

CHAPTER 8: EXAMINATION OF UNIVERSAL PASSAGES

Our thesis, "God's wrath postponed," simplifies the interpretation of the universal passages in the New Testament. Christ actually died for all, for all have been saved. Christ's death put a brake on the wrath of God and saved the entire cosmos from His immediate judgement. Thus, Christ is the Savior of all people, because all have been saved. Some of the following passages have been discussed earlier. The purpose of this section is to treat each passage independently and thoroughly.

I. Colossians 1:19,20

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Col. 1:19, 20)

The significance of Col. 1:19-20 is the cosmic (universe, not just earth or man) implications of the atonement. Christ is not simply the creator and sustainer of Mankind, He is the creator of the universe. His concerns are for man, but not just man. Christ was sent, not just to reconcile man to God, but to reconcile the cosmic order to God.

In comparison, Noah's obedience to God saved not just mankind, but saved the earth as well. Noah's obedience was unable to stop the wrath of God upon creation, but it was able to spare creation the total effects of that wrath. The result was that creation was spared total eradication, and life, though altered, was saved and once again began to thrive. If the salvation accomplished by Noah extended beyond mankind, how much more would it be expected that the salvation by Christ extend to the creation, or the cosmos.

It was not just mankind that was thrown out of order through rebellion toward God in the early stages of Creation. The entire universe required redemption, propitiation and reconciliation. Col. 1:20 is the climax of the depiction of Christ as, not just the creator (vs. 16), sustainer (vs. 17) and authority (vs. 18) of all things, but also the reconciler of all things. His obedience did not stop the wrath of God, but deflected that wrath onto Himself, and in so receiving the wrath, spared the universe (including the earth and man) the wrath its disobedience deserved. Thus, "through him (Christ) to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through the blood of the cross - through him, whether things on earth or things in heaven."

Paul's final phrase, "whether things on earth or things in heave," leaves no choice but to interpret "all things" without exception. A cosmic reconciliation resulting in peace has occurred as a result of Christ's actions on the cross.

One may ask, "but doesn't the war still go on?" In a sense, yes! Christ's obedience deflected God's judgement away from the cosmos. It also altered God's relationship to the cosmos. By receiving the judgement of the cosmos the cosmos is now indebted to Christ and all future judgement of the debtor is in the hands of the one who paid the debt. Thus, future judgement is dependent upon ones relationship to the Son who paid the debt.

This is why Paul can shift his emphasis from the generalized universal reconciliation in Col. 1:20 to a more specific reconciliation of believers in Col. 1:21-23. These believers have received the common grace of God's universal withdrawal of judgement at the time of the cross, but by acknowledging Christ have moved into a more specific relationship with him. This

relationship puts the believer in good standing before the living God who blesses them in this life and the life to come, canceling out all future judgement.

II. I Timothy 4:9,10

"This is why we work hard and struggle, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of believers."

Paul's emphasis is on his God ordained priorities. His efforts are not on bodily development, which has some value, but on godliness which is infinitely more valuable (vs. 8) in the present life and the life to come.

Godliness is viewed as having present benefits and benefits in the life to come. Because God rewards now as well as in the future, Paul refers to Him as the "living God". God is not viewed just in His transcendence as "way out there", who only reviews our life and rewards at some future time. Rather, Paul views God as actively present. Godliness is not practiced simply because God will later review our lives and reward us according to the value of our life, rather the "living God" is involved in our lives now and our godly behavior has value and rewards in the present. All worth, all value, all godliness is actuated by our present hope on this "living God."

This "living God" is actively involved in His creation, but specifically, He is involved with humanity. For, Paul states, "(God) is the Savior of all people." Salvation is not limited to believers but in a lesser sense He is the actual Savior of all. It is a present condition of all, not a hypothetical potential (unlimited atonement). All have not received the full benefits of salvation (universalism) reserved specifically for the believer, but all have received some benefits. Paul state, "He is (present tense) the Savior of all."

The question should not be asked, "Is God the Savior of all?" but, "to what extent, or how, is He the Savior of all?" For Paul clearly declares that salvation for the believer involves more than it does for the unbeliever when he says, "who is the Savior of all people, especially the believers." Thus, though God is especially the Savior of believers, he none the less is in some way also the Savior of all.

The thesis, God's wrath postponed recognizes the universal nature of salvation, for all have been saved from the immediate wrath of God at the crucifixion of Christ, thus all have been saved. Yet, "God's wrath postponed" also recognizes that only believers in the person and work of Jesus Christ will escape the wrath which is to come. Only believers in God's Son walk in true godliness and experience the "living God" in the present life and the life to come. Thus, God is "the Savior of all men, especially of believers."

III. I John 2:2

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

That Jesus Christ is the propitiation⁵¹ for the sins of believers has seldom been disputed among Christians. The fundamental question is who is John referring to when he speaks of the

⁵¹ for the meaning of propitiation the discussion in the earlier chapter.

"whole world"⁵² and how is Christ's death a propitiation for them. Is the death of Christ applied for the whole world the same way that it applied for believers? Or, is it even possible that when John says "whole world" he is referring to the world of believers?

In order to identify the "whole world" it might help to know who "our sins" refers to. The difficulty with the epistle is that, besides knowing "our" refers to believers John never clearly identifies who specifically the recipients of his letter are.

Gary Long⁵³ and Arthur W. Pink⁵⁴ argues for an ethnological interpretation, that is, the recipients were believing Jews. Thus, Christ was the propitiation, not just for believing Jews, but also for the whole believing world of non-Jews as well. But, to say that "our" in "our sins" refers to believing Jews seems forced. It seems odd that John would close a letter to believing Jews with a warning to "guard yourselves from idols" (5:21).

Moderate Calvinism attempts to resolve the issue by allowing for a generic view (1 John was written to a general audience), but explains the passage as actual for believers but only sufficient or potential for the world. Paul Enns is representative when he says, "John indicates the propitiation is 'for our sins...but also for those of the whole world'. Christ's death was a substitutionary death that made provision for believers, but John emphasizes the sufficiency is 'for the whole world.' Although the whole world is not saved, because Christ is God His death is sufficient for the entire world; it is, however, effectual only in those who believe."⁵⁵

But, if the whole world is not saved, how can Christ be the propitiation for the whole world. The text uses the present tense, "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not only ours, but for the whole world." Christ isn't potentially the propitiation for the sins of the world, he "is" the propitiation for the sins of the world. He postponed the Father's wrath, thus saving the entire world from the immediate judgement of God.

Most interpretations for the meaning of "whole world" have to first resolve who "our" is in "our sins". *God's wrath postponed* does not force that we make this distinction. If John is writing a generic letter to be read by any believer (I don't believe this), a geographical letter to specific group of known believers (most likely view), or to a group of believing Jews this interpretation is applicable. Christ died for all, for all still live, and thus all have been saved.

Our conclusion is that Christ received the wrath of God for all men, and saved all from his physical wrath at the time of the Cross. Christ is not just the propitiation of our sins (believers), but he is also the propitiation for the sins of the entire world.

IV. Romans 5:12-21

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the

⁵² for the various meaning of "world" see discussion in earlier chapter.

⁵³ Long, Gary D., Particular Atonement. Presbyterian Reformed Publishing Co., 1977. pp. 94,95.

⁵⁴ Arthur W. Pink, *The Atonement* (Venice, Florida: Chapel Library, a.d.), pp. 13-14.

⁵⁵ Enns, Paul P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989.

judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. [Romans 5:12-21]

The importance and complexities of the issues surrounding Romans 5:12-21 makes it in the eyes of many expositors one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament. One theologian has stated, "If you wish to know whether a man is a theologian, turn to his Greek New Testament, and if it opens on its own accord to the fifth chapter of Romans, and you find the pages worn and brown you may safely set him down as a devotee of the sacred science (referring to theology)".⁵⁶ Although there are many difficult issues regarding the text, none is more relevant than the issue of how to understand Paul's use of "all men" in verse 18. To do so requires that we look at the entire passage and grasp the development of his argument. *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- [Romans 5:12]*

Adam was the first man in the world and the father of humanity. Adam also committed the first act of disobedience. His one act of disobedience introduced sin into the world. The result of that sin was that the judgement "death" spread like cancer to all subsequent humanity. The existence of death is the evidence of the presence of the sinful condition of mankind. By "all" Paul means humanity "generically", that is everyone without exception. Christ is left out of the equation at this stage because Paul is referring to the condition of humanity prior to Christ coming into the world. Christ did not sin, nor was he a sinner. The next verse clearly demonstrates the historical sequence that Paul had in mind.

for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. [Romans 5:13]

God's Law for Adam was the command, "do not eat. . .". Thus Adam was held accountable for his actions on the basis of law. Law defines sin, so that law accentuates the sinfulness of sin and increases the accountability for performing the sinful act. It is not that men had no conscience or that they didn't know the difference between right and wrong, it was simply that not having law expressly defined weakened the verdict for the sinful act.

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. [Romans 5:14]

⁵⁶ Chafer, Lewis S. Systematic Theology. Vol 2 p. 297.

But even though they didn't have the Law death still reigned over mankind in the time period between Adam and Moses, even with those that had not acted contrary to an expressed command, such as the action of Adam.

That God held man accountable apart from the Law is evident in the judgement of the flood. Man still had a conscience and knew the difference between right and wrong. Mankind did not have to act contrary to stated law to be held accountable for his sin. After all, wasn't Satan's statement, "you will be like divine beings who know good and evil." Thus, death reigned over man.

Now, Paul shifts his emphasis towards Christ. Adam was a type of the one to come. Let us see how Paul applies this and develops his argument.

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. [Romans 5:15]

How is Adam a type of Christ? Both gave something to mankind. Paul's analogy is not of comparison however, but of contrast (thus some would call it an anti or arch-type). Adam gave mankind something detrimental to his welfare. Christ, in contrast, gave man something of abundant benefit. Adam's act of disobedience (transgression) gave mankind death. Christ obedience provided something abundantly more beneficial.

Why does Paul say "the many died" instead of "all" died? It maybe that to say "all" would be inaccurate, for Enoch did not die. Paul may also have in mind Elijah, who though was after Moses was before Christ. Either way, to say "all" died would be contrary to fact. Not that these were without sin, but that they did not receive the judgement of Adam's sin by dying. Paul also does not use "all" in reference to the "gift of the one Man, Jesus Christ." Rather he says this gift "abound to the many (people)." Since Paul uses "many" instead of "all" to exclude some from the effects of the transgression, it would appear that Paul does the same in reference to those who are benefited by the gift. Paul elsewhere defines the effects of the gift as eternal life. It would appear that the "many" are those who receive the complete benefit from the gift as a result of Christ's obedience. People receive the gift of eternal life by believing that Christ died on their behalf. Thus, the "many" in this verse refers to a select number of people from "all" humanity.

The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. [Romans 5:16]

Paul continues to explain the contrast between Christ's gift of grace resulting from obedience with Adam's contribution (I prefer not to call it gift) of death resulting from his transgression. But transgressions were not Adam's property alone. The judgement of death was the result of Adam's one transgression. His one transgression acted like a communicable disease multiplying into many transgressions spreading through all subsequent humanity. Christ's gift was given, not just to deal with the effects of Adam's one transgression, but to counter the effects of the "many" subsequent transgression. Adam's one transgression resulted in condemnation, yet Christ's actions came about, not just because of the one transgression, but as a result of the many

transgressions that followed. Justification is not just for the transgression of Adam, but for the many subsequent transgressions as well.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. [Romans 5:17]

Paul contrasts the reign of death that resulted from Adam's transgression, with the eschatological reign of "those that receive the grace and the gift of righteousness". Death is personified as having reign over all that were born after Adam. The reign of death will be replaced by the reign of real people that receive the "abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness in life" through the One, Jesus Christ.

It is significant that "Death reigned" is aorist tense, but "those who. . . will reign in life" is future tense. Adam transgressed! Death Reigned! But if those who will reign are not yet reigning then does death still reign? or, what reigns in the interim? After all, don't all still die?

John states that the last acts of God will be to destroy death, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" [Revelation 20:13-14]. So, between the time of Christ work on the cross and the end mentioned by John death has a presence.

Paul makes it clear elsewhere, that although death still is, it is impotent. Though we die, we do not suffer the impact of death. Paul states, "But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" [1 Corinthians 15:54-57]. Sin no longer condemns, law has lost its power to judge, thus death, like a bee without a stinger has no way to deliver its poison.

Paul's use of "many more" should not be viewed quantitatively. He is not saying "many more" people will reign in righteousness than were effected by the transgression of Adam. It is an absolute certainty that this righteousness is qualitatively superior to the judgement.

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. [Romans 5:18]

Paul concludes that the one act of each man, Adam and Christ, had a universal implication on mankind. Adam's transgression resulted in the condemnation of the entire human race. Christ's righteousness resulted in the justification of life to all humanity.

Although some theologians have questioned the universal implications of Adam's sin bringing condemnation, the vast majority would not be in disagreement on the generic use of Paul's comment regarding Adam's offense. A literal understanding of this verse, the surrounding context, and Paul's other writings make it inexcusable to believe that he teaches anything but that "all" humans were condemned by Adam's transgression. Even though Christ was without sin, he shared in the judgement and condemnation of man. Thus, although "many" were accounted as sinners

(Christ himself excluded) "all" were condemned (including Christ, because of his voluntary association with mankind) as a result of the transgression.

The greater amount of disagreement arises on how to understand Christ's "act of righteousness resulting in justification for 'all' men." Did he provide: justification for everyone generically, thus all are justified; the ability for everyone to receive justification; the potential for everyone to be justified; or does "all" mean something less than each and every human being?

The thesis of "God's wrath postponed" recognizes the "many" and the "all" of Romans 5:12-18 literally. Christ's sacrifice was viewed as a judicial act that halted judgement upon the cosmos. Thus "all" humanity was viewed as justified by the actions of Christ by the Father. Not that man has any righteousness in himself, but rather the righteousness of Christ covers humanity⁵⁷, providing protection from immediate judgement.

In addition, God's focus shifts from man's guilt in Adam to the indebtedness of mankind to Christ. "All" are indebted to Christ because he saved "all" from the immediate wrath of God in connection with the association of judgement in Adam's transgression. This includes not just the generation that was spared from the wrath, but also every subsequent generation, for they owe their existence to Christ. Now that they have been justified by Christ they are accountable to Him. Refusal to acknowledge His sacrifice becomes the basis of judgement and the primary sin of man. *For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. [Romans 5:19]*

Paul shifts his emphasis from the past and to some degree present condition of all humanity to the future condition of those made righteous in Christ. In verse 18 Paul was making a declaration of the universal effects of Adam's transgression - condemnation. "All" were condemned as a result of his transgression. In this passage Paul is referring to the declaration of humanity as sinners as an effect of Adam's transgression. Though Jesus was condemned and thus was part of the "all" in verse 18, he was never a sinner. Paul, recognizing the exception of Christ rightly refers to sinners as "many".

Paul also shifts from the general condition of "all" humanity to a position of the select righteous from within this group in the future. Not all will be made righteous, only those that acknowledge Christ and receive the gift of righteousness through him. These are the same as the ones that reign in the future (vs. 17).

The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, [Romans 5:20]

Paul contrasts between Law and Grace. Transgression existed prior to Law, but because Law defined and explained the transgression it left the transgressor without excuse, thus the transgressor, having the Law was guiltier than the transgressor without the Law. Law specifies commands, "you shall not", thus placing the transgressions in the likeness of Adam's. Transgression then is a direct act of disobedience against the commands. Such transgressions are without excuse.

But if Law increased the intensity of condemnation associated with transgression, then Law also intensifies the super-abundance of Grace, for even transgressions that are in direct

⁵⁷ see earlier chapter on the Old Testament meaning of kaphor.

disobedience to God's commands are covered by the righteousness provided through the obedience of Christ.

so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. [Romans 5:21]

Throughout much of Romans Grace is contrasted with the Law. But Law was given to the Jews, a select group of humanity. Grace is not just for those that are under the Law, but for all humanity. Whereas only the Jews were under the obligations of the Law, all people are under Sin. Thus, Paul's contrast of Grace shifts from the Law to a contrast with sin. Why? Because Law was given to the Jews, but Grace was given to "all". Thus, Grace extends super-abundantly beyond the Law to embrace the whole of humanity. Paul is not writing just to the Jews but to humanity in general.

Paul brings the typology between Adam and Christ to conclusion. He repeats, sin reigned in the form of the personification of death. In contrast, Grace would reign (also a personification), not with sin but righteousness to eternal life through the reality of the actual person of Jesus Christ. Where sin once reigned in death, Grace now reigns in life. Where there is no death there is no end to life, thus eternal life.

Some discussion could be made regarding Paul's use of a subjunctive aorist, translated by the NAS "would reign". The Subjunctive mood has been called the mood of probability. That doesn't mean that there is uncertainty, in fact when used with the Greek $\iota\nu\alpha$, it can mean "with the result of".⁵⁸ The question in verse 21 is whether this should be translated in the past tense (NAS) or in the future tense "will reign" (NET Bible). The later is consistent with the future tense in verse 17 which speaks of those made righteous through Christ reigning in the future, however, here the focus is not on the people that will reign but on Grace reigning. Grace did not have to wait for those that would be declared righteous to take authority over death. Rather, Grace took control, began to reign and will progressively build its reign until death is thrown into the Lake of Fire. Thus Grace reigns. Grace reigned, in that Christ's sacrifice defeated death for all humanity by forfeiting the immediate wrath of God at the time of the cross. Grace presently reigns by declaring those who acknowledge Christ have victory over death, procuring for themselves eternal absence of judgement and death. Grace will reach the climax and be proclaimed absolute ruler when there is no more death. At that point there will be no more sin, Law, or death, just righteousness, life and super-abundant Grace.

V. John 1:29

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

John the Baptist viewed his purpose as, "the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord'" (John 1:23; Isa. 40:3). He understood his unique calling was to set

⁵⁸ John 3:16 and Philippians 2:10 are additional examples of the use of the subjunctive mood used in this manner. Although John 3:16 is most often translated "should not perish" it must be understood that that the issue is not indefinite or merely probable, in other words Jesus is making an emphatic statement that "they will not perish". The same is true of Philippians 2:10. Though translated "in order that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord", Paul was not making an indefinite statement. It is obvious from the context that he believes that "every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord".

the stage for the coming Messiah. His first proclamation of the Christ summarizes the total ministry of Christ's mission on earth, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin the world!" (John 1:29). This short proclamation 1) "Behold the Lamb of God" identified Christ's mission with the Old Testament Passover, 2) "who takes away the sin" foretold the nature and purpose of Messiah's sacrifice, and 3) "of the world" explained the universal implications of His sacrifice.

First, Jesus as "the Lamb of God" is a proclamation of his identification with the Passover. He celebrated the Passover feast with the apostles just prior to the crucifixion, was removed from the cross just before the celebration of the Passover and Paul refers to "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7). The church has for centuries viewed the Lord's supper as Christ's identification with the Passover.

The Passover celebration commemorated God's last miraculous judgement upon Egypt in His deliverance of Israel from bondage (Exodus 12:1-42). In the actual event of Passover Moses instructed the children of Israel to sacrifice a lamb and apply blood at the top and sides of the doorframe at the entry of each of their homes. God would inflict his judgement on Egypt and its gods (12:12)⁵⁹, putting to death the firstborn of each household. God would bypass or pass-over only those homes marked by the blood of the lamb. This blood of the innocent lamb was God's means of covering over (atone) those that were to be spared from His wrath. The judgement of death was upon the lamb as a substitute for the firstborn children of Israel.

Although not called such, the Passover has all the elements of "atonement" (Hebrew Kaphor) and is the first of a series of atonements in Israel's history.⁶⁰ The subsequent atonements would climax in the ultimate atonement, the person of Jesus Christ who is rightfully declared by John, the "Lamb of God". This blameless lamb was sacrificed to provide the means for a sinful and helpless humanity (Rm. 5:6) avoid God's judgement. Christ is the door and the cross is the doorframe between heaven and earth (John 10:7-9). The blood of the Lamb was placed on the doorframe. God's response to the obedience of the Christ was to pass-over those for whom the Lamb was slain. Humanity was thus spared God's immediate physical judgement. The yearly celebrations of Passover commemorated God's deliverance of the nation's firstborn children, and anticipated the deliverance that was yet to be provided by the sacrifice of God's Firstborn⁶¹ - Jesus Christ.

Second, in addition to linking Christ to the Passover, John also says of Christ, that He, "takes away the sin". It is significant that he uses the singular "sin" rather than "sins". If Christ had taken away the "sins" of the world then there would be no sins in the world. The universalist would be correct in asserting that all are saved, for there would be no bases for judgement. But Christ didn't remove the "sins" of the world. Rather, he removed "the sin" of the world. Exactly what is the sin which Christ removed? Paul gives us the best clue by proclaiming Christ to be the

⁵⁹ The text says that the judgement was on "Egypt. . . and all its gods." Each of the plagues appears to have been directed at one of the gods of Egypt. Pharaoh was considered by the Egyptians the son of Ray and was viewed as a supreme god of Egypt. By taking the life of Pharaoh's son, the God of Israel was executing judgement on one of the gods of Egypt and in doing so demonstrating His superiority over this god.

⁶⁰ Although illusions to atonement exist earlier in Scripture (God's sacrifice for Adam and Eve in the garden), the terminology and development of atonement is not found until Exodus 29. After which it becomes a major theme throughout the remainder of the Torah. See the later chapter on Atonement for a more complete understanding.

⁶¹ Christ, the firstborn of God and of Creation replaced the firstborn of Israel. Outside of the scope of this paper also is the idea of Christ as firstborn replacing the birthright of the first man, Adam. The issue of transfer of sovereignty and firstborn rights are in view.

last Adam. Christ's obedience counters effect/s of Adam's sin of disobedience.⁶² We know the nature of Adam's sin, and we also understand the obedient actions Christ took to counter Adam's sin. What we must ask, however, is exactly what effect/s of Adam's sin did Christ counter?

Adam's disobedient act was the first "sin" in the world. By introducing sin into the world it set a pattern of sin for the world. His one sin had several effects upon the world. First, it condemned the world. As a result of that one sin the judgement of death was pronounced upon the world. Regardless of an individual's personal righteousness the declaration of death was upon him, and all had to face death. Second, every person after Adam was influenced by the presence of sin to the degree that each and every person committed acts of sin. Thus, humanity was condemned by sin on two levels. The first by being in a world condemned as a result of Adam's sin, and so by association with Adam held accountable for Adam's sin;⁶³ and second, as a result that every human sins (Rm. 3:23), each person is accountable for his own sins. The general result of sin is that the mind of man is spiritually darkened, insensitive, and incapable of doing anything to deliver himself from the universal judgement for sin. In this state of darkness he is declared dead in his trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-5; Col. 2:13).

How did the obedience of the last Adam counter the effects of the disobedience of the first Adam? The obedience of Christ brought to judgement the disobedient act of "the Sin" of the first Adam. Thus, the world's condemnation on the basis of the Adam's "Sin" is "taken away". Though the condemnation of this sin is taken away the consequential effects (or remaining residue) of Adam's sin still remains. Every person is a sinner, not just because he was in Adam, but because every person has sinned (Rm. 3:23). The universal condemnation of humanity based on Adam's "sin" was taken away. Each person is thus held accountable, not because of Adam's sin, but because of his own sins.

Our third point then is that Christ is "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the World". His sacrifice had universal implications. It is the "sin" of Adam, but it was the "sin" that condemned the "world" and was thus "the sin of the world". By taking away this blanket, universal condemnation of humanity Christ provided the means of dealing with the condemnation of humanity based on individual sins. Condemnation and death still remains in the world because sin is still present in the world. All humanity is still under judgement, because all still sin. The world is still condemned, but not on the basis of Adam's sin. Adam's sin was judged at the cross of Christ. Adam's sin will not be the bases of final judgement. Each person is held accountable apart from the first Adam:

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:11-15).

⁶² see my later comments on Romans 5.

⁶³ Theologically referred to as the doctrine of Original Sin.

Nothing is said about final judgement being based in original sin. No one will be able to stand before God and blame Adam for his sins. Original sin cast its cloud, and its effects are still present, but Christ (the last Adam) took away the universal condemnation based on Adam's sin. In doing so, however, the world became indebted to Christ. At the death of Christ, the world was under the universal condemnation of Adam's sin. The world added condemnation to condemnation by murdering the sinless Son of God. But Christ interceded for man, and received man's judgement upon Himself. He thus judiciously cancelled the immediate physical judgement and cancelled out the universal condemnation based on Adam's sin (In this context He is the Savior of the World). In doing so, the world is indebted to Christ, and all judgement is placed in the person of Christ. Thus, final judgement is dependent on one's individual response to Christ.

The entire world, meaning the physical world and the world of humanity, was saved by Christ from the immediate physical wrath of God at the time of the cross; thus Christ is the Savior of the World. But each person is still accountable for his/her own sins. Christ's sacrifice sufficiently paid the price needed to forgive these sins as well. However, because they are the personal sins of the individual, each individual must acknowledge Christ to have these sins forgiven. Salvation from future wrath is dependent on acknowledging Christ for the forgiveness of personal sins. When one trusts Christ for the forgiveness of his sins, Christ sacrifice pays the debt and the individual's name is registered in the "book of life" thus canceling the wrath of the "lake of fire". Each human is a sinner because he sins, but the sin that determines one's future destiny is the one sin of denying the Savior who died for sin. The rejection of Christ leaves the person accountable for his sins (John 3:17-18).

VI. II Corinthians 5:14-21

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Corinthians 5:14-21]

In this great passage we see God reconciling people to Himself through the death of Christ.⁶⁴ Who is being reconciled? We know that Christ died for "all" (vs.14), God has reconciled "us" to Himself through Christ (vs.18) and "in Christ He was reconciling the 'world' to Himself" (vs.19). But what does all this mean? Have all been reconciled in the sense that the entire world is forgiven and will never be judged (Universalism)? Have all been reconciled in the sense that Adam's sin is no longer imputed but men are now responsible for their own sins (some forms of

⁶⁴ see the previous chapter on reconciliation.

Arminianism)? Does all simply mean the world other than Jews, that is reconciliation in no longer for the Jews but for "all", both Jews and Gentiles (some Strict Calvinist)? Or, has the world been reconciled in the sense that Christ's death was sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect? That is, the death provided the means for all, but only those moved by the Spirit are capable of appropriating it (most Moderate Calvinist)? Just how literal should we understand "all" and "world"⁶⁵

For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; [2 Corinthians 5:14]

Paul is speaking to a Gentile audience about the far-reaching effects of Christ's death. It is not Paul's love for Christ, but Christ love that compelled Christ to do what he did that controls Paul. Is it conceivable that Paul is saying to them, "For the love of Christ Controls us (believing or apostolic Jews), having concluded this, that one (Christ) died for all (both Jew and Gentile believers), therefore all (Jewish and Gentile believers) died"? When Paul desires to emphasize the inclusion of the Gentile community into the program of God doesn't he clearly say it, or makes it clear within the context (i.e., Eph. 2:11-16)?

Unless "all" is clearly declared to be otherwise, it seems better to understand "all" to mean "all mankind, excluding none". But are they reconciled in the sense that "all" have been forgiven and will be omitted from future judgement? No! Christ died for "all" in that his death stopped the immediate execution of the Father's judgement upon the world. Judgement was executed. It was placed upon Christ instead of the world. Therefore, when the Father looks upon the world he sees a world that has been judged, and though alive declared dead, because all died in the death of Christ.

and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. [2 Corinthians 5:15]

Though physically alive, the declaration of death is removed only when they acknowledge that Christ died for them. When someone acknowledges Christ dying for them they participate in His resurrection and the declaration of death is removed. There was a purpose in Christ dying for all. He did not die so that men should continue to live in sin, as Paul puts it, "so that they who live (still all) might no longer live in themselves." They had been condemned because they lived for themselves. But now Paul declares that they are alive because of Him (Christ), therefore, instead of living for themselves "everyone" ought (indebted) to live for the one who received their judgement and proved it by rising from the dead.

Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer. [2 Corinthians 5:16]

If we no longer live for ourselves, but for the one who died and rose on our behalf, our view of "all" people has changed. Living for Christ, we see people through the eyes of Christ. We see them through the eyes of love that compelled Him to die for them. We see them as persons for whom Christ died.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. [2 Corinthians 5:17]

⁶⁵ see earlier discussion on world.

Christ death halted the wrath of God, but it did not change the nature of man, nor the conditions of the world. By receiving the Father's wrath Christ saved all from immediate physical wrath. But mankind is still declared dead unless an acknowledgement is made of what Christ did. Unless one declares Christ he is still dead and unable to participate in the full benefit of Christ's death, and so he cannot participate in the power of the resurrection. The resurrection defeated death. Our participation in Christ's resurrection removes the former declaration of death and makes us a new life in Christ.

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, [2 Corinthians 5:18]

The entire program has been God's, from its initiation to its finish. Man is the beneficiary, but not by his own efforts. Paul focuses first on those that have a special place in reconciliation. The believer has been reconciled into a special working relationship with the Father. We who were alienated have now been given the responsibility of ministry, a ministry of reconciliation.

*namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
[2 Corinthians 5:19]*

What is this ministry of reconciliation? It is the message that Christ paid the price required to bring about reconciliation. Christ reconciled the world by receiving the judgement of the world upon Himself, postponing wrath upon the world and giving the world a new relationship with Him. The world's sins were not held against them, and thus the world was spared judgement. The "we" refers to Paul and the disciples of Christ, probably not just the apostles, but it doesn't appear to be including the Corinthians at this point. He perceives it is his responsibility to bring the world from the general reconciliation (the postponement of wrath) into a special reconciliation (a personal relationship with Christ).

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [2 Corinthians 5:20]

The world has been reconciled, but Paul sees himself as one who represents God appealing to the Corinthians to enter into a more specific reconciliation. A reconciliation that will free them from future judgement. It is not enough to be spared from the past wrath, "acknowledge what Christ has done and enter into an eternal relationship with God. Thus, be totally reconciled to Him."
He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Corinthians 5:21]

Christ was sinless. Not that he didn't know what sin was, but that there was no sin in Him. His sinlessness qualified him to be a sacrifice on our behalf, so that (with the purpose of) "we might become the righteousness of God in Him." Righteousness is not something that has been imputed to the world, neither is it a definite state of being for the world. Christ was made sin for all, but only those that acknowledge such can have his righteousness imputed to their account. The Father

sees those who have placed faith in His son covered by the son's righteousness. If we wear His righteousness we are expected to live in a manner consistent with that righteousness.

VII. II Peter 2:1

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. [2 Peter 2:1]

Peter warns the followers of Christ to be cautious. There was among them some that appear to be prophets and teachers, but who were teaching contrary to sound doctrine. They are like false prophets that came before them. These present and future teachers will perish like the false prophets before them. Peter spends the rest of Chapter 2 illustrating with Old Testament examples of those that were like these heretics.

The point of the passage that is central to our study, is the phrase, "even denying the Master (or Lord) who bought them". It is impossible to deny that Peter is making a declaration that these false prophets, false teachers, heretics, in some sense have been bought by the Lord. The phrase is difficult for the universalist in that even though the passage suggests Christ dying for all, there is a definite judgement of God's wrath upon some, thus all will not be saved. The universalist's argument crumbles.

Arminians have held that the passage teaches the possibility that Christ's followers losing their salvation. If this passage were to be considered in isolation to all the very clear New Testament passages teaching to the contrary (cf. John 3:16; 5:24; 10:28-29), it might be plausible. But understanding God's revelation, requires that we either attempt to find a solution to perceived contradictions by looking for a possible alternative understanding of the more obscure passages (this one), accept contradictions as being answerable only within the wisdom and knowledge God, or hold judgement until a reasonable solution to the contradiction can be proposed. Theologians who believe God as rational, has created a rational universe and has given us revelation that is reasonable (and without error) will strive for rational or at least evidential understanding.

Moderate Calvinists usually hold, "They were 'redeemed' in the sense that Christ paid the redemptive price for their salvation, but they did not apply it to themselves and so were not saved. Christ's death is "sufficient" for all (1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2), but is "efficient" only for those who believe.⁶⁶ Thus redemption is hypothetical, they have been bought but it has absolutely no effect unless they appropriate it. So, they are potentially redeemed, but not actually redeemed. It's kind of like someone paying another persons jail bond and the person won't leave his jail cell. He doesn't appropriate what has been done for him. All legal barriers are removed but they must take action and appropriate it.

There is a problem with the above analogy, however. Whether a person gets up and walks out of the prison or not has nothing to do with the legal fact that he is free. He may not act like a free man, but because the payment is made, the declaration of freedom means he is legally free whether he acts upon it or not. There is no hypothetical or potential freedom here. Even if he remains in jail he is still a free man. There is no such thing as a hypothetically or potentially free man. If the Bible says a person has been bought, it isn't a potential or hypothetical purchase, in some since he has received a benefit from the purchase whether he appropriates the full benefit or not.

⁶⁶Walvoord, John F., Roy B. Zuck, and Dallas Theological Seminary. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983-c1985.

Some Consistent Calvinists hold that 1 Peter 1:1 should not be understood in the context of salvation at all. One view, sometimes referred to as the "temporal deliverance view" understands the heretics as physically delivered from the sinful defilement or pollution of the world. Their profession of Christ, though false, puts them in the community with the Saints which in a sense protects them from the sins of the outside world, thus they are viewed in a temporary deliverance. The problem with this view is that it doesn't deal with the full meaning of "bought". Were they bought or not? Little is stated how redemption explains this view.

A second non-salvation view of the passage, called "the sovereign creation view" understands "Lord" not as the Lord of New Testament Salvation, but as "Lord who owns the covenant nation of Israel", thus the Lord that bought Israel out of Egypt. The false teacher is one that has denied the Lord who bought Israel out of bondage and 2 Peter 2:1 is taken from Deuteronomy 32. Gary Long states,

the point that Peter seems to be making in referring to Deuteronomy 32:6 in 2 Peter 2:1 is that 'just as God had sovereignly acquired Israel out of Egypt (including 'his children' as well as the 'spot' among them which was a 'perverse' and crooked generation,' Deut. 32:5) in order to make her a covenant nation spiritually and nationally because He had created her for this purpose, so Christ, the sovereign Lord, acquired the false teachers (spots and blemishes, 2 Peter 2:13) in order to make them a part of the covenant nation of God in the flesh because He had created them, within the mystery of His providence, for the purpose of bringing glory to Himself through their foreordination unto condemnation (cf. 2 Peter 2:12; Jude 4).⁶⁷

This interpretation assumes that the readers are Jews and that the false teachers he refers to are Jews. If he speaks of present or future false teachers, why would he speak of them in the context of the Old Covenant? Peter says, "they will secretly introduce false heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them". Peter's examples of comparative behavior and judgement are from the Old Testament, but not the nature of the heresies. The future tense is not speaking of individuals of the Jewish Covenant, for the Jewish Covenant has been replaced with a New Covenant.

Long is on to something though. He recognizes the principle that God, in saving a few, saves the many. The Lord purchased all of Israel for the sake of the elect of Israel. This principle is true throughout the Old Testament. God used Joseph to save Israel, but in saving Israel he also saved the surrounding nations. Abraham saved Lot, but in doing so he also saved the king of Sodom and the city of Sodom (temporarily). By saving Noah, God saved mankind.

The thesis of, "God's wrath postponed" states that Christ purchased the cosmos and saved it from the immediate physical wrath of God at the time of the cross. Thus, every man, woman, child and creature living at the time of the cross were spared from the wrath of God. Thus, every man, woman, child and creature living today have a debt to Jesus Christ for making a purchase that gave them their present existence. He is not just their creator. He is also their physical Savior in that "all", including false teachers have been "redeemed" from the immediate wrath of God.

⁶⁷ Long, Gary D. Definite Atonement. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1977. p.77