

# **In Christ shall all be made alive**

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Just as a heads up, this Bible study is an edited excerpt from my (much longer) Bible study titled: *“What the Bible really says about heaven, hell, judgement, death, evil, sin, and salvation”* (and I’d highly recommend reading that one all the way through from beginning to end if you’re able to, in order to get the full picture of what the Bible is talking about when it comes to salvation; but for those who don’t have the time to read that one right now, please do read this Bible study carefully).

Those who have read my Bible studies titled *“Immortality and the second death,”* *“What the Hinnom?”*, and *“What is death?”* now know that no humans can suffer in any of the biblical “hells” (at least not for any longer than it takes to die a second time in the lake of fire; and please go read those three studies if you aren’t yet aware of this fact, or, if you have the time, I’d actually recommend you read my aforementioned *“What the Bible really says about heaven, hell, judgement, death, evil, sin, and salvation”* study that this one is based on rather than just reading those three studies and this one, since it covers even more details that are useful to know). And while there are no passages in the Bible which refer to either “hell” or the lake of fire by name which outright state that anyone will remain dead in the lake of fire without end, this doesn’t prove that the people who do end up there will ever be resurrected from it either, much less that they’ll then experience the type of salvation Paul primarily wrote about (meaning being quickened<sup>1</sup> — sometimes also referred to as being vivified, depending on your Bible translation — which refers to having our mortal bodies be made immortal<sup>2</sup> as happened to Jesus after His resurrection,<sup>3</sup> being “made

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<sup>1</sup> I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; — 1 Timothy 6:13

<sup>2</sup> But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. — Romans 8:11

<sup>3</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peter 3:18

*alive*”<sup>4</sup> beyond the reach of death,<sup>5</sup> which means being incapable of dying,<sup>6</sup> as well as never being subject to the corruption<sup>7</sup> and the humiliation of mortality ever again<sup>8</sup>), which brings up the question of whether any of that will actually happen. Well, the answer to that question is found throughout the writings of Paul, who taught that everyone will indeed eventually experience salvation, which means we need to take a look at some of the passages which teach this. But before we do, we also need to be aware that, while everyone *will* experience salvation in the end, not everyone will be saved, and if this sounds like a contradiction to you, please consider the following question: If I pointed out that, among a group of 4 people, they each had a quarter, but that at the same time only 1 of them had a quarter, and that both statements were equally true, how could this be the case? Well, it’s actually quite simple: All 4 people had a piece of a pie, each an equal-sized slice of the pie that made up the whole pie when put together, but only one of these people had a 25-cent coin in their pocket. You see, the same word can refer to different things, and this applies to both the word “quarter” as well as the word “saved” (not to mention “salvation”). As we learned in my *“Thing that differ”* Bible study (and please read that study too, if you aren’t already aware of this fact, or, again, just read my whole aforementioned longer Bible study — which covers every detail you need to know about soteriology — instead of reading these shorter ones), there are

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<sup>4</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

<sup>5</sup> So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:54-55

<sup>6</sup> Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. — Hebrews 7:16

<sup>7</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. — 1 Corinthians 15:53

<sup>8</sup> Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. — Philippians 3:21

multiple types of salvation referred to in the Bible, and not everyone experiences every sort of salvation (and unless you think being saved in whatever way it is you believe that Jesus saves us today — which, according to most Christians, is being saved from suffering never-ending torment in fire — is the exact same sort of salvation that Peter<sup>9</sup> and the rest of Jesus' disciples experienced<sup>10</sup> when they were saved from drowning, that it's the same sort of salvation the Israelites experienced when they were saved from Egyptian slavery,<sup>11</sup> or that women are required to give birth<sup>12</sup> in order to experience that sort of salvation from inescapable torment in fire, I trust you agree that the words “salvation,” “save,” and “saved” are not all referring to the same type of salvation every time they're used in Scripture). Relatively few people will experience the sort of salvation referred to under the Gospel of the Kingdom (again, covered in my *“Things that differ”* study if you aren't aware of the difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and Paul's Gospel, the latter of which is about actually going to heaven, while the former is simply about living in the kingdom of heaven here on earth, which refers to living in the land of Israel for 1,000 years after Jesus returns), so it shouldn't be a surprise to hear someone who believes in the salvation of all humanity agree with the assertion that not everyone will be saved, as long as one realizes that we're referring to

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<sup>9</sup> And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. — Matthew 14:28-30

<sup>10</sup> And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. — Matthew 8:24-25

<sup>11</sup> Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. — Exodus 14:30

<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. — 1 Timothy 2:15

specific types of salvation that not everyone is guaranteed to experience when we say that.

But that aside, how can we even suggest there's a type of salvation that everyone will experience? Well, it's because there are a *multitude* of passages in Paul's epistles which seem to plainly teach the salvation of all humanity (even though many Christians who don't want to accept the possibility of the salvation of all humanity will do anything and everything they can to come up with explanations as to why these passages actually don't mean that). Of course, it's also true that there are other passages in his epistles which say only certain people will be saved, and at first this seems like it would be a contradiction if the salvation of all were true, but only until one once again remembers that there are different types of salvation, and realizes that any passages in Paul's epistles which seem to teach the salvation of all could easily just be referring to one type of salvation which everyone experiences, while passages which teach that *not* everyone will be saved would then simply be referring to another type of salvation that not everyone experiences, and the fact of the matter is, this absolutely is the case.

So what are these passages which teach that everyone will experience salvation? Well, to begin with, Paul's Gospel *itself* teaches us this<sup>13</sup> (and that's really all the proof one should need). In fact, not only does it teach the salvation of all humanity, the "*Christ died for our sins*" element of his Gospel also means that someone who believes in never-ending punishment can't actually be a member of the body of Christ, because they don't believe that sin has been

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<sup>13</sup> Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: — 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

dealt with, once and for all, through Christ's death for our sins, and hence hasn't truly believed Paul's Gospel (if anyone believes that a person can be punished without end because of their sins, they haven't understood what it means that "*Christ died for our sins*," and you can't truly believe something if you don't actually understand its meaning). Not only that, though, it also means that someone who believes a person can only be saved by choosing to believe something specific aren't in the body of Christ either, because it isn't our belief that saves us, but rather it's Christ's death for our sins, along with His subsequent burial and resurrection on the third day, that saves us (I'm referring specifically to a general salvation that everyone experiences when I discuss verse 3 of 1 Corinthians 15, and not the special, figuratively-labeled "eternal life" type of salvation referred to in verse 2, which is something only a relative few will enjoy — it's important to keep in mind that both types of salvation are being discussed in the first four verses of 1 Corinthians 15, and if this sounds confusing, don't worry, because it will all become clear as you read the rest of this study). To believe that one has to choose to believe something specific in order to be saved is putting the cart before the horse, since faith, or belief, in what Christ accomplished is the cart bringing us into the special "eternal life" form of salvation (which is a form of salvation that not everyone experiences) known as membership in the body of Christ, while the general salvation of all humanity because of Christ's death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day, is the horse. (If you aren't familiar with the fact that "eternal" and "everlasting" are generally figurative terms in the KJV and other less literal Bible translations that use the words, keep reading, since I'll cover the meaning of the words later in this study as well.)

I should say, while "the salvation of all humanity" *isn't*, strictly speaking, Paul's Gospel *itself* — since Paul's Gospel is technically just those combined elements that he said he taught the Corinthians (Christ's death for our sins, His burial,

and His resurrection on the third day) — because the salvation of all humanity *is the end result* of Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection on the third day, **it means that the salvation of all humanity because of what Christ accomplished is this Gospel's main point.** And so, while there are other details about his Gospel which also need to be understood in order to be considered a member of the body of Christ (such as what it means that "**He** was buried," and please be sure to read my "*What is death?*" Bible study if you don't know what I'm referring to, because knowing what it means that Christ was buried is equally important if you want to be sure you're actually a member of the body of Christ), it *can* legitimately be said that "the salvation of all humanity *because of what Christ accomplished*" is *essentially* Paul's Gospel. (Again, of course, referring to a general salvation, meaning being made immortal and sinless, and not the special "eternal life" sort of salvation which only the body of Christ will get to enjoy in heaven, or even the other "eternal life" sort of salvation, which the Israel of God will enjoy in the kingdom of heaven for 1,000 years.)

Despite all this, it's been stated by many people that 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 was talking only about those in the Corinthian church who believed Paul's Gospel (or at least only about people who believed Paul's Gospel in general), and that it didn't include the rest of humanity anywhere in its words, and, in fact, that the "for our sins" part of this Gospel was *only* referring to the sins of the Corinthians who believed that the words in Paul's Gospel are true (or at least only referring to the sins of those who believe his Gospel in general). And while it is true that this part of the chapter *was* about what the Corinthians specifically believed, what they specifically believed wouldn't actually make any sense if "our sins" wasn't referring to the sins of all humanity.

I mean, aside from the fact that he *didn't* tell them something along the lines of, "Christ *can* have died for the sins of you Corinthians specifically, but only if you happen to believe that He died for your sins, making it so that He did die for your sins, even though He didn't actually die for your sins if you don't believe He did" (which would have to be the case if this passage was only about the sins of the Corinthian believers rather than the sins of all humanity), why would he have called this the good news he brought to them if it wasn't already news which is good for his audience at the time he spoke it to them in person, before they even believed it? (This is why it's *called* good news/a Gospel to begin with: because it's good news whether someone believes it or not, or even hears it or not — it couldn't be called good news if it's something that has to be believed in order to avoid a never-ending punishment, since it could then only be called potential good news, or Paul's Potential Gospel.) The statement that "Christ died for our sins" would have to already be good news to anyone Paul told this fact to *before* he even spoke the words to them if he wanted to be able to call it a Gospel in the first place, and not just news which *can* be good, but only if they happened to hear it and then also believe it's true, somehow turning it into good news for them (although not really particularly good news, since, statistically speaking, they were still pretty much guaranteed to lose most of their loved ones to never-ending punishment in the end, if modern Christians are correct).

I should also say, this is where the Calvinists are at least partly correct (or at least those Calvinists who don't say unscriptural and illogical things such as, "Christ's death for our sins was *sufficient* to save all, but *efficient* to save only the elect," because if something must be added to His sacrifice in order for someone to be saved – even something as simple as having to believe the right thing – then His death for our sins was, by definition, *INsufficient* on its own to save anyone). The consistent Calvinists at least understand that, if we can't do



anything at all to save ourselves, it can only be Christ's death for our sins (along with His subsequent burial and resurrection) that saves us, which means that anyone whose sins Christ died for *has* to be considered to be saved from at least some perspective (referring to salvation from a proleptic perspective, and not to the special "eternal life" type of salvation, of course), since otherwise His death for our sins accomplished absolutely *nothing* for *anyone* prior to someone hearing about His death for our sins and then choosing to believe that His death for our sins accomplished something for them too, thus making them their own (at least partial) saviour by turning Christ's ineffectual action (which, by definition, is what His death for our sins would be if it didn't have any effect without someone else doing something, such as choosing to believe something specific, to add to it as well) into an action that finally helped accomplish something for them after all.

Where these Calvinists go wrong is in forgetting that the words Paul specifically said he spoke to the Corinthians when he first evangelized to them in person were *not* "Christ died for **your** sins" (or even "Christ died for the sins of the elect," which is what most Calvinists basically believe he meant). Instead, he wrote that the words he told them in person were "Christ died for **our** sins." If he only meant that Christ died for the sins of the Corinthians and himself specifically, it would mean He didn't also die for the sins of anyone else, including the believers in Rome or Galatia or anywhere else for that matter (and that He didn't die for your sins either). But let's say that he just meant "the sins of the elect," or even "the sins of believers in general" (to make this point clear to those who aren't Calvinists as well), when he said "our sins." Well, since it's not like believing that Christ died for our sins could then make it a fact that he died for their sins specifically, but only after believing it (since He only died once), this means He had to have at least died for the sins of anyone hearing this proclamation of good news *before* Paul spoke those words to anyone. And so, unless every single Corinthian Paul spoke to believed his words, if Christ's

death for our sins is what saves us, it would mean that Paul was lying to anyone who *didn't* believe that Christ died for our sins when he spoke those words to them, because that statement would have to include everyone hearing him say those words rather than just the listeners who also believed those words were true (since it would mean that Christ *didn't* actually die for their sins after all, considering the fact that anyone whose sins Christ died for has to be saved). Not only that, it would mean *we* were *also* lying anytime we explained that the good news includes the fact that Christ died for our sins, at least if anyone who heard us didn't believe it either (unless, perhaps, what one *actually* has to believe in order to be saved is that Jesus died only for the sins of Paul and the Corinthians he spoke to — and that everyone in Corinth he preached his Gospel to got saved — and not that he actually died for you or anyone else, but then we'd have to ask what the basis of our salvation really was in the first place).

So yes, Christ's death for our sins actually *had* to apply to *all* humanity (and hence guarantee the general salvation of all humanity), as Paul also made clear when he expanded on all this later in the same chapter by writing that just as "*in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*"<sup>14</sup> Many Christians assume that Paul was simply referring to being resurrected here (based on the fact that a large part of this chapter is about resurrection), but we know that everyone who Paul said will be "made alive" includes those who will never die,<sup>15</sup> such as the members of the body of Christ who will still be living at the time they're caught up together in the air to meet the Lord when He comes for

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<sup>14</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

<sup>15</sup> Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. — 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

His body,<sup>16</sup> not to mention the members of the Israel of God who will still be alive at the Second Coming and who will remain alive — thanks to the tree of life — until the time they're finally also made immortal, so being “made alive” (translated from a future-tense variation of ζωοποιέω/“dzo-op-oy-eh'-o” in the KJV, which is the same Greek word that “quickened” and “quickeneth” is translated from) obviously can't simply be referring to resurrection (which is an entirely different word, translated from the Greek word ἀνάστασις/“an-as'-tas-is” instead) since not everyone who will be “made alive” will actually die and be resurrected (yes, that the dead will be physically resurrected *was* Paul's main point in this chapter, but he used his Gospel to prove this point, and in doing so ended up covering details that went far beyond just simple resurrection, including elements that apply to those who *won't* be resurrected — because they'll never actually die — as well).

And since the “in Adam” half of the verse is about the end result of his sin as it applies to *everyone* (and not just those people who will actually literally die), it stands to reason that, “*even so*,” the “in Christ” part is about the end result of His death for our sins as it applies to every one of us as well, which can only be the quickening of our mortal bodies (since, as Paul explains later in the very same chapter, being made immortal is what we're looking forward to as far as our salvation goes,<sup>17</sup> and that being made immortal is how the death Adam brought us all is ultimately defeated, which also means that any human who is

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<sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. — 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

<sup>17</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

made immortal will then be experiencing the final stage of their own salvation). That, combined with the fact that not everyone will end up as a corpse prior to being “made alive”—confirming that the “*for as in Adam all die*” part of the verse can only be referring to being made mortal, meaning being in a state of slowly dying because of what Adam did—tells us Paul was simply explaining that, for as in Adam all are dying (mortal), even so in Christ shall all be quickened (made immortal). The Present Active Indicative tense in the original Greek of the word translated as “*die*” in this verse in the KJV also makes this clear, I should add, making “*in Adam all die*” in the KJV a figurative translation of a Greek phrase which literally means “in Adam all are dying” (meaning all are in a state of mortality and are slowly dying).

Of course, most Christians assume that one can’t be “in Christ” without first having made a conscious decision of some sort to end up there, leading them to also assume that only those who choose to be “in Christ” (or only those who are elected by God to be “in Christ”) can be made alive/quickened/saved, and they then read that assumption into this verse when trying to interpret it. But aside from what we’ve already covered about the meaning of Paul’s Gospel (which should be enough, in and of itself, to prove that everyone has already been guaranteed general salvation, and can, in fact, already be said to have been saved from at least a proleptic perspective — prolepsis being a figure of speech meaning “the representation or assumption of a future act or development as if presently existing or accomplished,” calling what is not yet as though it already were, in other words, as God Himself often does in Scripture<sup>18</sup>), if you read it carefully you’ll notice that, not only does it not

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<sup>18</sup> Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. — Romans 4:16-17

actually say one has to make a choice to end up “in Christ” in that verse, it isn’t even talking about being “in Christ” from a positional perspective to begin with. (The reason most Christians conclude that one has to choose to be included in the “in Christ” part of this verse is generally because they’re assuming the sort of salvation Paul was writing about here is either the special “eternal life” sort of salvation he also taught about that involves membership in the body of Christ and isn’t a form of salvation everyone will experience, or the “eternal life” type of salvation Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry that involves membership in the Israel of God—which is a type of salvation where one *does* have to do something specific if they want to experience it, and which is also not a form of salvation that everyone will experience, although whether<sup>19</sup> one does end up experiencing that sort of salvation<sup>20</sup> is technically predetermined<sup>21</sup>—not realizing that Paul was writing about an entirely *different* sort of salvation here.) If that’s what Paul had been getting at, he would have written, “for as **all in Adam** die, even so **shall all in Christ** be made alive.” Thankfully, that’s not what he wrote. Instead, the way he carefully worded it (“for as **in Adam all** die, even so **in Christ shall all** be made alive”) lets us know that Paul was using a parallelism there to tell us that everyone affected by the action of the first Adam is, “*even so*,” also equally affected by the action of the last Adam (referring to Christ Jesus),<sup>22</sup> and completely outside of their own desire or will. The slight difference in wording might not seem

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<sup>19</sup> No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. — John 6:44

<sup>20</sup> And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. — John 6:65

<sup>21</sup> Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. — John 15:16

<sup>22</sup> And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. — 1 Corinthians 15:45

important to most Christians (and those who don't want to accept the possibility of the salvation of all humanity will automatically insist it doesn't matter, without even taking the time to think about it), but it makes all the difference in the world when you realize that God didn't simply inspire Paul to just throw words onto the page haphazardly, but rather that He made sure Paul laid the words out the way He did in order to make certain it's clear that, just as nobody had any say in experiencing the effects of the first Adam's action (mortality and, in most cases, physical death, aside from the relatively few people who will experience their quickening without having died), *even so* they also have no say in experiencing the effects of the last Adam's action (eventual immortality) either. Basically, the order of the words God chose for Paul to use tells us that "in Adam" and "in Christ" simply mean "because of what Adam did" and "because of what Christ did," and are not positional terms at all in this passage, but are rather causal terms.

The fact that Paul wasn't referring to being "in Adam" or "in Christ" from a positional perspective there is also backed up by what he wrote in Romans 5. Of course, in addition to assuming that our salvation is (at least partly) based on possessing a certain attribute others don't have, which allows us to fulfill a required action we have to do for ourselves in order to be saved (such as having enough natural wisdom and/or intelligence and/or humility and/or righteousness to be able to make a choice to believe the specific thing that ultimately saves us, for example, or at least having the natural ability and desire to build up that required wisdom and/or intelligence and/or humility and/or righteousness so one can make that specific choice), rather than being based 100% on Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection (with no action taken on our part at all to contribute to our salvation, since us having to accomplish anything at all in order to ensure our own salvation — even if that accomplishment was just managing to choose to change our minds,

meaning managing to choose to repent, and choosing to believe the right thing — would be salvation based at least in part upon something we had to do ourselves, which would ultimately be salvation by works), most Christians want to place the blame for our mortality, death, and sinfulness on each of us as individuals rather than on Adam as well, but that's not what Paul taught. You see, in addition to what he wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:22 about how we all die (literally meaning how we're all mortal) because of Adam, in Romans 5:12 Paul not only confirmed that the specific thing Adam did to bring his descendants mortality and death was *his (Adam's) own sin*, but he also went on to explain that the reason *we ourselves* now sin is *because* of that mortality we inherited from Adam, when he wrote in that verse: "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"

This is one of the most misunderstood passages in Scripture, and most Christians have assumed the word "for" in this verse means "because," and hence have interpreted the last two parts of this verse to mean "and so death passed upon all men *because* all have sinned" in order to preserve their doctrine that we're ultimately to blame for our own mortality and death (and many Bible versions have even mistranslated the verse that way). But, aside from the fact that this would render the verse literally nonsensical (I can't see any way that the phrase "and so death passed upon all men *because* all have sinned" can legitimately follow "wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and still make any sort of sense at all, at least not based on any rules of grammar, not to mention logic, that I'm aware of), if we die because we sin, the first part of the verse would be entirely superfluous, and might as well be cut out of the verse altogether, since that part of the passage would tell us basically nothing about *why* we sin, making it entirely irrelevant (not to mention that it would also turn the words "*and so*" in the verse into a lie: the words "*and so*" are connecting the clause in the second half of the verse to the part of the

verse that came before it, which means that what was written in the first part of the verse *has* to be the reason for the clause that comes after those words, yet there's no actual connection made between Adam's sin and our death and sin in the verse if that clause actually means "*because* all have sinned," since that places the responsibility on us rather than on Adam, contrary to what the words "*and so*" are telling us, as well as contrary to what Paul told us in 1 Corinthians 15:22).

I mean, let's break it all down: A) Adam sinned ("*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world*"), B) his sin brought him mortality leading to eventual death ("*and death by sin*"), C) because of this, his mortality passed down to his descendants ("*and so death passed upon all men*") and D) for that reason, meaning because of that mortality, all of us descendants of Adam have also sinned ("*for that all have sinned*"), giving us a nice unbroken sequence of causes and effects. But if we were to instead interpret the last two parts of the verse as meaning "and so death passed upon all men *because* all have sinned" we've suddenly lost the whole narrative, since this doesn't tell us *why* all have sinned the way the literal reading of this verse does. "That all have sinned" *because* "death passed upon all men" answers that question, but reversing the order (making sin the cause and mortality — which the word "death" is simply being used as metonymy for in this verse — the effect rather than mortality the cause and sin the effect) just makes a mess of the whole thing, leaving us with the question of why we sin, which was a part of what Paul was trying to explain in the first place with this verse (and as for why mortality leads to sin, it's simply because, while we can have the strength to avoid sinning *some* of the time, being mortal makes us too weak to avoid sinning *all* of the time). In fact, if our sin actually *was* the cause, the verse should have actually been written as: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin... but wait... that really doesn't matter at all, now that I think about it, since death



actually passed upon all men because all the rest of us have sinned too, and this had nothing to do with that one man to begin with, so I don't know why I even mentioned him in the first place."

And for those of you who are thinking "Original Sin" might be the answer to that question, aside from the fact that "Original Sin" isn't a *term* found anywhere in Scripture, it isn't a *concept* found anywhere in Scripture either. In fact, the basis for this strange doctrine is a misinterpretation of the very verse we've just been looking at, but I don't see anything in this verse which says we've inherited a "sin nature" from Adam (which is yet another term you won't find anywhere in Scripture), or even that guilt for Adam's sin has been imputed upon us, as those who hold to this doctrine claim is the case. Yes, being mortal causes humans to become corrupt and sinful very quickly, but the claims of those who believe in "Original Sin" can't actually be found in the Bible without heavily reading one's assumptions into this verse, and to do so would be pure eisegesis. Some people do attempt to use Psalm 58:3<sup>23</sup> and Psalm 51:5<sup>24</sup> to defend their doctrine of "Original Sin" as well, I should say, but the first verse is talking specifically about "*the wicked*" (who are differentiated from "*the righteous*" a few verses later in the Psalm,<sup>25</sup> telling us this isn't talking about all humans, but is instead about those who are particularly bad; besides we know that newborn babies can't speak lies as soon as they're born, as the psalmist said they do, because they can't speak at all yet, so we know he's employing hyperbole there, meaning the verse can't be taken as literally meaning all humans start off wicked but rather that the wicked begin their destructive path

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<sup>23</sup> The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. — Psalms 58:3

<sup>24</sup> Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. — Psalm 51:5

<sup>25</sup> The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth. — Psalms 58:10-11

at a very young age), and there are so many possible interpretations of the second verse which *don't* turn Romans 5:12, not to mention 1 Corinthians 15:22, into a nonsensical lie, as would be the case if “Original Sin” *were* a valid concept, that it's utterly foolish to even *consider* it as a defence of the doctrine. For example, it could simply be more poetic hyperbole (which is a figure of speech David was known to employ in this book, unless you believe his tears could literally create a whole swimming pool on his furniture<sup>26</sup>), it could be using “in iniquity” and “in sin” as metonymy (which is another figure of speech used all throughout the Bible) for “in a world full of sin,” or it could even be referring to the possibility that he was born as a result of his mother having an affair similar to the one he's believed to be confessing he had with Bathsheba in this very Psalm (and which is what many people think the verse means, believing that the way he recorded his past treatment in Psalm 69:4,<sup>27</sup> 7-8,<sup>28</sup> 11-12,<sup>29</sup> and 20-21<sup>30</sup> indicates this as well), and these are just three possible interpretations (there are others I didn't get into here, which you can discover for yourself if you're so inclined), so the concept of “Original Sin” really is a nonstarter.

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<sup>26</sup> I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. — Psalm 6:6

<sup>27</sup> They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. — Psalm 69:4

<sup>28</sup> Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. — Psalm 69:7-8

<sup>29</sup> I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards. — Psalm 69:11-12

<sup>30</sup> Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. — Psalm 69:20-21

On top of all that, though, I'm hoping by now you've noticed that Paul didn't simply write "*for all have sinned*" in Romans 5:12 the way he did in Romans 3:23.<sup>31</sup> Instead, he wrote, "*for **that** all have sinned.*" Missing a single word when reading a passage in Scripture, such as the word "that" in this case, can change everything and make you completely miss the point of the passage. Yes, one could perhaps be excused for thinking Paul meant "*because all have sinned*" if he had left out the word "that" in this verse, and if one also hadn't yet considered all of the above points we just covered. But he didn't leave it out, **and so** "*for that reason all have sinned*" is the only thing Paul could have possibly been getting at in this part of the passage, which means the only way to use the word "because" instead of "for" in this verse is to interpret it along the lines of, "*because of that [mortality] all have sinned,*" which doesn't help the idea that sin is the cause rather than the effect either. **And so**, I maintain that the KJV actually got this correct, and that we should simply stick with what it actually says here and interpret it accordingly, since it gives us answers to both the question of why we're mortal, as well as the question of why we sin, and also keeps the blame for our mortality, death, and sinfulness squarely on the shoulders of the "one man" Paul meant for us to understand it belongs on: Adam. (At least from a relative perspective, even if God was ultimately the one behind it all from an absolute perspective.<sup>32</sup>)

And so, contrary to what pretty much all Christians have been taught, we ourselves don't die because we sin. In fact, Adam and Eve were the only humans who died because they sinned — or, rather, began to die/became mortal because they sinned. Yes, that's what God's warning to Adam, which is rendered figuratively in the KJV as, "*for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou*

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<sup>31</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; — Romans 3:23

<sup>32</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: — Ephesians 1:11

*shalt surely die*,” meant. Remember, the expression “*thou shalt surely die*” was used in both Genesis 2:17<sup>33</sup> and in 1 Kings 2:36-46<sup>34</sup> in the KJV, and yet, based on the amount of time it would take to travel from Jerusalem to Gath and back (even on horseback), there’s no way that Shimei actually died physically the day he crossed the brook Kidron, as Solomon warned he would in 1 Kings. And he certainly didn’t “die spiritually” that day either, as most Christians mistakenly assume the translation of “surely die” in the KJV means (an assumption they make because they recognize that this is obviously a figurative translation, based on the fact that Adam didn’t physically drop dead on the day he sinned), which confirms that the popular “spiritual death” idea is a complete misunderstanding of the term “surely die” in the KJV. As far as Shimei goes, it just meant that he had basically signed his own death warrant and knew that he was “as good as dead” on the day he crossed the forbidden brook. And as far as Adam and Eve go, it literally just meant that, to die, they began dying,

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<sup>33</sup> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. — Genesis 2:17

<sup>34</sup> And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; and king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. — 1 Kings 2:36-46

meaning they gained mortality leading to eventual physical death on the day they ate the forbidden fruit (which makes sense considering the fact that the Hebrew phrase מוֹת תָּמוּת /“mooth ta’-mooth,” translated as “thou shalt surely die” in both passages in the KJV, literally means “to die you will be dying”; this also tells us that “to die” can’t possibly be a reference to being punished in the lake of fire, by the way, because Adam didn’t end up in that location the day he sinned either, so becoming mortal remains the best interpretation of this warning).

Understanding this also helps explain why Jesus was able to avoid sinning, as well as why we’ll stop sinning once we’re made immortal. Some people will say, “The reason Jesus didn’t sin is because He’s God, and only God in the flesh could avoid sinning so He could be the perfect sacrifice for sin,” but what they’re telling us when they say that, even if they don’t realize it, is that we humans could then never be free of sin, not even after our resurrection, since we aren’t going to become God, so that couldn’t possibly be the reason. Instead, the reason is because He was in a state that was neither mortal nor immortal (it’s not a term found in Scripture, but because it’s useful to have a label for this, I personally refer to being in this state as being “semi-mortal,” for lack of a better existing term that I’m aware of — although if you’ve read previous editions of this study, you might remember me using the term “amortal” instead, but I’ve since decided that “semi-mortal” makes more sense), which means that, while He wasn’t yet immortal, which means being entirely incapable of dying—as we’ll also be when we’re quickened, just like He is now—the fact that He didn’t have a human father meant that He *could* die but that He *wasn’t slowly dying* the way we mortals are either, and not having mortality coursing through His veins, along with having the Spirit without measure,<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. — John 3:34

meant He was strong enough to avoid giving into temptation to sin (this combination of “semi-mortality” and having the Spirit without measure also kept Him alive, even on the cross, until He was ready to die<sup>36</sup> and willingly gave up His life<sup>37</sup>). This means Adam could have also theoretically avoided sinning if the circumstances had worked out that way, although he didn’t have the Spirit without measure like Jesus did, and ultimately gave in to temptation (for various reasons that I don’t have the time to get into right now), leading to the mortality and sin that all of us now get to experience.

That Adam is ultimately responsible for our condemnation to mortality, death, and sinfulness is also backed up a few lines later in Romans 5 as well, in verses 18–19,<sup>38</sup> when Paul told us that, just as judgement to condemnation came upon all men because of the offence and disobedience of *one*, and not because of *their own* offences or disobedience, righteousness and justification of life will *also* come upon all men because of the obedience of *one*, and not because of *their own* obedience — which would have to include obedience towards any commands to do anything specific in order to experience (general) salvation, including commands to choose to repent and/or to believe anything specific — telling us that only two people are responsible for our current and future states, the first Adam and the last Adam, and that we’re just along for the ride.

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<sup>36</sup> No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. — John 10:18

<sup>37</sup> And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. — Luke 23:46

<sup>38</sup> Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. — Romans 5:18-19

You see, when Paul wrote, *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,”* he was using another set of parallelisms there, something he seemed to love using to prove this particular point in various epistles, where the “all” and the “many” in the second part of each sentence has to consist of no less than the exact same number of people who fall under the “all” and “many” in the first part of the sentences, or else the parallelisms would fall apart, as would his entire point. And for those who are wondering why Paul wrote “many” rather than “all” in verses 15<sup>39</sup> and 19 of this chapter, there are at least two reasons (there could be more, but I’m going to give you the most important reasons). First, verse 15 had to use “many” because not everyone will physically drop dead, as we already discussed. And second, Jesus was technically affected by Adam’s sin to a certain extent as well, in that He too was condemned to die because of Adam’s action, since He had to die for the sins we now commit because we’re mortal, thanks to Adam (which is why He could be included in the “all” of verse 18). But since He Himself never sinned, verse 19 couldn’t say “all” became sinners, which is why Paul instead wrote that *“many were made sinners,”* meaning every human other than Jesus (and again, being a parallelism, all the people who *“were made sinners”* because of *“one man’s disobedience”* will also *“be made righteous”* because of *“the obedience of one”* — and please re-read that carefully: because of *“the obedience of one,”* and **not** because of *their own obedience* to choose to repent and believe the right thing — or else the parallelism wouldn’t work; and remember, this is referring to the general salvation everyone will experience,

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<sup>39</sup> But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. — Romans 5:15

not the special “eternal life” type of salvation that only a relative few will get to enjoy).

But for those who still really want to blame our mortality and death on our own sins rather than ultimately blaming it on the first Adam’s sin, I’d be curious to know what they believe the condemnation that came upon all men because of the offence and disobedience of one/Adam actually even is, exactly, not to mention why Paul included the part about “*wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin*” in verse 12, and also why he claimed that “*in Adam all die*” in 1 Corinthians 15:22.

Now, some like to insist that one has to first choose to receive the free gift to be included in the second half of these parallelisms (completely ignoring how parallelisms work), based on the inclusion of the word “receive” in verse 17,<sup>40</sup> but Paul didn’t actually say anything about receiving the gift being a choice in that verse at all (although, if it was a choice, then receiving the “*abundance of grace*” mentioned in that verse would also have to be a choice). The idea that receiving the free gift is a choice is an assumption that one has to read into the verse, since it just isn’t there in the text (you won’t find the words “choice” or “choose” *anywhere* in the chapter), and receiving something isn’t necessarily something one chooses anyway, as evidenced by how Paul told us that, on five separate occasions, he received thirty-nine stripes.<sup>41</sup> Since he would have experienced those lashes whether he first purposefully chose to receive them or not (at no point did he say to his assailants, “Please whip me”; and had he instead said, “I refuse to receive these stripes,” they still would have whipped him anyway), it’s time to reconsider the idea that “receiving the free gift” is

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<sup>40</sup> For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) — Romans 5:17

<sup>41</sup> Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. — 2 Corinthians 11:24



something one chooses rather than simply experiences apart from anything they have to choose to do, because, aside from the fact that this would make salvation something they gained through *their own* obedience rather than because of the obedience of *one*/Christ (thus contradicting Paul's entire point, which is that only the first Adam and the last Adam are responsible for anything that happens to us when it comes to both our condemnation and our salvation), having to choose to receive it would also be something one had to accomplish in order to be saved, which by definition would make it a work one had to do in order to be saved, and the most difficult work one could ever do at that, based on how difficult most people find it to "choose to receive the gift" and "get saved" (at least as far as the traditional Christian understanding of what salvation is goes). And so, rather than being offered money as a gift and having the option to either accept it or reject it, which is an analogy many Christians like to use when discussing salvation, it's actually more like having money directly deposited into one's bank account entirely without their knowledge (with evangelism being about telling people the money is there, whether or not they happen to believe it, or "choose to receive it").

The reason most Christians insist that receiving the free gift has to be a choice (aside from simply never having considered the possibility that it might not be) is because they just don't want to accept that condemnation and salvation could possibly be something we have no say in, which is why they also insist that we're entirely responsible for our own condemnation to mortality and death (and its resulting sinfulness) as well, contrary to what Paul wrote (all the while often also contradictorily placing the guilt for Adam's sin on us at the same time, in order to preserve the doctrine of "Original Sin," which is a doctrine that really only exists in order to be able to claim that everyone deserves to be punished in "hell" without end simply by virtue of being born). You see, if our condemnation is based entirely on the action of one (Adam), as

Paul said it was, then our salvation would have to be based entirely upon the action of one as well (the last Adam), as Paul also said it is, rather than based (at least in part) upon a wise decision we ourselves make to receive the free gift, and the pride of most Christians just won't allow them to accept that as a possibility (because, although they'll deny it — even to themselves — most of them, at least on a subconscious level, really want to be able to take the credit for having made the wise decision to “get saved,” and many definitely want those who don't make the same wise choice they believe they made to be responsible for not getting saved, based on the tragically large number of Christians who have asked me things along the lines of, “Are you saying that unbelievers will get the same reward as me? Even though they didn't choose to accept Christ like I did?”, thus telling us they believe they earned, and even deserve, salvation because they were smart enough to choose to receive it, unlike all those sinners who aren't smart enough to make the same good choice they did and hence don't also deserve it the way they do).

I should quickly add, some will point out that 1 Corinthians 15:1-2 also talks about “receiving” the Gospel Paul preached unto them,<sup>42</sup> and that the salvation referred to in that passage seems like it could possibly be said to be conditional, if we take the passage on its own without considering the rest of Scripture. But even if we interpreted the passage as Paul referring to receiving salvation rather than simply receiving (or hearing) the message he preached unto them, based on what we've already covered (not to mention still have yet to cover), it could only be talking about receiving the special form of salvation that involves joining the body of Christ after hearing his Gospel there (a form of salvation that not everyone receives), and not the completed salvation

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<sup>42</sup> Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. — 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

(being quickened and made sinless) that's discussed throughout the rest of the chapter (as well as that's discussed in Romans 5), so even if someone *did* have to choose to "receive" this special form of salvation, it doesn't mean anyone has to choose to receive the general salvation Christ won for all of us through His death for our sins, burial, and resurrection on the third day.

This all means it's time to recognize that the idea of the (general) salvation Paul primarily wrote about being based at all upon something people have to do for themselves — even if what they have to do for themselves is something as supposedly simple as having to choose to believe the right thing — rather than being based *entirely* upon what *one*/Christ did for us, is really something one must read into the text based on one's preconceived idea that this salvation depends at least partly (even if just 1%) on us and our wise decision to believe and/or do something specific rather than depends 100% on what *one*/Christ did. This also means it's time to stop ignoring the scriptural truth of predestination,<sup>43</sup> although the thing almost everyone gets confused about when it comes to this topic is that, if everyone will experience general salvation, as Paul said we all will, yet only certain people are chosen,<sup>44</sup> or elected,<sup>45</sup> for salvation, as he also said, then the sort of salvation he meant we're chosen for can only be the special "eternal life" type of salvation that not everyone gets to enjoy, which means that predestination is actually about *when* someone experiences salvation, not about *if* they get to experience it. Basically, while some people are chosen by God to receive a special, early experience of salvation — meaning they'll be quickened and made sinless

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<sup>43</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. — Ephesians 1:11-12

<sup>44</sup> According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: — Ephesians 1:4

<sup>45</sup> Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. — 1 Thessalonians 1:4

before everyone else, among other things — Paul is teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 that *everyone* will *eventually* experience the salvation that involves being quickened and made sinless, even if perhaps not until after they've been resurrected from their second death at the end of the ages.

Of course, many people are uncomfortable with the idea of predestination, and so they like to say things along the lines of, “God doesn’t want robots,” and teach that God gave us something called “free will.” These people don’t understand that “free will” is a complete impossibility from a purely logical and scientific perspective, however, and that it can’t actually exist in reality at all. You see, while everyone agrees that we can make choices, most people who teach the importance of “free will” also believe that the choices we make can’t be predetermined ahead of time in any way, meaning they aren’t subject to causality (although a choice is simply the act of selecting between two or more existing options, regardless of whether the selection that’s made was predetermined or not, which is why the ability to make choices can’t be the definition of “free will” in and of itself). This ignores reality, however, since every choice has to be predetermined, by our nurture and/or nature (meaning our life experiences and/or genetics), and/or by influences outside the sphere of the physical universe (such as<sup>46</sup> by God Himself<sup>47</sup>). You see, even though it might feel like our choices are independent of any cause, and even though the relatively few people who have actually taken the time to try to figure out what the term “free will” even means have concluded that it indeed refers to a choice which is independent of a cause (which it has to be, because if a choice one makes does have a cause, it means the choice was predetermined by that cause, since that’s what it means to be subject to causality), if a choice truly was (or

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<sup>46</sup> A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps. — Proverbs 16:9

<sup>47</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: — Ephesians 1:11

even could be) uncaused, it would mean the choice one made was actually completely random (which I doubt any Christian would think is better than being predetermined). The bottom line is, because an event has to either have a cause or not have a cause, there's no way for any event (even an event such as selecting a specific option or options) to be anything other than caused or uncaused, or at least nobody has ever been able to provide a third option that works within the limits of reality (although, if you disagree, please let me know what that third option is), which is why "free will" is really an entirely meaningless term altogether, unless one is simply using it as a synonym for "random chance." (And yes, I know that the term "freewill offering" is used in the KJV,<sup>48</sup> but it isn't the same thing as the so-called "free will" we're discussing here, as it's simply a label for a certain kind of voluntary offering that wasn't required by God, and in fact *can't* mean the same thing unless you believe the performing of the *required* sacrifices and offerings *was* predetermined by God to be performed by those who chose to do so, meaning they had no ability to choose of their own "free will" to not do perform *those* particular sacrifices and offerings, if "free will" actually existed.)

When Christians talk about "free will," however, what they're almost always really getting at is that they believe the fault for not choosing to believe and/or do the same things as them when it comes to matters of salvation lies entirely with the one making the choice, and that the choice couldn't possibly have been predetermined in any way whatsoever (and this goes for their views on why one sins in the first place as well). There are other reasons too (such as self-righteousness and pride), but one of the big reasons Christians want to insist that "free will" exists is to make sure that God doesn't receive any of the

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<sup>48</sup> Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, Whatsoever he be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his freewill offerings, which they will offer unto the Lord for a burnt offering; — Leviticus 22:18

blame for a person's refusal to choose to "get saved," and to make sure it's clear that the sinner in question is entirely to blame for whatever negative consequences this might result in (to put it simply, it's largely because they want to make sure God is absolved of any responsibility for someone who doesn't choose to "get saved" ending up suffering without end in the unscriptural version of the lake of fire they tend to believe in).

Since everything has to have a cause, however (because otherwise the thing happening would be uncaused, or random), the questions that really matter when discussing the topic of who deserves the credit or blame for a particular choice are:

- 1) "What is the cause of the choices that people make?"
- 2) "Taking all the variables that were present at the time a choice was made into account, could the person making that choice have actually made a choice other than the one they did; and, if so, how, as well as why would they have chosen differently if they did?"

In discussions with Christians on this topic, when asked those very questions, they'll often deflect by saying things along the lines of, "Nothing causes the choice except for the chooser." Of course, even if this tautological attempt at a non-answer were in any way meaningful, or even demonstrably true in and of itself (which it certainly isn't; it's really nothing more than a confused and nonsensical assumption with no foundation, but one which they're forced to believe—pun intended—in order to continue holding on to the idea of "free will"), it tells us absolutely nothing about what really matters, which is why a particular choice is made, and it also ignores the second question altogether. (On purpose, I'm fairly certain, even if just on a subconscious level, likely in

order to avoid thinking about the topic from this perspective so that they couldn't possibly end up discovering that they might be wrong about it.)

But even if we were to ignore all the passages in Scripture that tell us God is ultimately responsible for our salvation (including both everything we've already covered, as well as what we've yet to cover), and put the credit and blame for choices entirely on "the chooser" instead, we'd then have to ask, "What is a chooser?" Well, a "chooser" is simply a person whose brain selects between available options, and one's brain is made up of (among other things) neural connections which are wired differently in each person by a combination of their life experiences and their genetics (our nurture and nature, in other words). The different layouts of the neural networks in each of our brains results in different choices made by each of us, and none of us gets to choose the way our brains are wired, because we didn't get to choose the life experiences and genetics that caused our brains to be wired the way they are at the time an option is selected. This means that, at the end of the day (presuming God doesn't interfere), it's ultimately our life experiences and our genetics that determine what choices we make, which means our choices are, at the very least, predetermined by our nurture and nature. And so the answer to the question of whether, in a hypothetical duplicate parallel universe — with every particle and wave being in the exact same state as it was here when a specific choice was made, including the particles that the atoms which make up the wiring of the brain of the person making the choice consist of — they could have chosen something different has to be, "No, they couldn't have." But if you believe they could have, I'd like to know not only how they possibly could have, but also why they would have (meaning, what would be different in this hypothetical parallel universe, which was identical to ours up until the point they selected the different option they did, that would result in them selecting a different option from the one they did in our universe).

Although there's no scriptural or logical reason to do so, at this point some will try to avoid these facts by claiming that our mind isn't actually generated by our brain, but instead somehow exists on a deeper, "spiritual" level (some will also get into pseudo-scientific talk about quantum realities as well, although I can guarantee you that few to none of them have any idea how quantum mechanics actually works). The problem is, aside from the fact that this is clearly both unscientific and unscriptural (as I covered in my *"What is death?"* Bible study, consciousness, or "soul," is generated by an unconscious spirit powering a biological brain, and can't exist separately from a living body, so please go read that study if this is a fact you aren't already familiar with), even if this idea were true, it couldn't actually help support their ideas so much as simply push the problem back a level. A supposedly "spiritual mind," whatever that's supposed to actually be, still has to be "made" out of something (out of whatever it is that spirit, or whatever it is they're claiming a mind comes from, consists of) and still has to make decisions or choices based on what its "neurological structure," so to speak, would then be made up of, and so the questions of why a particular option was selected over another, and whether another option could have actually been selected instead (and why it wasn't), are still the relevant questions that need to be answered, even if this were the case. Basically, to simply stop at the level of "the chooser" without finding out what "the chooser" consists of and why "the chooser" selects the particular options they do is essentially to say that a specific "chooser" is simply either naturally good or naturally bad (or perhaps naturally intelligent and/or wise, or naturally unintelligent and/or foolish).

In fact, along those lines, other Christians have said things like, "It isn't about the ability to choose something else, but about the inner motives of the heart. Some people choose to not get saved because they are lovers of themselves



and not of God. They don't want let go of their way of life, and so they don't want to believe and be saved. It's a choice that reflects the inner motives of the person." This assertion is actually very close to the truth because, yes, most people do prefer to love themselves over God, and don't want to let go of their current way of life. These facts don't help the common Christian arguments either, though, since it's still getting down to a matter of the nature of "the chooser" while ignoring the question of why the nature of "the chooser" is what it is (basically, why "the chooser's" biological brain, or even "spiritual mind," if you prefer, is "wired" the way it is at the time an option is selected), with the ultimate blame (again, presuming God doesn't interfere) being on that particular selfish and/or evil nature. And if it comes down to just that nature, it means they still couldn't have ever made any other choices than the ones they did since that would go against their nature, which means the choice was ultimately predetermined by that preexisting selfish and/or evil nature which they had no say in being given to them, because said nature was generated by their life experiences and genetics.

I've also heard some Christians suggest that, while God doesn't predetermine everything Himself by manipulating every particle in existence (including the particles that ultimately make up our brains) in order to control every detail of the universe that way, He still gets all of His will fulfilled because He's smart enough to be able to manipulate events within the universe to ensure people do His will. How He'd do this without controlling the very particles that make up the physical universe, though, I'm not sure. Perhaps He only manipulates certain particles, to make sure certain things happen, but stops short of controlling the particles that ultimately make up the human brain. But even if He isn't directly controlling the particles that ultimately make up the human brain, if He's controlling enough details in the rest of the universe to ensure His will is done, He'd still technically be manipulating the brain, even if from the

outside, and if His will ends up being done (as the people who suggest this idea believe happens), then He's still making sure that the brain of the person making the choice does end up making the choice He wants them to make (since otherwise His will wouldn't end up getting fulfilled). And so, at the end of the day, the end result of this idea is still predestination by God, and regardless of how the action that God wants completed ends up happening (whether it be via direct control of the brain or via manipulation based on events happening outside the brain), the action would still end up being predetermined by God.

This all means that there are two options and only two options, which are that either A) our choices are predetermined — by one's nurture and/or nature, and, perhaps, by outside influences such as God — or B) our choices are random. As I already said, nobody has ever been able to give a third option, and until they do, those remain the only two options available for us to work with, which means that even though we do all have a will, our wills can not be said to be free (particularly before we're saved — can a slave to sin<sup>49</sup> be said to be free?), and so it's time to recognize that "free will" is not only a completely illogical and unscientific concept, but that it's entirely unscriptural as well, which means that it's time to throw the idea away and accept that God is fully in control. And don't worry, this doesn't mean we're robots. Because, considering the fact that robots can do all sorts of neat things on their own (relatively speaking), while the Bible refers to us as merely clay in God's hands,<sup>50</sup> well, that would actually give us too much credit.

All that being said, the existence of "free will" is completely irrelevant anyway, at least when it comes to salvation, because whether "free will" could exist or

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<sup>49</sup> For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. — Romans 6:20

<sup>50</sup> Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? — Romans 9:21

not, Paul still places the responsibility for both our condemnation and our eventual salvation (at least our general salvation) on two men, and on two men alone, rather than on each individual human who will ever have lived (and also places the responsibility for whether or not we experience the special “eternal life” type of salvation on one Person alone as well: God, through His choice of whom He’ll give the gift of faith to<sup>51</sup>). The whole point of the parallelisms in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 is to make it clear that *one*/Christ has at least the exact same level of effect on humanity that *one*/Adam had, meaning Christ’s action changes the exact same number of people that fall into the categories of “all” or “many” that Adam’s action did, apart from any choice or choices we make ourselves. (And if Christ’s action *doesn’t* change the exact same number of people that Adam’s action did, it means that Adam’s failure was ultimately more efficacious than Christ’s victory was, making Adam and his sin more powerful than Christ and His death for our sins, considering the fact that none of us had to choose to allow Adam’s sin to make us mortal the way most Christians think we have to choose to allow Christ’s death for our sins to make us immortal.)

If you’re still finding this hard to accept, Paul’s parallelism in 1 Corinthians 15:22 can also be expressed mathematically: “For as in *a*, *x* die, even so in *z*, shall *x* be made alive.” The way parallelisms work means that the set (or variable, if you prefer) known as “*x*” has to be the exact same group (or number) of people in both clauses (with “*a*” and “*z*” being two different reasons for their two respective states at two different periods of time), not two separate groups of people who have to choose between Adam and Christ. In fact, since this is a parallelism, and because we know that nobody specifically made a conscious choice to “choose Adam” (I don’t recall ever thinking to myself, “I accept Adam as my condemner” before becoming mortal, which would have to be the case if

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<sup>51</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

we, “*even so*,” need to choose to “accept Jesus as our Saviour” in order to be made immortal; and if our condemnation happens without our conscious decision to “accept Adam,” then, “*even so*,” our salvation would also have to happen without our conscious decision to “accept Christ,” since this is a parallelism), or chose to die “in Adam,” but rather we were all simply born mortal (remember, our condemnation to mortality, death, and sinfulness was entirely because of *one*/Adam, and not because of anything we ourselves did, or else newborn babies who haven’t sinned yet would never die, and, at the very least, it would be extremely unlikely that third trimester abortions could even be performed), this also means that, “*even so*,” nobody can choose to be “in Christ” either (if this verse meant that it’s up to us to specifically choose to be “in Christ,” it would mean that it was up to us to specifically choose to be “in Adam” first, which we already know isn’t the case, since we’re all born mortal; and if these were positional sorts of states, and we could unknowingly end up “in Adam” by committing an act we didn’t realize placed us there, it would also mean that, “*even so*,” the only way to end up “in Christ” would have to also be by unknowingly committing an act we didn’t realize placed us there either). “All” (“x”) are mortal/dying “through Adam” or “because of what Adam did” (“in a”) rather than because of any choice of their own (our mortality precedes any choice of our own, and is in fact the reason we sin, as we just covered), and they will “all” (“x,” again) also eventually be “made alive”/become immortal “through Christ” or “because of what Christ did” (“in z”) rather than because of any choice of their own. And the same applies to when Paul uses the words “many” and “all” in his parallelisms in Romans 5 as well (go ahead and put an x in place of the words “many” and “all” in the passages in Romans 5 to see for yourself). With this in mind, the only way 1 Corinthians 15:22 could possibly mean that only some people (believers) will be quickened/“made alive” is if the verse said, “For as in Adam only some die, even so in Christ shall only some be made alive,” or if it perhaps said, “For as in Adam all die, *unevenly* so in Christ

shall only some be made alive” (the words “even so” in the verse basically mean “in the same way,” or “equally so,” telling us that the variable  $x$  has to be the same number of people on both sides of the words “even so”).

Unfortunately, due to a combination of the fact that most Christians misunderstand the various passages in Scripture about judgement, “hell,” and the lake of fire, especially the ones that include warnings by Jesus (which are indeed serious warnings, but they don’t mean anything even close to what most people have assumed they mean)—and are misinterpreting these and other Pauline passages about salvation in light of their misunderstandings of those judgement passages rather than interpreting those particular passages in light of these and other Pauline passages about salvation (because they don’t realize that the salvation Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry was an entirely different sort of salvation from the one Paul was writing about here, they mistakenly assume that, since not everyone experiences *that* sort of salvation, not everyone will experience the type of salvation that Paul was writing about here either; but even among the relatively few who do realize that these are different types of salvation, most aren’t aware of the fact that, outside of the cases where he *was* discussing Israel’s salvation under the Gospel of the Kingdom, which is a type of salvation that not everyone will get to enjoy, Paul was sometimes writing about the sort of salvation everyone will experience — which refers to being made immortal, and hence sinless — because of what Christ did, and sometimes simply writing about the special salvation only some will experience, which refers to joining the body of Christ and getting to experience their immortality early, and which itself has different “levels” of rewards that not every member of the body of Christ will necessarily be included in either, and so they make the assumption that he always meant the exact same thing whenever he mentioned salvation or being saved, causing them to end up with the inconsistent and contradictory doctrines they’ve come

to believe instead)—along with the fact that this verse says “in” (“in Adam” and “in Christ”) rather than “through” or “because of” (which is what the word is talking about here), most Christians read these passages and come away with extremely confused interpretations. Since one can only be “in” one of two people at a time, positionally-speaking, this causes them to miss the fact that the word “all” is the exact same group of people in both clauses (referring to “all of humanity”). To be fair, “in” obviously can mean “inside” something, positionally-speaking (either literally or figuratively, depending on the context), but it can also mean “through [the action of]” or “because of” something or someone, and that’s clearly what Paul was getting at in this parallelism.

However, let’s pretend to forget all of the above, and assume for a moment that this passage actually *is* referring to being “in Christ” from a positional perspective rather than referring to our immortality being because of what Christ accomplished. Does that change anything at all about the end result I concluded it would culminate in (all humans eventually experiencing salvation by being quickened)? Not even slightly. To put it simply, because this is a parallelism, we’d then be forced to read it as meaning: just as every human begins dying by being “in Adam,” *even so* every human *will* end up made alive by being “in Christ.” So even if you interpret “in” positionally here, being a parallelism would force this verse to then mean that every single person will be “in” both of these two people (Adam and Christ), figuratively speaking, just at two different points of time in each of their lives. That said, when you consider the fact that the context of the chapter was resurrection and immortality, it’s pretty clear that Paul was literally telling us in this parallelism that even though “because of what Adam did all humans are mortal, even so because of what Christ did all humans will be quickened” (and to be quickened means to experience the last stage of salvation, finally enjoying one’s immortality, and hence sinlessness).

For anyone who might somehow still be sceptical, though, hypothetically speaking, if Paul *was* trying to explain in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 that, because of what Adam did, every single human has been condemned to mortality and sinfulness, yet, *equally so*, because of what Christ did, every single human is guaranteed to eventually enjoy immortality and sinlessness, I'd like you to tell me what he would have needed to have written differently in those chapters in order to convince you that this is what he meant.

All that being said, while Paul tells us in verse 22 of 1 Corinthians 15 that everyone who experiences mortality because of what Adam did will eventually experience immortality because of what Christ did, he also tells us that there's a specific sequential order when it comes to each mortal human being made fully alive beyond the reach of death<sup>52</sup> (meaning that humanity won't all be quickened at the exact same time), with the first order mentioned being "*Christ the firstfruits*," and the second order being "*they that are Christ's at his coming*." Now, there is some debate as to exactly who is included in each of these two orders, with some people believing that the first order refers only to Jesus and that the second order includes everyone who will be quickened around the time of His Second Coming, while others believe that the first order refers to the body of Christ and that the second order is only those in the Israel of God who are quickened after He returns. And while this isn't something I'm dogmatic about, and, in fact, I'm not entirely sure we can even know for certain until we're able to ask Paul what he meant when we see him, I'm personally inclined to interpret the first order as being the whole body of Christ<sup>53</sup> (at the

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<sup>52</sup> But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. — 1 Corinthians 15:23-24

<sup>53</sup> And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. — Romans 8:23

time Christ comes for His body, although with this order of quickenings not actually including the Head of the body Himself, since otherwise verse 22 would also seem to mean that at some point in the future “in Christ shall Christ be made alive,” which seems to be contradicted by Peter, who wrote that Christ was *already* quickened<sup>54</sup> — past tense — by the Holy Spirit, not that He *will* be quickened/“made alive” — future tense, which is the tense verse 22 uses — by His own power, as though He isn’t already immortal now), including those dead members who will be resurrected, as well as the members of the body of Christ who are still living, finally experiencing their immortality at that time (the dead members of the body of Christ will be resurrected first, after which they and the remaining living members of the body of Christ will be “made alive”/made immortal as we meet the Lord in the air), and who will no longer sin from then on (because they’ll no longer be mortal). This event would be God withdrawing His ambassadors<sup>55</sup> from earth (as one does prior to declaring war) before the Tribulation begins, who then go on to fulfill their purpose in Christ in heavenly places.

With that in mind, I personally interpret the second order — “*they that are Christ’s at his coming*” — as referring to those made immortal at the time of the resurrection of the just,<sup>56</sup> 75 days after Jesus returns to earth and the Tribulation period has concluded (people such as “Old Testament” saints, for

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<sup>54</sup> For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: — 1 Peters 3:18

<sup>55</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. — 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

<sup>56</sup> And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. — Luke 14:14



example, at least from the point of Abraham onwards, as well as those who died following the teachings that Jesus and His disciples gave — and please compare the numbers in Daniel 12:11–13<sup>57</sup> to the numbers in Revelation 13:5<sup>58</sup> if you aren't familiar with the 75 day difference between the Second Coming and the resurrection of the just, because this is an important difference which proves that the quickening of the body of Christ takes place prior to the Second Coming, or at least prior to the resurrection of the just). I should say, for a long time I assumed that *everyone* who gets to enjoy the sort of salvation Jesus spoke about, both dead *and* living, will be made immortal at this point, but I've since concluded that only those who were dead and who will be resurrected shortly after the Second Coming will be made immortal at this time, and that everyone else who gets to enjoy “everlasting life” while living in the kingdom of heaven in Israel for 1,000 years will simply remain alive in a “semi-mortal” state (at least to begin with) thanks to partaking of the fruit and the leaves<sup>59</sup> of the tree of life<sup>60</sup> on a monthly basis, and won't be made truly immortal until the final order of quickenings is completed much later. As for why I've come to this conclusion, I'll just quickly say that if the reward for “overcoming” by some of those during the Tribulation will be to partake of the

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<sup>57</sup> And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. — Daniel 12:11-13

<sup>58</sup> And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. — Revelation 13:5

<sup>59</sup> In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. — Revelation 22:2

<sup>60</sup> Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. — Revelation 22:14

tree of life,<sup>61</sup> and if one needs to continuously consume its products in order to remain healthy and alive, as Revelation 22:2 seems to imply, yet the quickening of the resurrected dead happens instantaneously<sup>62</sup> and is irreversible, as is demonstrated by those in the body of Christ when they're caught up in the air to meet the Lord (as well as the fact that those who are still living at the time they begin enjoying what the KJV figuratively refers to as "everlasting life,"<sup>63</sup> or "eternal life,"<sup>64</sup> in the kingdom of heaven for 1,000 years will not be given true immortality at that point, since those who are resurrected after Jesus returns will be like the angels<sup>65</sup> and will no longer marry or reproduce, and if everyone who was given "everlasting life" was quickened/made immortal right then, there wouldn't be anyone left to fulfill the prophecies of righteous Israelites not only growing old but also having children in the kingdom,<sup>66</sup> as

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<sup>61</sup> He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. — Revelation 2:7

<sup>62</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. — 1 Corinthians 15:52

<sup>63</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. — John 3:16

<sup>64</sup> But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. — Mark 10:30

<sup>65</sup> For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. — Matthew 22:30

<sup>66</sup> Again the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the Lord; I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. — Zechariah 8:1-5

well as later on the New Earth<sup>67</sup>), it seems that there must two different methods of remaining alive on this earth and the New Earth (quickenings as the first method, and partaking of the tree of life on a regular basis as the second). That said, as I already mentioned, some like to group the body of Christ in with this order as well, and believe it applies to everyone who experiences the salvation that Jesus spoke about, as well as those who experience the salvation that Paul wrote about — even if some are quickened three-and-a-half or more years apart from each other — and believe the first order is just speaking of Jesus Himself. However, as I already explained, to do so really doesn't make any sense to me, considering the tense of "made alive" in verse 22, so placing the body of Christ in the first order rather than the second seems to make the most sense, and even more-so if I'm correct that only the resurrected dead members of those in the Israel of God will be quickened at the end of the Tribulation, which it would seem has to be the case for the reason I already explained, as well as because there wouldn't be anyone left to fulfill the prophecies of righteous Israelites not only growing old but also having children in the kingdom and on the New Earth if every member of the Israel of God were quickened when Jesus returns, as I've also previously mentioned (and the fact that all the living members of the body of Christ are quickened when they're caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, as well as the fact that the dead in Christ are resurrected *before* those who are still living when they go to meet Him in the air, yet those who are raised from the dead at the resurrection of the just are still dead 75 days *after* Jesus' Second Coming, is also more evidence that the body of Christ is not the Israel of God, and that our respective

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<sup>67</sup> For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. — Isaiah 65:17-20

quickenings take place at different times). But regardless of whether the body of Christ is included in the first order or in the second order, there are still a lot of people who won't have been "made alive" yet during that second order, including the rest of the members of the Israel of God who aren't quickened at the resurrection of the just but are still alive thanks to the fruit of the tree of life (not only 1,000 years later when the kingdom of heaven on earth draws to an end, but for the duration of the final age on the New Earth as well, however long that's going to last), not to mention everyone else who didn't get to enjoy "everlasting" life when Jesus returns. And so the question arises, if all humanity *is* going to be "made alive" because of Christ, yet each in their own order (which Paul told us *is* going to be the case), when will this happen for everyone who isn't included in those first two orders? Well, if everyone will be "made alive" in their own order, there must be at least one more order after that one for the rest of humanity to be included in, and the very next verse tells us there indeed is.

Of course, most people who read this chapter assume "*they that are Christ's at his coming*" in verse 23 is the final order of people to be quickened (if they even realize that Paul was talking about quickening at all), but Paul actually spoke of that third and final order made up of the rest of humanity that we now know also need to be "made alive," when he wrote "*then cometh the end*" in verse 24. Now, this technically could be said to have a double fulfillment of sorts, since the end of the ages *is* almost certainly *when* this final quickening occurs (and is something that the body of Christ has already attained in spirit,<sup>68</sup> and will have also attained physically at their own quickening, long before the actual final age ends), and this has caused most people to misunderstand Paul's statement there to mean that he'd moved on from the topic of resurrection and

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<sup>68</sup> Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. — 1 Corinthians 10:11

immortality and had now begun discussing the end of the world (or the end of the ages, or perhaps even the end of Christ's reign, as others assume) in this verse instead. But Paul hadn't even hinted at any such topics in this chapter so far, yet had just mentioned an order of different groups of people to be "made alive," made up of every mortal human who will have ever lived, as stated in the verse immediately prior to this one (in verse 23 when he wrote, "*but every man in his own order*," which was referring to all the men who are mortal because of Adam being made immortal by Christ — as he said would happen in verse 22 — in their own order), so there's absolutely zero basis that I can think of for interpreting this verse as meaning anything other than Paul telling his readers that "then comes the end of the quickenings of all the orders of men to be 'made alive'" (which tells us that the final *group* of men from the '*every man in his own order*' of groups made up of all men who are mortal will finally be made immortal at that time) and then going on to explain *when* in the future the end of the quickening of all humanity will occur, which will be at the time "*when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power*." I don't believe anyone would disagree with me that when Paul wrote, "*when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God*," he was explaining *when* whatever "*then cometh the end*" happens to mean takes place. And if the end of the world or ages (or even the end of Christ's reign) were going to occur *immediately* after "*they that are Christ's at his coming*" are quickened then it might make sense to assume that's what Paul was referring to there. But as I already mentioned, we know that there will be at least 1,000 years separating the period of time when that particular order of people will be quickened and the time our current world ends and is replaced by the New Earth (and, as those who understand the Doctrine of the Ages — more often referred to as the Doctrine of the Eons — are aware, there are two whole ages, likely made up of thousands of years or more, between that quickening and the end of the ages, which is when Christ's reign ends), so a

new topic about the end of the world, ages, or Christ's reign doesn't really fit there at all because none of those things are going to come to an end immediately (or even any time soon) after "*they that are Christ's at his coming*" are "made alive." Meanwhile, the end of the sequence of people being quickened in a specific order fits there perfectly, since the order of those quickenings is what he'd just been writing about. In fact, if he meant the end of the world, ages, or Christ's reign, he would have then been leaving out that final order of "*every man in his own order*" of all men who are dying from the sequential order of quickenings he'd just started writing about, so it really makes no sense at all for him to have gone from discussing that topic (the specific order of all the people who are mortal and dead because of Adam being "made alive" because of Christ) to suddenly discussing an entirely new topic altogether in this verse — never having even suggested that he was referring to that new topic (Christ's triumph over other rulers and turning the kingdom over to God) anywhere else in the chapter up until this point — and then to return to discussing his original topic of resurrection and quickening again as he does just a few verses later. Since it wasn't the point of the chapter to begin with, there would have been no reason for Paul to have even mentioned Christ delivering the kingdom up to God, to putting down all rule and authority and power, and to the end of Christ's reign over the kingdom (as he discusses in the next few verses after this one) in this chapter at all other than to explain *when* that final order of "*every man in his own order*" to be "*made alive*" that he'd just been discussing actually *is* going to be "*made alive*," by letting his readers know this final quickening would, in fact, not only be the end of the quickenings he'd been writing about in the two verses prior to it, but also that it would be the very last thing Christ does before giving up His reign and turning the kingdom over to God (and, in fact,

that this final quickening would be how death is finally destroyed, as he said it would be a couple verses later<sup>69</sup>).

Now, a lot of Christians simply assume that the reference to the destruction of death in verse 26 is just talking about the salvation of *“they that are Christ’s at His coming”* in verse 23 (they have to, because of their assumption that not everyone will experience the salvation Paul was writing about here). But aside from the fact that death somehow being said to be destroyed by that group of people being quickened (or being saved in whatever way they assume this means) when Christ returns would mean nobody *after* Christ’s return (including anyone born during the thousand-year kingdom in Israel and on the New Earth, as well as those in the Israel of God who aren’t quickened at the Second Coming) could possibly be saved (because the final salvation via the destruction of death would then have already been said to have taken place when Christ returned, since, if salvation was figuratively referred to as the destruction of “death,” there wouldn’t be any “death” left to destroy for anyone else to get saved by it happening again afterwards, since it will have already been destroyed at that point), this also isn’t possible because verses 24 and 25 tell us that His enemies are subjected, and that death is destroyed, at a point in time **after** *“they that are Christ’s at His coming”* have been “made alive,” and **not** than that His enemies are subjected and that death is destroyed **by** that particular group of people being “made alive.” Remember, death is the *last* enemy to be defeated, yet there will still be more death and enemies continuing to exist *long* after the quickening of *“they that are Christ’s at His coming,”* since, aside from any death which will occur on earth during the 1,000 years itself, there’s not only going to be a final (even if somewhat short and one-sided) battle between God and those who consider Him to be their enemy

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<sup>69</sup> For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. — 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

a thousand years *after* the quickening of “*they that are Christ’s at His coming*” which will involve the death of all those enemies who will rise up against Israel in that attack,<sup>70</sup> we’re also told in Isaiah 65 that people will continue to die on the New Earth for a certain period of time as well (when Isaiah wrote, “*There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed*”<sup>71</sup>), long after “*they that are Christ’s at His coming*” have been quickened. And for those who are thinking that Revelation 21:1–8<sup>72</sup> means there won’t be any death on the New Earth, a careful study of that passage should make it clear that only those who get to reside within the walls of the New Jerusalem won’t ever drop dead (or suffer in any way

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<sup>70</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. — Revelation 20:7-9

<sup>71</sup> For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. — Isaiah 65:17-20

<sup>72</sup> And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. — Revelation 21:1-8



anymore), since even if Isaiah hadn't told us that certain people were going to die on the New Earth, the fact that some people will still be mortal (or at least semi-mortal), not to mention the fact that some people will have died a second time in the lake of fire and that their dead bodies will be displayed there for everyone to look upon at that time,<sup>73</sup> also proves that death continues to exist and remain an enemy for at least a certain period of time on the New Earth, because death can't be considered to have been truly destroyed as long as A) anyone remains dead, and/or B) anyone is still in a state of slowly dying (as mortals are), or is even capable of dying (as semi-mortals still are until they're quickened), meaning death won't be destroyed until "*the end*" group of "*every man in his own order*" of groups is finally "made alive" and there aren't any humans left who are not yet immortal (and remember, immortality for humans is always connected with salvation in Scripture,<sup>74</sup> thus proving once again that everyone has to eventually experience the sort of salvation that Paul primarily taught about).

Of course, some Christians instead assume the references to death in these verses are talking about the mythical "spiritual death" that most Christians believe in (and which some of them mistakenly assume the death in verse 22 is talking about as well, although if it was, then Jesus *definitely* couldn't be included in the "firstfruits" reference, unless you believe He also "died spiritually," whatever that means, "in Adam"; although, if He did, He would have

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<sup>73</sup> For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. — Isaiah 66:22-24

<sup>74</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? — 1 Corinthians 15:53-55

then only been “made alive” spiritually “in Himself” as well, and wouldn’t have been physically resurrected), but if this part of the chapter is just talking about a so-called “spiritual death” rather than physical mortality, and it’s only talking about certain people being given some sort of “spiritual life” (or “going to heaven” after they die, which we now know isn’t even a scriptural concept, since only the living can enjoy life in heaven, or at least anyone who has read my *“Heaven isn’t what you think it is”* and *“What is death?”* Bible studies already knows this), the same problem that applies to those who think the destruction of death is simply referring to the salvation of *“they that are Christ’s at His coming”* would have to apply here as well, because the end of “death” doesn’t occur until *after* both *“they that are Christ’s at His coming”* are saved *and* all the rest of Christ’s enemies have been subjected as well, since it’s the *final* enemy to be defeated. (Although, if there were such a thing as “spiritual death,” this would mean that eventually everyone else will also become “spiritually alive” when Christ subjects His enemies and destroys death, since if “death” in this chapter was simply a reference to the so-called “spiritual death” so many believe in, there couldn’t be any “spiritual death” left once Christ destroys it, long after *“they that are Christ’s at His coming”* have been “made alive,” which means that everyone left who is still “spiritually dead” at that time will become “spiritually alive” when death is destroyed as well, especially based on the fact that verse 22 is a parallelism.)

So, unless someone has a better explanation of what these verses are referring to (one which doesn’t contradict the rest of Scripture, and so far one hasn’t been forthcoming when I’ve asked), it would seem the point of verses 24 through 26 definitely has to be about the final order of people to be “made alive,” meaning the rest of the “all” who die because of Adam who haven’t been “made alive” because of Christ yet (including both those who are currently dead at that time — meaning those whose bodies will have been burned up in

the lake of fire at the Great White Throne Judgement, and those who happen to die on the New Earth prior to the destruction of death — as well as those who are still living, thanks to having partaken of the fruit and the leaves of the tree of life to keep from dying, but haven't been quickened yet, referring to those whose names were written in the book of life but who hadn't already been quickened previously, along with their descendants, and also any mortal humans who might be living on the New Earth then as well, not having been given access to the tree of life, of course), finally quickened after the final age is completed and Jesus' reign over the kingdom comes to an end because He's placed all enemies (including death) under His feet (which ultimately just means that He'll no longer have any enemies at that time: in some cases, such as in the case of death, because they've been destroyed altogether and no longer even exist, but in other cases because they'll then be at peace with Him and God,<sup>75</sup> as I'll soon prove from another letter of Paul's) and has turned all rulership (including rulership over Himself) over to His Father, and God is finally "All in all"<sup>76</sup> (yes, in all; not just in a lucky few — if Paul had not pointed out that the "all" he was writing about doesn't include God, people could then turn around and say that "all" doesn't actually mean "all" because it obviously couldn't include God so it could then also exclude people who die as non-believers as well if it doesn't actually mean "all," but because Paul does point out that God isn't included in the "all" but doesn't mention anyone else as being excluded from the group, we know that everyone other than God *is* included in the "all," even those who die as non-believers — and for those who like to argue that "all"

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<sup>75</sup> When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. — Proverbs 16:7

<sup>76</sup> For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. — 1 Corinthians 15:25-28

in this verse can't actually mean everyone because of what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 12:6,<sup>77</sup> what I just wrote about "all" including everyone *other* than God tells us that it *has* to be referring to all sapient creatures other than God in chapter 15 regardless, but that aside, there's no good reason to assume that the "all" in chapter 12 isn't talking about everyone anyway, and based on what the Bible says about God's sovereignty, it almost certainly is).

This means, by the way, that people who use passages which tell us Jesus will reign "for ever"<sup>78</sup> in order to prove that "everlasting punishment" will also never end because those passages use the same words are actually basing their argument on an obvious misunderstanding, since Paul is clear that His reign *won't* be never-ending, but rather will only last until He's defeated the final enemy, and stops reigning after doing so. This also demonstrates just how few people are aware that A) nearly all of the passages that are translated as saying "eternal," "everlasting," "for ever," or "never" in the popular, and less literal, versions of the Bible such as the KJV have to be interpreted qualitatively and figuratively (just as these English words are almost always still used by us today: as hyperbole, meaning they're exaggerated expressions used for the sake of emphasis; for example, if I were to say, "That meeting lasted for ever," I doubt you'd assume I was still in the meeting and that it would, in fact, never actually end, although, if you aren't sure about this, please ponder it for the amount of time it takes an Everlasting Gobstopper to dissolve in your mouth, perhaps while watching a video of one of the various "eternal flames" people have lit being extinguished — the jawbreaker candy might take "for ever" to be completely consumed, perhaps even longer than that video lasts, but like most

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<sup>77</sup> And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. — 1 Corinthians 12:6

<sup>78</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. — Luke 1:32-33

things which are said to be “everlasting” or “eternal,” its time will eventually come to an end as well) rather than quantitatively and literally, based on this fact, as well as that B) everyone will eventually be quickened/“made alive,” which Paul knew because he saw much farther into the future than John did in the prophecies he recorded in the book generally called Revelation (John basically only saw into the beginning of the New Earth, when death is a much less powerful force than it is now, but still exists, since, at the very least, there will still be people dead in the lake of fire at that time, whereas Paul saw a much later point of time, at the end of the ages, when death is finally destroyed altogether, and nobody can be left dead at all if there isn’t any death left — which there couldn’t be if it’s been destroyed).

And since many Christians often make a similar mistake when they try to insist that, “If ‘eternal damnation’ isn’t actually never ending, then ‘eternal life’ would have to come to an end as well, and we’d eventually die,” I’m forced to point out that they really aren’t thinking things through when they make this assertion, since we’ve already determined that the “for ever” words in the KJV generally have to be interpreted qualitatively rather than quantitatively (or figuratively rather than literally), so we have to assume they aren’t talking about how long one lives (or how long one is punished) so much as about the form or quality of the life and judgements they experience will be (and, in fact, most Christians *already* interpret this term figuratively or qualitatively anyway, as those who have read my “*What is death?*” Bible study should now be quite aware, based on the fact that most Christians believe everyone lives on in a conscious state after they die — contrary to what Scripture teaches, as explained in that study — which means they interpret “eternal life” quite figuratively, or qualitatively, rather than literally, or quantitatively, since otherwise they’d have to agree that *everyone* will enjoy the form of salvation known as “eternal life”). And so, just because one’s time experiencing “eternal damnation” will come to

an end, it doesn't stand to reason that anyone enjoying "eternal life" in the future will eventually die (or lose their salvation), because it isn't verses about "eternal life" that promise us lives which never end anyway, but rather it's verses about our impending immortality which tell us we'll never die (at least after our quickening). So, when people are eventually resurrected from their second death in the lake of fire to be "made alive"/quickened (which they'll have to be in order for it to be able to be said that death has truly been destroyed, since as long as death continues to hold anyone prisoner, death hasn't actually been defeated or destroyed at all, but rather continues to be an enemy), members of the body of Christ will still remain alive, although not because of any passage that speaks of "eternal life" but rather because of passages that tell us we'll already have been made immortal. Basically, when someone reaches the end of the figurative "for ever" or "everlasting life," that particular aspect of their salvation (the special sort of salvation that only a few will ever get to enjoy) will be over, but they'll still remain alive because they'll have bodies that can't die (or, if they're among those who get to enjoy "everlasting life" in Israel, or perhaps even on the New Earth, but haven't been made immortal yet, they'll finally be given immortality, along with everyone else).

The simple truth is, it should be quite obvious to anyone who has made it this far (and really to anyone who has read the whole Bible and was actually paying attention when they did so) that the words "everlasting" and "eternal" (not to mention "for ever") almost never actually mean "never ending" (or "without end") when you read them in less literal translations of Scripture such as the KJV, any more than they do when they're used in everyday speech today, but almost always have to be read as hyperbole in such Bible versions. This isn't to say it's impossible that these words are meant to be interpreted quantitatively rather than qualitatively in certain passages where they're used in the KJV and other less literal Bible translations, of course (and I'm certainly not insisting

that they couldn't possibly have ever had a quantitative meaning when they were used outside of Scripture back then either), but one has to consider each instance of these words extremely carefully when reading Scripture, looking at the context of the passage, as well as of Scripture as a whole, before deciding they are meant to be interpreted quantitatively in a specific passage, so as not to contradict the rest of Scripture (since, if Scripture contradicted itself, there would be no reason to even consider what the Bible has to say about this topic in the first place, and nearly anyone who did so would likely be wasting their time). And when one looks into Scripture in its original languages, while taking everything we've covered in this study into consideration (as well as what we've yet to cover, as you'll soon discover), it becomes evident that "for ever" in the KJV and other less literal Bible translations *has* to generally be a figurative term meaning "for the age" (referring to the impending age that will last for 1,000 years when the Israel of God rules the planet after Jesus returns) or "for the ages" (referring to the final two — and greatest — ages, including both the 1,000-year age when the Israel of God will rule the world, as well as the final age on the New Earth, prior to the end of the ages), and that "everlasting" and "eternal" in the KJV also have to both generally be figurative terms which mean "pertaining to an age or ages" or "taking place during an age or ages" (referring again to one or both of the two aforementioned future ages, depending on the context), although these three terms can also sometimes simply figuratively refer to an indefinite period of time in the present evil age we currently live in, but with a definite beginning and end (similarly, looking at the Greek while taking everything we've covered into consideration makes it clear that the word "never" in the KJV also has to often be a figurative translation, generally just meaning "not for the age," telling us that, whatever the passage in question is referring to, it won't happen during the impending 1,000-year age). However, for those who are looking for even more proof of this than what Paul wrote (although the fact that Paul tells us everyone will be quickened/"made

alive” should make this obvious enough to anyone who is being honest with themselves), all we have to do is look to the Hebrew Scriptures (meaning the books of the Bible which are generally referred to as “the Old Testament”) which make it very clear that nearly everything referred to by these words in the less literal English Bible versions using them does eventually come to an end.

For example, in Exodus 21:6 we read about servants who choose to remain in servitude rather than going free on the seventh year, as was their right: *“Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.”* If we interpret “for ever” as literally referring to a period of time that never ends, it would either mean that the servant (or slave) in question can never die, or that the servant will have to remain in bondage to his master without end, even after both of their physical resurrections and judgements at the Great White Throne in the distant future (as well as in any afterlife, if one actually existed, in the meantime, even if they both ended up in different places while dead, although we now know from what we’ve covered that there is no conscious afterlife, but for those who believe there is one, this point would still apply). Since I doubt anyone believes either of these options to be the case, I trust everyone would agree that the “for ever” in this verse is actually a hyperbolic translation which really means “for a specific time period, even if the end date (the time of the servant’s death) is currently unknown,” which demonstrates that when we see the phrase “for ever” in the Bible, we can’t just automatically assume it means “without end.”

Of course, some Bible versions do say things like “for life,” or “permanently,” rather than “for ever” in this verse, but at the very least, you have to admit that עולם/“o-lawm” (which is the Hebrew word that “for ever” is translated from in this verse in the KJV) doesn’t literally mean “without end” or “never ending” (or



at least doesn't necessarily always mean "without end" or "never ending"), and this tells us that just because we see "for ever" in an English translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (or even "everlasting," for that matter, which is also translated from the same Hebrew word), it doesn't mean we should automatically assume *it* means "without end" or "never ending" either, which is really all I'm getting at here.

However, I have had people insist that, even if the word עולם doesn't necessarily mean "never ending" in an ontological sense, the word should still always be understood as meaning something along the lines of: "it's going to be like this for as long as the thing or person in question exists." Aside from the problems this would cause that we've already discussed about the servant remaining enslaved even after his death and resurrection (unless you believe the servant never exists again after his death, and there's nothing in the text which indicates that עולם should only apply to his first life on earth if you're going to read it this way), this assertion also ignores the fact that עולם was translated other ways which contradict this conclusion as well, such as when it was rendered as "of old" in Deuteronomy 32:7,<sup>79</sup> and to insist that the word absolutely *has* to be rendered in a more "perpetual" manner would also mean that verse would have needed to be translated as saying something along the lines of "remember the days that never ended," or "remember the days that we're still experiencing," instead.

But is there any basis for my assertion that the word עולם doesn't necessarily mean "without end" anywhere else in the Bible, or are those the only examples? In fact, that this word doesn't necessarily mean "never ending" when it's used in the Bible can be seen in *many* places throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. For

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<sup>79</sup> Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. — Deuteronomy 32:7

example, Isaiah 32:14–15 says: “*Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.*” Unless we’re meant to believe that Jerusalem will be left forsaken and desolate and never recover or be inhabited again, as verse 14 seems to say, we have to interpret that “for ever” as meaning a specific period of time again, just as we had to do with the previous example. And, indeed, verse 15 tells us when that “for ever” ends, stating that Jerusalem will be left deserted “for ever,” *until* the spirit be poured from on high.

And those weren’t the only passages to demonstrate that it doesn’t mean “never ending.” We also read about the fact that the Levitical priesthood will be “everlasting” in Exodus 40:15<sup>80</sup> (with “everlasting” also being translated from עוֹלָם there), yet we know from Hebrews 7:14–22 that the priesthood of Aaron’s descendants is to be replaced by Jesus Christ, who will be “*a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*,”<sup>81</sup> and we know from 1 Corinthians 15 that even this new priesthood which is figuratively said to last “for ever” is eventually no longer going to be necessary either (since you don’t need any priest once there’s no

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<sup>80</sup> And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations. — Exodus 40:15

<sup>81</sup> For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest: (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. — Hebrews 7:14–22

sin or death remaining). That this “everlasting” priesthood will eventually come to an end is also backed up by the fact that, while the believing descendants of Isaac and Jacob will reign over the people of the earth as “kings and priests” during the thousand-year period of time when the kingdom of heaven finally fully exists on earth,<sup>82</sup> there almost certainly won’t be any Israelite priests on the New Earth at all, because there won’t be any need for them with no physical temple in the New Jerusalem<sup>83</sup> (and there definitely won’t be a need for them after the ages end and death has been destroyed, since everyone will have been quickened at that point, and so a priesthood will no longer be necessary).

Similarly, in Isaiah 24:5 we read, *“The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.”* This seems to tell us that the Old Covenant (also known as the Mosaic covenant, which is the only covenant that can be broken by humans — specifically by Israelites, since the Gentiles weren’t under the Mosaic law or connected with the covenants God made with Israel<sup>84</sup> — because all the other covenants of God are unconditional) can never come to an end and be replaced by a New Covenant because it’s said to be “everlasting,” but we know from other parts of Scripture that there *will* be a New Covenant for those in the

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<sup>82</sup> And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. — Revelation 5:10

<sup>83</sup> And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. — Revelation 21:22

<sup>84</sup> For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; — Romans 9:3-4

house of Israel and the house of Judah,<sup>85</sup> and that their Old Covenant in fact began to decay<sup>86</sup> when Christ died<sup>87</sup> (and will indeed eventually vanish away entirely, if it hasn't already). So we can see that "everlasting" doesn't necessarily mean "never ending" or "without end" when we read that word in the Bible any more than "for ever" does.

And it's not just the Old Covenant that's referred to as an "everlasting covenant" in the KJV. The Abrahamic covenant is too, in 1 Chronicles 16:16-18.<sup>88</sup> But since we know that the land of Canaan (now known as the land of Israel), which is what the promise in this covenant is about, will eventually cease to exist when the earth is replaced by the New Earth, the "everlasting" period of time that this covenant will last will also expire when our current planet does (which has to happen, since if our current universe isn't replaced by a New Heaven and a New Earth, our current earth would get pretty dark at the time of

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<sup>85</sup> Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. — Jeremiah 31:31-34

<sup>86</sup> In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. — Hebrews 8:13

<sup>87</sup> And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. — Hebrews 9:15-17

<sup>88</sup> Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; — 1 Chronicles 16:16-18

the heat death of the universe, presuming it isn't first engulfed by the sun when our star goes Red Giant, of course, as is believed to be likely to happen in a few billion years, give or take).

The translators of the KJV also demonstrated quite clearly that they didn't believe עולם always means "without end" in Ecclesiastes 12:5,<sup>89</sup> where they used the word עולם to say "his long home" when referring to the time someone who is dead spends in the grave. Since we know that everyone who dies will eventually be resurrected to face judgement (or enjoy salvation) one day, nobody could ever be resurrected from the dead if עולם meant "never ending." (Interestingly, though, some Bible versions actually *do* translate the verse to say "eternal home," telling us that the word "eternal" can be just as figurative in those versions as it is in the KJV, unless we're to believe there's no resurrection of the dead.)

Now, I could go on and on with example<sup>90</sup> after example<sup>91</sup> of things that were said to be "for ever"<sup>92</sup> or "everlasting" that eventually ended in the Bible, but I trust it's obvious by now that the translators believed those who read the KJV are able to understand figurative language, and that they never intended for anyone to simply assume the terms "for ever" or "everlasting" should definitely

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<sup>89</sup> Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: — Ecclesiastes 12:5

<sup>90</sup> I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. — 1 Kings 8:13

<sup>91</sup> Behold, I build an house to the name of the Lord my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. — 2 Chronicles 2:4

<sup>92</sup> The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow. — 2 Kings 5:27

be interpreted as meaning “never ending” or “without end” when translated from the Hebrew Scriptures, with “for ever” generally just being figurative language that refers to “an age,” or to “a seemingly long period of time with a definite beginning and end,” and “everlasting” generally just meaning “age-pertaining” (“pertaining to an age or ages,” in other words), age-during (“taking place during an age or ages,” in other words), or even just “long lasting,” with nearly everything that’s said to be “everlasting” or said to last “for ever” eventually coming to an end. These words are quite clearly being used as hyperbole in most parts of these books in the KJV and other less literal Bible translations, and are not meant to be taken literally at all (and if you look עוֹלָם up in a concordance, you can see many more examples for yourself proving that this Hebrew word doesn’t necessarily mean “never ending” or “without end,” and that “for ever” and “everlasting” don’t either).

And with all that in mind, if “for ever” and “everlasting” don’t necessarily mean “without end” or “never ending” in the parts of the Bible translated from the Hebrew Scriptures, it stands to reason that there’s a good chance they don’t necessarily mean that in the parts of the Bible translated from the Greek Scriptures either (meaning the books of the Bible which are generally referred to as “the New Testament”). Outside of the clear proof I’ve just provided from Paul’s epistles that they don’t, based on what he wrote about everyone being “made alive” (at least it should be clear proof for those who are using systematic theology to interpret Scripture and aren’t ignoring everything we’ve already covered), this is also made obvious by the fact that עוֹלָם is translated as αἰωνίον/“ahee-o'-nee-ohn” in the parts of the LXX (also known as the Septuagint, which is the earliest still-existing Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) where it’s translated figuratively as “everlasting” in the KJV, and since αἰωνίον is often translated as “everlasting” or “eternal” in the books of the less literal Bible versions translated from the Greek Scriptures (although it’s not

always translated that way either, even in the KJV, also making it clear that αἰωνίων can mean things other than “never ending,” which is why it’s sometimes also transliterated as “eonian” — which literally means “pertaining to an eon/age or eons/ages” — depending on your Bible version), one would think this means that we shouldn’t just automatically assume the words “everlasting” and “eternal” were definitely meant to be interpreted literally in the English translations of these books either (especially since, if עולם often *doesn’t* mean “never ending,” it makes no sense to then say that its Greek translation as αἰωνίων can *only* mean “never ending,” as some insist, when we already know from the LXX that it *rarely* means that anyway), and that neither should “never” or “for ever,” both of which are also translated from cognates of αἰωνίων: such as αἰών/“ahee-ohn’,” which literally means a singular “age,” or long period of time with a definite beginning and end (which is why it’s sometimes transliterated as “eon,” depending on your Bible version), and αἰῶνας/“ahee-ohn’-as,” which literally means plural “ages,” or multiple periods of time, each with a definite beginning and end, based on the definition of the word “age” (which is why this word is sometimes transliterated as “eons,” depending on your Bible version), and which are both translated as “age” and “ages”<sup>93</sup> in different parts of less literal English translations as well — although the KJV tends to use “world” in places that mean “age,”<sup>94</sup> but various other less literal translations use “age” instead of “world” in those same verses—telling us that these words definitely don’t only mean “can’t ever” or “without end.”

In fact, unless we want to believe there are three eternities, including a “past eternity” (we can see from the way the KJV translators rendered 1 Corinthians

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<sup>93</sup> Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: — Colossians 1:26

<sup>94</sup> But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: — Luke 20:35

2:7 to say “*before the world*”<sup>95</sup> instead of “before for ever” or “before eternity” that they knew better than to always translate the word αἰών in a manner that denotes a period of time which never ends), as well as a “present eternity” and a “future eternity” (which the KJV translators rendered as “*neither in this world, neither in the world to come*”<sup>96</sup> rather than “neither in this for ever or in the for ever to come” or “neither in this eternity or in the eternity to come” in Matthew 12:32), we can see that the word αἰών simply doesn’t necessarily mean “without end,” just as the KJV’s rendering of αἰωνίων as “*before the world began*” in 2 Timothy 1:9<sup>97</sup> instead of “before eternity began,” and as “*since the world began*” in Romans 16:25<sup>98</sup> instead of “since eternity began,” proves that αἰωνίων doesn’t necessarily mean “never ending” either (in fact, I’m not aware of a single version of the Bible that renders it as “eternity” in this verse). So if anyone ever tries to claim that αἰωνίων can *only* mean “never ending” or some other word or phrase that denotes an endless period of time, and that it can’t possibly refer to something more temporary, simply show them the passages I just referred to, which is all the proof one needs that this isn’t the case at all.

This all goes for when the word αἰών is translated in a sentence to say “never” as well, as already mentioned. This can be demonstrated by the way John 11:25-26 is rendered in the KJV: “*Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth*

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<sup>95</sup> But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: — 1 Corinthians 2:7

<sup>96</sup> And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. — Matthew 12:32

<sup>97</sup> Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, — 2 Timothy 1:9

<sup>98</sup> Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, — Romans 16:25



*and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* We know this *can't* be a literal translation, because people who believed in Jesus at the time He made that statement *did* eventually die physically (and still do today). So unless we're to believe that Paul actually *wasn't* revealing a mystery (meaning revealing a secret which hadn't been disclosed before he did so) in 1 Corinthians 15:51 when he wrote, "*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,*" we have to interpret the word "never" figuratively in the KJV in that passage in John, since Paul was the *first* to reveal the secret that some people will never die prior to being made immortal. And Jesus couldn't have been referring to the supposed "spiritual death" that most Christians believe in, because "never" literally means "not even one time," yet Christians believe we already "died spiritually" at least once, at the time of our first sin, so it couldn't refer to that concept even if there was such a thing as "spiritual death," at least not without adding the word "again" to the sentence (and that word is definitely not there in the original Greek, any more than it's there in the KJV). So unless Paul was lying about this being a mystery, or secret, at the time he wrote about it, the passage in John *has* to be a figurative translation of the Greek, simply meaning, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not be dying for the age," telling us that believers (at least believers saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom, since this was stated by Jesus during His earthly ministry) won't die during the 1,000-year age they'll enjoy in the kingdom of heaven when it begins on the earth (the reason we know it's only referring to that one particular age rather than referring to multiple ages is because it's translated from an Accusative Singular variation of αἰών rather than from a plural variation of the word).

And even in passages where it might seem to make sense to interpret the terms literally on first glance, such as Romans 16:26 for example<sup>99</sup> (which uses the phrase “*the everlasting God*” in the KJV), this still isn’t necessarily the case. Some would insist that to interpret it figuratively would mean that God will eventually die, but this verse isn’t actually trying to tell us that God’s life will never end in the first place. The fact of the matter is, we already know that God isn’t going to die based on earlier Scripture, such as Psalm 102:27, which told us long ago that His “*years shall have no end*,”<sup>100</sup> so that’s not something Paul needed to explain to his readers. Instead, if we interpret the word “everlasting” consistently with its other instances in the KJV (meaning we interpret it as figuratively referring to a long period of time, or even as pertaining to the ages), we can see that Paul is simply telling us that God is the age-pertaining God, meaning He doesn’t just sit on high, removed from our struggles in time, but rather that He cares about — and is even intimately involved in — what happens during the ages. And those who might think this limits Him to the ages aren’t thinking things through carefully enough, since otherwise God being said to be

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<sup>99</sup> But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: — Romans 16:26

<sup>100</sup> But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. — Psalm 102:27

the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob<sup>101</sup> would limit Him to being the God of those three men, and those three men alone, as well. And the same goes for passages such as Galatians 1:3-5<sup>102</sup> and Philippians 4:20,<sup>103</sup> where a more consistent interpretation of the passages as figuratively saying “to our God and Father be glory for the ages of the ages” wouldn’t mean they’re telling us that God’s glory will end when the ages do, any more than the figurative interpretation of Romans 16:26 means that God’s life would end at that time; it just means that Paul was simply focusing on the glory God will finally receive — which He certainly isn’t receiving now, at least not to the extent He will at that time — when the two greatest ages finally begin (which, as those who are familiar with the Doctrine of the Ages know, is referring to the thousand-year age when the kingdom of heaven exists in Israel, as well as to the final age on the New Earth, but I don’t have the space to get into the details of that topic here so I’m going to leave it up to you to dig deeper into that subject if you’re at all curious to learn more). Simply put, with very few exceptions, the Bible doesn’t delve into details pertaining to eternity, but is instead focused almost

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<sup>101</sup> Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him, Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him. — Luke 20:27-38

<sup>102</sup> Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. — Galatians 1:3-5

<sup>103</sup> Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. — Philippians 4:20

entirely on details pertaining to the ages (even though this fact might be less obvious to people who only read less literal translations of Scripture). What occurs after the end of the ages isn't something that God seems to want us to know about right now (other than to know that everyone will have been quickened/saved by that time), and He appears to want us to concern ourselves with what happens *during* the ages instead.

But even if we did interpret “everlasting” and “for ever and ever” in those particular passages literally, the fact remains that, if we're reading Bible versions which do use the words “for ever,” “everlasting,” and “eternal,” one has to be aware that “for ever” in those versions is very often just figurative language that refers to “an age” or “ages,” or to “a seemingly long period of time with a definite beginning and end,” and the same goes for not only “everlasting,” but also “eternal,” which is often used as a synonym for “everlasting” in the KJV and is almost always translated from the same Greek word — with the one exception,<sup>104</sup> where it's instead translated from ἀἰδίος/“ah-id'-ee-os,” not causing any problem for the doctrine of the salvation of all humanity at all. And so the bottom line is that we should always be considering the context of the passages these various words are being used in, as well as comparing these passages to the rest of Scripture, in order to determine whether these terms actually should be literally interpreted as meaning “without end” or “never ending” (not to mention “can't ever,” in the case of the word “never” being used) in those instances, or whether they should be interpreted figuratively instead, to make sure a literal interpretation of the English translation wouldn't contradict other parts of the Bible, in other words. And, just as the scriptural references to an “everlasting” Old Covenant can't literally be talking about a

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<sup>104</sup> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: — Romans 1:20

never-ending covenant, because that would contradict the passages which talk about how it has to fade away and be replaced with by a New Covenant, scriptural references to “everlasting” judgements (or to punishments which last “for ever,” or even “for ever and ever”) can’t literally be talking about judgements and punishments which never end, because that would contradict the passages which talk about the salvation of all. (This, by the way, also means that, while we can be said to be given “eternal life” at the point we believe the Gospel and are saved, this can really only be said to be the case from a proleptic perspective, because the actual, physical experience of “eternal life” — referring to our quickening and being taken to the heavens, in the case of those of us in the body of Christ, and to getting to live in the kingdom of heaven during the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, in the case of those in the Israel of God — can’t actually begin from a literal perspective until the final ages actually commence, since we now know that the phrase really means “age-pertaining life” when interpreted consistently with the rest of Scripture.) And even if one were to simply ignore everything I covered about the Hebrew and Greek words we just looked at, the facts about the figurative meaning of the words they’re translated into in the KJV should still be pretty obvious based on the passages I used to discuss them in their original languages.

But in case anybody is somehow still sceptical about the salvation of all humanity, Paul confirmed it beyond any shadow of a doubt when he wrote in 1 Timothy 2:3–6 that Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all.<sup>105</sup> You see, when a ransom is fully paid, all those who are held captive are set free, unless the one paying the ransom has been lied to (and there’s nothing in this passage which qualifies the “all” as referring only to believers, so to insist it only includes them

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<sup>105</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. — 1 Timothy 2:3-6

is to once again read one's assumptions into the text, especially in light of the fact that Paul began the chapter talking about all men alive at the time,<sup>106</sup> and also said in verse 4 that "all mankind" is included in those whom God wills to salvation, and there's nothing in the text to indicate he'd suddenly begun referring only to believers immediately after that, but instead wrote that Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for the same "all" he'd been talking about already, telling his readers that every human who will have ever lived has been ransomed, even though they won't all experience their salvation at the same time).

To break it down:

1. Anyone Christ "gave Himself a ransom" for *will* be ransomed.
2. If someone is ransomed as a result of Christ's death, they *will* be saved.
3. The "all" Christ "gave Himself a ransom" for includes all mankind.
4. All mankind will be saved.

Please don't confuse this as meaning that Christ died in our place, receiving the penalty for our sins so we wouldn't have to receive said penalty for our sins ourselves, though, as many Christians believe He did (so long as we choose to believe He did so, they'd also claim). Of course, even if the idea that Christ paid the price for our sins in our place were a scriptural concept, it makes no sense that we would have to choose to believe He paid the price for our sins in our place in order for Him to have actually paid the price for our sins in our place (He either did or He didn't, and our belief couldn't change the fact either way — although, if it could, it would then be our belief that ultimately saved us rather

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<sup>106</sup> I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. — 1 Timothy 2:1-2

than simply Christ Who saved us), because if those who didn't choose to believe it then had to pay the price themselves, it would mean God was double-charging, which would be quite dishonest of Him (not to mention most unfair to His Son, Who endured beatings and the pain and humiliation of the cross before entering the death state, all in order to be a ransom for *all* sinners in order to save them,<sup>107</sup> and God isn't going to shortchange Him of any of the sinners He suffered and died for in order to save, regardless of whether some of them might not have been born wise enough to come to believe He did so prior to their death or His return — and those who don't believe this good news includes most Christians out there as well, by the way, since they themselves don't believe that He ransomed "all" humanity through His death for our sins either, which means they haven't fully understood — and hence can't be said to have truly believed — Paul's Gospel themselves).

That said, there's absolutely nothing *anywhere* in Scripture which even *implies* that Jesus died "in our place," or that He received the penalty for anyone's sins "in their place" so they wouldn't have to pay the price for their sins themselves. However, for those who have never really thought about this, let's consider what it would mean if He actually *did* pay a penalty for our sins so that we don't have to suffer that particular penalty ourselves. If He did, and if ending up in the lake of fire without being able to leave it was the penalty for our sins (whether consciously or otherwise), it would mean that Jesus would have to still be burning in the lake of fire (experiencing the specific punishment we deserve is what paying the penalty "in our place" means, after all). But since He never even set foot in the lake of fire to begin with (He couldn't have, since it hasn't even begun burning in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom yet, at least not as of the time this study was written, and He wasn't crucified or buried in that

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<sup>107</sup> This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. — 1 Timothy 1:15

valley either), much less remained there for all time (which would have to be the case if that truly was the price to be paid for our sins that He paid), burning without end in the lake of fire obviously wasn't a punishment He suffered "in our place," which means it couldn't possibly be the specific penalty we deserve either, at least not if He *did* pay the penalty we deserved "in our place." And if the penalty He supposedly paid "in our place" was simply death instead, nobody who "got saved" would ever actually drop dead, which obviously isn't the case (and believers have been crucified as well, so it wasn't simply crucifixion that He endured "in our place" either, if that was the penalty He paid "in our place"). This also means the penalty couldn't be never-ending "separation from God," since, if it were, Jesus would also have to be separated from God at this point in time, and for all time, in order to truly "pay the penalty in our place." And for those who want to suggest that the penalty might be "spiritual death," whatever that's supposed to be, it would again have to mean that A) Christ "died spiritually" for us "in our place" (and I'm assuming nobody actually believes He "died spiritually") rather than died physically on the cross, but also that B) nobody can be "spiritually dead" before they die physically if Christ paid that penalty "in our place," yet most Christians believe we're *already* "spiritually dead" *prior* to salvation, so there's no way He could have "died spiritually" for us "in our place" so we don't have to ever "die spiritually" ourselves, because we're already in this spiritual state *before* we get saved (or we would be if the common Christian viewpoints of "spiritual death" and Penal Substitutionary Atonement were true, of course).

This doesn't mean that there *isn't* a penalty for our sins, however. In fact, there is, and that penalty is indeed death. It's just that Jesus didn't die "in our place" to receive the penalty so we don't have to, which should be obvious considering the fact that believers continue to drop dead today. And while it's true that the reason we die is simply the mortality we inherited from Adam, the



sins we can't avoid because of that mortality also make us worthy of the death most of us will experience,<sup>108</sup> so any mortal humans who end up sinning (which is all of us,<sup>109</sup> or at least all of us who don't die before we're able to sin, although everyone who does die prior to that point will presumably eventually sin as they grow up on the New Earth after they're resurrected) still need to have their sin dealt with. Because, sure, God could temporarily overlook sin, and in "Old Testament" times He did indeed pass over the penalties of many sins which occurred<sup>110</sup> (especially the sins of those who participated in the sacrificial system under the Mosaic law, presuming they didn't commit "a sin unto death,"<sup>111</sup> meaning a sin that had a death penalty attached to it under the law). But the blood of bulls and goats could not actually take away sins<sup>112</sup> (the death of these animals couldn't actually remove the penalty of sin, nor could it keep us from sinning again), and so if Christ had not given His life for us (and if God hadn't known ahead of time that this was going to happen), it would have been unjust of God (Who judges according to truth<sup>113</sup>) to pass over the penalty

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<sup>108</sup> And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. — Romans 1:28-32

<sup>109</sup> For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; — Romans 3:23

<sup>110</sup> Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; — Romans 3:25

<sup>111</sup> If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. — 1 John 5:16-17

<sup>112</sup> For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. — Hebrews 10:4

<sup>113</sup> But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. — Romans 2:2

of their sins, and treat them as if they *hadn't* sinned and *weren't* deserving of death (and it would be equally unjust of Him to simply forgive us today without what Christ did as well).

Because He lived a completely sinless life and then became “*obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*,”<sup>114</sup> however, Christ became *more* deserving of the authority to save us sinners than we sinners remained deserving of death. In fact, He was given all power (once again translated from the Greek ἐξουσία, which we now know simply means “authority”) in heaven and in earth,<sup>115</sup> and so now not only does Christ have the power, meaning authority, to save all the sinners He died to save from the condemnation our sins made us deserving of, as well as to quicken everyone and destroy death altogether, God is now also able to righteously forgive sins at any time because His doing so is in accord with what Christ deserves due to His obedience. And since Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:15 that “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*,” and not that Christ Jesus came into the world to save only those few sinners who happened to be born wise enough to decide to let Him save them, every sinner will ultimately end up saved in the end because it’s what Christ Jesus came to do and deserves.

So, while He didn’t die “in our place,” or pay the penalty “in our place” (since most of us still die), Christ *did* die in order that *the penalty could be justly set aside* and everyone can be forgiven, justified, resurrected (if they’ve died), and even made free from ever being able to die (quicken, in other words). That’s not all, though. Because He died *for our sins*, He not only condemned sin (not us

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<sup>114</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. — Philippians 2:8

<sup>115</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. — Matthew 28:18

— sin itself) in the flesh,<sup>116</sup> but His death also put away sin,<sup>117</sup> removing sin from the equation for all humanity altogether (thus making Him the antitype of the goat in the wilderness in the Mosaic law,<sup>118</sup> among other things), and if sin has been put away, it's no longer something anyone needs to worry about.

Remember, Jesus' six hours of torment on the cross touched an aspect of humanity's condition that the swift death of the Passover lambs could never reach (remember, Israel's Passover lambs were not tortured during the temple sacrifices under the Mosaic law — rather, their throats were slit, with that being the extent of their suffering; however, the same can't be said about Jesus Christ on the cross). In fact, the depth of suffering during His time on the cross goes deeper than anything anyone prior to Paul ever understood, telling us that the whole race is finished (the Passover lambs left Israel intact while the cross wiped out everything and everyone in its path<sup>119</sup>). The apostles looked back to the patriarchs, but when Paul taught about what happened on the cross, he went all the way back to Adam in his explanations.<sup>120</sup> No other writers discussed Adam when it came to dealing with sin and salvation; they wrote about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, among others, but only Paul traced

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<sup>116</sup> For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: — Romans 8:3

<sup>117</sup> For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. — Hebrews 9:26

<sup>118</sup> And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. — Leviticus 16:20-22

<sup>119</sup> For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: — 2 Corinthians 5:14

<sup>120</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. — 1 Corinthians 15:22

our entire spiritual history back to the first man,<sup>121</sup> and only in his Gospel is the entire race made new. Yes, the Hebrew Scriptures promised a new birth for Israel, but the new creation Paul taught about is to the new birth what a lake is to a teacup. You see, when Jesus rose from the grave, there was a whole new creation (referred to as a new “creature” in the KJV) which came into existence,<sup>122</sup> one which comes into the lives of everyone who believes Paul’s Gospel today,<sup>123</sup> and which will eventually come into the lives of every human who will ever have lived. In addition, when He went down into the tomb, it can be said that He brought sin down into the earth with Him, and when He was resurrected three days later, He returned without that sin, and so sin is no longer being held against anyone anymore, regardless of whether they believe it or not, because Christ died *for our sins*, which is yet more proof that everyone will experience salvation in the end, when they’re eventually made immortal (although those relative few who “*come unto the knowledge of the truth*” now, meaning those who understand and believe what it means that Christ died for our sins, and that He was buried and rose again on the third day, get to enjoy a special form of salvation on top of the type of salvation that everyone will experience: including freedom from religion — because they know there’s nothing they have to do, or even that they could do, in order to receive the benefits of what Christ did for us, since they’re aware that having to do any act at all would be a work performed in order to earn that gift, even if that act was simply having to choose to receive the free gift that Christ already guaranteed for us all, and also getting to experience that salvation before the rest of

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<sup>121</sup> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: — Romans 5:12

<sup>122</sup> For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. — Galatians 6:15

<sup>123</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — 2 Corinthians 5:17

humanity does too, being quickened long before the majority of humanity will be).

That's not all, though, because Paul also wrote, *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,"* in Ephesians 1:13. How does that prove the salvation of all? Well, if you read it in the context of the whole chapter, and are also familiar with the different kinds of salvation mentioned in Scripture, you'll notice that this section of the chapter (verses 3 through 14<sup>124</sup>) is primarily about the blessings that God has purposed beforehand to literally lavish upon those (*"hath abounded toward us"*) whom He chose to become members of the body of Christ. Simply put, this section of the chapter is all about how God has predestined certain people to experience certain blessings in Christ, blessings which not everyone will experience. This isn't Calvinism, however, since experiencing the blessings mentioned in this chapter aren't about the general salvation that everyone receives. It's only those who are experiencing the special "eternal life" form of salvation Paul taught about that he was writing to in this passage, specifically the body of Christ.

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<sup>124</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.  
— Ephesians 1:3-14

And so when Paul wrote, “*after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation,*” he was saying that his readers had heard the word of truth, and, in what is essentially a parenthetical, explained what that word of truth they heard was: the good news (“*gospel*”) of their salvation. To put it simply, Paul wrote here that the good news they had heard was the good news of their already guaranteed salvation — meaning the general salvation that all humanity has been guaranteed — not the good news of how they *could* have salvation if only they did something specific (note that he didn’t write, “*after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your **potential** salvation, although only if you actually believed that gospel,*” but rather that they had heard the good news about the salvation which was *already theirs* — since it was already everyone’s, even if perhaps just proleptically at present, thanks to Christ’s death for our sins, burial, and resurrection — after which they trusted that this good news about their already guaranteed salvation was indeed true). The point here is that, because there is no included proposition in the text connected with the salvation they heard about, the good news they heard was a proclamation that they were already guaranteed salvation prior to hearing about it (as the outcome of Christ’s death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection). Simply put, Paul couldn’t tell them the good news of their salvation if it wasn’t already guaranteed.

Now, most people read this verse and assume that either the first part of the verse (“*In whom ye also trusted*”) or the last part of the verse (“*in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise*”) actually is a proposition about their salvation, and that their salvation wasn’t guaranteed until after they actually believed the supposed good news about how they could attain said salvation. But this is a misunderstanding due to not being aware of what the different types of salvation mentioned in Scripture are all

about. All the first part of the verse is telling us is that they trusted Christ *after* they heard the good news of their already guaranteed salvation which He'd already won for all of us (including them), and all the last part of the verse is telling us is that, after they trusted that Christ had already guaranteed salvation for all of us because of what He accomplished through His death for our sins, burial, and resurrection, even before they believed it, they were then sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which means they were also given a special form of salvation ("*an earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*") which doesn't apply to all humanity the way the salvation Christ guaranteed for all of us does, since not everyone is sealed by the Holy Spirit. All that is to say, Paul's little parenthetical in Ephesians 1:13 is simply telling us that "the good news of [their and everyone's general] salvation" was already "as good as done" for them (and for everyone) before they heard it, and after they heard about the salvation that was already guaranteed for them (because it's guaranteed for everyone), they trusted Christ and were sealed with the Holy Spirit, and hence were also given the special "eternal life" form of salvation only members of the body of Christ get to enjoy (and were then awaiting that salvation guaranteed for everyone, meaning the quickening of their mortal bodies, referred to here as "*the redemption of the purchased possession*," which they'll receive when Christ comes for His body, and which everyone else will also eventually receive, although "*every man in his own order*," as already discussed).

But even clearer than that example, Paul also wrote that God is "*the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe*" in 1 Timothy 4:10,<sup>125</sup> and honestly, it doesn't get any more clear than this, with Paul telling us that God will save absolutely everyone, even if those who believe this good news will get to experience a

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<sup>125</sup> For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. — 1 Timothy 4:10

special level of salvation on top of that (as already discussed, including freedom from religion, as well as an earlier experience of immortality than everyone else). Every Christian out there knows the definition of the word “especially” (or “**specially**,” which the KJV uses here, and which ultimately also means “particularly,” not “exclusively,” and which is also the origin of the term “**special** form of salvation” that I’ve been using throughout this study), yet somehow most of them seem to forget what it means when they get to this verse. But their apparent selective memory aside, they’d still recognize that if a teacher said, “I’ve given everyone a passing grade this year, especially Lydia who got an A+,” the teacher would have meant that, while nobody else got an A+, they still all passed, since these Christians actually *do* know that “especially” (and even “specially”) doesn’t mean “specifically” or “only,” even if they need to pretend to themselves that it does when considering what Paul had to say here.

Likewise, if someone wrote, “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith,*” the way Paul did in Galatians 6:10, they’d know that they should focus most of their positive efforts on believers (“*them who are of the household of faith,*” the very same people Paul was referring to when he wrote, “*specially of those that believe,*” in 1 Timothy 4:10), but that they should still try to do good unto everyone else (the very same “*all men*” that Paul said God was the Saviour of) as well, and not that we should do good *only* unto believers (and for those who might be wondering, yes, the Greek word translated as “especially” in Galatians is indeed the same Greek word translated as “specially” in the KJV in the verse we’ve been looking at in 1 Timothy: *μάλιστα* / “mal'-is-tah”). In fact, if “specially” did mean “only,” the part of the verse which tells us God is the Saviour of all men would be a lie, because it didn’t say God is “the *potential* Saviour of all men, but really only of those that believe” (or that God is “the Saviour *available for* all men, although *only actually* the Saviour of those that believe”), but instead plainly



tells us that He actually *is* the Saviour *of all* men, and to be able to legitimately be called the saviour of someone, you have to actually save them at some point, which means that, to be able to truly be called “the Saviour of all men,” God has to actually save all men eventually. Bottom line, if even *one* human fails to end up experiencing salvation by the end of the ages, Paul would be just as much a liar as that teacher would turn out to be if any of the students in Lydia’s class received a failing grade after telling them they’d all passed.

And Calvinists who insist that Paul is only claiming “God is the Saviour of all *kinds* or *sorts* of men,” and that God only wants “all *sorts* of men” to be saved rather than actually “*will have all men* to be saved,” as Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 2:3-4,<sup>126</sup> A) that’s clearly not what these passages say anyway (the words “kinds” and “sorts” aren’t there in the text), and B) they’re ignoring the second part of the verse where Paul says “specially of believers” (which can’t really follow the phrase “all *kinds* of men” and make any sense in this case, since “specially” would then be have to be qualifying who the “all *kinds* of men” are, but the word “specially” can’t actually be used that way because it means “particularly,” not “exclusively”) rather than “specifically believers,” so they’re just reading their own preconceived doctrinal bias that not everyone will experience salvation into these passages because they have no other choice if they don’t want it to contradict their theological presuppositions, just as non-Calvinist Christians who believe in never-ending punishment do in their own way as well.

All that is to say, this passage once again verifies that the doctrine of salvation taught by Paul throughout his epistles is indeed that every human who is affected by the curse and locked up in unbelief<sup>127</sup> — not to mention in

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<sup>126</sup> For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. — 1 Timothy 2:3-4

<sup>127</sup> For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. — Romans 11:32

vanity<sup>128</sup> (neither of which we've been locked up in because of any choice we made, but rather, from a relative perspective, because of a choice Adam made, and, from an absolute perspective, because God Himself chose to lock everyone up in that manner so we could eventually also be shown mercy and be delivered from the bondage of corruption, since, if we'd never experienced evil we couldn't have truly appreciated the contrasting goodness, and if we'd never experienced sin and death, we could never experience, and hence never truly appreciate, grace; immortality wouldn't mean much to us either without having first experienced mortality, I should add) — will also be equally (actually, even more so<sup>129</sup>) affected by the cross and made immortal, even if it doesn't happen to everyone at the same time (with believers getting a special, earlier experience of salvation, as well as potentially getting to rule and reign with Christ in the heavens during the impending ages, or perhaps getting to rule over the earth from Israel — depending on which sort of salvation they're experiencing — figuratively referred to as “everlasting life,” or as “life eternal,” in the KJV and other less literal Bible versions).

In fact, the verses (Romans 8:18–23) around the passage which tells us that all creation (referred to in the KJV as “*the creature*”) has been locked up in vanity also tells us quite definitively that all humanity will indeed be saved: “*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the*

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<sup>128</sup> For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. — Romans 8:20-21

<sup>129</sup> But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) — Romans 5:15-17

*manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.*” Notice that Paul said “the creature” (meaning creation, referring to all human beings — if not all biological beings who can look forward to things — and not just those who are in the body of Christ) has the earnest expectation of “*the manifestation of the sons of God*” (referring to our appearing with Christ when He returns<sup>130</sup>), because “*the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God,*” and they wouldn’t be looking forward to our appearing if they weren’t going to benefit from it, which we know they will, since Paul wrote there that they *shall* be delivered from the bondage of corruption and will become “*children of God*” (not to be confused with those of us who are “*the sons of God,*” which is a much more esteemed position — referring to our position as joint-heirs with Christ<sup>131</sup> — although we *are* still technically “*children of God*”<sup>132</sup> as well, even as “*sons of God*”). In addition, verse 23 says that it’s “*not only they, but ourselves also,*” which means “*they*” (those who *aren’t* in the body of Christ) and “*ourselves also*” (those who *are* in the body of Christ, referring to those “*which have the firstfruits of the Spirit*” — telling us that there will be others *after* those in the body of Christ who will also have the Spirit, based on the meaning of “firstfruits”) will **all** enjoy “*the redemption of our*

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<sup>130</sup> When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. — Colossians 3:4

<sup>131</sup> And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. — Romans 8:17

<sup>132</sup> The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: — Romans 8:16

*body*” (our quickening, in other words, which is salvation; although “*every man in his own order,*” of course).

It’s not just salvation that all humans will experience, though; it’s also reconciliation. And while the salvation that involves being made immortal is technically only experienced by mortal beings such as humans, reconciliation will be experienced by all sentient, sapient beings in the universe who require it, as demonstrated by a passage where Paul used a similar sort of parallelism to the ones he used in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5, this time in the first chapter of his epistle to the Colossians. In fact, I don’t know how someone can read verses 15 through 20 of that chapter<sup>133</sup> and not end up a believer in the reconciliation of all creatures, although it seems most people somehow miss the fact that Paul is using a type of parallelism known as an Extended Alternation here — likely because they probably aren’t familiar with Paul’s consistent use of parallelisms throughout his epistles to prove the salvation (and reconciliation) of all humanity — to tell us that the same “all” created *by Him* are also the same “all” that are reconciled *to Him* by the blood of Christ’s cross, and that this passage tells us that not only are *all* humans (meaning *all* the things created in earth, as mentioned in both verses 16 and 20) both created by and reconciled to Him, but all the creatures in heaven/outer space (as also mentioned in both of the same two verses, referring to a list of spiritual beings that overlaps with another list of creatures who are described

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<sup>133</sup> Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. — Colossians 1:15-20

in Ephesians 6:12 as being the spiritual wickedness in high places<sup>134</sup>) are also both created by and reconciled to Him, and there would be no need to reconcile spiritual beings in heaven who weren't first alienated, so it can only be the foolish<sup>135</sup> (and sometimes sinful, or even evil) spiritual beings in the heavens who are being reconciled; and if all of them are going to be reconciled, as Paul promises they will be in that passage, we know that all the creatures on the earth will be as well, as he also says they will be in the same passage.

It's important to keep in mind that reconciliation means the parties on *both* sides of an estrangement or conflict are now at peace with one another, meaning that God is at peace with them, *and* they're at peace with God, when this reconciliation occurs, which wouldn't be the case if any of them were still being tormented in the lake of fire at that time, which they would have to leave right before Christ destroys death by resurrecting and quickening any dead humans still left in the lake of fire as well (thus proving that "for ever and ever" isn't meant to be interpreted as literally meaning "without end" — even when it comes to the punishment of the spiritual beings known as the devil, the beast, and the false prophet in the lake of fire,<sup>136</sup> since they'd have to be included in the "all" which are both created by and reconciled to God as well — and telling us that it actually means "until the end of the ages," or "for the duration of the final age or ages," depending on the context of the passage in question,

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<sup>134</sup> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. — Ephesians 6:12

<sup>135</sup> Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: — Job 4:18

<sup>136</sup> And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. — Revelation 20:7–10

although getting into all the details of this figurative translation would take far too many more pages, so I'll just leave at that), since Christ's defeat of all other enemies takes place just prior to the destruction of death (and if there's a better way to put an end to an enemy<sup>137</sup> than turning that enemy into a willing servant, or even a friend,<sup>138</sup> I don't know what it would be). This is also proven by the prophecy of Philippians 2:10-11 which tells us "*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,*" because nobody can say Jesus is the Lord and truly mean it apart from the Holy Spirit leading them to do so,<sup>139</sup> which means anyone who does so will possess the Holy Spirit at that time. There's absolutely no indication in this passage that this declaration will be forced out of them the way most Christians assume it will be, especially since it's "*to the glory of God the Father,*" and He'd receive far more glory from a willing confession based on the reconciliation that Paul wrote about than from a coerced concession by an enemy, so the only reason to read the idea of this confession being forced out of still-existing enemies at gunpoint (or whatever sort of threat it takes to get a presumably immortal spiritual being to assent to something they don't want to assent to) rather than being made by friends and willing subjects who are now at peace with Him in their minds is, once again, preconceived doctrinal bias that not every human will experience salvation and that not every created being who needs it will be truly reconciled to God. But, if you're having trouble with this parallelism, replace the word "all" with the variable  $x$  again in both

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<sup>137</sup> Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. — Romans 12:20-21

<sup>138</sup> When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. — Proverbs 16:7

<sup>139</sup> Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. — 1 Corinthians 12:3

verses 16 and 20 of Colossians 1 — in fact, do it in all the verses *from* verse 16 to verse 20 — and it should become clear what it means.

Now, some try to argue that verse 21 contradicts this conclusion, but that just means they aren't reading the text very carefully, since A) it really should be obvious that the point Paul was making about the eventual reconciliation of all created beings concludes with the end of verse 20, and B) they somehow miss the fact that when Paul wrote, *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet **now** hath he reconciled,"* he was simply stating that his readers had already experienced this reconciliation at the time he wrote the letter. But since we're not claiming that verses 16 to 20 say everyone has currently been reconciled in their minds yet anyway, the immediate reconciliation of believers doesn't preclude the eventual reconciliation of everyone else he promised would eventually be reconciled as well (in fact, if it did mean that, it would also mean that no humans other than those who first read this epistle some 2,000 years ago could be reconciled after that time, which would mean there's no hope for you or me either). It's also important to notice that it's only in our minds that Paul says the alienation takes place prior to being reconciled, as well as to know that the alienation is entirely one-sided at this point in time, with religious humans (and foolish spiritual beings) mistakenly believing that God is still angry with them because of their wicked works, as it could be said He was, from a certain perspective, prior to the crucifixion,<sup>140</sup> not realizing that God is actually already at peace with everyone because of what He did through Christ, and that He isn't imputing the

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<sup>140</sup> God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. — Psalm 7:11

trespasses of the world unto them at all<sup>141</sup> — remember, while evil acts will be judged at the Great White Throne,<sup>142</sup> sin (which is not the same thing as evil, unless you believe that animals can sin<sup>143</sup>) won't be, because sin has already been entirely taken care of by Christ — but is instead now asking those of us in the body of Christ to beseech the rest of the world to be reconciled to God (or technically to be conciliated to God, since the Greek word translated as “reconciled” in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 in the KJV is καταλλάσσω/“kat-al-las'-so,” which is much more one-sided than the Greek word ἀποκαταλλάσσω/“ap-ok-at-al-las'-so,” which was also translated as “reconciled” in Colossians 1:20-21, is), meaning to be at peace with God in their minds because He's already made peace with them through of the blood of Christ's cross, and to believe the good news of their already guaranteed salvation because of what Christ did (and it seems we'll be bringing a similar sort of message to the alienated spiritual beings in the heavens, after Christ takes us up there to be with Him, as well).

Some also attempt to argue that Jesus doesn't help angels, but only helps the descendants of Abraham, based on a certain type of translation of Hebrews 2:16 which is rendered along those lines (but which is translated in the KJV as: *“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.”*), in order to argue that Colossians 1:20 can't mean spiritual beings

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<sup>141</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. — 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

<sup>142</sup> And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. — Revelation 20:12

<sup>143</sup> And he knew it, and said, It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. — Genesis 37:33



will be reconciled to God. But even if theirs was a good translation of the verse, it doesn't say Jesus will *never* reconcile angels and other spiritual beings. Just as not every human is reconciled to God at present, as we just covered, this translation of the verse could only mean that Jesus isn't helping angels out *at present* (which does seem to be true). But since Colossians says they *will* be reconciled, we know they'll have to be in the future, and that this verse can't mean what they're assuming it means (although, even if we did ignore Colossians, we'd then have to also believe that no Gentiles could be saved as well, since they aren't descendants of Abraham).

If you're somehow still sceptical, however, I'd like to ask you to explain what the basis of your belief that you've been saved (or will experience salvation) even is, presuming you believe you've been saved. If you can honestly say that you've been saved because Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, it can be said that you have faith in Christ for your salvation. But if you believe you've been saved because you chose to believe that Christ died for your sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, then it can really only be said that you have faith in your faith for your salvation. Because in order to truly be saved based solely on what God and Christ accomplished (meaning based 100% on Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection), rather than based (even if only in part) on what you yourself accomplished (meaning *choosing to believe* in Christ's death for our sins, and His subsequent burial and resurrection), *everyone* has to be saved (at least proleptically; and if something is proleptic in God's eyes, it's guaranteed to happen) by what God and Christ accomplished, whether anyone believes it or not, since otherwise it's your faith that ultimately did the job of saving you, with Christ only accomplishing the first step of your salvation, but not actually completing it Himself. (Another way we can put it is that all humanity has been saved from an absolute perspective because of what Christ accomplished, and

that everyone will eventually be saved from a physical perspective as well for the same reason, but that only believers have been saved from a relative perspective.)

Now, those aren't all the arguments for the salvation (and reconciliation) of all humanity. There are *many more*, but those should be enough to make it clear that the only way to avoid the conclusion that everyone will eventually experience both salvation and reconciliation is to insert words into Paul's epistles that aren't there, to redefine certain words into meaning something other than what the writers meant by them, or even to change (or simply ignore) the order of the words in some verses. But there's just no justification for doing so, especially when we consider the fact that there's no basis for believing in never-ending conscious torment in the lake of fire—or even in an afterlife realm—to begin with, as we already learned in the other Bible studies you should have read before this one (referring, again, to my *“Immortality and the second death,” “What the Hinnom?”*, and *“What is death?”* studies, so please go read them if you haven't already).