

What others are saying...

“The magnificent love and wisdom of God has not been written about with such clarity since the days of the patriarchs. I applaud Gerry Beauchemin for producing this important book. I have waited twenty-five years for it.”

Michael Wm. Gross, D.D., Th.D., Ph.D., Maryland

“Everyone should read and study *Hope Beyond Hell*, a book of hope. Read it, understand it, and share its message with others.”

Harold Lovelace, M.Th, D.D. Author *Read and Search God's Plan*, AL

“With great spiritual discernment and a heart attuned to the transforming love of God, Gerry Beauchemin has written a book that will, if you permit it, inspire love, peace, joy, and hope – all the fruit of the Spirit – in your own heart.”

**Thomas Talbot, Professor Emeritus, Willamette University, Oregon
Author of *The Inescapable Love of God***

“I first learned, espoused, and taught the truths presented in this book over 40 years ago. *Hope Beyond Hell* encapsulates them better than any I have read.”

Bill Boylan, Ph.D., Author, Speaker, South Dakota

“This is an excellent book. Many who attend the churches of our day would do well to read *Hope Beyond Hell* and to study and think for themselves.”

**Bob Evely, M.Div., Asbury Theological Seminary,
Author of *At the End of the Ages*, Kentucky**

“*Hope Beyond Hell* answers the questions we have been afraid to ask about God's unfailing love and inexhaustible patience.”

**Pastor Ivan A. Rogers, Former Bible College President,
Author of *Judas Iscariot: Revisited and Restored*, Iowa**

“As an instructor in Church History, *Hope Beyond Hell* is one of the most balanced studies available on the remedial judgments of God and the great truth of the restoration of all things in Christ. The author has done it in a logical, common sense way the average layman can understand. This is a book about the love of God.”

**Rev. Terry Miller, M. Phil, Former Pres., Bethesda Mennonite Institute
of the Bible, Former member of the House of Representatives, SD**

“Hope Beyond Hell is a bold and impassioned plea for Christians of every stripe to consider the grand proposition that God's goodness, grace and love reaches farther than most of us have ever dared to imagine. Gerry's comprehensive research of the biblical record and extra-biblical sources is powerfully, even overwhelmingly compelling. All who read this book with a spiritual mind and listen with spiritual ears will receive a deepened revelation of Christ in God.”

Dr. Bruce A. Gerlach, Professor, College of the Ozarks, Missouri

“Hope Beyond Hell is a ‘must-read’ for those who have lost their way because they couldn't reconcile a Bible declaring ‘God is Love,’ while simultaneously teaching that the fate of the sinner is eternal damnation. Layer by layer, concept by concept, this book will loose the bonds of insanity that has plagued the Church for centuries.”

Grady Brown, M.Th, D.Litt.

Director and founder of Dayspring Bible Ministries, Texas

“Hope Beyond Hell is one of the most concise books covering the subject of the righteous purpose of God's judgment. The reader will see that God will not rest until He will become All in all (1Cor 15:28).”

Dr. Marian Paul Kampik, Silesian University, Poland

“Hope Beyond Hell is an excellent and well researched book. I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit is using Gerry at this very important time in Church history.”

**Rev. Rod Walton CJ: Anglican Independent Communion,
Founder of Bereavement Rescue, United Kingdom.**

“Hope Beyond Hell explains the facts of God's limitless grace and boundless love. It truly offers hope beyond hell. Carry a case to all funerals! This is the book I've been waiting for!”

Pastor Robert Rutherford, Speaker, Teacher, Songwriter, Georgia

“For decades I have questioned the need for and the justice of eternal punishment in light of God being ‘love.’ This is a well-researched book, providing fresh insights into the teachings of the Church Fathers, and difficult texts like Mat. 25 and Luke 16. Even if one does not agree with his conclusion, one does feel reassured about the extent of God's love in Christ.”

H. Peter Kuiper, M.Div., Fuller Seminary, Ed.D, Nova University, CA

THE PROBLEM

Picture yourself as a missionary to the Muslim nation of Senegal, West Africa. The date? September 26, 2002. About a year prior, you befriended your neighbor, Abdou Ndieye, a Muslim merchant. Only a few weeks ago, he graciously accepted your invitation to study the Bible with you. You are thrilled. Abdou is the first Muslim with whom you have begun sharing the Good News.

Today you prepare to explore another portion of God's Word with him, but something terrible has happened. You cannot believe what you are hearing and seeing on the news. The Joola, a Senegalese ferry, has capsized killing almost 2,000 people. You remember that Abdou's wife, Astou, and his 14-year-old daughter, Fatou, are on that ship. You are in shock and cannot believe what you are seeing—a ship's underside sticking up out of the sea with helicopters hovering overhead. You hurry next door. As you knock on the door, you hear deep groans and wailing. You slowly enter. Abdou is prostrate on the floor. He pleads before Yalla (Wolof for Allah), "Why? Why? How could you let this happen?" He goes into spasms of weeping, beating his hands against the floor.

Feeling utterly helpless, you pray, "God help me comfort my friend."

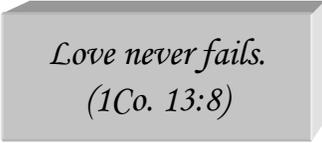
Abdou lifts his eyes, hardly able to recognize you for the tears. "My wife and daughter have died a terrible death! Tell me I will see them again; tell me they are safe in God's arms! Has your Jesus taken them to His heaven?" You are lost for words. The silence is deafening.

"Answer me, Christian, will I see them again? Are they in a better place? Tell me!"
You remain speechless. What can you say? Where is the "Good News" when you need it most?¹

FOREWORD

LOVE NEVER FAILS! (1Co. 13:8) Words of victory, power, hope and encouragement. Oh, do we dare believe? Can it really be possible? For most of my life, I have embraced teachings built on well-defined arguments for why LOVE SOMETIMES FAILS. Not that it wanted to fail or lacked the power to succeed; it just didn't work out sometimes. In fact, it didn't work out most of the time. The simple but profound truth in this study has radically altered the way I now see the One who is Love.

Friends have warned me that truth can be found in the strangest places. The truth in this book found me on the road back from a medical outreach in the Aztec villages of Mexico. For the past few years, I had watched Gerry labor in what he calls his "helps" ministry for the Kingdom—a dental ministry where he would labor for days



Love never fails.
(1Co. 13:8)

well into the night, demonstrating practically the Father's love. As we went on different outreaches, I came to notice a pattern—one that to this day continues: Gerry would be the first one up and running, working late into the night, with a gentle, caring spirit throughout. On the day scheduled for return, when everyone else would be packed and waiting, he was finishing up one last patient. After watching him for several clinics, I had to know what made him tick. What was his secret? As the trips down would sometimes take 8 to 10 hours, we had plenty of time to talk. The study you hold in your hands reflects his view of God, and the life I saw lived is the fruit of that. It is a simple truth that can be summed up in three mighty words—LOVE NEVER FAILS!

I confess that when I first heard him expound on this, it hit me like a ton of bricks. So simple and yet so radically different from that which I had heard all my life. A truth that will, as all truth does, set you free. When this truth caught up with me, I was marveling at God's never-ending love for Israel as shared by the Apostle Paul in Romans, in spite of their persistence in unbelief. With two little words, Gerry turned my world upside down, or should I say right side up, "Why Israel?" And with that began a deeper study into this One

who is Love, who is working out His victory and will not stop until He becomes “all in all.”

Come hear again the Good News shared by the angel with some shepherds one night outside of Bethlehem—Good News of great joy to all people! Rekindle the fire as you hear again of the One who is making all things new. Rejoice again as you ponder our Father who will not rest until all His children are safely home. Marvel at His wisdom in working out His master plan for the ages to see His will accomplished—that none should perish. Worship afresh the living God, who is the Savior of all men. Watch the Word unfold before you, as the mystery (hidden for ages) brings a peace that passes all understanding. Stand in amazement as you experience the One who is Love, doing what He does best—transforming His creation into His likeness. Our God truly is an awesome God and this study is another affirmation to His never-ending, never-failing LOVE.

My prayer for you as you journey through this was expressed so well by the Apostle Paul—“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you....that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen!” (Ep. 1:17-18; 3:16-19 RSV; 3:20-21 NIV).

David Nuckols
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INTRODUCTION

Are you at peace regarding the eternal destiny of your children, parents, brothers, sisters, and grandparents? Are you experiencing abundant joy in your “personal” salvation while unsure if some of your dearest loved ones might suffer throughout eternity? How is that possible if you really love them as much as you love yourself? You see, we Christians have a problem, a very serious problem. The problem is our belief that hell is “eternal” and that most of humanity will suffer endlessly. Deep inside we know something is not right, but we suppress our questions and doubts because we “think” the Bible teaches it. What inner conflict rages within us! It is futile to find satisfying answers to the problems this issue raises. For example:

- ♦ How can an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving God create billions of people, knowing most will be tormented in hell forever?
- ♦ Is the power of our “free will” to damn ourselves for eternity really absolute, exceeding the power of God’s “free will” to save us, His very own property? “All souls are mine” (Ez. 18:4). If so, who suffers most in eternal damnation, man or God who loves man with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3)?
- ♦ “How can Christ be considered greater than Adam if Adam has the power to condemn more people than Christ has the power to save?”

Please do not accept pat answers to these critical questions. Jesus commands us to judge for ourselves what is right (Lu 12:57). What is right about a punishment that never ends?

How has this teaching affected the spread of the “Good News” — the Gospel? Think about it. An “eternal” hell...

- ♦ maligns God’s character before the world.
- ♦ contradicts His unending and unfailing love for all people.
- ♦ makes our worship stem more from fear than of true affection.
- ♦ denies His unlimited power to accomplish all His will.
- ♦ makes man’s will greater than God’s will.
- ♦ infinitely minimizes Christ’s triumph over death and the evil one.
- ♦ denies that Christ fully accomplished His mission on earth.
- ♦ violates God’s divine witness revealed in every conscience.

- ◆ negates the most glorious promises in the Bible.
- ◆ ignores the testimony of the early Church.
- ◆ robs most of us of true and lasting peace and joy.
- ◆ affects what we become; like parent—like child.
- ◆ hinders world evangelism. (Remember Abdou?)

“Test all things” (1Th. 5:21). Have you tested this teaching?

For most of my life, the fear of hell stalked me, ever waiting for an opportune moment to raise its ugly head. Just the idea was like a sword slicing through me. It has been the greatest stumbling block to my faith. In fact, I almost gave up on Christianity because of it.

Hell is a horrifying thought. Millions have been terrorized by it. Some have even killed their children to spare them such a fate; remember Andrea Yates from Houston who drowned her five children? If we would truly grasp the horror of it, we would go insane. Our every waking moment would have to be spent snatching whoever we can out of the fire or nothing but constant guilt would torment us. Can you imagine the horror of suffering “forever?” What is a billion years? It is but a second in eternity. Who could possibly imagine such horror? What if you or one of your loved ones should go there? Does this thought affect how you feel about God?

This theme has gripped my heart as it afflicts millions of people and dishonors God before the world. After years of wrestling with this topic, studying the Bible, and reading the works of others, I have found that hell, whatever it consists of, is a judgment given from the disciplinary hand of a loving Father. Though the symbolism surrounding it seems severe, it ultimately serves a good and remedial purpose. One of our greatest presidents agreed. In *Abraham Lincoln the Christian*, William Johnson, stated:

Abraham Lincoln did not nor could not believe in the endless punishment of anyone of the human race. He understood punishment for sin to be a Bible doctrine; that the punishment was parental in its object, aim, and design, and intended for the good of the offender; hence, it must cease when justice is satisfied. All that was lost by the transgression of Adam was made good by the atonement.¹

That is the message of this book. It is indeed good news for those tormented over the destiny of lost loved ones! Millions in our land can relate. Though the subject is hell, the book is really about God.

What is He like? A popular Christian cliché some time ago was: “God is good—all the time!” Well, you will find solid support for it here. God is good even in His judgments! They are not infinite and horrendously cruel, but just, righteous, and remedial.

If you think I am manipulating the Scriptures in this book, then please leave it. But if not, be ready to fall in love with an amazing and wonderful God!

Tradition

*You invalidate the word of God
for the sake of your tradition.*

(Mt. 15:6 NAS; Mt. 15:3, 9)

If religious leaders of Christ’s time could invalidate the word of God for the sake of tradition, is it not possible today? Is the Church somehow immune? Only in 1995 did the Southern Baptist Convention finally submit an official apology regarding their stand on slavery.² Yes, slavery used to be accepted in Christendom. Many debates took place for and against slavery with each side quoting the Bible. However, when one considers that the letter kills and the Spirit gives life, and our beliefs must harmonize with the spirit and tenor of the Bible as a whole, the argument against slavery takes on new force. The same applies with the case against an “eternal” hell.

Traditions endure for generations, are highly revered, and are extremely difficult to change. There are no harder forms of error to confront and correct. When Paul and Steven declared to their fellow Israelites that God’s mercy extended to the Gentiles, they were stoned! Do we hold to any traditions for which Christ might rebuke us for? If we refuse to acknowledge any inconsistencies in our beliefs, how will we ever know?

This book examines the Augustinian tradition of everlasting punishment, so-called because it stems principally from the theology of Augustine, who is said to be the father of the western Church.³ This tradition assumes that the vast majority of the human race will never be saved. This is based on passages such as, “Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Mt. 7:14 - see page 220 #9). However, is this what Christ meant by these words? This book presents abundant Scriptural evidence why this could not be what Christ and the Apostles taught.

Most Christians have not fully thought through the serious implications of this tradition. In essence, it teaches that an all-powerful and all-loving God has created a world knowing full well the majority of His creation would spend eternity in suffering. How can this be?

Although this is what tradition assumes, most Christians, in their heart of hearts, do not embrace it. In *Hell Under Fire*, Daniel Block, professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, wrote, “The traditional doctrine of hell now bears the marks of *odium theologium*—its defenders are seemingly few.”⁴ Though its defenders may be few, the doctrine itself continues to terrorize millions.

The tradition that an all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful God would create a world where the majority of His human creatures are destined to suffer for all eternity is incomprehensible. What greater horror has the world ever known?

The tradition that an all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful God, would create a world where the majority of His human creatures are destined to suffer for all eternity is incomprehensible.

Implications

These people draw near with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.

(Is. 29:13)

What is this passage saying? It is warning us about a fear toward God taught by the commandment of men. Could Augustine’s teaching on hell be just such a commandment? Certainly, it removes our hearts far from God! Can we honestly say our affection toward God has not been influenced by this horrid doctrine? Has the thought that God might punish you or your loved ones forever in hell ever hindered your love toward Him?

This tradition seriously affects our understanding of God, including our whole outlook on life and how we relate to people. Do we not reflect, at least to a degree, the character of the God we worship? If we think seriously about the implications of this teaching, it will lead to certain undeniable conclusions as mentioned on page six.

Confronting Our Tradition

A tradition begins when someone's interpretation (in this case Augustine's) is accepted by others and passed down through the generations. How many Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians hold to beliefs solely because they have been passed down to them? Should we not critically evaluate for ourselves our traditions? "Test all things; hold fast what is good" (Th. 5:21). "Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right" (Lu. 12:57)? Christ strongly warns us about our traditions (Mt. 15:3, 6, 9). Perhaps you have struggled with hell as I have. Maybe you have longed that somehow, in this case, tradition is wrong. If so, read on. But before starting, let us consider one important point.

Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?

(Lu. 12:57)

The Scriptures

The Bible has been translated from ancient tongues and cultures by men who carry their own ideas into their translations. They cannot help reading the ancient manuscripts through the lens of their personal theology. They are only human. Since most of our translators have held the doctrine of eternal torment, they unwittingly filtered all they translated from that mindset. That is why we must constantly be on our guard, like the Bereans (Ac. 17:11), comparing Scripture with Scripture based on the original Greek and Hebrew words. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures..." (Mt. 22:29 KJV).

Unless God gives us ears to hear, the Bible will remain a mystery (Pr. 20:12; Lu. 8:8). For unless He opens our minds and hearts, we toil in vain. "For our sufficiency is from God and not of the letter...for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2Co. 3:5, 6). The Ku Klux Klan is known to have based its evil actions on the "letter" of Scripture, but did the Klan know its Spirit?⁵ "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2Ti. 2:15).

To help you rightly divide the word of truth, I submit to you the following five principles of interpretation for your consideration:

- ◆ Pray for understanding.
- ◆ Trust Scripture to interpret Scripture, not man.

- ◆ Base your beliefs on the total forest of Scripture, not a few trees.
- ◆ Put aside what your spirit reveals is not right or good until the Lord resolves the issue in your heart (1Th. 5:21; Lu. 2:57).
- ◆ Remember that the ancient eastern custom was to use language in the most vivid possible way.⁶ (Appendix V, #18)

“Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the **power** of God” (Mk. 12:24)? I encourage you to meditate on the Scriptures presented in this study, for they focus strongly on God’s power. Follow the example of the Bereans, who were “more noble” than the rest, for they did not just take someone’s word for it, but searched it out for themselves (Ac. 17:11). You may find *The Word Study Concordance*, by George Wigram and Ralph Winter helpful as it lists words according to Greek usage, not English. You do not need to know Greek to use it. Winter explained:

“Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?”

The Word Study Concordance traces not English but Greek words. You can find listed every passage where a given Greek word occurs regardless of how many different ways it may be translated into English. Even the best lexicons are basically some scholar’s reflections on the data drawn from a concordance. Once you have read these Bible passages yourself, you have acquired something no dictionary can easily give you—a certain instinctive feel for the word. You have become conditioned by the actual use of the word (which is the most normal and reliable way to learn any word in any language), not to equate it to some other word. Students often try to short-circuit this process and go directly to a lexicon.⁷

Since this book has no index, we invite you to download the book free from our website. Use the “find” feature on your computer to look up words, topics, and Scriptures.

With a humble spirit and prayerful attitude, let us look intently into God’s written revelation seeking to understand His character and purpose in His judgments.

Scripture quotations are based on the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter I dismantles the four pillars on which our belief in everlasting punishment has been erroneously based. First, I show that “eternal” punishment in Mt. 25:46 is a mistranslation of the Greek word *aionios*. I provide numerous examples showing that *aion* (Greek of *olam*) is of limited duration. For example: Jonah was in the fish forever **until** three days later (Jon. 1:17; 2:6). Mountains are eternal **until** they are scattered (Hab. 3:6). The law is eternal **until** it vanishes away (Le. 24:8; He. 8:7-13). Naaman’s leprosy clings forever **until** his death (2K. 5:27). Circumcision is eternal **until** the new covenant. Animal sacrifices are eternal **until** ended by Christ (2Ch. 2:4). God dwells in Solomon’s temple forever **until** it is destroyed (2Ch. 7:16). A slave serves his master forever **until** death ends his servitude (Ex. 21:6). Hills are eternal **until** made low and the earth is burned up (Ge. 49:26; De. 33:15; Is. 40:4; 2Pe. 3:10). The Aaronic priesthood is eternal **until** Melchizedek (Ex. 40:15; Nu. 25:13; He. 7:14-22). Stones are a memorial forever; where are they now (Jos. 4:7)? Israel’s judgment is forever **until** God restores it (Is. 32:13-15). God makes one an eternal excellence **until** many generations (Is. 60:15). Second, I show how *Gehenna* (“hell” in most Bibles) also cannot be eternal. Jesus said, “**Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there** [the prison of *Gehenna*] **until you have paid up the last cent**” (Mt. 5:26). The word “until” confirms that hell is not eternal. Third, I give examples from Scripture showing that death and destruction (*apollumi*) are not the end of the story with God. W. E. Vine writes, “The idea is not extinction but ruin; loss, not of being, but of well being.”¹ Finally, I show that “free will” is not absolute. We cannot trump God’s will to save **us, His** property (Ez. 18:4).

Chapter II affirms God loves all people and wills to save all. It proves from Scripture that He is **all**-powerful and works through life’s circumstances to cause every person to believe and willingly repent, whether in this age, or the age to come (Ep. 2:7). *I will... cause you to walk in my statutes* (Ez. 36:27).

Chapter III proves from numerous Scriptures that death is not hopeless for anyone, and that all God’s judgments have a good and remedial purpose. For example, *He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him* (Lu. 20:38). *Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects* (Job 5:17).

Chapters IV and V look at the bigger picture of God's plan for man. They tie together important pieces of the puzzle enabling us to better harmonize the Scriptures, especially as they apply to God's judgments.

Chapters VI and VII examine thirty-six texts which confirm in my heart, either directly or indirectly, God's unending and unfailing love for all.

Chapter VIII looks at the evidence provided by six key witnesses: The Old Testament, the Apostles, the Early Church, the Moral Witness (Conscience), and the Good and Bad Fruits of our beliefs. Take the Early Church for example: Charles Pridgeon, president and founder of the Pittsburgh Bible Institute, wrote: "In these early centuries those holding the doctrine of endless punishment were in the minority and no one was counted unorthodox who believed in restitution and the ultimate and complete victory of Christ. In fact, the leaders in the early Church Councils and those who were chosen to establish orthodoxy were well-known believers in the beneficent side of future punishment. This is especially true of the second great Church Council which was held to perfect the Nicene Creed....There is no word in these early statements of creed in favor of endless punishment."² In *Encheirid. ad Laurent*, c. 29, Augustine wrote: "There are very many in our day, who though not denying the Holy Scriptures, do not believe in endless torments." Note he said, "very many" and that they do not deny the Holy Scriptures.³ Hope beyond hell is an ancient theology firmly rooted in the Early Church. A close look at all these Witnesses powerfully affirms this hope.

Chapter IX provides an additional 24 key points affirming this Hope.

Chapter X declares God's oath to bless all - Christ is *indeed* the Savior of the World (Jn. 4:42) - He successfully accomplished His mission on earth (Jn. 17:4; 12:47) - and reveals from observing current events how an awesome and glorious view of God is taking the Christian world by storm.

The Trilogy, by D. Scott Reichard, exalts God's sovereignty and His responsibility to save all due to His laws of liability and redemption. Is it really a question of "freewill" versus sovereignty? From a legal standpoint, "free will" is a side bar; ownership is the issue. God, as Creator, owns all He has made (Ge.1:1; Ez.18:4). Man has delegated authority, but God retains sovereignty! His liability laws are based on ownership. Exodus 21:33-34 says if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox falls in (of his own free will), the owner

of the pit shall **make it good** and buy the animal. God's law makes the owner of the pit responsible; he must buy the ox (see also De.22:8 and Ex. 22:5-6). Well, consider this analogy: God created a beautiful garden as man's home. In the center of it, He dug a pit and chose not to fence it off; in fact, he shades it with two temptation trees and hires a sly tempter as the grounds keeper. And what happened? Man fell in the pit just as God knew he would from the foundation of the world (Ep. 1:4; Re. 13:8). God purposely left it exposed. When Adam and Eve fell in, all creation became subject to death. But God had a plan. Like the pit in Exodus 21, His own liability law obligated Himself to make it good, which He did. In Christ, God redeemed all of humanity. He purchased the dead ox and owns us. It cost the precious blood of His Son to redeem us. There is no way our "free will" can take from God what legally belongs to Him. We were purchased with what is of infinite value (1Pe. 1:18-20). What Good News! Christ redeemed the whole world! (1Jn. 2:2; 1Ti. 2:6).

The majority of Church leaders of the early centuries believed in an end to God's punishments, either through annihilation or ultimate reconciliation. They understood that *olam* and *aion* often pertained to the age to come, and did not mean "eternal" as many claim. They understood the symbolic nature of fire in the Scriptures and viewed God's judgment "fires" as something very positive. Fire was an element of life (Is.4:5), of purification (Mal.3:2-3), of transformation (2 Pe.3:10) and never of preservation alive for purposes of anguish. To them, fire was the sign of God's being, not His wrath. God is a consuming fire (He.12:29). Christ's eyes are a flame of fire (Re.1:14). The seven lamps of fire are the seven spirits of God (Re.4:5). His throne is a fiery flame and its wheels a burning fire (Da.7:9, 10). God's ministers are a flame of fire (He.1:7). He is like a refiner's fire (Mal.3:2). God answers Gideon (Jud. 6:21), David (1Chr. 21:26), Elijah and Elisha by fire. God gave His law in fire (De. 33:2) and the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost in fire.(Ac. 2:3) Christ baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mt. 3:11). Fire tries every man's work (1Co. 3:13) and saves us "as by fire" (1Co. 3:15) not tortures in fire. The fires of *Gehenna* are kindled for purification - "**Everyone** will be purified by fire" (Mk. 9:49 - GNT). Note that this fire is in the same context as *Gehenna fire* (v.47)! As Jerome says, "fire is God's last medicine for the sinner."⁴

"Lord, please open up the Scriptures to my heart."

CHAPTER SIX

PROCLAMATIONS

PART ONE

The word...upon which You have caused me to hope.
(Ps. 119:49)

This chapter is complete from the unabridged edition. Please read Chapter Summaries in the previous pages first. The above verse says perfectly what the next two chapters are about. Here, I present thirty–six texts that either directly confirm or indirectly support my conviction in the Blessed Hope. Truly, they are the word upon which He has caused me to hope. They speak powerfully to me, and I hope they will to you too. I have arranged them in alphabetical order with a few exceptions. Please pray for God’s revelation as you read these precious passages.

All Is Possible

With God all things are possible.
(Jer. 32:17; Mt. 19:24–26; Mk. 10:27; Lu. 1:37; 18:26)

With God all things are possible? Do we believe this statement? Is it possible that an all-powerful God who can do anything, and who loves everyone, cannot save whom He will, or will not save whom He can? I can accept that one might admit they do not know if God can or would save those in hell. But, to say dogmatically “there can never be any hope” is a frank denial of this passage, God’s power, and the many promises made in Scripture.

Beatitudes

Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.
(Lu. 6:20–21)

Christ was not speaking only to believers here as seen in Lu. 6:19, 7:1; Mt. 5:1-2, 7:28-29; and Mt. 8:1. He addressed the crowd. According to our tradition, the majority of humanity is hopelessly lost. Therefore, when will these lost ones receive the kingdom, be filled, and laugh? I no longer struggle with this passage, as I can simply accept it as it is. This is one more example of how the Scriptures are harmonized as a result of the Blessed Hope.

Creation Freed

*For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope because the **creation** itself also **will be delivered** from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs until now.*

(Ro. 8:19-22)

“Creation” in the above passage certainly includes people. Christ died for people. What part of creation groans and labors with birth pangs more than people? All people in God’s appointed time will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and share in the blessings of the sons of God, the first-fruits (elect) of His creation. That is what this glorious passage says. Any other view demeans this precious promise into something insignificant. If people are not referred to here, how do we understand the following passages?

All people... will be delivered from the bondage of corruption and share in the blessings of the sons of God, the first-fruits.

- ♦ *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15).*
- ♦ *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation (2Co. 5:17).*
- ♦ *In Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails but a new creation (Ga. 6:15).*

“Creation” clearly includes people! Oh, if we would only see how central people are in this passage. We could then fully experience the great comfort and joy it was intended to impart to our hearts!

Death Destroyed

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death....

(1Co. 15:26)

Death is an enemy and will be destroyed. Which is the last enemy, the first death or the second? German scholar and Bible translator A.E. Knoch wrote:

Death at any time is an enemy. We are agreed on that. The second death is an enemy. One of these is the last enemy. Is it the first or second? Can the first death be the last enemy? No enemy can be last if it has another coming after it. Hence the single word last is all the proof needed to establish the fact that it must be the second death which will be abolished.¹

If death, the last enemy, is destroyed, then life is the result. If this is not so, the statement is void of meaning. For what is the opposite of death? For the process of dying is not the greatest or last enemy, it is the state of death itself. Whether death be the first, second, or tenth, nothing changes because “death” in 1Co. 15:26 is not qualified. Scripture includes any types there may be. “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades [hell], where is your victory? The sting of death is sin....But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through Christ” (1Co. 15:55-57).

Drags All

Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.

(Jn. 12:31-32)

The word “draw” (Greek - *helkouo*) is literally “to drag.”² It is not restricted by the resistance of the object being pulled. Once the judgment of this world has run its course and the ruler of this world is cast out, Christ will drag all men to Himself. He confirmed this just a few verses further (vs. 47) by saying He came “to save the world.” Christ successfully accomplished His mission! (Jn. 17:4; Jn. 3:17).

Consider the unrestricted force of “draw” in these examples:

- ♦ Peter, having a sword, **drew** (helkouo) it and struck... (Jn. 18:10).
- ♦ Peter went up and **dragged** (helkouo) the net to land, full of large fish (Jn. 21:11).
- ♦ They seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** (helkouo) them into the market place (Ac. 16:19 NAS).
- ♦ Taking hold of Paul, they **dragged** (helkouo) him out of the temple (Ac. 21:30 NAS).
- ♦ Is it not the rich who...**drag** (helkouo) you into the courts. (Ja. 2:6)?

As the “sword,” “net,” “Paul,” “Silas,” and the poor were not able to resist the “dragging” powers that overcame them, neither can any power resist Christ’s dragging power. No power is greater than God; nothing can resist Christ. “I will **drag** all men to Myself.”

Especially Believers

*This is a **faithful saying** and **worthy of all acceptance**.*

*For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living **God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. These things command and teach.***

(1Ti. 4:9-11)

This must be a very important passage to warrant such a powerful introduction and closing. Paul exhorts us to view these faithful words as worthy of all acceptance, and tells us to command and teach these truths. Understand the importance of this critical passage. If God is the Savior exclusively of those who believe during their earthly existence, as our tradition teaches, then this passage is clearly in error. The difference between “exclusively” and “especially” is paramount. To interchange these concepts is to contradict Scripture.

What does “especially of those who believe” mean? The immediate context sheds much light: “Set the believers an example....practice these duties....so that all may see your progress. Take heed to yourself and teaching; hold to that, for *by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers*” (1Ti. 4:12-16 RSV).

Is this salvation by works? No, it is “working out” salvation (Ph. 2:12). God’s purpose in salvation is not to save us in our sins (Mt. 1:21), but from them. Christ saves us from our sinful nature and transforms us into His image (Ga. 4:19) so we may shine as lights in

the world (Mt. 5:13-16). Thus, believers are “especially” saved because they have been justified by faith, and are presently working out their salvation as God empowers them (Ph. 2:13). Their salvation is being perfected (made complete) for all to see (1Ti. 4:15-16).

None of this changes the fact that God is still the Savior of those who do not yet believe. Once His righteous, just, and purpose-driven judgments have run their course, death will be destroyed, all will be made alive, and all will be subjected to Christ. Then God will be all in all (1Co. 15:22-28). He is, in an ultimate sense, the Savior of all men, (unbelievers and believers) but especially, at present, of believers.

The Greek word “especially,” is *malista*. Could it also mean “exclusively”? The only way to know is to observe how it is used in Scripture. This is a good example of how useful *The Word Study Concordance* can be. *Malista* occurs twelve times. As you read these references, try substituting the word “exclusively” and see how it fits.

- ♦ *They...fell on Paul’s neck sorrowing **most of all** [*malista*] for the words which he spoke (Ac. 20:38).*
- ♦ *I have brought him out before you all and **especially** [*malista*] before you King Agrippa (Ac. 25:26).*
- ♦ *Agrippa...**especially** [*malista*] because you are an expert (Ac. 26:2-3).*
- ♦ *Let us do good to all, **especially** [*malista*] to those who are of the household of faith (Ga. 6:9-10).*
- ♦ *All the saints greet you, but **especially** [*malista*] those who are of Caesar’s household (Ph. 4:20-23).*
- ♦ *If anyone does not provide for his own, and **especially** [*malista*] for those of his household, he has denied the faith... (1Ti. 5:3-8).*
- ♦ *Elders be counted worthy of double honor, **especially** [*malista*] those who labor in the word and doctrine (1Ti. 5:16-18).*
- ♦ *Bring the cloak...and the books, **especially** [*malista*] the parchments (2Ti. 4:13).*
- ♦ *There are many...deceivers, **especially** [*malista*] those of the circumcision... (Tit. 1:10-11).*
- ♦ *But more than a slave—a beloved brother, **especially** [*malista*] to me but how much more to you (Phil. 16).*
- ♦ *Reserve...for the day of judgment, and **especially** [*malista*] those who walk according to the flesh (2Pe. 2:9-11).*

*God... is the Savior of all men, **especially** [not exclusively] of those who believe.*

*“This is a **faithful** saying
and worthy of **all** acceptance...
we trust in the living God,
who is the Savior of **all** men,
especially [not exclusively] of
those who believe. These things
command and teach!”*

Can we substitute the idea of “exclusively” for “especially” in any of these *malista* passages? No! Nor do we have grammatical or contextual grounds to do so in 1Ti. 4:10. Compare this passage with Ga. 6:10: “...let us do good to all, *especially* to those who are of the household

of faith. ”Can we neglect doing good to unbelievers? Of course not! Neither can we deny that God is the savior of **all** men. But to the contrary, we are commanded to teach this very thing!

Every Knee

At the name of Jesus every knee will bow.

(Ph. 2:10-11 NAS) See also Ps. 66:3-4; Is. 45:22-25; Ro. 14:11; Re. 5:13

It is tragic that our hell theology has forced us to deny the glorious majesty of this great declaration. It has forced us to read into it a compelled submission, as we would give to one like Hitler. Without such a prejudice, we would never have restricted the passage this way. A close look at the context will prove that only a genuine adoration is possible. I list 20 points to demonstrate this in Appendix II.

Fullness of Times

*According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the **fullness of the times** He might **gather together in one all things** in Christ...in Him...who works all things according to the counsel of His will.*

(Ep. 1:9-11)

The good pleasure of God is to gather together in one all people, from every place. A time is coming when this promise will be realized in all its greatness. For God is truly GOD, a God who works all things out according to the counsel (purpose) of His will. This is not “wishful” thinking; it is His decree. What He decrees will take place and nothing—not even man’s sin or will can stop it (Job 42:2; Ez. 36:27; Da. 4:35). In God’s good time, He will bring everyone into Christ. This is not hard to believe for us who know His love, power, and will.

Forgive Them

“Father, forgive them.”
(Lu. 23:34)

Do you think the cruel soldiers who crucified Christ were forgiven? I do. Christ prayed for them, sealing His request in His blood. Would God forgive the ones who tortured His Son and bar forever from forgiveness those for whom He died? Please think about this.

Christ on the cross is the embodiment of forgiveness –the key element of our faith (Mt. 6:9-15). What hinders forgiveness more than worshipping a God who never forgives the lost? The doctrine of hell has short circuited the Gospel's power for over 1600 years hindering our ability to forgive. But the Good News is, there are no limits to God's forgiveness! Christ, the very image of God, forgiving His torturers, is all the evidence we need. Why even read this book?

If God writes people off forever, so will we. For 34 years my brother Bob ridiculed me for my faith. I tried countless times to share Christ with Him, but to no avail. Eventually, I wrote him off. This was until I discovered God's unending love. Once I began to see Bob through God's eyes of limitless love, my love for him was rekindled. No longer did I see him as a lost cause, but as a worshipper of God in the ages to come (Re. 5:13). It may be I who will wash his feet in God's Kingdom. What a revelation! This radically changed my attitude towards him. I began to honor him as I saw him through the eyes of Christ, beholding his torturers, asking for their forgiveness. Bob died suddenly one day. And though I grieve, I'm at peace.

Friend, God does not command us to do what He will not do. The Gospel of Peace (Ro. 10:15) magnifies God in His unlimited love and forgiveness. With hearts enraptured by such a God, and filled with His Spirit, we too will forgive as Christ did. And when the world sees and experiences **that** forgiveness, it will encounter Christ in us and be drawn to Him as He proclaimed (Jn. 12:32)!

For As...Even So

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.
(1Co. 15:22)

Would the following statement sound strange to you? “For as in the pre-Civil War era **all** African Americans were slaves, **even so**, in

the post-Civil War era, **some** African Americans were given liberty.” It sounds strange to me. It doesn’t make sense.

- ♦ In “For as **all**...even so **all**,” the agreement makes grammatical sense.
- ♦ In “For as **all**...even so **some**,” the statement makes no grammatical sense because “all” and “some” do not agree in context: “for as...even so” requires agreement. Grammatically, you cannot say, “all” to mean “some.” “All” means “inclusive;” “some” does not.

Some say that “made alive” simply means all are resurrected to judgment. The whole context argues against such a thought, for “made alive” is presented solely as something glorious and positive. (I discuss this next). Others claim “all” refers to two completely different groups of persons. Only those “in” Christ are made alive, inferring that the majority of humanity is excluded. This would be tautology, for it is like saying, only the saved will be saved. Of even greater weight is the context: in such a glorious chapter as this, to say “only the saved will be saved” would seem a forced or strained interpretation. For in what way then would death be destroyed, swallowed up in victory, and its sting lost (See 1Co. 15:26-28, 54-55)? Do the magnificent words of these verses fit with a victory affecting just a small fraction of those dead in Adam? The Jerusalem Bible makes it unmistakably clear: “Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ” (1Co. 15:22).

Made Alive

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

(1Co. 15:22)

To some, “made alive” means merely to resurrect in order to annihilate. The word is *zōopoieō* (Strongs #2227). It is the verb form of *zōē* (#2222). Vine defines it as, “to make alive, cause to live, quicken” from *zōē*, “life,” and *poieō*, “to make.”³ *Zōē* is the same word used in Jn. 3:16, and in more than 130 New Testament passages. “I am the way, the truth, and the life [*zōē*]” (Jn. 14:6). The phrase “made alive,” (*zōopoieō*) is used only 12 times (Jn. 5:21a, 21b; 6:63; Ro. 4:17; 8:11; 1Co. 15:22, 36, 45; 2Co. 3:6; Ga. 3:21; 1Ti. 6:13; 1Pe. 3:18). Try to read the idea of annihilation or everlasting torment in any of these references and see if they fit. You will quickly see they refer only to a positive and glorious spiritual life.

Last Adam

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.
(Ro. 5:18-19 NAS)

Let's take a moment to break down and discuss this text.

- Clause 1. *“As through **one** transgression there resulted condemnation **to all men**,*
- Clause 2. ***even so** through **one** act of righteousness there resulted justification of life **to all men**.*
- Clause 3. ***For as** through the **one** man's disobedience **the many** were made sinners,*
- Clause 4. ***even so** through the obedience of the **One the many** will be made righteous”* (Ro. 5:18-19 NAS).

Why should “the many” in clause 4 refer to a different group than “the many” in clause 3, since nothing is said to indicate a difference? Only someone trying to support an agenda would try to read into it such an idea. In addition, it would contradict clauses 1 and 2. The point made in clauses 3 and 4 is singular versus plural.

Singular..... versusplural
the one..... affecting the many

Since everyone agrees all men were made sinners, clause 1 clearly refers to all men. Clause 2 argues from clause 1 and even states all men are in view. In clause 3, Paul expounds his thought further, he points out Adam, though only one person, has affected the lives of the multitudes of humanity (the many). No one will argue “the many” in clause 3 is not all men. So also, in clause 4, the exact comparison is being made except that “the One” affecting the lives of the multitudes of humanity (the many) is Christ. The “many” of clause 4 must be the same “many” as clause 3 because nothing is stated to the contrary. The “for as” followed by the “even so” requires the agreement. An honest seeker of truth must acknowledge these relationships. Basic grammar and ethics require it.

The Weymouth translation words it clearly.

*It follows then that just as the result of a single transgression is a condemnation which extends to the whole race, so also the result of a single decree of righteousness is a life-giving acquittal which extends to the whole race. **For as through the disobedience of the one individual the mass of humanity were constituted sinners, so also through the obedience of the One the mass of humanity will be constituted righteous** (Ro. 5:18-9 .*

Joseph Kirk, pastor, radio preacher, and former director of *Scripture Studies Concern*, said it this way:

But someone will ask, Why does it say “the many” instead of “all” in verse 19? This is because the one disobedient man and the One righteous Man are put in a class by themselves. They are in contrast with “the many.” We may put it as follows: The one disobedient man plus “the many” equals all humanity made sinners. The One obedient Man plus “the many” equals all humanity made righteous. That “the one” plus “the many” made sinners, includes all humanity, few, if any, attempt to deny. Even so, “the One” plus “the many” made righteous is all-inclusive and guarantees justification of life for all humanity.⁴

See also Richard H. Bell’s “Romans 5:18-19,” *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 48 (2002), pp. 417-432. This Tübingen scholar argues that “Paul does in fact support a universal salvation in Rom. 5.18-19. Such an understanding is supported by both the context and by a detailed study of these verses” (p. 417).⁵

Finally, to get the full sense of Paul’s force of argument, we need to meditate on the whole context, especially verses 12 through 21. In the event Paul might be misunderstood, he spells it out clearly in his closing statement. “Where sin abounded, grace abounded *much more*” (Ro. 5:20)! How can a believer claim Christ gained back less than what Adam lost?

One phrase has been used to reduce the “many” in Christ to mean the “few”: “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those *who receive* abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Ro. 5:17). Paul is comparing Adam to Christ. He refers

to “those who receive [*lambanō*]” in a passive sense. Adam sinned, and as a result, all men have received (passively) the consequences of his action. The consequences of Christ’s action must also be received in the same manner, or Paul’s whole argument falls apart. Dr. Bell’s exegesis confirms this.⁵ Consider the following examples of Paul’s use of the word, *lambanō*, in the very same letter:

- ♦ *Through Him, we have received [*lambanō*] grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name (Ro. 1:5).*
- ♦ *We also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received [*lambanō*] the reconciliation (Ro. 5:11).*
- ♦ *For you did not receive [*lambanō*] the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received [*lambanō*] the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father” (Ro. 8:15).*

In which of these cases is *lambanō* used in an active, qualifying sense? They are all examples of passively receiving something as a result of factors outside of ourselves. In the same way we have received (*lambanō*) the Spirit of adoption, or sin in Adam, we have received (*lambanō*) abundance of grace in Christ. See how this passage reads in the literal versions.

- ♦ *For if by the offense of the one the death did reign through the one, much more those, who the abundance of the grace and of the free gift of the righteousness are receiving, in life shall reign through the one—Jesus Christ (Ro. 5:17 YLT).*
- ♦ *For if, by the offense of the one, death reigns through the one, much rather, those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning in life through the One, Jesus Christ (Ro. 5:17 CLT).*
- ♦ *For, if, by the fault of the one, death reigned through the one, much more, they who the superabundance of the favor and of the free-gift of the righteousness do receive, in life, shall reign through the one, Jesus Christ (Ro. 5:17 ROTH).*

For your scrutiny, I submit this passage in the *Greek Interlinear New Testament*. It illustrates the exact relationship between the words of Scripture, incorporating the *Strong’s Concordance* numbering system:

ei <1487> {IF} *gar* <1063> {FOR} *tu* <3588> {BY THE} *tou* <3588> {OF THE} *enou* <1520> {ONE} *paraptwmati* <3900> *o* <3588> {OFFENCE} *yanatou* <2288> {DEATH} *ebasileusen* <936> (5656) {REIGNED} *dia* <1223> {BY} *tou* <3588> {THE} *enou* <1520> {ONE,} *pollw* <4183> {MUCH} *mallon* <3123> {MORE} *oi* <3588> {THOSE} *thn* <3588> {THE} *perisseian* <4050> *thv* <3588> {ABUNDANCE} *caritov* <5485> {OF GRACE} *kai* <2532> {AND} *thv* <3588> {OF THE} *dwreav* <1431> *thv* <3588> {GIFT} *dikaiousnhv* <1343> {OF RIGHTEOUSNESS} *lambanontev* <2983> (5723) {RECEIVING,} *en* <1722> {IN} *zwh* <2222> {LIFE} *basileusousin* <936> (5692) {SHALL REIGN} *dia* <1223> {BY} *tou* <3588> {THE} *enou* <1520> {ONE} *ihsou* <2424> {JESUS} *cristou* <5547> {CHRIST} (Ro. 5:17)

If *lambanō* here is in an active and qualifying sense, then it would restrict the “all” to those lucky enough to have heard the Gospel in this life; intelligent enough to have understood it clearly; wise enough to accept it; and dedicated enough to deny themselves, carry their cross, and endure to the very end. If stringent conditions are necessary to receive God’s grace, what stringent conditions were necessary to receive Adam’s curse? What choice were we given? Paul’s whole point is that what Christ has gained for lost humanity exceeds what Adam lost! Only one forced to defend an eternal hell would try to insist that *lambanō* here is in an active, qualifying sense.

Paul’s argument is irrefutable: God, who is Love, sent Christ, “a life-giving spirit” as the last Adam (1Co. 15:45). In His eternal purpose from before the foundation of the world (Ep. 1:4; Re. 13:8), God sent the second Adam to undo all the harm committed by the first. Paul’s closing statement undeniably confirms this. (Next)

Much More

*Where sin abounded, grace abounded **much more**.*

(Ro. 5:20)

Is Adam’s sin in destroying lives greater than Christ’s sacrifice in restoring them? If so, then what the second Adam (Christ) has accomplished in rescuing a few is infinitely “much less,” not “much more” than what sin has done. The Weymouth translation, in verse 15, powerfully expresses the glorious achievement of Christ here:

*But God's free gift immeasurably outweighs the transgression. For if through the transgression of the one individual the mass of humanity have died, infinitely greater [much more] is the generosity with which God's grace, and the gift given in His grace which found expression in the one man Jesus Christ, **have been bestowed on the mass of humanity** (Ro. 5:15 WEY).*

“*Has been bestowed on the mass of humanity!*” This is an accomplished fact! As Adam impacted **all** humanity, so did Christ!

God Changes People

*I will...**cause** you to walk in My statutes, and...do them.*
(Ez. 36:26-27)

Is God a respecter of persons? What He has done for these, will He not do for others? “He is good to **all**.” “In truth...God shows **no partiality**” (Ps. 145:9; Ac. 10:34). See also Ro. 2:11, 10:12; Ga. 2:6; Ep. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1Ti. 2:3-4; Ja. 3:17; 1Pe. 1:17. Sadly, a flawed view of judgment has kept us from knowing God in His unlimited power and unstoppable will to change people. Scripture clearly teaches it. For God to sentence even one person to infinite penalty only proves He cannot or will not change that person, contradicting who He is.

*I will cause you
to walk in
My statutes*

God Does Right

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
(Ge. 18:25)

Is there a double standard? If something is wrong in our minds, is it not also in God's? How many truly believe God would create a world of people knowing they will suffer infinitely? Many accept this because they think God's moral standard is somehow different than ours. They erroneously base this on Is. 55:8: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts...” By simply quoting this one passage they attempt to justify an eternal hell. But they ignore the context. The phrase refers to God's **abundant** mercy, not cruelty! Please read the passage (Is. 55:7-9). Those who have a right concept of morality, love, and justice, know that a loving God would never inflict unjust (infinite) punishment.

God Wills All Saved

*I exhort first of all that supplications, **prayers**, intercessions,...be made **for all men**....this is **good and acceptable** in the sight of God our Savior; **Who will have** [desires NKJV] **all men to be saved**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth....Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a **ransom for all**, to be **testified in due time** (1Ti. 2:1-6 KJV) (Who **wills** that all mankind be saved. CLT).*

Our Lord rebuked His disciples for invalidating the Scriptures for the sake of tradition (Mt. 15:3,6,9). Have our translators done the same? Since most do not believe God is all-powerful to do His will, they make His “will” into a mere “desire” to conform to their limited view of God. They negate the force of His words. Translators are human and as such always translate from their personal world view. It cannot be otherwise. That is why we must be especially careful to compare Scripture with Scripture, and carefully use concordances.

Do we demean the power of prayer *for all men* by denying God’s power to change wills and hearts? Who prays for what they think cannot happen? We deny that Christ *ransomed all*. Otherwise we would know that God must release the ransomed whose penalty has been paid. We make the clause, *testified in due time* meaningless, since we do not believe all will be ransomed. What is *good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior*? Most of humanity forever cursed? Can you see how our hell tradition clashes head on with passages such as this? But the Blessed Hope glories in every part of it! Nothing needs to be explained away. (See “God’s Will,” chap. I).



It is my hope that you will prayerfully reflect on these proclamations based on God’s power. Please do not rush through them, but allow the Holy Spirit time to impart these glorious truths to your heart. We have been conditioned so long to limit these passages, that to now accept them in their full scope is not easy. Tradition is hard to overcome. Jesus said, “You invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.” “You err not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God” (Mt.15:6 NAS, 22:29). Like Abraham, let us not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but give Him glory, being fully convinced that He is able to fulfill all His promises (Ro. 4:20-21).

Jesus Died to Save the Whole World!

A VERSATILE TRACT
FOR YOUR USE
DESIGN / FORMAT / PRINT
USE YOUR OWN CREATIVE STYLE
(Download from our website)

Send to friends in emails and letters. Give to co-workers, clients, clerks & servers.
Post on bulletin boards. Leave in waiting rooms, restaurants, stores, offices, etc.!

JESUS DIED TO SAVE THE WHOLE WORLD!

*For I did not come to judge the world but to save the **world**.* Jn. 12:47
*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the **world**.* Jn. 1:29
*We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the **world**.* Jn. 4:42
*We testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the **world**.* 1Jn. 4:14
*He is the propitiation...not for our sins only but also for the **whole world**.* 1Jn. 2:2
*The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the **world**.* Jn. 6:33
*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw (lit. drag) **all peoples** to Myself.* Jn. 12:32
*I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to **all people**.* Lu. 2:10
***All the ends of the world** shall...turn to the Lord, **all families** of the nations shall worship.*
***All the earth** shall worship you and sing praises to your name.* Ps. 22:27, 66:4
*The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to **all men**.* Tit. 2:11 (NAS)
Through the greatness of your power your enemies shall submit themselves to you. Ps. 66:3

Do these Bible promises really mean what they say? What about billions of Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, etc.? What about the poor and homeless in the streets of Calcutta (Kolkata), the dumps of Manila, the rubble of Haiti, the slums of the world? Will all non-Christians be tormented in hell forever along with millions of unfaithful Christians? What about the 6 million Jews who were tortured and sent to the gas chambers by Hitler? Did they all suffer terribly and die only to go to an infinitely worse fate? No! A thousand times, no!

All the families of the earth shall be blessed. Ge.12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14
Christ came to destroy the devil's works! 1Jn.3:8
The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 1Co.15:26
Fear not, I...have the keys of Hell and of Death. Re.1:18 (KJV)
God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol.* Ps.49:15 (NAS) Redeem from "Hell?"
Oh Hades where is your victory?* 1Co.15:55 (NKJV) The only time Paul used the word "Hell."
His mercy endures forever. Ps.136:1-26 Repeated 26 times in this one Psalm!
God is love and love never fails [or ends RSV]! 1 Jn.4:8, 16; 1Co.13:8
***Every knee** will bow... and **every tongue** will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!* Ph.2:10-11
Appendix II gives 20 reasons why this can only be genuine and sincere worship!

For more promises read *Hope Beyond Hell* free at HopeBeyondHell.net

* *Sheol* and *Hades* are both translated "Hell" in the KJV - *Sheol* 31 times; *Hades* 10 times.

APPENDIX I: Proclamations of Hope (186 texts)

Even though it is the same Holy Spirit that opens our minds and hearts, a passage which supports the Blessed Hope for me, may not support it for you and vice versa. This list is not exhaustive. I present it only to show that my hope is solidly anchored in Scripture. Lord willing, and as time allows, I will add additional passages to this list in the future on our website.

Genesis

- ◆ 1:31 God [Who declares the end from the beginning - Is. 46:10.] saw everything He had made as indeed very good!
- ◆ 12:3 "All the families of the earth shall be blessed." (18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14)
- ◆ 18:25 "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"
- ◆ 26:3-4 He makes an oath to bless all nations.

1Samuel

- ◆ 2:6 "The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave [*Sheol*, rendered "hell" 31 times in the KJV] and brings up."

2Samuel

- ◆ 14:14 "God does not take away life; instead, He devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from Him."

1Chronicles

- ◆ 16:34 "He is good! For His mercy endures forever."
- ◆ 16:41 "His mercy endures forever." Repeated 41 times in the O.T.

Job

- ◆ 5:17-18 "Do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole."
- ◆ 23:13 "Whatever His soul desires that He does."
- ◆ 42:2 "You can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted." NIV

Psalms

- ◆ 2:8 He receives the nations for an inheritance.
- ◆ 13:5 "I trust in your unfailing love." NIV
- ◆ 22:27 "All the ends of the world shall...turn to the Lord. And all the families of the nations shall worship before You."
- ◆ 22:29 "All those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him...who cannot keep himself alive."
- ◆ 30:5 "His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning."
- ◆ 33:5 "He loves righteousness and justice ["judgment" —KJV]; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."

- ◆ 49:15 “God will redeem my soul from the power of [*Sheol*] the grave for He shall receive me.” Sheol is rendered “hell” 31 times in the KJV.
- ◆ 62:12 “To You, O Lord, belongs mercy; for You render to each one according to his work.”
- ◆ 65:2-3 “To You all flesh will come...You will provide atonement.”
- ◆ 66:3-4 “Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You.”
- ◆ 66:11-12 “You laid affliction on our backs...We went through fire...but You brought us out to rich fulfillment.”
- ◆ 67:1-4 “God...cause His face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations...let all the peoples praise You. Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For You shall judge the people righteously.”
- ◆ 72:11 “All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him.”
- ◆ 72:17 “All nations shall call Him blessed.”
- ◆ 82:8 “O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all nations.”
- ◆ 86:9 All nations shall come, worship, and glorify Him.
- ◆ 86:10 “You are great, and do wondrous things.”
- ◆ 86:13 “Great is Your mercy...You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.” Sheol is rendered “hell” 31 times in the KJV.
- ◆ 89:30-34 God will visit His son’s transgressions with the rod and stripes. “Nevertheless, My loving-kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.”
- ◆ 90:3 “You turn man to destruction, and say, “return...”
- ◆ 98:6-9 “Shout joyfully...for He is coming to judge the earth. With righteousness He shall judge the world...the peoples with equity.”
- ◆ 102:19-20 “The Lord looked down...he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death.” NIV
- ◆ 103:8-9 He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor keep his anger forever.
- ◆ 107:1 “He is good! For His mercy endures forever.”
- ◆ 135:6 “Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth.”
- ◆ 136:1-26 “His mercy endures forever.” Repeated in each verse!
- ◆ 138:4 “All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O Lord, when they hear the words of Your mouth.”
- ◆ 139:8 “If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.”
- ◆ 145:7-10 “They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Your works shall praise You, O Lord.”
- ◆ 145:14-16 “The Lord upholds all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look expectantly to You... You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

Proverbs

- ◆ 16:9 “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”
- ◆ 19:21 “There are many plans in a man’s heart, nevertheless the Lord’s counsel [“purpose”—RSV] that will stand.”
- ◆ 20:24 “A man’s steps are ordained by the Lord, how then can man understand his way?” NAS

Isaiah

- ◆ 2:2 In the last days His house shall be established and all nations shall flow into it.
- ◆ 14:24 “The Lord... has sworn, saying, ‘surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand.’”
- ◆ 14:27 “The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?”
- ◆ 25:6-8 He will make a feast for all people and destroy the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death [“in victory”—KJV] forever, and will wipe away tears from all faces.
- ◆ 26:9 “When Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”
- ◆ 26:10 “Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness.”
- ◆ 40:5 His glory shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it.
- ◆ 45:21-25 “There is no other God beside Me, a just God and a Savior...Look to Me, and be saved. all you ends of the earth!...I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. “Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him. In the Lord all the descendants of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.”
- ◆ 46:10-11 “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure’... Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”
- ◆ 48:10 “Behold, I have refined you...tested you in the furnace of affliction.”
- ◆ 49:6 “I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”
- ◆ 50: 2 “Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem? Or have I no power to deliver?”
- ◆ 52:10 “All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”
- ◆ 53:10-11 “The pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the labor [“travail”—KJV] of his soul, and be satisfied.”
- ◆ 54:8 “With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; but with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer.”
- ◆ 55:7b-8 He will “abundantly pardon. For” His thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are His ways our ways.

- ◆ 55:11 “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”
- ◆ 57:16 “I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made.”

Jeremiah

- ◆ 3:17 “At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it... No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.”
- ◆ 10:23 “I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”
- ◆ 23:20 “The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand it clearly. “ NIV
- ◆ 31:33-34 “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts.... They all shall know Me....For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”
- ◆ 32:17 “There is nothing too hard for You.”
- ◆ 32:40 “I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”

Lamentations

- ◆ 3:31-33 “The Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve...men.”

Ezekiel

- ◆ 36:23 “The nations shall know that I am the Lord...when I am hallowed in you before their eyes.”
- ◆ 36:26 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone...and give you a heart of flesh.”
- ◆ 36:27 “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.”
- ◆ 36:36 “Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I...will do it.”
- ◆ 16:55 “When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state.”
- ◆ 18:4 “All souls are Mine.” Thus, will not God provide for all His creation? See 1Ti. 5:8. Absolutely!

Daniel

- ◆ 4:35 “He does according to His will...No one can restrain His hand.”
- ◆ 7:14 “To Him was given dominion...that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.”
- ◆ 9:24 “Seventy weeks are determined...to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness.” All in due time!

Hosea

- ◆ 13:14 “I will ransom them from the power of the grave [*Sheol*]...O death, I will be your plagues! O grave [*Sheol*], I will be your destruction!” *Sheol* is rendered “hell” in the KJV 31 times!

Joel

- ◆ 2:28 “I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.”

Jonah

- ◆ 4:2 “You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness, One who relents from doing harm.”

Micah

- ◆ 7:18-19 “He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy... and will subdue our iniquities.”

Habakkuk

- ◆ 1:12 “You have appointed them for judgment...marked them for correction.”
- ◆ 2:14 “The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

Malachi

- ◆ 2:10 “Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?”
- ◆ 3:6 “I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.”

Matthew

- ◆ 5:26 “Assuredly....you will by no means get out of there [*Gehenna* prison] till you have paid the last penny.” Mt. 18: 34-35; Lu. 12: 59
- ◆ 5:44 “Love your enemies...that you may be sons of your Father.” Will God do less?
- ◆ 7:2 “With what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.”
- ◆ 9:36-38 “When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were wearied and scattered [“distressed and dispirited”—NAS], like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said... “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord...to send out laborers into His harvest.” Note: His concern for them was not their impending doom in hell.
- ◆ 12:20-21 “Till He send forth judgment unto victory. And in His name shall the Gentiles trust.” KJV
- ◆ 18:11 “The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.” How many of the lost are included in the word “that”?
- ◆ 18:14 “It is not the will of your Father...that one of these little ones should perish.”
- ◆ 23:1, 9 “Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples....One is your Father.”

Mark

- ◆ 9:49 “Everyone will be purified with fire” (GNT). Everyone!
- ◆ 10:26-27 “Who then can be saved?...With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”

Luke

- ◆ 2:10 “I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.”
- ◆ 3:6 “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.”
- ◆ 3:38 “Adam, the son of God.” This makes God the Father of all humanity.
- ◆ 4:18 “He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor...sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.” Also, “ To comfort all who mourn... give them beauty for ashes...oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Is. 61:2-3. See also Mt. 9:36-38.
- ◆ 4:22 All marveled at His gracious words.
- ◆ 9:56 “The Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.”
- ◆ 12:57 “Why do you not even on your own initiative judge what is right?” NAS “Test all things; hold fast what is good.” 1 Th. 5:21.
- ◆ 15:4 “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine...and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?” Would the Good Shepherd do differently?
- ◆ 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

John

- ◆ 1:7-9 “This man came...to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe...the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”
- ◆ 1:13 “Born, not...of the will of man, but of God.”
- ◆ 1:29 “Behold! The Lamb ...who takes away the sin of the world!”
- ◆ 3:17 “God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” See page 219 concerning “might.”
- ◆ 4:42 “We know that this is indeed the ...Savior of the world.”
- ◆ 6:33 “He...comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
- ◆ 6:51 “I shall give My flesh...for the life of the world.”
- ◆ 8:12 “I am the light of the world.”
- ◆ 8:56 “Abraham rejoiced to see My day...and was glad.” Only a triumphant Savior would bring Abraham joy.
- ◆ 12:32 “I...will draw [drag] all peoples to Myself.”
- ◆ 12:47 “I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.”
- ◆ 17:4 I have “accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do.” RSV

Acts

- ◆ 3:21 “Heaven must receive [Jesus Christ] until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

- ◆ 3:25-26 “In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. To you first, God...sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.”
- ◆ 10:34 “God shows no partiality.” See page 56.
- ◆ 17: 28-29 “As even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’ Being then the children of God...” (NAS) Speaking to unbelievers.

Romans

- ◆ 2:4 “Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Not terror).
- ◆ 3:3-4 “Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not!”
- ◆ 4:21 “What He had promised He was also able to perform.”
- ◆ 5:8 “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
- ◆ 5:17 “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” “Receive” is passive, not active. See pages 118-120.
- ◆ 5:18 “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.” Read the whole context from verses 12-21.
- ◆ 5:20 “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.”
- ◆ 8:21 “The creation [includes all people] itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.”
- ◆ 11:15-16 “If their [Israel] being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the first-fruit is holy, the lump [of humanity] is also holy.”
- ◆ 11:26 “All Israel will be saved...He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”
- ◆ 11:29 “The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.”
- ◆ 11:32 “God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”
- ◆ 11:33 “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”
- ◆ 11:36 “Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”
- ◆ 12:21 “Overcome evil with good.” God is our model.
- ◆ 14:11 “Every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” See page 195.

1 Corinthians

- ◆ 3:15 “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”
- ◆ 13:8 “Love never fails [ends]” RSV].” “God is love.” 1Jn. 4:8, 16.
- ◆ 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”

- ◆ 15:23 “But each one [Christ, elect, all men] in his own order.” In God’s appointed time. See pages 103–106.
- ◆ 15:26 “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death [second death].”
- ◆ 15:28 “When all “things” are made subject to Him, then...that God may be all in all.” In God’s due time!
- ◆ 15:54 “Death is swallowed up in victory.”
- ◆ 15:55 Where is death’s sting or Hades’ [hell’s] victory? Only time Paul used *Hades*!

2 Corinthians

- ◆ 5:14 “If One died for all, then all died.” All die to sin in Christ!
- ◆ 5:19 “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”

Galatians

- ◆ 3:8 “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, ‘In you all the nations shall be blessed.’”

Ephesians

- ◆ 1:9-11 “Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him...who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” Wow!
- ◆ 2:7 “In the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Show to whom, and for what purpose?
- ◆ 3:6 The Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel. What a glorious truth knowing all Israel will be saved - Ro. 11:26! See also Ep. 2:14.
- ◆ 4:8-10 “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Now this, ‘He ascended’ – what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.” See 1 Pe. 3:19 below.

Philippians

- ◆ 2:10-11 “At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” NAS
- ◆ 3:21 “He is able even to subdue all “things” to Himself.”

Colossians

- ◆ 1:19-20 “It pleased the Father...by Him to reconcile all “things” to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

1 Timothy

- ◆ 1:19-20 “Concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.”
- ◆ 2:3-4, 6 “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth...Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” KJV
- ◆ 4:9-11 “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially [not exclusively] of those who believe. These things command and teach.”
- ◆ 5:8 “If anyone [God included?] does not provide for his own [All souls are His.—Eze 18:4], and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” Does God abandon His own forever in torment?

2 Timothy

- ◆ 1:9 “God...saved us and called us...not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.”
- ◆ 1:10 “Our Savior Jesus Christ...has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Titus

- ◆ 2:11 “The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.” NAS

Hebrews

- ◆ 2:2 “Every transgression and disobedience received a just reward.”
- ◆ 2:9 “Jesus...tasting death for... everyone.” CLT
- ◆ 2:14-15 “Through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those [all people] who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”
- ◆ 7:25 “He is...able to save to the uttermost.”
- ◆ 8:10-11 “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts...and they shall be My people...for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest.”
- ◆ 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, & forever.” Always a Savior!

James

- ◆ 1:18 “Of His own will He brought us forth...that we might be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” See Ro. 8:20-23.
- ◆ 2:13 “Mercy triumphs over judgment.” Does this not apply to God?
- ◆ 5:11 “You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.” When is God not in full control?

1Peter

- ◆ 1:8 “You greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.” NAS
- ◆ 2:12 The Gentiles will glorify God in the day of visitation because they observed our good works.
- ◆ 3:19-20; 4:6 “He...went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient....the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

2Peter

- ◆ 3:8 “With the Lord...a thousand years [is] as one day.”
- ◆ 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise...but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”
- ◆ 3:15 “The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation.” Since a 1000 years are as a day to God, when does His longsuffering for the lost end? Will He seek His lost sheep “until” He finds them? Lu. 15:4.

1John

- ◆ 2:2 “He...is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”
- ◆ 3:8 “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” NAS Did He really succeed?
- ◆ 4:8, 16 “God is love.”
- ◆ 4:14 “The Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.” Also Jn. 4:42.

Revelation

- ◆ 1:17-18 “Fear not; I...have the keys of hell and of death.” KJV
- ◆ 5:13 “Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth...I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne.”
- ◆ 15:4 “Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?...For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.” Wow!
- ◆ 20:13 “Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”
- ◆ 21:5 “Behold, I make all things new....these words are true and faithful.”
- ◆ 22:3 “There shall be no more curse.”

*Blessed Hope**Big God**Small devil**God's will prevails**Future glorious for all**Augustinian Tradition**Small God**Big Devil**Man's will prevails**Future tragic for most*

Appendix II: Every Knee Shall Bow

*God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus **every knee will bow**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that **every tongue will confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Ph. 2:9-11 NAS).*

Is this forced worship, or one offered genuinely from the heart? Below are 20 points that together, I believe, unmistakably affirm true worship.

- ◆ According to Vine, “bow,” (*kamptō* per Strong’s 2578, “to bend”) is used especially of bending the knees in religious veneration (Ro.11:4, 14:11; Ep. 3:14; Ph. 2:10). [In contrast] *sunkamptō* signifies... to bend down by compulsory force” (Ro. 11:10).¹
- ◆ The phrase “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” was used in early baptismal services by which those being baptized expressed their commitment to Christ or declared they had been saved through Christ.² Now, since “under the earth” refers to the abode of the dead (or hell), then even in death an opportunity remains to confess Christ unto salvation.
- ◆ “No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit” (1Co. 12:3). This is strong evidence it refers to a sincere worship since fear alone could bring about a forced worship without the need of the Holy Spirit moving the heart.
- ◆ Paul links mouth confession with salvation. “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus...you will be saved...with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Ro. 10:9).
- ◆ This worship brings Him glory. A forced worship would not glorify or satisfy a loving God. “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me” (Mt. 15:8).
- ◆ That this is true worship is confirmed in Re. 5:13 and by the entire context (Re. 5: 11-14) if they are related. “Every creature in heaven and earth and under the earth...I heard saying: ‘Blessing, honor, glory, power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb’...” (Re. 5:13). Why would these two contexts not be related?
- ◆ The word “confess” in this passage is the same Greek word *exomologeomai* that Christ used in praising His Father in Mt. 11:25 and Lu. 10:21. It is used 11 times: Mt. 3:6; 11:25; Mk. 1:5; Lu. 10:21; 22:6; Ac. 19:18; Ro. 14:11; 15:9; Ph. 2:11; Ja. 5:16; and Re. 3:5. None of these can be seen as “forced” praise. They relate to what flows naturally from the

heart. For example, Jesus exclaimed, “I heartily praise Thee, Father...that Thou hast hidden these things...” (Mt. 11:25 Wey). The NIV and the NAS read, “I praise you Father.” Ro. 15:9 RSV states, “I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name” (See the NIV, NAS, TEV, Phillips, Jerusalem Bible, RSV, NEB, WEY, and so forth). *The Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament* says *exomologeomai* is the Greek word used in Psalms for “praise” (*yadah*) and “give thanks” (*hoday*) in the Septuagint used in Christ’s time. Simply reading Psalms confirms the genuine worship of Ph. 2:11.³

- ◆ Ken Eckerty in an article titled, “The Work of the Cross,” said:

I think it’s significant that the bowing of every knee and the confessing of every tongue is done “in” the name of Jesus, not “at” as translated by the KJV. Scholars such as Vincent, Robertson, Young, Rotherham, and Bullinger (just to name a few) all say that it is best translated “in.” “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I...” Mt.18:20 “In” Christ’s name implies an “entering into” or an intimacy with His name. Confession “in” His name cannot mean anything but intimacy.⁴

To accurately understand Ph. 2:9-11, we must go to the Old Testament from where it is quoted. Let us look closely at Is. 45:21-25:

21. There is no other God beside Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. 22. Look to Me and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. 23. I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. 24. He shall say, ‘Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him. 25. In the LORD all the descendents of Israel shall be justified, and shall glory.’

- ◆ “Surely in the LORD I have righteousness” (vs. 24). Only a genuine believer could say this. Note that this is stated as an oath (vs. 23), making it especially pertinent.
- ◆ Those who are incensed against Him shall be ashamed (vs. 24). Being ashamed is usually a positive thing and often a sign of genuine repentance. 2Ch. 30:15; Ezra 9:5-7; Job 19:3; Jer. 6:13-15, 8:12, 12:13, 31:18-20, Ez. 16:60-63, 36:31-33; 2Th. 3:14-15.

- ◆ “All the descendants of Israel shall be justified and shall glory” (vs. 25). Justification and glory are undeniable evidences of genuine repentance.
- ◆ “Because He delights in mercy. He will again have compassion on us, and **will subdue** our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea (Mic. 7:18-19).” Is subduing iniquity forcing insincere worship?
- ◆ “He is **able** even **to subdue** all “things” to Himself (**Ph.** 3:21).” Note: “things” is not in the Greek and that this is said in the very same letter!
- ◆ “How **awesome** are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your **enemies shall submit themselves** to You. All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name. Selah. Come and see the works of God; He is **awesome** in His doing toward the sons of men (Ps. 66:3-5).” Certainly these passages together with Ph. 2:11 all point to the same glorious worship (Re. 5:13)!

In Ps. 66:3-5, God is described twice as “awesome” in the very context of “enemies submitting themselves” through His “great” power. And this mind you, is all in the context of “all the earth” worshiping and singing praises to God! David then invites us to come and see how awesome is His doing toward humanity! Where is “forced” worship here? As well, they are “submitting themselves,” not “being” submitted. Relative to Mic. 7:18-19, how can a “compassionate subduing” from a God “delighting in mercy” (in the very context of sins cast away) possibly coincide with a forced worship of those eternally being tormented in hell? Now Ph. 3: 21 is found in the very same letter as our key text, making it particularly pertinent. It affirms that God’s power is “even able” to do something. “Even able” implies something extraordinarily impressive. A compelled submission by brute force is not particularly impressive. But a God winning the hearts of His enemies through His sacrificial love on the cross—that is impressive! That’s what makes Him truly a most “awesome” and all powerful God!

- ◆ “He humbled Himself...even the death of the *cross*. *Therefore* God also has highly exalted Him...that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow” (Ph. 2:8-9). Every knee bows because of the cross. The word “therefore” links the cross with worship. To deny genuine worship at the foot of the cross is to strip this passage of all its meaning. Worse, it strips the cross of its power to save and insults the Spirit of grace (He. 10:29). Talbott asks:

Now just what is the power of the Cross, according to Paul? Is it the power of a conquering hero to compel His enemies to obey Him against their will? If that had been Paul’s doctrine, it would have been strange indeed, for God had no need of a crucifixion to compel obedience. He was quite capable of doing that all along. God sent His Son into the world, not as a con-

quering hero, but as a suffering servant; and the power that Jesus unleashed as He bled on the Cross was precisely the power of self-giving love, the power to overcome evil by transforming the wills and renewing the minds of the evil ones themselves. ⁵

The cross of Christ is the greatest power in the universe because it alone can melt the hearts of God's enemies, and make them His friends. As John Milton, the famous 17th century English author wrote, "Who overcomes by force hath overcome but half his foe." ⁶

- ◆ Salvation is directly mentioned here. "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Therefore**...work out your own salvation...for God works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Ph. 2:11-13). The word "therefore" is very significant, for it links the confession that Jesus is Lord directly with salvation.
- ◆ God Himself works in them "to will." Does God working in the hearts of His children to will to do His good pleasure mean only a forced submission? The question is its own refutation.
- ◆ "When all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him that God may be all in all" (1Co. 15:28). The Greek word for "subject" is the same word applied to Christ. Can it be questioned that Christ's submission is not freely given? Moreover, would God be all in subjects forcefully subjugated?
- ◆ *God also has **highly exalted** Him and given Him the name which is above every name....* What kind of a worship, sincere or genuine, would **highly** exalt Christ? I know which one would lowly exalt Him.
- ◆ Finally, some will say, "Of course they'll confess then, it will all be too obvious. There will be no merit to confessing then." But are we saved by merit? Where is boasting? It is excluded (Ro. 3:27). We, as the Church, have stripped this passage of its full glory. The bottom line is the love of God will do what His power alone could never do: conquer the hearts of His enemies and make them His friends.

Why did I go into such detail over this one verse? Because this passage is very well known, quoted, and even sung about. Sadly, it is not truly appreciated for its glorious meaning. I think any honest reflection of these twenty points must agree with the evidence presented, that Ph. 2:9-11 affirms sincere and heartfelt worship.

In the name of Jesus every knee will bow in sincere worship.

Appendix III: **♪ ♪ Testimony of Song ♪ ♪**

If we, as the corporate body of Christ, carefully observed the words we sing in our worship of God, we would quickly see the message the Holy Spirit is speaking through us. Are we not the living body of Christ? The words we express in worship repeatedly attest to the Blessed Hope! The following are just a few examples:

*The love of God is greater far — Than tongue or pen can ever tell.
It goes beyond the highest star — And reaches to the lowest hell...
Could we with ink the ocean fill — And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill — And every man a scribe by trade,
To write the love of God above — Would drain the ocean dry,
Nor could the scroll contain the whole — Tho stretched from sky to sky.
O love of God, how rich and pure! — How measureless and strong!
It shall forever more endure — The saints and angels' song.¹*

*Ah, Lord God...Nothing is too difficult for Thee...
Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing. Nothing is too difficult for Thee.²*

*All of my days I will sing of Your greatness. All of my days I will speak of Your
grace All of my days I will tell of Your wondrous love.³*

*Come Hark! the herald angels sing...Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and
sinners reconciled!" Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the
skies...Light and life to all He brings, Ris'n with healing in His wings.⁴*

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come Let earth receive her King
He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found.⁵*

*One day every tongue will confess You are God.
One day every knee will bow.
Still the greatest treasure remains for those who gladly choose you now.⁶©*

Where is the threat of an eternal hell in these words? Are they not filled with hope, comfort, and peace? Do they not impart life? The love of God goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. Absolutely nothing is too difficult for Him! All of my days I will sing of Your greatness—speak of Your grace—tell of Your wondrous love. Joyful, all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies! Light and life to all He brings! He comes to make His blessings flow as far as the curse is found!

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¹ Though fictional, it accurately and vividly illustrates the plight Christians face when proclaiming the gospel. It is set in the backdrop of an actual historical event. The author knows personally people affected. How many Muslim parents and spouses suffered horrendous grief that fateful day? Of the several hundred missionaries in Senegal at that time, who among them could offer these sufferers true and genuine comfort?

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Free Will
God's Will
"Eternal" Rejection?

II

God's Nature

His Power
God Can Change Us!
He Will Do It!
His Love
Fatherhood of God
God Loves All People
His Love is Not Partial
Love with No "Buts"
God's Will
Christ's Purpose

III

Purpose in Judgment

Just Penalty
Hope Beyond Death
Texts that Testify
Thoughts to Ponder
A Just Judge
God's Wrath
Examples

IV

Blessed Hope I

Hope for the World
Babes
Reason
Question of Questions
Power versus Love
Paradigm Shift
Salvation's Purpose
Mystery to Ponder
Thoughts and Prayers
Scope of the Gospel
Paid In Full

V

Blessed Hope II

Election
Purpose Of Election
Plan B
Due Time
Last Things

VI

Proclamations I

All Is Possible
Beatitudes
Creation Freed
Death Destroyed
Drags All
Especially Believers
Every Knee
Fullness of Times
Forgive Them
For As...Even So
Made Alive
Last Adam
Much More
God Changes People
God Does Right
God Wills All Saved

VII

Proclamations II

Good News
Israel
Judge what is Right
Keys
Kolasis
Love Never Fails
Mercy
Overcoming Evil
Power of the Blood
Rejoicing
Religion that is Pure
Rescued from an Age
Restoration of "All"
Satisfied
Unchanging
Until He Finds
Wayward Son
Very Good
What Moved Christ
World Purpose

VIII

The Witnesses

The Old Testament
The Apostles
The Early Church

The Moral Witness
Good Fruit
Bad Fruit

IX

Evidences

Abortion Is Merciful
Beyond Horror
Calvinism Affirms
Christ, Our Model?
Comforts the Grieving
Cross of Christ
Cruel World
False Hopes Raised
Gospel of Peace?
Hell's Purpose
Incredible
In Love with God
Love...As Yourself
Life's Potential
Natural Instincts
Parents!
Personal Reflection I
Personal Reflection II
Prayer and Thanks
Scripture Harmonized
Spirit of The NT
Statistics of Missions
Testimony of Song
Worship Magnified

X

Christ Triumphs

Oath of God
Savior of the World
Mission Accomplished
Ultimate Price
Mercy on All
Glorious God
Change Coming
To Believers
Jesus Died for All

App I:

Hope Proclamations

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