanity.”

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: 2 CORINTHIANS

For the love of Christ constrains us; because we judge thus, ***that one died for all***, therefore all died. ***He died for all***, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who for their sakes died and rose again. Therefore ***we know no one after the flesh*** from now on. Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. But ***all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation; namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation.*** (2 Corinthians 5:14-19, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

This is indeed good news. The Pharisees who denied Christ in previous verses are reconciled to God through Christ Jesus. Universal reconciliation is the primary precept in these verses. Other doctrines of its type require us to believe that only we and fellow believers are saved. Those who believe alternative doctrines believe they (and they only) are reconciled to God. Those doctrines require something other than the plain meaning of scripture. "One has died for all." Christ Jesus's sacrifice is for the whole world; for the whole of humanity. He did not die only for those who believe in Him, but for all flesh; for the whole world.

We are wonderfully blessed when we come to know Him. When we profess our belief in Him we are a new creation. The old self dies and a new self is born. It is a self that sees He is love and practices what is seen. "Behold the old has passed away. The new has come."

Universal reconciliation declares only what the scriptures do. Other doctrines require these verses be construed the old has passed away, the new has come, but only for those who believe. Christ died for us and He does not count our sins against us. He died for all even those who rebel against Him? Doctrines like eternal conscious torment conclude Christ did not "reconcile the whole world to himself." He reconciled only a few.

Albert Barnes is a world famous Presbyterian Theologian. He wrote "Notes on the Whole Bible" which are referenced earlier. He writes that some believe only the elect are saved. He believed universal reconciliation is the special view and eternal conscious torment is the general view. Using Dr. Barnes example both doctrines "are found in scripture." The need to explain the consistency or the contradictions between the two is unnecessary he says. It is unimportant to understand the differences between the two doctrines even if we could. Dr. Barnes teaches God's grace is "...intended to secure the salvation of His chosen people." What is believed is secondary to being chosen or not.

"In Christ" and "through Christ" we have been reconciled to God. These verses are consistent with God's love, His limitless mercy. Mr. Sprenger advises us, "According to Paul, then, preaching the reconciliation of all is in fact preaching the gospel." This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: GALATIANS

The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Good News beforehand to Abraham, saying, ***“In you all the nations will be blessed.”*** (Galatians 3:8, emphasis added)

Paul's purpose in this letter is to challenge the false doctrines being preached in Galatia. He had preached there and many Gentiles in that area believed the Gospel. After he departed false teachers inserted themselves and their doctrines into the culture newly formed in Christ. The false teachers may have been Jews who believed the Gospel, but held tightly to ritual and traditions of their former life. The false teachers may have been Paul's Jewish peers acting to bring chaos to the new church Paul helped bring together. Both groups taught that a belief in Christ included a transition to Jewish culture and acceptance of Jewish tradition. Paul sets the record straight with this letter.

Paul points out that God's promise to Abraham has not abated. His promise is active and true. God “blesses all the nations” because of Abraham. God did not exclude nations. There is nothing that can be done to gain this blessing. It is Impartial Grace. As simply as is possible to be stated, God blesses all the nations of the world; He blesses all the families of the world. There is no room for contradiction or distinction.

Universal reconciliation affirms these verses to be literally true. Other doctrines preach eternal conscious torment and deny the plain meaning of scripture that “all families” will be blessed. Other doctrines suppress God's immutable love and make Him incapable of loving all. Universal reconciliation teaches that God's love is relentless and overwhelming. It is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: EPHESIANS



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, ***according to the riches of his grace***, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him to an administration of the fullness of the times, ***to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth***, in him; in whom also we were assigned an inheritance, ***having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who works all things*** after the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be to the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ: in whom you also, having heard the word of the truth, the Good News of your salvation—in whom, having also believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... (Ephesians 1:7-13, emphasis added)

This is the salvation Gospel of Christ. In Christ Jesus we have redemption. Because His blood was shed for the purpose of atoning for the sin of the world we can claim salvation. Universal reconciliation teaches His grace is abundant and it is poured out on all. Other doctrines limit God's grace to a few. Those doctrines diminish the scope of Christ's sacrifice.

The mystery is now known. God's plan from the beginning was to make all things righteous through Christ Jesus. It is Christ Jesus Who is obedient to the point of death. Those of us in Christendom who are blessed to see this mystery in its glory realize Christ's sacrifice reconciles us to His Father; to our Father in heaven. Not only are we reconciled, but God's plan "...to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, in him" is complete.

Universal reconciliation is true to scripture. Other doctrines cannot be true because they deny that God through Christ "unites all things in Him." Those doctrines actually divide. Those doctrines teach the phrase "unite all things" is to be understood to mean to unite some things? The traditional doctrine of eternal conscious torment disputes He will "unite all things." Scripture says, "All things will be united in Him." It is God's will that "all things unite with Him." We believe that is what brings glory to Him. This is Impartial Grace.

For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you, and the love which you have toward all the saints, don't cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, ***the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him***; having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of his calling, and what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. ***He put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things for the assembly***, which is his body, ***the fullness of him who fills all in all***. (Ephesians 1:15-23, emphasis added)

David Guzik is introduced by Enduring Word website as "...a pastor, Bible teacher, and author of a widely used Bible commentary. Millions of people have access to David's online Bible commentary on sites such as Enduring Word and Blue Letter Bible." I have read Mr. Guzik's work. His commentary has been helpful to me in my study. His effort to help others understand God's Holy Word is commendable. I am using Mr. Guzik's commentary and explanation of Ephesians 1:15-23 as a guide to better understand His Word.<sup>13</sup> I would like to be one who receives heavenly wisdom and to be one who understands the mystery that is "The Blessed Hope." I pray the "eyes of my heart" are opened and that I fully comprehend the "riches of His glorious inheritance."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Paul gives thanks for the love the Ephesian church holds for others in the church, that is “for all the saints.” His gratitude for the Ephesian church is expressed to heaven regularly and always. Mr. Guzik instructs us, “This was because their faith and love were evidence of their participation in this great work of God.” Mr. Guzik is correct to say, “Faith and love do not earn us participation in his great work of God. They are evidence of our participation in God's plan.” The Ephesians possess a “love for all the saints.” Mr. Guzik points out that Paul is giving praise to God for the Ephesian assembly because they love others in the church. Mr. Guzik says, “The real evidence of God's work in us is not the love we claim to have for Him, but our love for His people that others can see.”

The True Light that is Christ Jesus is what others see when His love for us permeates our love for others. The love we have for Christ is seen in our love for others. Paul asks God to strengthen the church and to give them a “spirit of wisdom” and “revelation in the knowledge of him.” He is asking that the church be given insight and understanding, especially about those things that are about Christ.

We learn about Christ Jesus' position in God's plan. He is elevated to a place in heaven that is demonstrative of His authority and of His power. His position is Sovereign over all creation. His Name is above all other names. All things are subjected to Him. He is given authority “...over all things to the church which is His body....” All things.... Let that sink in!

Pastor Guzik closes his commentary on these verses writing, “If Jesus is the Head, then the community of Christians make up His Body.” That is certainly true, but better still is the fact Christ Jesus is over all things. All things are subject to Him. There is nothing in these verses that lead us to conclude that God's love abates for those not in “the community of Christians” as Pastor Guzik teaches. There is nothing in these scriptures that separates one person from another. All men are included in “all things.”

Universal reconciliation embraces these scriptures as true. Other doctrines diminish the breadth of God's love and the full impact of Christ Jesus' obedience even to death on a cross. It is not a mystery any longer. Our Father's Son is our Savior. WE are all subject to Him. He has subjected us to God. God will indeed be “all in all.” This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

To me, the very least of all saints, was this grace given, to ***preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ***, and to make all men see what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in ***God, who created all things through Jesus Christ***, to the intent that now through the assembly the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him. (Ephesians 3:8-12, emphasis added)

Paul tells what his calling is. He has been given "...this grace...to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ...." Paul identifies himself as the least of the disciples and in other scripture as the worst of all sinners. He has been redeemed. The worst of all sinners is reconciled to God. He is not elevating himself or setting himself above any other person. "I am the very least of all the saints...." His ministry mission is to preach to the Gentiles. He is to expose the mystery of God's plan to Gentiles. Gentiles are all men and women created by God who do not or cannot claim Israel as their birthright. Gentiles are the whole world, the whole human world, minus Israel.

The mystery that Paul is preaching is that God intends to save the whole world through Christ Jesus. Every Gentile ever created and every Israelite ever created will be reconciled to God. That is His Divine Plan. The Light that is Christ Jesus is revealed. The Light that is Christ Jesus shines brightly in His church. It is by God's Divine Plan that His power is known. It is for His good purpose that the church be given wisdom of "unsearchable riches." Ask yourself to define "unsearchable riches" in your own life. Could there possibly be a limit to His grace considering His "unsearchable riches?"

This knowledge that all of His creation will be reconciled through Christ Jesus to Him is the mystery revealed. It is this knowledge of this mystery, the knowledge of Christ Jesus, that empowers each of us "to go and make disciples." It is God Who gives boldness. It is God Who gives faith. It is God Who gives us confidence to speak the Truth.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Universal reconciliation embraces these scriptures as literally true. Other doctrines, such as the doctrine of eternal conscious torment, teach that most of mankind is doomed to suffer eternally. Rebels would strive to live in the darkness and ignore the Light, but they cannot escape Him. The Light cannot be ignored as it is God's Plan that Light reveals all things. All things will be made new in Him. This is Impartial Grace.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you also were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ***one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all.*** But to each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Therefore he says, "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." Now this, "He ascended", what is it but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, ***that he might fill all things.*** (Ephesians 4:4-10, emphasis added)

Paul is closing this letter to the Ephesians. He proclaims himself "a prisoner of the Lord" and uses this position to appeal to the Church. He gives them instructions to "walk in a manner worthy" of the Christ-like life we are called to. Paul encourages us to treat one another "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Paul is not a prisoner of Romans only, but certainly a prisoner of Christ. He writes elsewhere that "to live is Christ, to die is gain." What manner of life is worthy of Christ's body broken and blood shed? It is love. It is love that is Christ's love. It is love that is the Father's love. Walking in a manner worthy of our calling requires we strive for peace and unity in Spirit. We can only do that in love. We must practice "bearing with one another in love."

What is the unity of the Spirit? What binds us to peace? Christ's overwhelming, all-consuming love binds us to Him and to the Father. We are in concert with God's Divine Plan when we agree that God is love and that God Saves. We agree Jesus is "God Saves." Emmanuel is "God with us." Jesus and Him only can save any of us. Paul points out there is only One Spirit, "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in us all." One God over all. One God sovereign over all. One God Who is in all. One God Who is love. One God Who reconciles us all.

Christ Jesus has ascended to the Throne of God. He reigns from the right hand of the Father, now. He was with us for a time and He was buried for a time. He preached to the saints for three days. He was resurrected at the command of His Father. His life, His body broken, His blood shed is sufficient grace to save all. It is God's will that all shall be reconciled to Himself. God's Son sacrificed on the cross is redemption for the sin of the world. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: PHILIPPIANS

If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassion, make my joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through rivalry or through conceit, but in humility, each counting others better than himself; each of you not just looking to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name; ***that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*** (Philippians 2:1-11, emphasis added)

All persons regardless of their respective state of salvation; saved or unsaved, will know the Name of Jesus is "above every name." Every knee will bow in submission to Him and in recognition of His Holy Place. All things will give glory to God. The unsaved (every knee) will bow to Him and bring glory to the Father. The unsaved will experience a remedial punishment for their sins and the blood that flowed from Jesus will cover them, too. The Father will reconcile all to Himself. He will be "all in all."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

I use notes from A. E. Knoch's Concordant New Testament as background. Scripture teaches Christ Jesus came from a place with the Father. They were One in the Same. They had the "same love, being in full accord and of one mind...." Christ Jesus was "in the form of God...." He is the Son of the Father, He has the same plan as the Father, and He is His Father's Servant. He "emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant." He set aside His position and took on Himself the physical nature of His creation. It was a complete transformation. Little of His glory is seen in His physical nature. Before He came to serve He was in form God. He was above all in the heavens. He lowered Himself to take up the curse of death on the cross. He was once almighty and made Himself the least of all. He, of His own volition, descended from the highest. He came to the lowest. The sweep of His plan gathers all to Himself. "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

That time wherein all mankind confesses their love for Him has not yet come. There remains a rebellion. There are enemies still that cannot or will not acknowledge His love for them. There is a time coming "when all things are subjected to Him" and when He will "put all things in subjection to His Father, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). The Father has been exalting His Son since His resurrection. There are enemies still. There are those who oppose Him still. However, the Christ rules over many celestial powers and soon all creation will be subjected to Him. Christ Jesus has ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand of His Father (1 Peter 3:22). The earth is His Kingdom. He is Sovereign and it is His Dominion. The whole universe is subject to Him, now.

His shed blood reconciles all things to God. "All things, whether on earth or in heaven..." will be reconciled to God. "All things, whether on earth or in heaven..." will be made subject to Him. He became the lowest and shall become the highest. The Name of Christ Jesus is the Name above all other names. There is none of greater honor. There is none other that blesses us with grace. When His Name is called out "every knee shall bow" and "every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...!" All of this to glorify our Father God. By the power of His Name will the knees of every generation bow and tongue of every person confess Christ is Lord. This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Other doctrines require we believe that at the Name of Jesus a few knees will bow and a few tongues will confess Jesus Christ is Lord. The glory that is due the Father is lessened because only a few will find salvation in Him. The remainder, those who are condemned to annihilation or to eternal conscious torment, will be looked upon from heaven by the Christ that could have saved them, but did not.

The plain meaning of scripture is the best meaning. Every person will be reconciled to God. No person will be abandoned to a place that cannot be proven exists. Mr. Sprenger asks us to, "Remember that 'No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3)." Christians sing with joy in the knowledge of the mystery revealed in Christ Jesus. All means all. Every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord and will be in the Holy Spirit. This is Impartial Grace.

For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as ***the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction***, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who think about earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the ***Lord Jesus Christ; who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself.*** (Philippians 3:18-21, emphasis added)

If there is an eternal end for the rebellious, then "their end is destruction." These scriptures make a better case for annihilation, also known as conditional immortality, than eternal conscious torment. Those who believe in Christ Jesus and who are brought into the family of God certainly have reason to rejoice. He "will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body...." That, indeed, is good news. But, greater than that He has the power "...even to subject all things to Himself."

Other doctrines stretch the plain meaning of scripture to say He will not. Those doctrines do not allow that Christ will end the spiritual lives of the disobedient by eternal destruction, rather they go another step to say Christ supervises their eternal torment. The doctrine insists Jesus, Who is the Savior of the whole world, really is not.



Universal reconciliation advocates for God's immutable love. We cannot say His power to save even the most heinous person ever created cannot be made subject to Himself. Otherwise, His power is not all-powerful. He is love and He wills all of His creation be reconciled to Him. He is the Shepherd tending all His flock. He rules over a Kingdom of all. It is reasonable to conclude Christ can reconcile all to the Father and because He is love, He will. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: COLOSSIANS

For *all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him; and through him to reconcile all things to himself, by him, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens, having made peace through the blood of his cross.* You, being in past times alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet *now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without defect and blameless before him*, if it is so that you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of *the Good News which you heard, which is being proclaimed in all creation under heaven*; of which I, Paul, was made a servant. (Colossians 1:19-23, emphasis added)

Paul is writing to the church he helped found in Colosse near Ephesus. Like the congregation in Galatia the people were being swayed by men to abandon the truth of their faith. Traditions, rites and rituals infiltrated the church there, consequently, false doctrines were rising in prominence. Paul instructs the faithful to recall the “mystery” revealed to them. God is pleased with the work of Christ on the Cross. Everything has been covered in the Savior's blood and peace abounds.

There are some alive today who have not heard the Gospel. Verse 23 dismisses that assertion because “...the gospel you heard...has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven.” How that may have been fulfilled I cannot say. I can say with absolute certainty that Christ Jesus said, “It is finished.” “All creation” has received the Gospel. It has been proclaimed to “all creation under heaven.” “The Blessed Hope” is somehow passed to all generations. “All creation” receives the gospel and “every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the Glory of the Father.” What good news! What a Gospel!

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Notice Paul declares himself to be a minister of the Gospel of Christ. He never alludes to the traditionalist doctrine of eternal conscious torment. Men and traditions manufacture that doctrine from thin assumptions and questionable interpretations. God is Christ Jesus. Scripture records here that “all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” in Him. “All” of God was in Christ Jesus “to reconcile to Himself all things.” The Father in Christ Jesus. The Father's plan is fulfilled in Christ Jesus. “All things” are reconciled to the Father through Christ Jesus. The plain meaning of these scriptures is easily understood.

We sin because of the fallen state of the world. None of us is ever free of sin. We live sin or we feel sin or we think sin. Sin is all around us. These scriptures teach we can say with confidence we are “reconciled in His body of flesh by His death.” The degree of our sin does not change the fact that “by His death” we will be given to the Father “holy and blameless.” We, all of us, “all things” will be “above reproach before” the Father because Christ Jesus reconciles all things. We must also “...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....” Who can claim they have been every moment of every day “stable and steadfast?” I dare say, none. Who among us has not fallen away “...from the hope of the gospel that...” we heard? I dare say “all things” fall short.

Universal reconciliation embraces these scriptures as literally true. Other doctrines dispute that conclusion. In order for any of those to be true change the plain meaning of scripture. Those doctrines must conclude not “all things” will be reconciled to God. Only a few things will be deemed righteous, blameless and holy. Mr. Sprenger asks, “How could Paul state it any more clearly!?”

Universal reconciliation requires that all things are reconciled to Him and that He is able to persuade unrepentant, rebellious people with His overwhelming love. This is Impartial Grace.

where there can't be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondservant, freeman; ***but Christ is all, and in all.*** (Colossians 3:11, emphasis added)

Mr. Sprenger tells us, "All creation is birthed in Christ; all creation remains in Christ; but not all of creation has been awakened to Christ 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light.'" (Eph 5:14). Paul provides insight to life in Christ. Because we know Him we are confident He knows us. Because we know Him our focus is on Him at the right hand of the Father. Our focus should be on heavenly things; spiritual things. Our focus should be prayers to be blessed with wisdom. Paul tells us that our temporal lives have changed in Christ. Our spirits are quickened in Christ and we have a life kept with Christ in God. Paul presses the church in Colosse to set aside all things worldly. End all that is earthly in you. End immorality of all kinds. Put aside passions. Do not succumb to self. Let pride and envy go. Do not idolize your self.

Every person ever exposed to the Light of Christ acknowledges his sins. Pride, which is also idolatry, puts up obstacles, but over time with the Spirit of God working in us we "put away: anger, wrath, malice, slander and obscene talk." We come to live lives in Christ Jesus and we do not deceive one another. Christ has given us a new life and we change. Our old self is discarded and He gives us renewal in Him. He is in us and we strive to bring glory to Him and away from ourselves. The old self that condemns another is put off and love is put on. The old self that judges harshly is put off and love is put on. The old self that practiced the ways of the world is put off and the life of Christ is put on.

Christ's Gospel is not party to any nationality or culture. "There is not Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; *but Christ is all, and in all.*" Knowing Christ Jesus and being known by Him is crucial. Being a believer "is a gift from God and that by way of faith." He leads us to believe. Our lives change and our focus is to bring glory to Him. That is Christ-like life...bringing glory to God. God intends that believers set aside animus for those who disagree with us and take up a new life with the Spirit of God at our head. Christ is everything. He is the fullness of God dwelling in Him. God is pleased in Him. Christ Jesus is in the men and women He created. Everything that is created was created by Him at His command. He is in all. This is universal reconciliation wrapped in relentless love.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Other doctrines teach that billions of people will be eternally punished by a just God. Those doctrines lessen the power of Christ. They diminish the “fullness of God in Him.” Those doctrines contradict the meaning of scripture as these verses simply and plainly understood teach “Christ is all, and in all.”

Dave Armstrong writes a Bible Study from a Catholic perspective. He expositors about forgiveness on a human level and then declares God cannot forgive an unrepentant sinner.<sup>14</sup> He writes, “Forgiveness is, of course, a distinguishing characteristic of the Christian life.” We are commanded by no less than Christ Jesus to love our neighbors, to love our enemies, to make peace with our brothers. We are taught to care for widows and orphans. Mr. Armstrong teaches we forgive others “because God has forgiven us.”

Mr. Armstrong tells his audience that the person receiving God’s forgiveness “must repent.” If there is not an act of repentance then the receiver cannot “obtain true forgiveness.” Mr. Armstrong adamantly states Divine forgiveness “is not absolutely unconditional, as many falsely teach.” However, being truly remorseful and truly repenting is “a firm resolve to try to do better...and a determination to cease engaging in that sin.” He writes Christians ought to forgive others unconditionally, especially others who have repented. God, though, does not forgive unconditionally. “...God cannot and will not forgive a person who doesn’t repent and accept the forgiveness (in this case, salvation itself).”

Universal reconciliation teaches it is enough that Jesus, Whose Name means “God Saves,” is all and in all just as scripture declares. Mr. Armstrong expounds upon the orthodox understanding that the fullness of God was pleased to dwell in Him, but that the fullness of God cannot and does not dwell in all men. Jesus is Emmanuel. His Name is “God is with us.” Scripture declares all has been given over to Him and He has subjected it to Himself. He then subjects His creation to His Father and God is pleased. These verses stand alone, even so all other scripture supports this simple truth; “It is God's will that all be saved.” “God is Love. His love will save all.” This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: 1 TIMOTHY

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

And I thank him who enabled me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he counted me faithful, appointing me to service; although ***I was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and insolent. However, I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*** The grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. The saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance, that ***Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*** However, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, ***Jesus Christ might display all his patience, for an example of those who were going to believe in him for eternal life.*** Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:12-17, emphasis added)

Mr. Sprenger asks, "If the prerequisite for mercy is ignorance and unbelief, then who will fail to qualify?" All created beings require God's mercy. All people are at first ignorant of God's grace and only exposed to His mercy in stages of their lives. All people have to be shown what their faith is; that it is a gift from God. Mr. Sprenger's question is poignant. "...Who will fail to qualify" for God's mercy especially if Paul is our example?

Paul declares in Holy Scripture that he is the "foremost" of all sinners. It stands to reason that God saves the most wretched man. There are none worse than the most wretched of all men. Mr. Sprenger asks, "Again, if Paul is the foremost sinner, then hasn't God's plan of redemption been accomplished to the foremost?"

Christ said from the cross, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." Later as He took His final breath He said, "It is finished." Christ is asking the Lord to forgive the very persons who hate Him. He is asking the Father to overlook and to forgive their complicity in His crucifixion. Will His Father not do what His Son asks? "It is finished." Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. Other doctrines preach there are some who are worse than the most wretched man and reap an eternal torment for their rebellion.

These verses preach "God is love." His mercy extends to the most wretched of men. This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; ***who desires all people to be saved and come to full knowledge of the truth.*** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man ***Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all;*** the testimony in its own times; to which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth in Christ, not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. (1 Timothy 2:3-7, emphasis added)

Paul is teaching Timothy and subsequently everyone about worship. The focus of the instruction regards the behavior of men and the behavior of women in church settings and in daily life. Paul exhorts Timothy and all Christians to pray for all men; to pray the needs of all men are met; to pray the hearts of all men would turn to Jesus. His "...is the testimony given at the proper time."

Universal reconciliation embraces these scriptures as literally true. His desire that "all people" are saved and that "all people...come to the full knowledge of the truth..." epitomizes Impartial Grace. There is not one person created that He did not create in love and His love is immutable. His love is completely overwhelming as "Christ Jesus...gave Himself as a ransom for all."

Other doctrines dispute it is truly God's desire that all be saved. Most of those teach a doctrine of eternal conscious torment. That doctrine teaches Christ, "...who gave Himself as a ransom for all...," really did not pay for the sin of all. Rather, the doctrine believes that Christ's sacrifice applies only to few because they either had the foresight to have chosen to believe Christ or they had the blessing of being chosen by God to believe Christ. It is a doctrine contradicting what God's Word declares about Christ's sacrifice.

The Father leads us to read His Holy Word. His Spirit leads us. He uncovers God's Word for us. What He reveals is not revealed in the traditions of men. We have read that Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is a "ransom for all men." We've read that "every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Christ to the glory of the Father." We have discussed the contradictions. The plain meaning of scripture is poorly interpreted, modified or manipulated to support the doctrine of eternal conscious torment.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

These verses show a powerfully, all-consuming loving Father's boundless mercy. His love for His creation is seen in these verses. Jesus gave His life as a "ransom for all." This is Impartial Grace.

If you instruct the brothers of these things, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which you have followed. ***But refuse profane and old wives' fables.*** Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise has some value, but godliness has value in all things, having the promise of the life which is now, and of that which is to come. ***This saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance.*** For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we have set our trust in ***the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*** Command and teach these things.

Let no man despise your youth; but be an example to those who believe, in word, in your way of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Until I come, pay attention to reading, to exhortation, and to teaching. Don't neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elders. Be diligent in these things. Give yourself wholly to them, that your progress may be revealed to all. ***Pay attention to yourself, and to your teaching. Continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*** (1 Timothy 4:6-16, emphasis added)

It is ironic that these verses open with "Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths." Paul continues to teach and to encourage Timothy. He's a young man leading a congregation and evangelizing his community. His heart is in the right place. Paul admonishes him to hold fast to the message he is giving. There are others, older men, potentially influencing Timothy perhaps causing him confusion. Paul tells him to maintain his bodily exercise for it is good, but being Godly is profoundly superior. Paul exhorts Timothy to accept as truth, "...the living God, Who is the Savior of al men...."

William MacDonald writes in the Believers Bible Commentary regarding these verses, in particular verse 10.<sup>15</sup> Christians have an outlook on life different than those who do not believe in Christ. It is our passion to reach out to unbelievers and tell them the Truth of God's Holy Word. Dr. MacDonald writes, "The Christian sees beyond the passing things of the world and sets his hope on the living God." Christians are not ever disappointed in their belief. Dr. MacDonald tells us the reason for our hope is "that He is the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of the those who believe." We comprehend God's grace and mercy. We know Christ reigns now.

These verses should not be construed to mean that "only" those who believe are saved, but "especially" those who believe. We should not exclude a whole class of people, unbelievers. In fact, we should take pains to demonstrate their inclusion. God instructs us to love even those who hate us. That would mean to love even the most heinous unbeliever, would it not? Our Lord commands us to love all. It is counter-intuitive to command us to love when He does not, yet that is the contention of many. These scriptures do not declare God is rejecting anyone. God is the Savior of all people. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: TITUS

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; **looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works.*** Say these things and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise you. (Titus 2:11-15, emphasis added)



Paul is instructing Titus to preach “...what accords with sound doctrine.” Paul goes on to describe behaviors and characteristics of Christian men and Christian women. There are lists of good things to do and things to not do. Simple rules for living a life that bring honor to God. Paul explains from where we draw grace. “The Grace of God has appeared.” God's grace is manifest in Jesus. With His appearance as the “only begotten Son of God” He brought with Him “salvation for all people.” He is training all of us for life that is with Him; all of us. By His abundant grace He brings salvation to all men. The Concordant Literal Version translates this verse to say, “The saving grace of God made its advent to all humanity.” Young’s Literal Translation translates this verse to say “For the saving grace of God was manifested to all men.” Scripture tells us that the “saving grace of God” is made obvious to all men. “The saving grace of God” is Christ Jesus.

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses to be literally true. Other doctrines require a belief that God's grace be only for a few. They preach God's grace is available to all men, but only given to a few. They alter the plain meaning of scripture to make it mean something not intended.

It is God's will that none shall be lost. He is certain to be “all in all.” God's grace is an action and there is indeed a result. It is “The Blessed Hope.” This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: HEBREWS

God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ***has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things***, through whom also he made the worlds. His Son is the radiance of his glory, the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when ***he had by himself purified us of our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high***; having become so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they have. . (Hebrews 1:1-4, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

The power of these verses is overwhelming evidence that Christ died on a cross for the sins of all men and that He is “the heir of all things.” He is King over the most pious and He is King over the worst rebel. He owns us all. To Him God gives all and to the Father does Christ give glory.

The Messiah is spoken of by the prophets of God and “in these last days” God speaks to all humankind through Christ Jesus. His Name is Jesus and He is God's saving grace manifested to all men. Christ Jesus Whose Name is Emmanuel is God with us. It is by no other Authority that our Christ Jesus is “appointed the heir of all things.” He is heir of all the earth; everything on the earth, under the earth, in the sea and throughout the universe. These verses declare with certainty that Christ Jesus is fully credited with the Father for creating the world. It is His creation and we, all of us, are part of that glorious work.

It is Christ Jesus Who purifies all sins. Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as they do not limit the sins purified to those who repent, obey, show faith and persevere. These verses declare with certainty that He by His obedience to His Father's Will make us purified from sins. He is the “heir of all things” and His possession is free of blot. Today He is elevated to the place of Highest Honor at the right hand of the Father where He sits on the King's Throne.

Other doctrines diminish Christ's sacrifice. Those doctrines conclude that Christ's inheritance is not “all things.” They declare the majority of mankind will be sent to eternal conscious torment even though Christ inherits “all things” He creates. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment requires that Christ reigns over eternal torture.

God's Kingdom is Christ Jesus' Kingdom. All things created are created for Christ and all things created will be subject to Him. All things created bring glory to God. Be reminded that Christ Jesus' Name will “cause every knee to bow and every tongue to swear allegiance.”

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

I believe God's Holy Word spoken to us. I am confident most Biblical scholars believe His Word with all their hearts, too. There is a general agreement that there is not any man, no matter how hateful, no matter how bitter he is toward God, who will not see His glory. Further, Scripture teaches every tongue will confess and will swear allegiance to God. Every knee will bow and all will be subject to Him. This is Impartial Grace.

You made him a little lower than the angels. You crowned him with glory and honor. ***You have put all things in subjection under his feet.*** For in that he subjected all things to him, ***he left nothing that is not subject to him.*** But now we don't see all things subjected to him, yet. But we see him who has been made a little lower than the angels, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that ***by the grace of God he should taste of death for everyone.*** (Hebrews 2:7-9, emphasis added)

Christ Jesus is obedient to the Father. He stepped away from the Throne of God for a little while. He took upon Himself the flesh of mankind. We know the history of His birth. He was "...for a little while lower than the angels...." We know the history of His crucifixion. We know the history of His time "preaching to the saints" and His subsequent resurrection. He was for a little while a man. He died our Savior. He resurrected as our King. He reigns sitting at the Father's right hand on the Throne of God. It bears repeating so there will not be any misunderstanding, Jesus was obedient to His Father. He stepped away from His heavenly place and took on human flesh. He became the Savior of all. Jesus was obedient to death. His blood shed and His body broken for the sins of all men.

Jesus is God's grace. "...By the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." God's manifested grace for everyone. He is light in everyone. He died for everyone. God "crowned Jesus with glory and honor." His Father put everything under His Son's Authority. "Everything is in subjection to Him." There is "...nothing outside His control."

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. Other doctrines limit who is included in “everyone.” Those doctrine's dictate that “everyone” consists of those God chose or consists of “everyone” who chooses God. Our Father says, “I will remember their sins no more.” Yet, those doctrines require He remember their sins for eternity. Those doctrines diminish the power of Christ's sacrifice to a few. Universal reconciliation insists His death atones for the sins of everyone. His grace is our reconciliation to Him. This is Impartial Grace.

“For this is the covenant that ***I will make with the house of Israel.*** After those days,” says the Lord; “***I will put my laws into their mind, I will also write them on their heart. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*** They will not teach every man his fellow citizen, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ ***for all will know me, from their least to their greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more.***” In that he says, “A new covenant”, he has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and grows aged is near to vanishing away. (Hebrews 8:10-13emphasis added)

The author of Hebrews explains that Christ Jesus is not another High Priest, but that He is THE High Priest. Our High Priest is seated at the right hand of the Father. Our High Priest is majestic and is the “...grace of God manifested...” for us all. Christ Jesus is not a worldly High Priest. He is the heavenly High Priest. His Ministry is elite and nothing compares to His gift. Others have been appointed priests and prophets to serve for a time. Those men and women served the Lord's purpose to expose the Truth to all. Our High Priest tells us that He did not come to replace the Old Covenant. He came to fulfill it. Christ Jesus says, “I have not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17-18).

Israel was given this first covenant and they were unable or unwilling to accept it. They could not or would not meet the Lord's terms. They were insolent. They were dishonoring. They were human and they failed. The covenant is not faultless. The people are not faultless, for if both were without blame there would not be reason for another covenant. It is incontrovertible.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

“...They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.” Not one person is excluded. All are subject to the statement, “they shall all know me...?” They will know God is merciful and forgives all sins! God does not add any qualifiers. The least to the greatest will know Him. All will know Him. God says He will be merciful toward their sins and that He would remember their sins no more.

These verses are a kind of bedrock for universal reconciliation. Other doctrines require God remember all sins for eternity as He punishes those not chosen by Him or those who had the good fortune of choosing Him. These doctrines contradicts scripture. God's Word means that all sins are forgiven because all men will come to know Him and be reconciled to Him. He says clearly “they shall all know me.” What a blessing it is to know that His mercy will cause Him to “remember their sins no more.” This is Impartial Grace.

or else he must have suffered often since the foundation of the world. ***But now once at the end of the ages, he has been revealed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*** (Hebrews 9:26, emphasis added)

A. E. Knoch dedicated his life to preparing the Concordant Literal Version of God's Holy Word. From the commentary he produced we affirm, “The old covenant...was dedicated with the blood of calves and he goats. The new is inaugurated with the blood of Christ.... No intermediary is involved. The High Priest made Himself the propitiation of our sins without any other human help.” The sins of the world are put away because He sacrificed Himself. Mr. Sprenger says, “Though not yet evident, sin will finally be completely put away, and all creation, which is waiting anxiously for its redemption (Rom8:19), will be set free.”

Christ has yet to be seen at the end of the eons. Sin has not been put away from all people. Sin will eventually “be banished from the universe.” By this we will all know the conclusion of the eons. The ages will be gathered up and an eternal age with Christ will begin. Israel will be restored and the hearts of men will have written on their hearts the words of the Almighty God. Sin will be past and the Father will remember them no more. Praise God we are all Israel. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: 1 PETER

If you call on him as Father, who without respect of persons ***judges according to each man's work***, pass the time of your living as foreigners here in reverent fear: knowing that you were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, ***from the useless way of life handed down from your fathers***, but with precious blood, as of a faultless and pure lamb, the blood of Christ; who was ***foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world***, but was revealed at the end of times for your sake, who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; ***so that your faith and hope might be in God.***

Seeing you have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth through the Spirit in sincere brotherly affection, love one another from the heart fervently: having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and remains forever. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all of man's glory like the flower in the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls; but ***the Lord's word endures forever.***" (1 Peter 1:17-25, emphasis added)

God judges each of us because we are fallen. The Father knew that each of us would be unable to meet His expectation of righteousness or love. It was known to the Father and to the Son that the Son's lifeblood would be the only way to restore His creation to Himself. God knew we would fail Him. He knew Adam and every other man since him would fail Him. Our Father judges without favoritism. He does not see denomination, attendance, culture, status or behavior. He judges our walks on the paths of our lives. He judges our work. He causes us to always walk in reverence to Him. Money and things do not make us successful in our walk. We cannot purchase our way to His glorious presence. Our denominational underpinnings are not the way to the truth. Traditions of men are truly worthless in God's sight. He says the things we learned about righteousness are "handed down by tradition by our fathers." Are the things about a Christ-like life taught by our traditions? What about traditions that are contrary to those of our fathers, but in concert with the fathers of others? Is the Southern Baptist walking a straighter path than the path of the United Methodist? Is the Mormon any more righteous by "the tradition of their fathers" than the Roman Catholic who follow the "traditions of his fathers?"

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

God judges and we are to avoid that. We are saved by the blood of Christ Jesus shed that fateful day at Calvary. Because we have received the gift of faith and that through grace we understand the significance of Christ in our daily walk. We see, feel and express the grace that is in today. Our hope is in Christ and God is reasonable to expect our love to be for Him, in Him, through Him. We are to be His in every moment of every day.

Men build doctrines that include some and exclude most. We build traditions that judge all when we are cautioned not to judge at all.

Sermon Writer is a website that provides resources for Biblical study. They provide this explanation of these verses.<sup>16</sup> We are told “the useless way of life handed down” is Peter’s description of “the traditions and values handed down by their parents – their spiritual inheritance.” Traditions and values form our moral judgments. Beliefs contribute to our understanding of the ways our lives work. The traditions handed down to us from our parents and traditions given to us by way of our Bible teachers are not necessarily good or worthy. We are taught to set all of those aside for the better, purer Way. We are to see and to live and to work our days in “The Blessed Hope.”

...having good behavior among the nations, so in that of which they speak against you as evildoers, they ***may by your good works, which they see, glorify God in the day of visitation.*** (1 Peter 2:12, emphasis added)

Peter admonishes believers to “put away all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all slander.” There is not any room in a believer's heart for anything other than Christ Jesus and the love of God. We are living in the Kingdom of God now. We know, as believers our path to heaven to live a life of eternal peace is assured. He is our Guide and Mentor, we should love as He loves. Reach out to Him for understanding of all situations you face. Seek Him and His direction. Take it in small doses and grow into Him. Better still, let Him grow within you. Being forgiven requires we be forgiving and “...grow up into salvation.”

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

The Lord our God is good. His Son is good. His Spirit is good. All things come together for the purpose of good especially for those of us who believe. Our Christ is our Bridegroom and we are His. He is building a foundation that cannot be shaken. We are as Peter calls us “a holy priesthood.” We “offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ Jesus.” There is nothing evil in His Bride or in the Temple He builds. He, Christ Jesus, the Cornerstone starting the foundation and becomes the Capstone completing the work He starts in us. We cannot be shamed and He cannot be ashamed of us. It is an “honor for you who believe....” Those who do not or simply will not believe will stumble through their lives. Christ will be a stumbling stone to them.

Those people rejecting Him are known to Christ. He created them after all. He knows those who will love Him and live for Him through Him. He knows those, too, who will not love Him. For us, however, we are chosen to be “a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession....” We should never understand this honor to make us greater than those who are not. We “...now are God's people.” Our lives, our souls, our spirits have been united with Him by the faith that He gives. We “...have received mercy.”

Peter admonishes us “...to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against our souls.” Judging others does not rest in our authority, but in Christ Jesus through the Father. We do not have any right to lay punishment on any other person. Judgment and punishment are His authority. “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable....” Let the light of Christ be in all we do. Let Christ's Truth be our truth. When we are the victim of another person's sin, let us forgive and not judge that person. When they speak against us, our conduct will be our testimony and our witness. By our “good deeds” God is glorified.

The doctrine of universal reconciliation teaches that as children of God we should have a lifestyle that brings glory to God. We are to preach to others with words and deeds. We are to bring the Light into dark places. Christ's Words and His sacrifice save us. His life is Light. He died as atonement for the sins of the world, that is to say, the sins of the whole world.



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literal truth. We have no reason to conclude from these verses that unbelievers will suffer eternal conscious torment for having not been chosen by God or for not choosing God. Universal reconciliation teaches that believers have a new life now and should live accordingly. “For this is the will of God, that by well-doing you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your freedom for a cloak of wickedness, but as bondservants of God (1 Peter 2:15-16).” This is Impartial Grace.

But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. “Don't fear what they fear, neither be troubled.” ***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts***, and always be ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, with humility and fear: having a good conscience; that, while you are spoken against as evildoers, they may be disappointed who curse your good way of life in Christ. For it is better, if it is God's will, that you suffer for doing well than for doing evil. ***Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God***, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which ***he also went and preached to the spirits in prison***, who before were disobedient, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, while the ship was being built. In it, few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. This is a symbol of baptism, which now saves you—not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, ***through the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him.*** (1 Peter 3:14-21, emphasis added)

“...Jesus Christ, Who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to Him.” Christ Jesus sits in Authority now. We are living in the Kingdom of God, now! All angels, all authorities, and all powers are subjected to Him. He reigns, now! Christ reigns and all is subjected to Him.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Peter first encourages wives to be respectful of their husbands and husbands to honor their wives. Peter is encouraging love in the home, in the family, in the church. If any of us should suffer for doing the righteous thing; if punishment comes upon us for being truthful and honorable to Him, then we should bear the pain of suffering. We should always keep in our minds, bodies and souls the Truth that is Christ Jesus. We are encouraged to "...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you...." Defending the hope that is in you is Christ Jesus. The hope is that Christ Jesus will eventually set all things right. Tears and sorrows will be wiped away. Death will be abolished. All will be in His presence. The hope that is in us is Christ Jesus and that is our defense.

These verses are often taken out of context by the advocates of the doctrines opposed to universal reconciliation. Eternal conscious torment rationalizes a judgment of others who do not believe the same things in the same ways. These verses are used to "defend" our denominational precepts; the "traditions of men" become idols replacing "...the Hope that is in us." Many Traditionalist authorities condemn men, women and children to eternal conscious torment and they defend their condemnation using these verses as a catalyst. "Being prepared to give a defense of the hope that is in you" is not the same as giving a defense of eternal conscious torment or other traditions of men.

Christ Jesus is the only Righteous One. He is One suffering torment on a cross for our salvation. He suffered "once for sins." He suffered once to pay the ransom for the sin of the world, even the sins of the unrepentant rebel. He suffered once to pay the ransom for believers and for unbelievers. And, for those who never heard His Gospel.

Christ Jesus "was made alive in the Spirit and in which He proclaimed to the spirits in prison...." What did He proclaim? "He suffered once for sins." Who are the spirits in prison? He preached to the whole of the world who did not obey God's command to repent during the time of Noah. He preached salvation to those who rejected Him and who died in their sins. He preached He is their blessed hope. This is Impartial Grace.

For to this end ***the Good News was preached even to the dead***, that they might be judged indeed as men in the flesh, ***but live as to God in the spirit***. But the end of all things is near. Therefore be of sound mind, self-controlled, and sober in prayer. ***And above all things be earnest in your love among yourselves, for love covers a multitude of sins.***(1 Peter 4:6-8, emphasis added)

Mr. Sprenger points out the “dead” cited in these verses are the same “saints in prison” written about earlier. He writes, “Peter is still referring to the souls in prison from the days of Noah, whom Christ preached to, presumably following His crucifixion and descension into the 'lower parts of the earth', in which He 'lead captive a host of captives...' (Ephesians 4:8,9)” Consider what this means. It reveals the truth “concerning the purpose of God's judgments on mankind in order to bring about his future plans for them to live in the Spirit!”

The doctrine of universal reconciliation preaches that Christ Jesus is the hope for believers and the hope for unbelievers. Christ Jesus preached to the dead who never heard His Gospel. He saved those who had no inclination to believe He was their Messiah. Consequently, all will be reconciled to Him, to the Father and God will be “all in all.” This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: 2 PETER

But don't forget this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ***The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*** (2 Peter 3:8-9, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

This is the second letter Peter writes to these good folks. He is reminding them of their position in Christ Jesus and the status they hold in the Kingdom of God. These good people have heard the prophets and listened to apostolic teaching. Peter cautions them about the unbelieving world that will mock them and try their patience. The mockery will be rampant and the evidence of sin will be overwhelming. Men will preach with scoffing tones that the promise of Christ's coming is false and wishful thinking. They will preach that nothing has changed since the beginning of time. But, Peter points out the scoffers and mockers ignore the fact that it is God Who created all the earth, everything on the earth, the seas, the skies and everything living in them. God created mankind, even the scoffers. God knows their mockery, too. He is not blind to them.

The Father and the Son created all there is in the world. It is the same power. Peter says that "...heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly." The promise is that God does not want any of His creation to perish. It is His wish that "...all should reach repentance." Will God not keep His promise? Will His wish not be? Will His will be thwarted by a man's choice? God is an all-consuming fire. He is a righteous fire. Every person will be tried by His Holy fire. The dross will be burned away to ash and the purity of God's creation will remain. Peter tells us what will be burned away. The fire will come quickly and without warning in the same way a thief comes in the night. The universe will be consumed by fire and dissolved. The works, good and bad, will be exposed by the burning of God's Holy fire. Peter is confident these things will come to pass and he asks, "...What sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness....?"

Peter tells us we wait patiently for this time to come. God is not slow to keep His promise. We expect the heavens and the earth to be made new. Only righteousness will dwell there. Until then Peter exhorts us to "...be diligent to be found by Him without spot or blemish, and at peace." Mr. Sprenger contends God is "literally not purposing...that any should perish, but for all to come to repentance." The promise originally given to Abraham is still in effect.

This is His promise: None will perish and all will repent. That's as plain as can be spoken. God wishes that none will perish and that all will reach repentance. Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. Other doctrines do not allow for a Sovereign God. Those doctrines state God is Sovereign, but the doctrines limit God's power to save all men. Those doctrines believe God does not choose to save all men. Those doctrines contradict the plain meaning of scripture.

Universal reconciliation is a doctrine teaching no souls will perish and all will repent. All will be reconciled to God. His love is that great, even greater still. This is Impartial Grace.

### IMPARTIAL GRACE: 1 JOHN

And *he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.* (1 John 2:2, emphasis added)

Christ Jesus was obedient to His Father to the point of dying on a cross. Christ Jesus died on that cross for the clearing of my account. My sins are no longer recorded. Christ Jesus paid my account in full. Not only has he cleared my account He has cleared the accounts "for the sins of the whole world." His death was not in vain. His death was for the sin of all. He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. To say otherwise as Mr. Salisbury suggests is to conclude the doctrines of eternal conscious torment and others like it "makes hell an eternal monument to the devil's works of sin and death."

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. This is Impartial Grace.

Everyone who sins also commits lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whoever remains in him doesn't sin. Whoever sins hasn't seen him, neither knows him. Little children, let no one lead you astray. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. *To this end the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* (1 John 3:4-8, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Christ Jesus came from His place in heaven. He came in the likeness of His Father and in the likeness of mankind. He is the atoning sacrifice for sins of the world. Every evil thing Satan causes Jesus Christ makes void.

I paraphrase A.E. Knoch's commentary on these verses from the Concordant Literal Version (CLV). Satan is the Christ's Adversary. That title is appropriate considering Satan's goal to disrupt God's creation even to destroy it. It was in Eden that Satan constructed the lie that led to Eve's disobedience and subsequently to Adam's Fall. Peter warns in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober! Watch! For your plaintiff, the Adversary, is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking someone to swallow up; ...." It is Satan who inflicts Job with painful boils when Satan challenges God to remove His protection from Job. Satan introduced sin. False doctrines and slanderous thoughts are caused by Satan's deceptions. He is the root of lawlessness. He stands at the door and beckons men to idolize any and everything that is not of the Father.

Jesus came. He lived, preached, was persecuted, punished and hung on a criminal's cross. He was mercilessly impugned by those He came to save. He died and was placed into the grave. From that grave He was resurrected. In all of this He and He alone annulled all that Satan has done or causes to be done. All sin has been made void. Jesus came and Jesus lives. He has undone what Satan, the Adversary, has done. Eventually the Adversary will be bound and his influence on God's creation will no longer be. Christ Jesus did not die for the sins of those only who believe Him. He died for the sins of the world.

Satan is the force behind many delusions. Ask yourself if it is even possible, remotely possible, that Satan has been successful in causing yet another delusion? Consider Christian celebrations such as Christmas and Easter which are heavily influenced by pagan festivals. Would Satan, if he could, cause some men to declare other men will burn in hell fire for eternity? Would he give those same men credence in the world to the degree their false proclamation would surpass the love of God?

I believe God's nature is first and foremost love. Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. All that evil corrupts, Christ restores. This is Impartial Grace.

Beloved, let us love one another, ***for love is of God; and everyone who loves has been born of God, and knows God. He who doesn't love doesn't know God, for God is love.*** By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that ***he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.*** Beloved, ***if God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another.*** No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love has been perfected in us.

By this we know that we remain in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him, and he in God. We know and have believed the love which God has for us. ***God is love, and he who remains in love remains in God, and God remains in him. In this love has been made perfect among us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, even so are we in this world.*** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has punishment. He who fears is not made perfect in love. ***We love him, because he first loved us.*** If a man says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who doesn't love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? This commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should also love his brother. (1 John 4:7-21, emphasis added)

There is much to be gleaned from this chapter from God's Holy Word. Foremost and doubtless is the precept that God is love. We, as believers, should, at least, love all other believers with the kind of love that the Father has for us. His love is an agape love. We should always pray for others, even those who may not know Him. We should always have their interests above our own. After all the Father set aside His best interest when He created each of us and then He gave the life of His Son, Christ Jesus, for the atonement for our sin.

Scholars often conclude from verses of this chapter that God only loves those who believe in Christ Jesus. But is that the truth? God's love is pure. His love is not tainted with fleshly concerns.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

He who doesn't love doesn't know God, for ***God is love.*** (1 John 4:8, emphasis added)

It takes an honest personal assessment of ourselves to confirm that we know God in the same way He loves His creation. Without love we cannot know God, "...God is love." Something less than love cannot know God. I have been honest with myself and my assessment of myself with regard to love is bleak. I miss the target badly. Without the corrective force of God's love I could never know Him. Without the corrective force of God's love Paul would have carried out terror on "The Way." God's love is manifested in Christ Jesus. He is the corrective force applied to His creation. "...Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father." The corrective force of Christ's presence will bring about repentance even repentance by wretched men like Paul, like me. We live with Christ in us. We live with the love of God in us! Why?

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that ***he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins.*** (1 John 4:10, emphasis added)

Christ Jesus is God's love. Christ Jesus is God's Judgment! Christ Jesus loved us before we ever knew Him. He created us from before the foundation of the world. He loves us the moment He creates us. He loves us through all that is good and through all that is not. He loves us through trials. He tests us to fortify His love in us. Christ Jesus so loved the world that He gave His life as the Holy and Final atonement for the sin of the whole world. Who in His creation can be excluded from His love? The doctrine of universal reconciliation preaches no person can forever reject Christ. Christ's love overcomes the world. His power is not of this world. The corrective force of His love changes the hearts of all men.



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Because God's love is within us we should love one another. We should love even our enemies. We should give them food to eat and living water to drink. We should consider our enemy our brother. "There is no love greater than the love of a brother who gives his life for another." When we love one another the power of God lives in us and His power sustains us. There is nothing to fear in love. He lives in us and we need not fear in His love. The world cannot overcome us. Jesus is the Son of God. One day every person will be judged. Until that day we live in this world, but we should not fear our life in it.

We have seen and testify that ***the Father has sent the Son as the Savior of the world.*** (1 John 4:14, emphasis added)

We are admonished in this letter written by John to seek the Holy Spirit and test everything being learned to confirm "they are from God...." There are people in every corner of the world making claims to have supernatural power and authority. There are men and women bearing theological doctorates and professional standing espousing doctrines that are questionable, at least, false doctrine, at worst. They teach us spiritual things and we accept what they teach without questioning them or even questioning their motives.

We are warned that false prophets are in the world. They are many. Their intent is not Truth, but something far less than that. John describes how we can discern the true from the false. He tells us to test them, challenge them to prove they are from God. John encourages us to be confident in our position in Christ Jesus. The Light of Christ within us overcomes the darkness of the world. His Power in us is living and courageous. It is greater Power than any other in the world.

Our hearts are not in this world even though we live in it for a short time. John understands not everyone is going to listen to what he and the others are preaching. Those who listen have the Spirit of God within them. Those who do not listen have fear and terror in its place.

We love him, ***because he first loved us.*** (1 John 4:19, emphasis added)

God loves all. John writes that we lie when we say “I love God,” but hate our brother. It is not congruent. God is love and in us. God in us does not hate. God from His Throne does not hate. Any man saying he loves God must also love his brother.

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses to be literally true. Other doctrines, particularly the doctrine of eternal conscious torment, require God's love be only partial. Those doctrines declare God must possess a vengeful wrath that hates His children. They claim God must maintain tormenting fires that punish the rebellious creation for eternity.

Universal reconciliation teaches God is love and He will be “all in all.” Christ Jesus lovingly obeyed His Father. To His glory the whole of creation is subjected to Him. He in turn subjects all to the Father. God is all in all. This is Impartial Grace.

## IMPARTIAL GRACE: REVELATION

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, the Holy One, to receive the glory, the honor, and the power, for ***you created all things, and because of your desire they existed, and were created!***” (Revelation 4:11, emphasis added)

The angels sing and the Twenty-four Elders cast their crowns. They glorify God with these words. . “All things” are created by His will. It is His will that all be saved.

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses to be literally true. Other doctrines insist that is not the case.. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment, as an example, interprets “all things” are created by His will, but not “all things” will be reconciled to Him by His will. Those doctrines teach His will is that only some will be reconciled. The majority of mankind, according to those doctrines, must be eternally, consciously tormented. They conclude that God the Father and God the Son purposely created some that are not redeemable.

God puts His Spirit into the lives of every person He creates. The Spirit of God cannot be overwhelmed by the will of those He creates. His Spirit, His will in us all. This is Impartial Grace.

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

I saw, and I heard something like a voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousands of ten thousands, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who has been killed to receive the power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing!"

I heard ***every created thing which is in heaven, on the earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them***, saying, "To him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion, forever and ever! Amen!"

The four living creatures said, "Amen!" The elders fell down and worshiped. (Revelation 5:11-14, emphasis added)

What a scene! Every angel in heaven singing. There were more angels than a person could count. The number of angels singing is indescribably large. Angels at the Throne of God singing. Elders singing praises to the Son of God. There should be no doubt that "...every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them..." means every creature. There is not an excluded creature. "Every creature..." praises the Father and the Son.

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. Other doctrines, such as the doctrine of eternal conscious torment, exclude the majority of mankind. Those doctrines deny "every creature" means "every creature." "Every creature" will know the Lord because the Lord wills it to be so. This is Impartial Grace.

They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God, the Almighty! ***Righteous and true are your ways, you King of the nations***. Who wouldn't fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you only are holy. For ***all the nations will come and worship before you***. For your righteous acts have been revealed." (Revelation 15:3-4, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Mr. Sprenger rightly tells us, "This is the 'great mystery' spoken of by Paul concerning God's eternal, redemptive purpose to reconcile all creation back to Himself." We should conclude that God will be "all in all." These verses from The Revelation of Jesus Christ describe the world after the judgments have been laid upon the earth. Bowls and trumpets of judgment have been poured out. Even so we are told, "All the nations will come and worship before you."

He is righteous. He is Truth. He is the "King of the nations" now! Universal reconciliation concludes "all the nations" are all nations. There may only a few remaining nations after the judgment of tribulation, even so, "all the nations will come and worship before..." Him. These verses are a reiteration of the promise given to Abraham in Genesis as Mr. Sprenger points out. There is no authority to rule out any other person or any other nation.

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses to be literally true. His Word is Impartial Grace.

He will wipe away from them every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. The first things have passed away."

He who sits on the throne said, "***Behold, I am making all things new.***" ***He said, "Write, for these words of God are faithful and true."*** (Revelation 21:4-5, emphasis added)

It does not matter if your theology is historical or futurist. It does not matter if you believe Jesus has already come or if He is coming again. No matter your eschatological theology He is "...making all things new." What things? All things!

Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. Other doctrines want us to believe these verses do not apply to all people, but only to people who agree with those doctrines. Universal reconciliation teaches the believer and the rebel will be reconciled to Him. “All things will be made new.” The doctrine of eternal conscious torment, in particular, does not want us to believe “these words are trustworthy and true” on their face. The doctrine adds that every person during these “end days” will have already been chosen or has already chosen. All others are not among “all things made new.” All others are condemned by God, Who is love, to an eternal conscious torment.

Universal reconciliation is Impartial Grace.

## DEEPER DISCUSSION

### 1 Corinthians 15: “All in all”

Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable. But now Christ has been raised from the dead. He became the first fruits of those who are asleep. ***For since death came by man, the resurrection of the dead also came by man. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.*** But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then those who are Christ's, at his coming. Then the end comes, when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power. ***For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*** The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For, “He put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when he says, “All things are put in subjection”, it is evident that he is excepted who subjected all things to him. When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all things to him, ***that God may be all in all.*** (1 Corinthians 15:18 – 28, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

Lee Salisbury asks, "Is the last enemy, death, not destroyed? Are those to whom God becomes 'All in all' (1Cor.15:28) only those who managed to escape the devil's clutches?" Doctrines opposed to universal reconciliation teach that men who fail to believe in Christ Jesus are condemned to eternal punishment. Read and read again the verses above. Eternal punishment is firmly and concretely disproved.

Christ Jesus is the first fruits. His resurrection from the dead is proof that all will be resurrected. Adam's sin caused a universal physical death. Christ's resurrection universally restores life. Jesus is the only Man ever resurrected from the grave and remains alive. He is seated at the right hand of the Father at this moment. Those of us in Christ at the time of our respective deaths will be raised to join Him when the trumpet sounds His return. Those who fail to believe will be raised in life before the judgment seat. During this judgment "every knee will bow" and proclaim Jesus as their Lord. Jesus will give over His Kingdom to His Father. Each, meaning "all," of His enemies will be defeated. The last enemy being death itself. Death is defeated, therefore life reigns. It must be so. Everything is subjected to Him; EVERYTHING. Christ then surrenders His position to the Father. Christ, however, is not subjected to the Father as He, too, is God.

Why? The answer is in plain view. A most merciful all-loving Father wills it. The most merciful all-loving Father will reconcile His creation to Himself.

John Wesley wrote a commentary regarding this phrase, "all in all," from 1 Corinthians 15:28. <sup>17</sup> : He says, the Son "Shall deliver up the mediatorial kingdom." God, now unified as One, "may be all in all." Dr. Wesley writes, "All things, (consequently all persons) without any interruption, without the intervention of any creature, without the opposition of any enemy, shall be subordinate to God. All shall say, 'My God, and my all.' This is the end. Even an inspired apostle can see nothing beyond this." Dr. Wesley believes all men from the start of time will eventually say, "My God, and my all." He does not leave aside unbelievers from this sentiment. He reports the Triune God will be "all in all." No person created will be excluded. No entity can intervene or prevent any creature from the blessing that God is "all in all."

Dr. Wesley is conflicted in this assessment, however. A sermon he preached is transcribed for our benefit and is available online. Dr. Wesley had this to say about hell and those consigned to that eternal fate.<sup>18</sup> “First,” he writes, “the inhabitants of hell are perfectly wicked, having no spark of goodness remaining.” These evil men are not restrained in hell by other wicked men “and not by God, for He has forgotten them.” Dr. Wesley teaches wicked men are cast into eternal conscious torment by God and He “delivered them over to the tormentors.” The pains put upon the wicked men condemned to Hell by God will suffer “torments of body and souls...without intermission.” He preaches the punishments for the rebellion of wicked men will be executed forever more. The “Judge of all gives of the punishment which He has ordained for impenitent sinners.”

John Wesley's view on unrepentant sinners and their place in eternity is the doctrine of eternal conscious torment. Dr. Wesley proclaims that the believer's eternal fate in hell is stayed by a merciful God. But, for the unbeliever God's mercy is not felt.

Chuck Smith recently left this temporal world for a place established for him in heaven. He was the founder of Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California in the middle 1970's. Calvary Chapel has grown into a kind of denomination and Dr. Smith was essentially that denomination's head. Dr. Smith teaches doctrine that hell is the place of the damned. His view, though, is that the unbeliever chooses to be in that state of eternal conscious torment. Dr. Smith preached much with regard our eternal end. He prepared a message in which he preaches Jesus warns men about eternal conscious torment. Dr. Smith writes, “Jesus said ‘Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these, you did it to me.’ And those who we are ignoring the needs of those around them, the goats, ‘inasmuch as you didn't do it unto them, you didn't do it to me.’”<sup>19</sup> Because we know Christ, but fail to tell others the Good News of Christ, we have not honored or loved them. Dr. Smith says that Jesus then commands those who are not saved to “depart from me...ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” But, Dr. Smith wants us to know that “God did not prepare Gehenna for men; it was prepared by God for Satan. Therefore God does not cast men into hell. He didn't prepare it for men; He prepared it for Satan. However, if a person wants to align himself with Satan and go there, God will do His best to stop him. God has done his best to stop him.”

Dr. Smith's message preaches God lacks the ability, strength or desire to save a man. Dr. Smith says, "... a man can by his own volition and his own choices spend eternity apart from God." Dr. Smith preaches that the will of the unrepentant sinner is stronger than God's will. He preaches that the unrepentant rebel chooses his eternal fate. Hell to Dr. Smith is to "...spend eternity apart from God." Dr. Smith also says that because the audience he is addressing is an audience saved by grace then they have nothing to fear and should not worry about their respective fate. Eternal conscious torment is not their fate and is not to be feared.

John Calvin wrote about the precept "...that God may be all in all." <sup>20</sup> He asks, "Will it be so in the Devil and wicked men also? By no means...." Dr. Calvin suggests "It does not distinctly appear that God is all in all." He tells his audience, "When Christ will have executed the judgment which has been committed to him by the Father, and will have cast down Satan and all the wicked, the glory of God will be conspicuous in their destruction." We have heard this refrain before. God is glorified in the eternal conscious torments of others. It is an abhorrent thought. It is an abhorrent doctrine.

Dr. Calvin teaches only believers experience God's being in them. This is not an extraordinary teaching as it is now commonplace, orthodox. He says, "There would, however, be nothing out of place in understanding it as referring exclusively to believers, in whom God has now begun his kingdom, and will then perfect it, and in such a way that they shall cleave to him wholly."

Dr. Calvin's authority as a Bible Scholar is well known. A branch of theology has taken his name, that being Calvinism. Calvinism is considered to be orthodox even though Calvinism is at odds with other theologies such as Arminianism. Dr. Calvin has added his prejudice to his interpretation that "All" does not mean "all." Dr. Calvin, and Calvinism, believe "all" means only those who believe. To Dr. Calvin and to those who follow his line of thinking God is not loving to all, but certainly to them. Think about what it means if God is not "all in all."



## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

A. E. Knoch was a Bible scholar who dedicated much of his life preparing the Concordant Literal Version of the Holy Scriptures. He prepared a Commentary on the New Testament which is cited earlier. From the Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 he writes, "The reign of Christ is so beneficent, it brings mankind to such a state of perfection, that all further need of the restraints of government vanishes."

God has imputed the sin of the world on Christ Jesus. We are no longer subject to the rule of the evil one. Dr. Knoch writes, "Rule implies insubordination, and is unnecessary where there is perfect subjection. Rule is a temporary expedient to cope with evil. When evil is banished rule also retires. The effects of evil for mankind are concentrated in death. When the universe has been purged of all other evil, then death itself becomes inoperative and yields up its victims. Not till then is it true that all are made alive in Christ."

Dr. Knoch's belief would likely be considered heresy. He is truly preaching "God is love." "The universality of Christ's subject of all under His feet is evident from the one exception – God Himself." Only God could give His Son to be the perfect atonement for the sin of the world. The Son's obedience to death on the Cross is "for the sin of the world." Dr. Knoch goes on to declare "God is All in Christ now." God will "be All in His saints when we are made alive. He will be All in all when death is abolished." Think this through. Do not be quick to judge Dr. Knoch's interpretation as heresy. He writes, "What a marvelous outcome of God's purpose! What a Christ we have, Who can accomplish such a complete reconciliation!"

Dr. Knoch writes, "Christ came to 'destroy the works of the devil' (1 John 3:8, A.V.) But, if orthodoxy is true, then Satan has not only the vast majority on his side, but his work is not destroyed at all. Its results would never cease to mar the universe." ("All In All", pg 152).<sup>21</sup>

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

These verses are profound and define the doctrine of universal reconciliation. They are worthy of reiterated points and more discussion. His love is over all He has created. I believe He will be “all in all.” Adam sinned and there was The Fall. We all know of the story of Adam's poor and even deadly choice when he took the fruit from Eve and ate it. Because of that single event now all men are created by God, but subject to sin within. Adam caused physical death in all men.

We all know the testimony of Christ Jesus and His Holy Word. Christ was buried in a grave. After three days He was resurrected. Because of this divine act resurrection is now the condition of all created men. “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” There is not an argument to be made here that only those chosen by God or only those who have chosen God are saved. “...In Christ shall all be made alive.”

The Believer's Bible Commentary is authored by William MacDonald. Dr. MacDonald wrote many books and he took no remuneration for them. He writes that these verses reveal “the final banishment of death itself.”<sup>22</sup> Our Savior is victorious over death and sin. He “will see the victory He won at the cross effectual to the last outpost of rebellion.” There is not another party, not Satan, his puppets or fallen angels remaining on earth. Christ has authority over all things and all persons are made alive. “...To the last outpost of rebellion...” Christ's obedience and His Father's mercy extends. There will not be a person who will not be impacted by His obedience to His Father. He is given authority over all men and He gives authority to the Father. “Everything will be subject to Him Who is Lord of all.”

Bob Utley is a learned man. He has written a commentary on the New Testament entitled “You Can Understand the Bible: Study Guide Commentary Series.”<sup>23</sup> Mr. Utley writes “Believers share the reality of His resurrection and by faith, the assurance of theirs.” All will be raised, but believers are assured they will.” Unbelievers not so much. He says “Jesus is the first to be resurrected (cf. Col. 1:18), but in due time all of His followers will experience the same. In a spiritual sense we already have resurrection life (cf. Eph. 2:5-6).” Dr. Utley determines that “all will be made alive” only applies to those who know Christ. In Dr. Utley's understanding, as in Dr. Calvin's, “all” does not mean “all.”

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

The verse, 1 Corinthians 15:28, is clear language. "All things are subjected to Him." Christ then puts "all things in subjection under Him." Doing so makes God "all in all." Mr. Sprenger tells us, "This phrase is the real key to understanding God's purposes in relation to His time schedule. 'And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all.' Paul sees clearly to the end, and makes this ultimate and most concise declaration of the eternal purposes of God!"

God will be "all in all." It's not hard to see that "all things" will be given to Christ Jesus. He will give "all things" to His Father Who, through Jesus, created "all things." All things are in Christ. All things are in the Father. He is "all in all." These verses support themselves. The Gospel is in these verses. Adam's sin causes all to die. Christ Jesus is the cause of all life and all will be made alive! All die because of Adam. All live because of Christ.

There is not a person created who is not subjected to Christ and consequently subjected to the Father. His Sovereignty over all things has never ceased. His love conquers all. The clear meaning of scripture is this; the consequence of Adam's sin is physical death. Christ's death ends the curse of physical death. Under Christ Jesus all of those who are deceased will be raised to life. There is an order in the resurrection of the dead. First, Himself, then those who He owns, then at the end all are resurrected and given to God the Father. Jesus Christ defeated every known rule, tradition, law, and authority. He is King. There is nothing to hinder our love for Him. "Every knee will bow" and "every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord."

Doctrines opposed to universal reconciliation do not accept the plain meaning of scripture. They agree that "all" have sinned because of Adam, but refute the context of "all shall be made alive." Those advocating other doctrines preach a need to believe the first use of "all" is all, but the second use of "all" is less than its first use. It's not really all at all.

God has placed everything...all things...under the authority of Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus declared Himself that He does nothing that is not the will of the Father. Christ's authority is under the Father's authority. The purpose is so that "God may be all in all." Jesus died for the sin of the world and scripture teaches He will make all things new.

Dr. Calvin disagrees. Christian Classics Ethereal Library is a wonderful repository of Bible information and scholarly studies. They post Dr. Calvin's Commentary on these verses.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Calvin tells us, "There would, however, be nothing out of place in understanding it as referring exclusively to believers." Dr. Calvin believes that "all in all" is reserved only for believers. Unbelievers are bound to eternal conscious torment. Unbelievers will never experience the mercy of God. They won't feel the pressure of His love. They will die unrepentant and reap the sorrow they deserve. Dr. Calvin goes so far as to equate the thought that "all in all" includes a unity with Satan. Scripture declares that angels will be cast into the "lake of fire," too. Those who disagree are "impudent madmen." Dr. Calvin's thinking declares God's power is weak. The sacrifice of Christ was insufficient to save the world. Christ did not really die for the sins of the whole world, but only for souls enlightened as Dr. Calvin is enlightened.

### 1 Timothy 4: "God Is the Savior of All Men."

If you instruct the brothers of these things, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of the faith, and of the good doctrine which you have followed. ***But refuse profane and old wives' fables.*** Exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise has some value, but godliness has value in all things, having the promise of the life which is now, and of that which is to come. ***This saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance.*** For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we have set our trust in ***the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.*** Command and teach these things.

Let no man despise your youth; but be an example to those who believe, in word, in your way of life, in love, in spirit, in faith, and in purity. Until I come, pay attention to reading, to exhortation, and to teaching. Don't neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the elders. Be diligent in these things. Give yourself wholly to them, that your progress may be revealed to all. ***Pay attention to yourself, and to your teaching. Continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*** (1 Timothy 4:6-16, emphasis added)

## Impartial Grace: New Testament Scripture

It is ironic that these verses open with “Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths.” Paul continues to teach and to encourage Timothy. He's a young man leading a congregation and evangelizing his community. His heart is in the right place. Paul admonishes him to hold fast to the message he is giving. There are others, older men, potentially influencing Timothy perhaps causing him confusion. Paul tells him to maintain his bodily exercise for it is good, but being Godly is profoundly superior. Paul exhorts Timothy to accept as truth, “...the living God, Who is the Savior of al men....”

William MacDonald writes in the Believers Bible Commentary regarding these verses, in particular verse 10.<sup>25</sup> Christians have an outlook on life different than those who do not believe in Christ. It is our passion to reach out to unbelievers and tell them the Truth of God's Holy Word. Dr. MacDonald writes, “The Christian sees beyond the passing things of the world and sets his hope on the living God.” Christians are not ever disappointed in their belief. Dr. MacDonald tells us the reason for our hope is “that He is the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of the those who believe.” We comprehend God's grace and mercy. We know Christ reigns now.

These verses should not be construed to mean that “only” those who believe are saved, but “especially” those who believe. We should not exclude a whole class of people, unbelievers. In fact, we should take pains to demonstrate their inclusion. God instructs us to love even those who hate us. That would mean to love even the most heinous unbeliever, would it not? Our Lord commands us to love all. It is counter-intuitive to command us to love when He does not, yet that is the contention of many. These scriptures do not declare God is rejecting anyone. God is the Savior of all people. This is Impartial Grace.

Dr. MacDonald died in 2007. He was a prolific Christian writer and honored God by not accepting remuneration for the written works he produced. He was President of Emmaus College which is affiliated with The Plymouth Brethren Church. I am confident Dr. MacDonald's heart is owned by God. Dr. MacDonald is also an advocate of the doctrine of eternal conscious torment. He applies his predisposition favoring the doctrine to this writing. According to Dr. MacDonald God has made Himself known to the people of the world from the beginning of time and God provides for all. God by His grace made provision for mankind, all mankind, to believe and to be saved. But, only a few take advantage of God's grace. Dr. MacDonald concludes Jesus "...who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe..." is only inclusive of those who believe. Some, perhaps most, are excluded from His mercy and saving grace. Dr. MacDonald diminishes Christ's death in this commentary. He writes, "We might say that He is the potential Savior of all men and the actual Savior of those who believe." According to this explanation Christ's death is "potential" salvation, but still sufficient only for "...those who believe."

Dr. MacDonald was surely a loving, kind and generous man while living. He is described as a man truly loving God. He asks, "What does the Bible say about our destiny?" Scripture teaches, "It is appointed to men to die once and after this judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). No man will be able to cheat death. Dr. MacDonald says, "Death is not the end. There is a hereafter." That hereafter for believers is heaven. "After death there is judgment and an eternity of endless suffering for those who are not ready to meet God. The Bible says and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Dr. MacDonald teaches this condition is a fact that cannot be denied or altered.

Kevin Engle is a kind of archivist for The Plymouth Brethren of which Dr. MacDonald is associated. I am not certain Mr. Engle speaks for that denomination. His father, Kenneth, and Dr. MacDonald were contemporaries and close friends. Mr. Engle posts a sermon message by D. L. Moody entitled “Hell.”<sup>26</sup> Dr. MacDonald’s theology is in line with Dr. Moody’s. Dr. Moody writes about eternal conscious torment. He believes “the worm that dieth not is our memory.” In this life we are forgetful and perhaps we have an ability to bury painful memories. Dr. Moody says, “The time is coming when we shall remember and cannot forget.” He teaches, “God makes us keep our own record.” God causes us to review our record. Dr. Moody suggests Cain remembers his sin against Abel, that Judas will eternally remember kissing Christ Jesus, that the sinners before the flood will remember rejecting salvation in the Ark.

Dr. Moody writes, “There are many men and women now who think that all souls will at last be saved in spite of all their sins.” This is the common understanding of the advocates of universal reconciliation. Dr. Moody believes these advocates are good people in “error.” Dr. Moody does not believe God would sweep any unsaved man into heaven. Noah had to work for his salvation, but the sinners who drowned did not. Does that seem fair? Is it conceivable that God crushed evil men in Sodom leaving behind a few to despair? Dr. Moody’s doctrine concludes so. Dr. Moody’s theology is eternal conscious torment like Dr. MacDonald’s. The unrepentant will be cast into another place. “There will be no tender, loving Jesus coming and offering you salvation there – no loving wife or mother to pray for you there.” There is no hope in that place. There is only eternal conscious torment. Dr. Moody writes that God will say, “Cut them down; the day of mercy is ended.... There will be no preaching of the Gospel there.... There will be no revivals in hell.”

Is Calvinism a set of doctrines loaded with silly myths? Arminianism? Is eternal punishment a silly myth? Is universal reconciliation a silly myth? With which should we have nothing to do? The scripture states “...our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of *all people*, especially of those who believe.”

### Titus 2: “Bringing Salvation to All Men”

***For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works.*** Say these things and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no man despise you. (Titus 2:11-15, emphasis added)

Paul is instructing Titus to preach “...what accords with sound doctrine.” Paul goes on to describe behaviors and characteristics of Christian men and Christian women. There are lists of good things to do and things to not do. Simple rules for living a life that bring honor to God. Paul explains from where we draw grace. “The Grace of God has appeared.” God's grace is manifest in Jesus. With His appearance as the “only begotten Son of God” He brought with Him “salvation for all people.” He is training all of us for life that is with Him; all of us. By His abundant grace He brings salvation to all men. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment contradicts the simple reading of scripture.

Steven J. Cole is a contributor to the website Bible.org. Mr. Cole is identified as a Pastor of a church in Flagstaff, AZ. He writes about “the grace of God and how it works in our lives.”<sup>27</sup> Mr. Cole believes God's grace “is arguably the most important concept” for Christians to comprehend. He teaches that living in God's grace is to be equipped for “the battle to be godly.” It is Mr. Cole's opinion it is necessary to understand God's grace in order to “experience a close relationship with God and consistent victory over sin (Rom. 6:14).”

“The grace of God” that appears is Christ Jesus; His life, death and resurrection are precepts all men can and will comprehend. He brings salvation to all people. Mr. Cole is right to say, “...The enemy of our souls has created much confusion and controversy on this topic.” Good meaning men and women have developed “traditions of men” that are just as much to blame for the confusion and controversy.



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Mr. Cole suggests the interpretations of these verses from Paul's letter to Titus are in error. He reports "the KJV (King James Version) and the NIV (New International version) err by translating that God's grace has appeared to all men. That never has been true." He is right to conclude "there have always been many that have never heard of God's grace in Jesus Christ." Mr. Cole believes it is more properly understood "that God's grace that appeared in the person of Christ offers salvation to all that hear of it." It's Mr. Cole's contention that Paul did not intend Titus and, subsequently, every other person reading this epistle, to interpret the verse to mean "God's grace brings salvation to all men, he means, 'to all types of people.'" God is diverse in the types of people He saves "including those whom the world despises, even to slaves." Mr. Cole seemingly contradicts his position when he writes, "No one is beyond the reach of God's grace."

Mr. Cole wants his audience to understand "this does not mean all people are saved or will be saved." There are people "who by God's grace believe in Jesus Christ.... Those who do not believe in Christ will pay the penalty of eternal separation from God in hell." Mr. Cole acknowledges there are people, men and women created by God, who have never been exposed to the Gospel. It seems as if Mr. Cole is conflating the appearance of the "saving grace of God" to the hearing of it. Mr. Cole discusses his idea that "all people" is mistranslated and should be rendered as "all types of people." He declares "not all people are saved or will be saved."

The Concordant Literal Version translates this verse to say, "The saving grace of God made its advent to all humanity." Young's Literal Translation translates this verse to say "For the saving grace of God was manifested to all men." What are we to say? Scripture tells us that the "saving grace of God" is made obvious to all men. "The saving grace of God" is Christ Jesus.

Mr. Cole is right to preach "no one is beyond the reach of God's grace." That is a precept of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. But, Mr. Cole preaches also that "this does not mean that all people are saved or will be saved." He then goes on to say, "The Bible is uniformly clear there are two separate final destinations for all people."

Mr. Cole's assertions contradict the plain meaning of this verse. Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as literally true. Other doctrines diminish "the saving grace of God." Those doctrines require God's grace be only for a few. They preach God's grace is available to all men, but only given to a few.

Mr. Cole writes, "Before you can appreciate God's grace, you need to know that you are justly under His wrath and condemnation. You are headed for eternal judgment unless someone intervenes." Mr. Cole paraphrases an analogy by Charles Spurgeon. According to this analogy we are all born hanging from ropes. Our respective breaths are being choked out of us. To Mr. Cole's thinking God, in His wisdom and by His desire, cuts the rope from some freeing them to breathe. However, most are left dangling from a rope. The irony is too great to reason. Mr. Cole advocates a doctrine in which God creates life and also stifles it. He could easily cut the ropes of all and fulfill His "desire that all be saved."

Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry (CARM) is a culmination of many years of hard work and information sharing. Matt Slick is the force behind this ministry. He believes in Calvinism and that God chose him for salvation. He also believes most of humanity is not chosen. He supports a doctrine that excludes many of those created by God from "the appearance of God's grace." Mr. Slick writes this about Titus 2:11.<sup>28</sup> "We, the chosen, have had the blessing of saving grace bestowed on us in abundance. Saving grace is based upon the love of God manifested in the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins." Mr. Slick tells his audience that grace is not a substance that can be attained. Grace is a gift from God, but grace is not impartial. Mr. Slick tells us that grace "...is an action of God, therefore, it has a result." The doctrine Mr. Slick supports diminishes the plainly written precept that "the saving grace of God is manifested to all men."

Bob Utley prepared a commentary on God's Holy Word. He founded "Bible Lessons International" and the website bearing that name. He, Mr. Slick and Mr. Cole have a common understanding of these verses. Dr. Utley writes this regarding Titus 2:11.<sup>29</sup> These verses "give the theological basis for godly living." Dr. Utley tells us, "The life, teaching and death of Jesus fully revealed the Father's love, mercy and grace. When we see Jesus, we see God." Dr. Utley declares "God sent Christ to die for the sin of *all humans*, but they must personally respond by repentance, faith, obedience and perseverance (emphasis added)." Dr. Utley remarks these are scriptures "reflecting the universal scope of Christ's work 'for the world' and 'all men.'" Dr. Utley teaches, "The appearance of the grace of God" is universal, that is available to all men, but that grace (Christ Jesus) can only be realized by a work. Dr. Utley writes, men "...must personally respond by repentance, faith, obedience, and perseverance." In other words those of us who have been blessed to see "the grace of God manifested" must perform a work or series of works in order for salvation to have effect for us.

Dr. Utley writes, "God made humans in His image.... He promised to redeem all humans. He specifically mentions His worldwide agenda even in His call of Abraham...and of Israel...." On one hand we must work; we must repent, we must exercise faith, we must be obedient, and we must persevere. On the other hand God, "...promised to redeem all humans." Quoting Matt Slick (above), "God's grace is an action and God's action has a result."

Universal reconciliation preaches God will be "All in all." "Yahweh is good to all men." This is Impartial Grace.

### Hebrews 1: "The Heir of All Things"

God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ***has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things***, through whom also he made the worlds. His Son is the radiance of his glory, the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when ***he had by himself purified us of our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high***; having become so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they have. . (Hebrews 1:1-4, emphasis added)

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The power of these verses is overwhelming evidence that Christ died on a cross for the sins of all men and that He is “the heir of all things.” He is King over the most pious and He is King over the worst rebel. He owns us all. To Him God gives all and to the Father does Christ give glory.

The Messiah is spoken of by the prophets of God and “in these last days” God speaks to all humankind through Christ Jesus. His Name is Jesus and He is God's saving grace manifested to all men. Christ Jesus Whose Name is Emmanuel is God with us. It is by no other Authority that our Christ Jesus is “appointed the heir of all things.” He is heir of all the earth; everything on the earth, under the earth, in the sea and throughout the universe. These verses declare with certainty that Christ Jesus is fully credited with the Father for creating the world. It is His creation and we, all of us, are part of that glorious work.

It is Christ Jesus Who purifies all sins. Universal reconciliation embraces these verses as they do not limit the sins purified to those who repent, obey, show faith and persevere. These verses declare with certainty that He by His obedience to His Father's Will make us purified from sins. He is the “heir of all things” and His possession is free of blot. Today He is elevated to the place of Highest Honor at the right hand of the Father where He sits on the King's Throne.

Other doctrines diminish Christ's sacrifice. Those doctrines conclude that Christ's inheritance is not “all things.” They declare the majority of mankind will be sent to eternal conscious torment even though Christ inherits “all things” He creates. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment requires that Christ reigns over eternal torture.

John Piper is a renowned pastor, preacher and author. He provides his sermons and other resources at his website, Desiring God. Dr. Piper “is founder and teacher of [desiringGod.org](http://desiringGod.org) and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota.” Dr. Piper provides a sermon entitled “In These Last Days God Has Spoken By A Son.”<sup>30</sup> Dr. Piper addresses these verses from Hebrews 1 and Christ's authority as “heir of all things.”

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Dr. Piper asks why the author of Hebrews included the phrase “heir of all things.” Christ's Supremacy is in the fact that He is “heir of all things.” He is the First born of many. He is the Son of God and it is His Birthright to be Sovereign over “all things.” Dr. Piper declares that Christ's authority allows Him to keep promises. “Jesus, the Son of God, can make good on all He promises ” Is that the same as saying “Jesus, the Son of God, will make good on all His promises?”

This is a distinction softening Christ's authority and placing a kind of limit on the promises He will keep. It is as if Christ will keep some promises, most promises perhaps, but Christ does not have to keep all promises. Dr. Piper points out that Christ is over all things, “...who in the end will have under his complete control and ownership all things (all land, all water, all fire, all wind, all energy, all natural resources, all nations, all military might, all buildings, all bacteria and viruses, all angels, all demons, all spiritual and material beings except God the Father)....”

Christ Jesus, according to Dr. Piper, can, if He chooses, keep the promise that the meek will inherit the earth. He can, if He chooses, keep the promise that nothing will separate us from the love of the Father. He can, if He chooses, keep the promise to end death, mourning, crying or pain. He can, if He chooses, rule unhindered. Who could hinder Him? God gives all authority to Him. Who could delay His promise from being fulfilled? God promises that He will be “all in all.” Who will dissuade Him? Who will keep Him from His promise to His Son and to His creation? Dr. Piper answers these questions with this; “...the Son will make good on His own Word.”

Christ Jesus came into the world and is the “propitiation for our sins.” He was made manifest as the “saving grace of God.” He died a horrendous, torturous death as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. Dr. Piper wants us to believe as he does. There are some sins that Christ cannot forgive because the unrepentant person is so steeped in rebellion Christ cannot save him or worse will not save him.

Dr. Piper says, "The fear of hell is a golden opportunity for treating God as big and glorious and utterly real." I have to ask did God create hell? Or is it a pagan kind of horror used to bring people into compliance? Does God force His children to pay homage to Him in the same vein Nebuchadnezzar made people submit to his idol? How does Dr. Piper explain the millions if not billions of people living in places throughout the world that have never heard the Gospel of Christ Jesus? Is fear of hell truly "a golden moment for how to teach a child about how real and how great God is?" If God is love, then why is it "golden" to teach children to fear Him? Is it unreasonable to call hell a thing as in part of "all things?" If not, then Christ reigns over the doctrine of eternal conscious torment and its subsequent hell. Is it Christ Who torments? He is the only power that could. His would be the only Authority that could. Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Satan is defeated, too.

Dr. Piper is not alone in his assessment regarding Christ Jesus being "the heir of all things." Dr. John MacArthur writes about these verses and provides his exposition of them. He preaches Hebrews theme is about "superiority or the preeminence of Christ.... He's better than everything."<sup>31</sup> Christ is better than the prophets of the Old Testament and better than anyone in the New Testament. Christ Jesus is the authority over all things.

Dr. MacArthur explains that without God's forcible voice no person in their natural state could know God exists. Dr. MacArthur believes and preaches that no person could know God under their personal power or effort. He says, "You can't crawl out of your natural box and discover God. You can't do it. You and I live in a natural box." To understand God, to know Him requires an effort on God's part for your personal benefit. Dr. MacArthur declares no man created by God can know God unless God makes His voice clear. His creation can guess that God exists, but we do not really know unless God speaks.

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God does speak. Dr. MacArthur tells us God's word is "not smattered with a lot of human opinion like so many people try to tell you. Tell you that men wrote the Bible. It's all God spoke." Dr. MacArthur sells commentaries of nearly all, if not all, the books of the Bible. His commentaries are constructively "smattered with a lot of human opinion." That does not take away from the point that God speaks to us through His Holy Word. That begs the question. If a person never held God's Holy Word (the Bible) or could not understand the language the Bible is presented, did that person hear God speak?

Dr. MacArthur preaches about Christ's "heirship." Christ Jesus "is the heir of all that God possesses." The Kingdom now belongs to Christ Jesus. Everyone in the universe will be His "some day." Dr. MacArthur acknowledges "even Satan knew" Christ Jesus is preeminent and will possess "all of those existing in the universe." Dr. MacArthur's sermons and commentaries are rich. Christ is the "heir of all things." They are His. He created them. Dr. MacArthur is right to say that everything in the universe; that is everything ever created was created by Jesus Who is Christ for all men. He is right to say that all things will be subject to Him accentuating the fact that He is Sovereign over "all things." Simply stated, "Jesus is the heir of all things establishing His first glorious preeminence."

God's Kingdom is Christ Jesus' Kingdom. All things created are created for Christ and all things created will be subject to Him. All things created bring glory to God. Dr. MacArthur reminds his audience of Philippians 2:10 wherein it is declared that Christ Jesus' Name will "cause every knee to bow and every tongue to swear allegiance."

I believe God's Holy Word spoken to us. I am confident most Biblical scholars believe His Word with all their hearts, too. There is a general agreement that there is not any man, no matter how hateful, no matter how bitter he is toward God, who will not see His glory. Further, Scripture teaches every tongue will confess and will swear allegiance to God. Every knee will bow and all will be subject to Him. This is Impartial Grace.

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