The Gospel

Universal Restoration

Richard Kirsch

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Galatians 3:8 describes the gospel as all nations being blessed through Abraham. Acts 3:26 defines that word "blessed" as a removal of wickedness. The intent of this book is to reveal by the Scriptures that the gospel consists of nothing less than the restoration of ALL things.

In addition to supplying an anthology of universal restoration verses in the first 3 chapters, there are also chapters devoted to the subjects of God's sovereignty, His judgments, and resurrection. The author considers these 3 elements to be the pillars upon which universal restoration stands securely.

One of the most thought-provoking chapters in the book is entitled "Hell-Bent Verses Straightened Out." In that chapter, the reader is challenged to take a second look at certain Scriptural passages that, while appearing to support the traditional hell doctrine, actually support universal restoration when seen in light of their context and/or other companion verses.

"The restoration of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Acts 3:21

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The Gospel

AN ANTHOLOGY OF SCRIPTURES
REGARDING UNIVERSAL RESTORATION

By

Richard Kirsch

All Scriptures are from The King James Version or
The New King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

All italicized and embolden words are my emphasis.

While brackets and parenthesis can be a hindrance to the flow of reading, they can also assist readers in clarifying Scriptures or comments. I have chosen to insert an abundance of them. For those readers who do not sense any need of them, I appeal to your patience as you simply bypass them.

(All of my brackets are a smaller sized font than the main text. Regular sized brackets are those of quoted translations or other authors.)

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Dedication

*This book is dedicated **to future generations** whom God will anoint and give fresh eyes to grasp the gospel. May they be valiant for the Truth as they declare it to the ends of the earth.*

Psalm 22:30-31...A seed [i.e. Christ & His Body, Gal 3:16] shall serve him [KJV]; **future generations** will be told about the Lord [NRSV], They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born [i.e. spiritually], that he hath done this [KJV].

Psalm 78:1-7... Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, 3 which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, telling to **the generation to come** the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. 5 For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; 6 that **the generation to come** might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, 7 that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.

Psalm 102:15-18... the nations shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth Your glory. 16 For the LORD shall build up Zion; He shall appear in His glory. 17 He shall regard the prayer of the destitute, and shall not despise their prayer. 18 This will be written for **the generation to come**, that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD.

Author's Preface

New Eyes

> **Psalm 119:18** ESV... Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.

When an author completes a book, he sends a copy of his work to a proof-reader. He does this because he realizes that there may be certain misspelled words, grammatical errors, or unclear sentences that he did not catch when he proof-read his draft. A proof-reader acts as a fresh set of eyes. Likewise, Christians are often reminded to read their Bibles with a fresh set of eyes since all of us are inclined to read into the text whatever preconceived ideas we have adopted from our individual backgrounds and traditions.

As children mature, most of them begin investigating their parents' values to see what they themselves will choose to believe. It is vital, therefore, that parents teach their children how to think critically so that they can progress to even purer and higher values than those of their parents.

In order to grow and mature in the wisdom of God, it is important to be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance into all truth (John 16:13). Christians glean more from the Scriptures every time they read them. And as they continue to grow in the knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, they proceed to see new truths that can lead them to change long-held beliefs.

In his book "Introducing the Bible," William Barclay wrote the following:

> The student of the Bible must study the Bible honestly. This is to say, he must go to the Bible to find and to seek the truth, and not to prove a case about which he has already made up his mind. It is common, it is almost usual, for people to use the Bible as an arsenal of proof texts to prove things about which they have already made up their minds. A man can use the Bible to find in it what he wants to find. He can use it to hear the echo of his own voice, rather than the sound of the voice of God.

It is my hope and prayer that those who read this book will consider the Scriptures and accompanying insights with an unbiased, fresh set of eyes and with ears that hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

He that hath an ear,
let him hear what the Spirit saith
unto the churches [i.e. the called out ones].
- Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:16, 13, 22

Open My Eyes

Open my eyes that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit Divine!

Open my ears that I may hear
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear.
And while the wave-notes fall on my ear
Everything false will disappear.

Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me,
Spirit Divine!

- Clara H. Scott

Introduction

The Gospel ... The Ev-angel

Our English word "evangel" is derived from the Greek word *euangelion*, which is translated "gospel, good news, or good tidings." *Euangelion* is a compound word that is formed by the Greek words *eu* (good) and *angel-ion* (messenger).

There are many different English forms of the word "evangel" such as evangelist, evangelical, the evangelism, etc. We often hear the phrase "evangelical Christians." This label identifies those Christians who believe in God's good news. Different Christians, however, hold varying beliefs regarding the dimensions of the gospel.

Ephesians 6:19 declares the gospel to be a mystery. The overall consensus of orthodox Christianity regarding the gospel seems to include the idea that a few people will go to heaven while the majority of mankind will go to an everlasting place of torment called hell. That's hardly good news! If that is God's plan for His creation, is He really all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful? Is it possible that He created Satan with the ability to override His wise and loving plan for mankind? Is this God's good news? It is no wonder why some people hesitate to embrace such a gospel.

Today's motivational thrust of evangelism is to encourage sinners to say the sinner's prayer before it's too late. We are told that Christians should strive to get people saved before they die and go to hell. Otherwise, some fear that the sinners' blood will be on their hands. While it is true that His people

are called to warn sinners of the consequences of sin and to proclaim the good news, the Holy Spirit does the work of convicting and saving those who believe. Christians are commissioned to witness and proclaim, not to coerce, manipulate, or use unwarranted fear tactics.

Although the Bible does warn about a time when it will be too late, many Christians assume that this warning is about being too late to be saved. On the contrary, while there is a time when the opportunity to be in the first resurrection to rule and reign with Christ will be too late, there is never a time when the opportunity to be saved will be too late, even after death! When Revelation 14:6 refers to "the everlasting gospel," it is related to those who remain on the earth, not to the righteous who have been redeemed from the earth. This verse directly associates the preaching of the gospel with those who are not in the first resurrection.

One of the glorious hopes of the gospel is God's resurrection of the dead when even the unjust will be raised [John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15]. To believe that there is no hope for the unjust after death is to misunderstand the purpose of the resurrection of the unjust. They will be raised for an age of correction under the administration of the just who will be ruling and reigning with Christ in His righteous kingdom (Dan 12:3; Mat 13:43; Rev 20:4, 6). That time of judgment is described as being one of great tribulation in Revelation 7:9-17. The context, however, reveals that they came out of that tribulation cleansed.

Consider a similar circumstance of God's earlier judgment of the just in 1 Peter 4:17. They also experienced their own portion of tribulation (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim 3:12). Their judgment was a part of working out their salvation [Phlp 2:12-13]. This being the case, we learn that God's *judgment* is directly associated with *the gospel* of our salvation. Chapters 6 & 7 of this book will further elaborate on God's judgment, resurrection, and the gospel.

Throughout this book, *"The Gospel"* will be linked with *"The Restoration of All Things.* Notice the following two passages that describe these two vital, Biblical elements:

Galatians 3:8

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before *the gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall *all nations be blessed.*

Acts 3:20-21, 24-26

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of *restitution* [i.e. "restoration" in most translations] *of all things*, which God hath spoken by the mouth of *all his holy prophets* since the world began... 24 Yea, and *all the prophets* from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. 25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the [unconditional] covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed [i.e. Christ, Gal 3:16] shall *all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.* 26 Unto you first [i.e. other nations later] God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to *bless* you, in turning away *every one of you* from his iniquities.

Other similar Bible passages that link the gospel with universal restoration include passages such as the following:

- Isaiah 40:4 (universal restoration) with Isaiah 40:9 (the gospel)

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (the gospel) with John 12:32-33 (universal restoration).

While the word "gospel" means good news and is related to a number of good things that result from the work of Jesus Christ, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 defines *the basic foundation* of the gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:8, on the other hand, defines *the final outcome* of the gospel as a blessing to all nations. This book will establish

that the gospel's blessing to all nations is not a potential blessing for *some* among all nations, but that it is an assured blessing for *every* person among *every* nation. Many books have been written regarding the gospel of the restoration of all things. For a list of some of my favorites, see Appendix 11.

The unique purpose of this book is threefold. First, it is to provide a basic anthology of Scriptural passages that acknowledge the restoration of all things, both directly and indirectly. A database of such verses demonstrates that the restoration of all things is not limited to only a few verses but, on the contrary, permeates the Scriptures from beginning to end. The second intention of this book is to answer the common objections that are raised to refute Christian universal restoration, and to do so with pertinent, reasonable, and Scriptural insights. The third intention of this book is to explain how God's sovereignty, His judgments, and the resurrection of the dead are the sure footings upon which the gospel of the restoration of all things rests.

Chapter 1

Primary Universal Restoration Verses
(Over 60 Scripture References)

Like many people, I used to imagine that there were only a few Scriptures that leaned towards universal restoration, and that they were probably mistranslated or misunderstood since the majority of the Bible seemed to convey the impression that most people would follow the broad way to hell (Mat 7:13). After studying this matter diligently for a number of years, however, I came to a conclusion that is in stark contrast to my former viewpoint.

After having discovered over a hundred Scriptures throughout the Bible that state or imply God's restoration of all things, I came to understand that those verses that appear to suggest people going to hell forever are, in fact, the real mistranslations and/or misunderstandings. Such notions are based not upon the Scriptures, but upon long-held traditions of men. I pray that the following list of Scripture references will lead others to the same hope that I have discovered:

(The following list cites each verse in **bold print**.)

Genesis 12:3... I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you *all the families of the earth* shall be *blessed*.

Each reader will interpret this verse according to his/her maturity in the Scriptures and theological background. While this is a very familiar verse among Christians, most people seem to focus on the first part of the verse that mentions *blessings and curses.* Very little attention is paid to the latter part regarding *all the families of the earth being blessed* in Abraham. Surely, both parts of the verse are important. Due to the strong, conventional belief in hell, however, most thoughts regarding this latter phrase are presented as Abraham and his offspring positively affecting *a few among all* of the nations, rather than *all among all* of the nations. As mentioned earlier, each reader will naturally attempt to fit Genesis 12:3 into his/her theological background. Consider the following three passages with Genesis 12:3...

> *All the ends of the earth* shall remember and turn to the LORD, and *all the families* of the nations shall worship before you. Psalm 22:27 ESV

> I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me *every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.* Isaiah 45:23

> And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that *all people, nations, and languages, should serve him*: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Daniel 7:14

Acts 3:25-26, a New Testament companion passage to Genesis 12:3, reveals that the word "blessed" in Genesis 12:3 means to be turned away from wickedness, to be led to repentance and saved from sin. With that Scriptural definition of the word "blessed," this promise to Abraham presents the gospel of salvation to *all* the families of the earth, just as Paul affirms in Galatians 3:8...

> And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached *the gospel* beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." Gal 3:8 ESV

In the next four verses that follow, this promise of Genesis 12:3 and Galatians 3:8 is repeated with added details. One of these details is that all of the nations will be blessed *in Abraham's seed.* Galatians 3:16 identifies this life-giving seed of Abraham as being Christ.

Genesis 18:17-18...And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and *all the nations of the earth* shall be blessed *in him*?

Genesis 22:18... And *in thy seed* [i.e. Christ, Gal 3:16] shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 26:4... And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and *in thy seed* shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed...

Genesis 28:14... And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and *in thy seed* shall *all the families of the earth* be blessed.

Numbers 14:21... But as truly as I live, *all the earth* shall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

Nehemiah 9:6 ESV... You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve [or make alive, quicken, revive. Compare 1 Cor 15:21-22.] *all of them*; and the host of heaven worships you.

Psalm 22:27-29... *All the ends of the world* shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and *all the kindreds of the nations* shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and he is the governor among the nations. *All* they that be fat [i.e. prosperous, exalted, kings... Ps 45:12; 45:14; 60:3.] upon earth *shall eat* [Thy Words] *and worship*: *all* they that go down to the dust *shall bow before him* [Isa 45:23; Phlp 2:10-11]: and none can keep alive his own soul.

Psalm 64:9 AMP... And *all men* shall [reverently] fear and be in awe; and they will declare the work of God, for they will wisely consider and acknowledge that it is His doing.

Psalm 65:2, 5... O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall *all flesh* come [KJV]... 5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of *all the ends of the earth* and of the farthest sea [NASB]...

Psalm 66:1, 3-4 HCSB... Shout joyfully to God, *all the earth!*... 3 Say to God, How awe-inspiring are Your works!... 4 *All the earth will worship You* and sing praise to You. They will sing praise to Your name. Selah.

Psalm 67:1-7... God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. 2 that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among *all nations*. 3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let *all the people* praise thee. 4 O let *the nations* be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. 5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let *all the people* praise thee. 6 Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. 7 God shall bless us; and *all the ends of the earth* shall fear him.

Psalm 72:11, 17-20... Yea, *all kings* shall fall down before him: *all nations* shall serve him...17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: *all nations* shall call him blessed. 18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth

wondrous things. 19 and blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let *the whole earth* be filled with his glory; *Amen, and Amen*. 20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

Psalm 86:9... *All nations* whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

Psalm 98:1-4...O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him *the victory* [Isa 25:6-8; 1 Cor 15:52-56]. 2 The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. 3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: *all the ends of the earth* have seen the salvation of our God. 4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, *all the earth*: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

Psalm 102:15... So *the heathen* [i.e. nations] shall fear the name of the LORD, and *all the kings of the earth* thy glory.

Psalm 138:4... *All the kings of the earth* shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth [Isa 29:18; John 5:25].

Psalm 145:9-10... The LORD is *good to all*: and his tender *mercies are over all* his works. *All thy works shall praise thee*, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

Ecclesiastes 3:11... He hath made *every thing* beautiful *in his time:* also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

> Songs and hymns have been composed with this verse for lyrics, yet how many of us have considered what God had in mind as He breathed this provocative verse for men? Some translators have chosen words such as "appropriate or suitable" in place of "beautiful," but the literal meaning is "beautiful, fair, goodly, or pleasant." Why would the translators render it as appropriate or suitable unless to

accommodate the traditional belief that everything will not be good and beautiful when God is finished?

The second phrase might be more accurately rendered "also He has made this hidden in their heart" since the word "world" literally means concealed or hidden, and the word "set" is often translated as "made."

The phrase "so that no man can find out the work that God maketh" is very similar to Paul's words in Romans 11:33 where he writes, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and *his ways past finding out!*" Romans 11:32 which precedes this verse also reflects the same idea that Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:11 regarding God making *everything* good in His time. For in verse 33 Paul wrote, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have *mercy upon all*."

The final phrase in Ecclesiastes 3:11 regarding "the work that God makes from the beginning to the end" calls to mind other related verses such as Genesis 1:31, Psalm 90:17, 138:8, and Philippians 1:6 which describe God perfecting the work of His hands so that it is beautiful, good and pleasant in due season . . . "in His time."

Isaiah 11:6-10... The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the* LORD*, as the waters cover the sea*.

Isaiah 25:6-8... And in this mountain [Israel] shall the LORD of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees

well refined. 7 And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the vail that is spread over *all nations*. 8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off *all faces*; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off *all the earth*: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Isaiah 29:18, 24... And *in that day* shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness... They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

> If these verses do not apply to all people in all ages, then God is partial towards those in certain ages. If these verses do not apply to those unjust souls that are in the grave and will someday be raised from the grave (John 5:28-29), then God is partial. But the Scriptures state unequivocally that God is not partial. Therefore Isaiah 29:18, 24 applies to every man in every age. "In that day" is a vital key to this passage. It points to the day of resurrection. See Chapter 7 on this subject.

Isaiah 40:4-5... *Every* valley shall be exalted, and *every* mountain and hill shall be made low: and *the crooked* shall be made straight, and *the rough places* plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and *all flesh* shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Isaiah 45:22-25... Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth*: for I am God, and there is none else. 23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me *every knee* shall bow, *every tongue* shall swear. 24 Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and *all that are incensed* [i.e. angry] *against him* shall be ashamed. 25 In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

While verse 22 is a command, verses 23-24 declare a prophecy (v. 24) based on God's own, assured oath (v. 23). Both the command and the prophecy are concerning universal restoration. Finally, verse 25 not only declares that all Israel will be justified (Rom 11:26), but that they will be glorified (Isa 46:13; Rom 8:30). Their glory occurs only through Christ (Col 1:27) who gives them the power to fulfill their calling. As stated in Genesis 12:3, their calling is to be a blessing to *all* the families of the earth. This is Israel's glory that is accomplished by Christ, their Redeemer.

Isaiah 66:23... And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall *all flesh* come to worship before me, saith the LORD.

Ezekiel 47:1-9 ESV... Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and *behold, water* [i.e. living water: Jer 17:13; John 7:38; Rev 7:17] was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. 2 Then he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate that faces toward the east; and behold, the water was trickling out on the south side. 3 Going on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, the man measured a thousand cubits, and then led me through the water, and it was ankle-deep. 4 Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was knee-deep. Again he measured a thousand, and led me through the water, and it was waist-deep.

5 Again he measured a thousand, and it was a river that I could not pass through, for the water had risen. It was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be passed through. 6 And he said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he led me back to the bank of the river. 7 As I went back, I saw on the bank of the river very many trees on the one side and on the other [Rev 22:1-3]. 8 And he said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah [i.e.

desert], and enters the sea; when the water flows into the sea, the water [i.e. of the sea] will become fresh. 9 And wherever the river [i.e. River of Life] goes, *every* living creature that swarms [moves] *will live*, and there will be very many fish. For this water goes there, that the waters of the sea may become fresh; so *everything will live* where the river goes.

> This vision of Ezekiel is regarding God's final Temple. Notice where these Temple waters go. This Temple has living waters that flow east and eventually south. Israel's enemies have generally been East of them even as Cain ventured eastward out of the Garden of Eden. On a map, one will see that Esau-Edom, one of Israel's greatest adversaries, dwelt East and South of the Temple. This revelation of the final Temple is regarding living waters that eventually will flow out from His People (i.e. His Temple, 1 Cor 3:16) in order to *heal and restore* the wastelands of mankind's souls. This should come as little surprise since God's will for His People is for them to be a blessing to *all the families of the earth*.
>
> Verse 8 describes these Temple waters flowing into the Arabah which is the Arabian desert. Isaiah 35:6-7; 41:17-19; and 44:3 portray a similar scene of God providing living waters for the parched and barren souls of men. Not only does verse 8 state that the Temple waters pass through the Arabian desert, but they enter into the sea. A map will indicate that the sea in this area is the Dead Sea. In the Scriptures, the sea often symbolizes the masses of mankind that are tossed with tempestuous waves. See Psalm 65:7; 89:9; 93:4; and Ephesians 4:14, for example.
>
> This vision is about God's Temple waters restoring life to the deserts and the dead sea of humanity. It illustrates a *resurrection* of dead Gentiles, just as Ezekiel 37 illustrates a *resurrection* of Israel's dry, dead bones.

Daniel 2:35... Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the

chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became *a great mountain* [Israel, Isa 2:2-3], and *filled the whole earth*.

> Threshing floors and wind (i.e. Spirit) are also mentioned in Matthew 3:11-12. The idea is exactly the same as that in Daniel 2:35. Interestingly in Matthew 3:11-12, John the Baptist explained that Jesus would baptize His disciples with the Holy Spirit and fire which would burn up the chaff from the threshing floors with fire. The person himself would be saved, but his chaff (i.e. the old man with his sins) would be consumed.
>
> Likewise this is precisely what Daniel's words convey. The great mountain is Israel when they are converted to Christ (Rom 11:26; Isa 62:2; Acts 11:26). When all Israel is saved, then all other nations will renounce their false gods (laws, philosophies, *old man* agendas, etc.) and flow into Israel for salvation (Isa 2:2-5; 60:3-8). In essence, all other nations will be *broken to pieces* and *carried away*. Their evil governments will be abandoned as Israel's glorious salvation *fills the whole earth* with the gospel of redemption through Jesus Christ!

Daniel 7:13-14... I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that *all people, nations, and languages*, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Hosea 13:12-14... The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; His sin is stored up. 13 The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him. He is an unwise son... 14 *I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death*. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! Pity is hidden from My eyes.

If God will redeem rebellious Ephraim who was given God's Law, surely He will be even more merciful to the other nations who were not given His Laws. In Luke 12:47-48, Jesus stated that those who know better and yet disobey, will be punished more severely than those who do not know and disobey.

Joel 2:28... And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh*; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

God does not pour out His Spirit on all flesh in vain. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, says the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 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.* 12 *For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace*; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and *all the trees* of the field shall clap their hands" (Isaiah 55:8-12).

Habakkuk 2:14... For *the earth shall be filled* with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, *as the waters cover the sea.*

No doubt, some will think that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD" after the unrepentant sinners are cast into hell. Contextual and companion verses such as Habakkuk 2:13 and Psalm 127:1-2, however, explain that God did not create men to labor in vain, but that they will until they look to the Lord. Habakkuk's prophecy discloses the mystery that world peace will transpire only when men turn to His Temple,

and keep silent in His Presence (Habk 2:20), looking to His grace rather than to their works.

"The waters covering the sea" in Habakkuk 2:14 reflects a similar image as what we read in Ezekiel 47:1-9 where the waters continued to rise higher and higher until they covered everything - and *healed everything!*

Zephaniah 2:11... The LORD will be terrible unto them: for he will famish *all the gods of the earth*; and men shall worship him, *every one* from his place, *even all* the isles [i.e. lands] of *the heathen* [i.e. nations].

Zephaniah 3:8-9... Therefore wait for Me, says the LORD, until the day I rise up for plunder. My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger. *All the earth* shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. 9 ***For then*** *I will restore* to the peoples [not just Israel] a pure language [tongue, lips, speech], that *they all* may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord.

Why is this passage included with the obvious verses about universal restoration when verse 8 describes God's indignation and fierce anger that will devour all the earth? It is included because verse 9 describes the results of God's anger and devouring fire as that of restoration!

This purifying (Mal 3:1-6), devouring fire (Deut 4:24) is also seen with Pentecost's tongues of fire (Acts 2:3-4; Mat 3:11-12). It will be continued on an even larger scale when the Lord delivers His Kingdom (1 Cor 15:24) and sets it up over *all* the earth (Jude 1:14-15).

Malachi 1:11... For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same [i.e. East to West... Mat 24:27; Ezek 47:1-9; Zech 14:8] my name shall be great *among the Gentiles*; and in *every place* incense [i.e. prayer, Isa 56:7] shall be offered unto my

name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great *among the heathen*, saith the LORD of hosts.

Luke 2:10-11, 14... And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord... 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will [from God] toward men.

> How could it be "glory to God in the highest" if He saved only a few of those He created? The angel also proclaimed "peace on earth, good will toward men," not "peace to men of good will," as some translate it. The verse addresses *God's* good will toward needful sinners, not a sinner's good will that earns God's peace. Such a notion would corrupt God's grace.

Luke 3:5-6... *Every* valley shall be filled [so that there are no more low places], and *every* mountain and hill [i.e. pride] shall be brought low; and the *crooked shall be made straight,* and the *rough ways shall be made smooth*; and *all flesh* shall see the salvation of God.

John 1:7-9, 29... The same [i.e. John the Baptist] came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that *all men* through him might [the word "might" is added by translators] believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That [i.e. Christ] was the true Light, which lights *every man* that comes into the world... 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin *of the world*.

John 3:17... For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that *the world* through him might [the word "might" was added by the translators] *be saved*.

> The only way to deny that this verse is not representative of universal restoration is to also deny God's sovereignty

over all things, including His sovereignty over man's free will and the power of Satan. (John 3:16 will be included in chapters 2 and 3.)

John 4:42f... we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of *the world*.

Note that it does not describe Christ as the available or potential Savior of the world. Just because some Christians may not understand how Christ could possibly be the Savior for all the world, does not mean that He isn't. This is indeed a mystery to many people (Rom 16:25-27; Ephes 3:4-5, 9; Col 1:20, 26-27; Isaiah 52:13-15; Ephes 1:10; and Rev 21:5 which is the finale to the mystery of The Revelation of Jesus Christ).

John 12:31-33... Now is the judgment of *this world*: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw *all men* unto me. 33 *This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

What death did He die? It was the death that was to cancel Adam's sin. See 1 Corinthians 15:21-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19; and 1 John 2:2.

John 12:47... And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save *the world*.

Is it possible for Jesus or His Father to fail? Isaiah 46:10; 55:11; and 1 John 4:14 agree that such is impossible. Granted, the following verse (v. 48) states that Jesus' Words *will judge* people in the future. One ought to remember, however, that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." Jesus came to be the savior *of the world* (1 John 4:14). It is true that Christ's salvation includes *judgments*, but His judgments are just and remedial. When His judgments are in the earth, the people will learn righteousness (Isa 26:9).

Acts 3:21, 24-26... [Jesus Christ...] whom heaven must receive until the times of *restoration of all things,* which God has spoken by the mouth of *all* His holy prophets since the world began... 24 Yes, and *all* the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in your seed *all the families of the earth shall be blessed.* 26 To *you first* [i.e. Israel first, Acts 3:12], God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away *every one of you* from your iniquities. (Acts 3:23 will be clarified in Chapter 3.)

> This entire passage refers to *the restoration of all things* as stated in verse 21 and it means that *all the families of the earth shall be blessed* as is stated in verse 25. Verse 26 simply clarifies that this restoration of all things begins with Israel first.

Romans 8:18-22... For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us [Notice how the following verses describe this glory.]. 19 For the earnest expectation of *the creation* eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For *the creation* was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because *the creation* itself *also will be delivered* from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that *the whole creation* groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

Romans 11:15... For if the casting away of them [i.e. Israel] be the *reconciling* [atonement, restoration] *of the world*, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

Romans 11:25-32... For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits [i.e. that only a few good people will be saved]; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be

come in [i.e. come into Israel... Isa 2:2-5; 14:1]. 26 And so *all Israel shall be saved*: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. 28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 *For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance*. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them *all in unbelief*, that he might have *mercy upon all*.

> Is the above passage referring to "all Israel" from a certain point in time in the future and beyond? Does it also include Israelites that died in their sins in the past? If not, is God just and equitable to make this salvation available only to certain Israelites in the future? Furthermore, why does it mention all Israel, and nobody else? It does so because Romans 9-11 is addressing Israel's position with God. Other Scriptures explain that, once all Israel is saved, they will be His instrument to bring salvation to all the nations (Gen 12:3; Isa 2:2-4; 45:22-25) until the *fulness* of the nations have come into Israel (Rom 11:25).

Romans 14:10-12... we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, *every knee* shall bow to me, and *every tongue* shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

> Some Christians believe that standing before the judgment seat of Christ is for the purpose of determining whether one will go to heaven or hell. The judgment seat of Christ (Ps 110:1-3; 2 Cor 5:10), however, is for the purpose of exalting the faithful to rule and reign with Christ. Under their leadership, the unfaithful will be *restored* through equitable and remedial judgments (Isa 26:9; Ps 110:3; 1 Cor 5:5; 1 Pet 2:12f). This is the only Scriptural explanation of

how every knee shall bow since God never forces anyone to worship Him. It is beneath His dignity! He only accepts willing offerings (Ex 25:2; Ps 110:3).

1 Corinthians 3:13-15... *Every man's* work shall be made manifest: for the day [of the Lord, 1 Pet 2:12] shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try *every man's* work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: *but he himself shall be saved*; yet so as by fire [of God's just laws... judgment, Deut 4:12, 24; 5:5; Ps 148:8; Isa 5:24; **10:17**; Jer 20:9; **23:29**; Mat 3:11-12; 2 Pet 3:7].

Similar complimentary passages include Ezekiel 44:10-16 and Revelation 7:9-17. In these texts, those who fail the first time are to be cleansed later through much tribulation in fire (i.e. God's Word, Deut 4:36; Jer 23:29). Those who are not in the first (best) resurrection (Rev 20:4-6) are like the strong-willed child who needs extra heat to conform to the Father's will.

1 Corinthians 4:5... Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness [Mat 10:26; 2 Thes 2:8; 1 Cor 5:5], and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts [Rom 7:7-13]: and *then* shall *every man* have praise of God.

1 Corinthians 15:21-28 ESV... For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam *all* die, *so also* in Christ shall *all* be made alive. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying *every* rule and *every* authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put *all* his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For God has put *all things* in subjection under his feet. But when it says, *all things* are put in subjection; it is plain that he [i.e. the Father] is excepted who

put *all things* in subjection under him [i.e. the Son]. 28 When *all things* are subjected to him [i.e. the Son], then the Son himself will also be subjected to him [i.e. the Father] who put *all things* in subjection under him [i.e. the Son], that God may be *all in all*.

> "All things" is mentioned five times. Five is the number of grace! Also notice the profound declaration in verse 26 that death will be destroyed. When there is no more death, only life can remain - everywhere! What happens to hell (i.e. *hades*, the grave)? The same thing that happens to death. Revelation 20:14 explains that both death and hell are cast into the lake of fire, thus consuming both of them. Revelation 21:4-5 also describes the results of the kingdom being delivered to the Father (1 Cor 15:24) as that of no more death. It also states that at that time, *everything* will be regenerated.

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

> When Jesus cried out from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing," this request was in His Father's will, and His Father heard it and answered it.

Galatians 3:8... And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before *the gospel* unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall *all nations* be blessed.

> What a clear definition of the gospel is presented here! In Acts 3:26 we find Peter quoting this same promise that God gave to Abraham. There it connects this word "blessed" with turning people away from their wickedness.

Ephesians 1:9-11 ESV... making known to us the mystery of *his will*, according to *his purpose,* which he set forth in Christ, 10 as *a plan* for the fullness of time, to unite *all things* in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have

obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to *the purpose* of him who works *all things* according to the counsel of *his will*.

> Notice how "uniting *all things* in Christ" is described in this verse. It is a mystery. Furthermore, it is God's will, God's purpose, God's plan, and it is predestined. The only way that "uniting *all things* in Christ" will not occur is if God is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omni-beneficent.

Ephesians 1:21-23 **NRSV**... [Christ is] far above *all* rule and authority and power and dominion, and above *every* name that is named [Phlp 2:9-11], not only in this age but also in the age to come [Consider how greatly this fact limits Satan and hell.]. 22 And he has put *all things* under his feet and has made him the head over *all things* for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills *all in all* [everyone with everything].

Ephesians 4:10... He that descended [to earthly humanity] is the same also that ascended up far above *all heavens* [i.e. exalted places of power and authority], **that** he might fill *all things* [with Himself].

Philippians 2:9-11... Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus *every knee* should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that *every tongue* should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

> The word "should" implies that people ought to do something, but that they might not do it. "Should" is not in the original Greek but was added by the translators. The meaning is more accurate when "should" is omitted, or if the word "shall" or "will" is added instead. In other similar cases such as Colossians 1:18, translators have added the word "might" that is also not in the original Greek text. This is entirely unnecessary. Instead of

helping the flow of the text, it actually questions the original intent of the text! Colossians 1:18 should be rendered "...that in all things He *have* preeminence" NOT that He *might* have preeminence.

Philippians 3:21 ESV... who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject *all things* to himself.

Some may suggest that, although Jesus is *able* to subject all things to Himself, He will not do so since He will not force or coerce anyone to submit to Him. Psalm 110:3 plainly refutes any such notion by explaining that people will be willing in the day of His power when He subdues *all things* to Himself.

Colossians 1:19-20 ESV... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to *reconcile* to himself *all things,* whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

1 Timothy 2:4-6... [God]... Who will have *all men to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom *for all*, to be testified [witnessed, made evident] in due time.

Some translations render the words "will have" in verse 4 as "desires" or "wants" or "wishes." In Strong's opinion, such words are legitimate renderings for this Greek word. The outcome still remains the same, however, since God is sovereign and will do all of His pleasure (Isa 46:10). The fact that God will save all men cannot be escaped simply by translating this passage to read that God wants or wishes all men to be saved. Unlike His creatures, the Creator accomplishes whatever He wants, wishes, or desires.

Furthermore, if Christ gave Himself "a ransom for all," how could His Blood not be fully efficacious? Either

Christ did cover man's debt, or He did not! Since He did, it is only a matter of time until it becomes evident. It is not possible for Christ, Who has the fulness of Deity within Him, to fail. Neither man's disobedience nor Satan's power can defeat the will of God and the success of His Son. Isaiah 55:11 affirms that God will accomplish everything that He has purposed to do.

1 Timothy 6:13-15... I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth *all things*... 14 that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: 15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*...

The commandment that Paul was charging Timothy to keep is described in the previous verse as fighting the good fight of faith so that he would lay hold of [i.e. secure, Moffatt] divine life. Even though God "quickens all things," the Way to that new, Divine Life is faith. John 1:4 and 9 declare this same truth:

> In him was life; and the life was the light of men... 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world.

Many other translations render 1 Timothy 6:13 as "...Who gives life to all things" or something similar. This slight variance causes a reader to think that this verse is merely saying that God gives *physical* life to all things. But this is contrary to the context that exhorts Timothy to lay hold of the divine, spiritual life by fighting the good fight of faith. Paul is declaring the same truth in 1 Timothy 6:13 that he declared in 1 Corinthians 15:22, that "... in Christ shall *all be made alive* [i.e. spiritually]."

2 Peter 3:9 NKJV... The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, *not willing* that *any* should perish but that *all* should come to repentance.

As with 1 Timothy 2:4, many translators and readers take too much liberty to interpret this verse in such a way as to avoid the idea that God will not allow any to perish. Both times the word "should" is used in translation, it is added. To understand this passage properly, read it without the word "should."

Just as in 1 Timothy 2:4, the KJV chose to use the word "willing" in this verse, while most other translators chose words such as "wanting" or "wishing" or "desiring," implying that God might not get what He really wants! Consider the following verses that remind us of God's will and desire which His sovereignty guarantees: Ezek 18:32; 33:11; Luke 9:56; 19:10; and John 3:17.

The promise that is mentioned in 2 Peter 3:9 refers back to verses 4 and 7 regarding the judgment of the wicked. It is about the destruction of the old man. 1 Peter 3:4 and 7 describe this promise of judgment as being that of fire. As we've previously shown in other passages, God's Word is a fire (Deut 4:12, 24; 5:5; Ps 148:8; Isa 5:24; 10:17; Jer 20:9; 23:29; Zech 12:6; Mat 3:11-12; 2 Pet 3:7) that consumes the old man so that the new man can be created through the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45-53). Read Isaiah 9:7; 11:4-9; and 26:9 regarding God's righteous judgment. Note particularly the final outcome of this judgment in Isaiah 11:9, namely, that "...the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

1 John 2:2... And he is the propitiation [i.e. atonement] for our sins: and *not for ours only*, but also for the sins of *the whole* world.

Again, some will think that this means that Christ is a *potential* atonement. There should be no doubt that God is able to finish what He has begun with His creation (Psalms 138:8; 90:17; Isaiah 26:12; 29:23; 60:21; Eph 3:20; Phlp 1:6; 2:12-13; Gen 1:26-27), but God is not finished yet. Read Psalms 102:16-18 and 104:29-31. Such verses point to the resurrection, the central hope of Christianity!

Dying in sin is not the end. *All* will be raised for judgment (John 5:25-29). His judgment is a righteous process of correcting wrong things so that they are reconciled. Contrary to what many think, God's judgments are remedial, not simply punitive.

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

The question at stake here is whether or not God's will and His purpose will succeed. The only thing that could prevent His will from occurring is another power that is mightier than His own. Some people think that Satan's power or man's free will is able to thwart God's will. Ephesians 1:21-23 and many other verses deny any such possibility. See Chapter 5 for a Biblical view of God's absolute sovereignty.

Revelation 5:13... And *every* creature which is *in heaven*, and *on the earth*, and *under the earth*, and such as are *in the sea* [symbolizing the masses of troubled mankind... Ps 65:7; 89:9; 93.4; Ephes 4:14], *and all* that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

What could be any more comprehensive? Colossians 1:19-20 is similar. Compare these verses with Isaiah 45:22-25; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10-11; and Psalm 22:29 which mention every knee bowing and every tongue confessing.

Revelation 15:4 NKJV... Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For *all nations* shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested.

Not only is this verse crystal clear, it also explains why all nations will come and worship God. Notice how the introductory question is followed immediately with an explanation. Compare Isaiah 29:18, 24 and John 5:25-29

which confirm that even the unjust will be judged and thus be reconciled unto God.

Revelation 21:5... And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make *all things* new. And he said unto me, Write: for *these words are true and faithful*.

Some people think that "make all things new" applies only to things from that time forward and that it does not apply to anyone who has died in sin before this new age arrives. That is illogical to the context. Revelation 21:1-5 is regarding God's Kingdom, New Jerusalem, coming down to men in order to make *all things* new [v. 5] by way of the resurrection of the dead. Read Psalm 22:29-31 and Matthew 19:28 regarding a new generation of people that shall be born again. The New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:2 is God's Israel Kingdom after it has been purified, or born anew (Acts 1:6-8). Similar prophecies include those such as Isaiah 2:2-5 and Psalm 110:3 that describe people willingly submitting to God's New Israel Kingdom.
Revelation 21:5 is also the fulfillment to the words that Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven... for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Mat 6:10-13). The "amen" is a reassuring word of affirmation!

It seems worthy also to pay special attention to another emphasis that appears at the end of Revelation 21:5: "...These words are true and faithful." With this statement, God marked something important and something that men are inclined to overlook. Words such as "amen" and "these words are true and faithful" are employed to emphasize vital truths. Similarly, the book of Psalms employs the word "selah" [i. e. stop, look, and listen] to cause the reader to meditate deeply on the preceding words.

While the Scriptures listed in this first chapter should provide more than sufficient evidence for the veracity of universal restoration, the next two chapters will offer even more examples. The Bible references supplied in chapter

2, however, will not be as obvious as those mentioned in this first chapter.

Chapter 2

Underlying Universal Restoration Verses
(Over 80 Scripture References)

There are many other verses besides those listed in Chapter 1 that, when studied in conjunction with other complimentary verses, clarify and confirm *the restoration of all things.* Because these verses are less obvious, this chapter will include more accompanying comments, and the remarks may be quite lengthy in some cases. Numerous examples are purposely supplied in order to accentuate the prevalent theme of *the restoration of all things* throughout the Bible.

Genesis 3:15 NKJV... And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.

> Because this verse is so fundamental and vital, the following comments will be especially extensive.

Genesis means beginning. The book of Genesis outlines the beginnings of everything, including *the gospel.* In the previous chapter, we discovered that, according to Galatians 3:8, the gospel was preached to Abram in Genesis 12:3. While Genesis 12:3 describes the "what" of the gospel, Genesis 3:15 provides the first glimpse of the "how" of the gospel.

Most Bible students recognize that Genesis 3:15 is a vital and far reaching verse with profound implications. There remain differing opinions, however, as to the exact

ramifications of this verse. As with so many passages, some hold that Genesis 3:15 is good news for only some of Adam's race, while others believe that it proclaims good news *for all* of Adam's race. The following verses and comments are a basis for the latter view:

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 - 28 and **Romans 5:12-21** provide post-Calvary revelations that are directly related to Genesis 3:15. Both of these passages declare that Christ's work at Calvary overwhelms and cancels all of the death that the first Adam's sin caused. Whether this is a potential or an absolute cancellation of death, however, cannot be determined by Genesis 3:15 alone. "Line upon line" [Isa 28:10] diligent searching reveals its ultimate significance.

John 12:31-33 is also directly linked to Genesis 3:15. Jesus declared that if He was lifted up on the cross to be *bruised* (John 3:14; 8:28), He would draw (literally "drag") *everyone* to Himself. The following verses illuminate the meaning of this word "draw" as being that of compelling love: John 6:44; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4; and Song of Solomon 1:4. The Greek root word for "draw" means to take or choose for oneself. The idea of God taking everything for Himself is at the heart of universal restoration and is reflected in such verses as Psalm 2:8; John 17:20-23; and 1 Corinthians 15:28.

> John 3:14, regarding Jesus being "lifted up" on the cross to be *bruised* (Gen 3:15) is in reference to Numbers 21:8-9 where Moses "lifted up" *the serpent* (Gen 3:15) in the wilderness. As 2 Corinthians 5:21 records, He that had no sin became the sin offering so that sinners would be made righteous by His righteousness!

Especially noteworthy is John 12:33 which records the following: "This he said, *signifying what death he should die*." Mark this verse carefully! Jesus' words regarding His being lifted up on the cross and thereby drawing all men to Himself were spoken in order to indicate that His

death was for *all* the sins of *all* the world. In short, such words identified Him as the Savior of *the entire world*.

John 16:8-11 and **Hebrews 2:14-15** add further insights tied to Genesis 3:15. Regarding the judgment for man's sin, Jesus declared in John 16:8 that the Holy Spirit would convince and convict *the world* of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The reason that He will convince the world of judgment is because the prince of this world is judged. He is judged by the perfect life of Jesus Christ and is thus exposed as a liar and a murderer.

Hebrews 2:14-15 confirms this same idea that Jesus came to destroy the devil who had the power of death so that those who were subject to bondage would be delivered. *Everyone* was subject to bondage (Rom 5:12). The issue at stake is whether Jesus will accomplish His mission of destroying the devil so that those in bondage to him will be delivered. Isaiah's prophecy in 55:11 assures us that He will.

Romans 8:20-22 confirms Hebrews 2:15, stating that "the *whole creation* will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And remember, this truth is a parallel passage with Hebrews 2:15, which in turn, is directly connected to Genesis 3:15.

Finally, **Isaiah 45:22 and Revelation 1:7** are also associated with Genesis 3:15 through other verses such as Numbers 21:8-9 and John 3:14 that were previously mentioned in conjunction with this discussion of Genesis 3:15. All who *looked to or beheld* the serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness were healed. While Isaiah 45:22-23 reveals God's oath that *every* knee will bow and *every* tongue will swear, Revelation 1:7 declares that *every* eye will see Him and shall mourn when they do. "Blessed are they that mourn [i.e. repent of their sins]: for they shall be comforted" (Mat 5:4). Zechariah 12:8-**10**-14 is also similar to Revelation 1:7 and Matthew 5:4: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and *they shall look upon me* [as Israel looked at the serpent in the wilderness] whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." (Zech 12:10)

Line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, the Scriptures disclose that the bruising of the serpent's head by the Seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15 is an introductory, foundational statement regarding the ultimate *restoration of all things.*

Exodus 32:9-<u>13-14</u>... And the LORD said to Moses, I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! 10 Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation. 11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians [i.e. symbolic of the world] speak, and say, He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever. 14 So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

This passage is related to universal restoration by way of God's unconditional covenant that He promised in Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 and other verses. Unlike the Old Covenant given through Moses, this covenant placed no conditions on Abraham or his offspring. God promised that He would do it completely by His own sovereign power, wisdom, and love. Furthermore and most importantly, this covenant affected

the entire world through Abraham (i.e. "in thee shall *all families of the earth* be blessed").

Exodus 32:9-14 simply reveals a test of Moses' faith in God's promise to Abraham, a test that necessarily must try every faithful believer. A few other similar recorded examples of this same test of faith regarding God destroying His People due to their sins, or forgiving them due to His unconditional covenant, include Jeremiah 33:24-26, Hosea 11:7-9, Amos 7:1-6, Micah 7:18-20 and Romans 11:1. Like Moses who asked God to blot him out of His book if He would not forgive Israel's sins (Ex 32:32), Paul echoed the same sentiment in Romans 9:3 saying, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren... who are Israelites, to whom pertains... the covenants... and the promises..."

> Every person must sooner or later come to grips with this issue. Am I saved by my own good works, or by my belief in the grace and mercy that God promised? Romans 4:11-25 reminds us that Abraham is the father of the Christian faith. According to Galatians 3:8, *the gospel* was indeed preached to Abraham, and he believed it.

Leviticus 25:8-10, 13, 28... And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. 9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement [reconciliation] shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. 10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto *all* the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return *every man* unto his possession, and ye shall return *every man* unto his family... 13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return *every man* unto his possession... 28 But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it *until* the year of jubile: and in the jubile it [i.e. his lost possession] shall go out [i.e. be released, "forgiven"], and *he shall return unto his possession*.

How far-reaching is this atonement? Is it merely *potential* atonement for those who would choose it? Not in this context, it isn't. It is God's law that *every debt* is forgiven and *every person* is forgiven and redeemed from *all* bondage every 50 years. It is against God's Law to allow bondage to continue forever! This being the case, it flies in the face of so called "eternal" punishment. A discussion about the word "eternal" will follow later in this book.

While this passage is addressed to people's physical lives and property, it should not be difficult to see how such debts apply also to one's spiritual debts due to sin, especially in light of the day of atonement in this context. Anything and *everything* that is lost is to be *restored*. Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost (Ezek 34:11-16; Luke 19:10).

The founding fathers of the United States chose to inscribe Leviticus 25:10 on the Liberty Bell. In the 20th century, the United States again incorporated the same theme into its Pledge of Allegiance with the words "with liberty and justice for all." How is it that men desire liberty and justice *for all,* yet many of them believe that God is unable or unwilling to accomplish the same? If it is impossible for God, how should men expect themselves to produce it? Is God's liberty and justice for all only a potential desire or hope that a few will enjoy? No! To the glory of God's atoning sacrifice *for all,* NO! It is an absolute law that will be fulfilled in time.

Deuteronomy 4:27-<u>30-31</u> HCSB... The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be reduced to a few survivors among the nations where the LORD your God will drive you. 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see, hear, eat, or smell. 29 But from there, *you will* search for the LORD your God, and *you will* find ⌊Him⌋ when you seek Him with all your heart and all your soul [i.e. New Covenant]. 30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, *you will* return to the LORD your God in

later days and obey Him. 31 *He will not leave you, destroy you, or forget the covenant with your fathers that He swore to them by oath, because the* LORD *your God is a compassionate God.*

> God did not state "if you search for Him" or "if you return to Him." He emphatically declared that Israel *will* search, *will* find, and *will* return. Yes, He also explained that this would occur *when* Israel sought Him with all their heart and soul. Actually, the word "when" is an added word to help the flow of translation. Some translations add the word "if" instead of "when." Neither word is included in the original Hebrew. However, even if one does adopt these words, seeking God with all the heart and soul is indeed the only way to find Him. Passages such as Romans 2:4 and 2 Timothy 2:25 explain that it is God's goodness, not their own, that leads people to faith and repentance. It comes down to a matter of being saved by grace, not by works.
>
> Finally notice that verse 31 in the above text, as in so many other cases, refers back to the unconditional covenant that God made with Abraham, and which Paul describes as *the gospel* in Galatians 3:8. If this covenant is unconditional on man's part, how is it possible that only some people that *do* something will be blessed by it? God's name is at stake since He swore to Abraham that *all the world* is to be blessed by this oath (Gen 12:3). As we discovered from the previous passage in Leviticus 25 regarding the day of atonement, God's blessing of freedom from bondage applies to everyone, not only to a few who opt to receive it.

1 Samuel 2:10... The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall *judge the ends of the earth*; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

> Contrary to the general opinion, the word "judge" not only involves punishment when it is appropriate, but also

healing and restoration as is seen in Isaiah 26:9 and Psalm 9:8. When God *judges the ends of the earth*, it means that He rules over it with His righteous laws that will ultimately result in its restoration. Read chapter 6 of this book that clarifies a fuller understanding about God's judgments. Also see comments under Psalm 2:8-9, a very similar passage.

1 Kings 8:41-43... Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; 42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house [Isa 56:7]; 43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: *that all people of the earth may know thy name*, to fear thee, ***AS*** *do thy people Israel*; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

2 Kings 19:19... Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his [king of Assyria's] hand, *that all the kingdoms of the earth* may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

1 Chronicles 16:30-34... Fear before him, *all the earth*: *the world also shall be stable,* that it be not moved [i.e. troubled... Ps 93:1; Isa 49:8 vs Isa 24:19]. 31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say *among the nations*, The LORD reigneth. 32 Let the sea [i.e. the masses of mankind] roar [i.e. rejoice at the sound of God's Word], and *the fulness thereof*: let the fields rejoice, and *all that is therein.* 33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, because he cometh to judge the earth. 34 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

Psalm 2:8-9 HCSB... Ask of Me, and I will make *the nations* Your inheritance and *the ends of the earth* Your possession. You will break them with a rod of iron [i.e. judgment]; You will

shatter them like pottery [earthen vessels, Job 10:19; Isa 29:16; Jer 18:4].

Both 1 Samuel 2:10 and Psalm 2:8-9 are complimentary texts. Each sheds light on the other. How does Jesus break to pieces His adversaries? Does He do this in hell? 1 Samuel 2:10 declares that "out of heaven He thunders upon them." Thunder is a figure of speech used throughout the Scriptures to represent God's Word. It is also His Word that judges people, restoring them to righteousness (Isa 26:9). Note Exodus 19:16; Ps 77:18; Ps 149:6-9; Rev 2:26-27; and Rev 19:11-15.

Why would God's Son want "the nations for His inheritance" (Ps 2:8) if they were in hell? To inherit the nations means that He will possess them. They will be His, and He will be theirs (i.e. the New Covenant, Heb 8:10; 2 Cor 6:16). In other words, He will be in them and they will be in Him. Thus Jesus' prayer to His Father (John 17:20-23) will be answered. What was His prayer? The Prince of Peace prayed for *the world* to know Him so that universal unity and peace would finally be accomplished.

Psalm 68:18 KJV... Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts *for* men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, *that* the LORD God might dwell among them.

The reason I've quoted from the KJV here is that most of the other translations chose either the word "from, among, or of " instead of the word "for." Indeed, upon this one preposition rests a night-and-day difference of interpretation. When Christ ascended on high and led captivity captive, what did He take as the spoils of war? Were they gifts *from* men or gifts *for* men? The answer supplied in Isaiah 63:1-9 and Isaiah 9:4-7 is that they were gifts *for* men.

As a double witness, all the translators render Ephesians 4:8 in a way which reveals that Psalm 68:18 should be

translated with the preposition "for" or "unto." Of over 12 standard translations that I referenced, every one of them rendered Ephesians 4:8 with "to" or "unto" or "on."

> "Wherefore he saith [i.e. referring to Ps 68:18], When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts *unto* [i.e. for] men" (Ephes 4:8).

It seems unlikely that the translators would be unaware of the connection between these familiar, parallel verses in Psalm 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8. Why, then, did they translate Psalm 68:18 contrary to Ephesians 4:8, unless the traditions of men influenced their decision? It is plainly inconsistent.

Furthermore, the final phrase "that the LORD God might dwell among them" is strong evidence that these gifts were *for* men, and not *from* men. While it is true that men will indeed bring gifts to God, they will do so because He *first* loved them (1 John 4:19). Did He love *only some* of the rebellious, or *all* of the rebellious? Love constrains a person when his/her eyes and heart are opened to it (2 Cor 5:14-15).

Psalm 82:8... Arise, O God, judge the earth: for *thou shalt inherit all nations*.

This is a provoking verse for some people. How is it that God's judgment in the earth and His inheriting all nations compliment each other? Chapter 6 (God's Judgment) of this book will shed much light on this enigma. For now, suffice it to say that when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness (Isa 26:9). In this verse, notice the similar vision of God inheriting all nations just as 1 Samuel 2:10 and Psalm 2:8-9 also proclaim.

Psalm 110:1-7 NRSV... The LORD says to my lord, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool" [i.e. submitted under His feet, 1 Cor 15:21- 24-25 – 28; Phlp 3:21]. 2 The LORD

sends out from Zion your mighty scepter [The scepter represents His Word which includes judgment, wrath, AND mercy, Habk 3:2.]. Rule in the midst of your foes. 3 Your people will offer themselves *willingly* on the day you lead your forces on the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning, like dew, your youth will come to you. 4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." 5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. 6 He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses [i.e. death to self, the old man]; he will shatter heads [authorities, 1 Cor 15:24] *over the wide earth.* 7 He will drink from the stream by the path; therefore he will lift up [i.e. exalt] his head.

> **Verse 1** of this passage is quoted in the New Scriptures more frequently than any other verse from the Old Scriptures, making it a vital verse! Compare 1 Corinthians 15:21-28 with Psalm 110:1. It includes *all* of the enemy authorities being subdued in the context of *all* being made alive in Christ.
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> **Verse 3** reveals that the enemies in verse 1 were Israelites. This is no surprise considering Israel's continual rebellion throughout history.

Verse 4 emphasizes the guarantee of Messiah's never-ending priestly office, reminding us of His oath regarding it. According to Hebrews 5:1-11, the calling of a priest is to have compassion on the ignorant and those that are out of the way by offering gifts and sacrifices for sins. Thus, Psalm 110 describes not only a just king who rules, but also a compassionate priest who pardons sin once it is revealed by the just king's laws (i.e. Gal 3:24).

> **Verse 5** describes kings being shattered by this scepter of righteousness. Kings represent those in exalted positions with power. They include literal kings (Ps 72:11; 138:4) as well as anyone who exalts himself (Mat 23:12) by asserting his own will (2 Thes 2:3-4) against the Messiah's will.
>
> **Verse 6's** judgment is true justice that rewards the righteous and corrects the unjust with appropriate

punishments that result in restoration. It is not simply punitive judgment, but also remedial. Most translations render verse 6 as "He shall judge." The word used here, however is *mishpat* [#4941] and is never accurately used as a verb because it means God's standards of right and wrong. When it is employed incorrectly as a verb, it is easier to leave a wrong impression that God will judge only with severe, eternal punishments. Such a translation mistakenly accommodates a strong implication of the orthodox hell theory.

Verse 7 concludes this entire passage with the word "therefore." Therefore... he will lift up his head. Some translators render it as "the" head. In either case, the Lord is exalting both His head and the head of those that He serves as King and Priest. That will include *everyone* in due season (Ps 47:2, 7; Rev 19:16). In Isaiah 1:5-6, notice the sick head of Israel that needed healing. Then read Psalm 27:6 and Hebrews 12:12 that mention a lifting-up action. This final victory of *restoration* is the result of His administration of judgment (of righteous laws) that is mentioned in verse 6.

Isaiah 2:2-5... And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains [i.e. nations], and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations* shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Consider this passage as a fulfillment of Genesis 12:3 that all nations will be blessed in Abraham. Until Jacob walks

in God's Light, this prophecy will not transpire! Jacob-Israel is to be God's firstborn, born- again nation (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:6 - 7 - 9). As the other nations see Israel's restoration and blessings, they will be drawn into it's economy (God's Laws) and become naturalized Israelite citizens (Ex 12:48-49; 1 Kings 8:41-43; Ezek 47:22-23; Dan 2:34-35, 44-45), thus bringing peace to *all* mankind.

Isaiah 14:1-4 ... For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land [i.e. with God's Laws]: and the *strangers shall be joined with them*, and *they shall cleave to the house of Jacob*. 2 And the people [Israel] shall take them [the strangers], and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their [former] oppressors. 3 And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, 4 that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

At first glance, these words appear to violate God's strict law of Israel's separation from other nations (Deut 7:1-6, for example). But in light of other parallel verses such as Isaiah 2:2-5 and Jeremiah 31:27, this passage is easily understood to be foreigners immigrating into Israel and becoming naturalized citizens under God's Laws. Exodus 12:48-49 made provision for this naturalization of citizenship. It was, however, conditioned upon the strangers embracing Israel's laws regarding the Passover and circumcision, both of which point to Christ.

While the remainder of Isaiah 14 is not included in the quotation above due to its length, it is a very profound passage that depicts the final ruin of the King of Babylon and of Lucifer, resulting in *universal peace and restoration!*

Isaiah 26:9, 19... With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of *the world* will learn righteousness... 19 *Thy dead men shall live,* together with my dead body *shall they arise*. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust [i.e. resurrection!]: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and *the earth* shall cast out the dead [physically & spiritually].

> Many people limit God's judgments by applying them only to punishment and/or hell. This verse indicates that God's judgments cause people to learn righteousness (i.e. Christ). Daniel 12:1-3 also describes this time of resurrection, judgment, and deliverance in which those that are wise will be leading *many* unrighteous ones to righteousness.

Isaiah 32:1-4 HCSB... Indeed, a king will reign righteously, and rulers will rule justly. 2 Each will be like a shelter from the wind, a refuge from the rain, like streams of water in a dry land and the shade of a massive rock in an arid land. 3 Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those who hear will listen. 4 *The reckless mind will gain knowledge*, and *the stammering tongue will speak clearly and fluently*.

> This prophecy is concerning Christ and His Body ruling and reigning during the millennium (Dan 7:18; 12:3; Mat 13:43; 19:28; 1 Cor 6:2; Heb 12:28; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 20:6). It describes that time when the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His anointed ones (Rev 11:15). During this time, God will open the world's eyes and ears (Isa Isa 40:5; 52:10; Joel 2:28; Rev 1:7) to His Truth! As a result, people will become *willing* (Ps 110:3), and *all* tears will be wiped away (Isa 25:8; 30:19; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19; Rev 7:17; 21:4).

Isaiah 35:1-5 HCSB... The wilderness and the dry land [i.e. symbolizing empty, desolated lives] will be glad; the desert will rejoice and blossom like a rose. 2 It will blossom abundantly and will also rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. *They will see*

the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God. 3 Strengthen the weak hands, steady the shaking knees! 4 Say to the cowardly: "Be strong; do not fear! Here is your God; vengeance [i.e. against the old man via Christ's blood, Isa 63:1-**4**-7] is coming. God's retribution [i.e. reward, benefit] is coming; *He will save you* [i.e. from sin]." 5 *Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped.*

> While only the first 5 verses of this chapter are supplied above for the sake of brevity, the entire chapter portrays a similar scenario of the final order of redemption (1 Cor 15:23a) for God's creation. The wilderness, dry land, and desert symbolize the parched, barren souls of people. The vengeance that makes it possible for the wilderness to become glad, fruitful, and fragrant as a rose is the blood of Christ. He is 'the rose of Sharon" (Song 2:1). "Sharon" means upright and pleasing (Mat 3:17). As people place their trust in Him, they become like Him (Ephes 4:13, 15; 1 John 3:2).

Isaiah 40:4-5... *Every* valley shall be exalted, and *every* mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and *all flesh* shall see it together [i.e. being joined together as one]: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

> Isaiah 60:1-3 also mentions this glory. Both passages connect God's glory with His salvation. Colossians 1:27 declares that Christ in us, being our Savior, is our hope of glory.

Isaiah 42:16-18... And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: *I will make darkness light* before them, and *crooked things straight* (Isa 40:4-5). These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. 17 They *shall be* turned back [i.e. repentance], they *shall be* greatly ashamed that trust in graven images, that say

to the molten images, Ye are our gods. 18 Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

> Although this passage does not mention the word "all," its companion verses in Isaiah 40:4-5 do. Furthermore, since God promises never to forsake Israel, how can He forsake the rest of His creation since He is impartial (Deut 10:17; Pr 24:23)? Notice how this passage repeats "I will," thus declaring that this salvation is by grace, not by any works or choices of man.

Isaiah 49:6 HCSB... He says, *It is not enough* for you to be My Servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations, to be My salvation *to the ends of the earth.*

> Since all Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26), it follows that all the families of the earth will also be saved - if God is not partial, and if He fulfills His *gospel* promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3. Israel is simply God's firstboro nation that is prepared and destined by God to be a role model for all the other nations (Isa 2:2-4).

Isaiah 52:5-9... Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. 6 Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I. 7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings [i.e. gospel], that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! 8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye [HCSB reads... "every eye shall see." Rev 1:7 declares the same.], when the LORD shall bring again Zion. 9 Break forth into joy, sing together, *ye waste places* of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

How is universal restoration related to this verse? The passage is about sinful Israel to whom God is promising peace and good tidings of salvation and comfort - to its *waste places*. Romans 11:26 confirms that "all Israel will be saved." And the reason that God saves them is so that they can be His agent to pass on this good news to *the ends of the earth* [Isa 49:6; Gen 12:3]. Never overlook the fact that the *resurrection* from the dead (spiritual and physical waste places) is at the heart of the gospel!

Isaiah 52:10... The LORD hath made bare [i.e. uncovered] his holy arm [of strength] in the eyes of *all the nations*; and *all the ends of the earth shall* ***see*** [perceive, discern, consider, understand] the salvation of our God.

This verse is included in this chapter of less obvious verses since some may argue that *seeing* God's salvation is not necessarily the same as *receiving* it. This is a legitimate thought to consider. When in doubt about an ambiguous verse, its context is often helpful, as it is in this case. Read Isaiah 52:7-15 which begins with good news and concludes with God sprinkling (i.e. cleansing) nations so that they can *see and hear.* What could affirm men *receiving* God's salvation more than His cleansing them so that they can see and hear [John 3:3]?

Notice the following additional examples that depict people being cleansed and/or drawn to God when they *see* (perceive, understand) His salvation:

Zechariah 12:10-14 foretells that when the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem *look on* Him Whom they pierced, they will mourn. Such mourning indicates repentance that is at the threshold of *receiving* salvation.

Matthew 24:30-31 states that *all the tribes of the earth* shall mourn when they *see* the Son of Man coming in clouds with power and great glory. Granted, some may interpret this mourning as that related to fear of being punished. Even if that were the case, God's punishments

are always remedial and not punitive alone (Heb 12:9-11). This mourning, however, is like that mentioned in Zechariah 12:10-14 which indicates a repentant mourning that occurs from God pouring out His Spirit and *opening people's eyes* to their sins - and to His grace. This mourning indicates that such people are *receiving* God's salvation.

Revelation 1:7 is similar to the two preceding references in Zechariah and Matthew. "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and *every* eye shall *see* him, and they also which pierced him: and *all* kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him..." Some will insist that this wailing surely is due to a sense of their doom of damnation. But why would this text be interpreted that way except for the strong traditions of men? The Scriptures alone do not warrant that view.

Isaiah 6:1-8 describes the prophet's response to *seeing* the glory of God. He, too, acknowledged his sins, was cleansed, and accepted God's invitation to serve Him! What could be more indicative of *receiving* God's salvation?

Isaiah 29:18-24 mentions a day when the deaf *shall hear* the words of the book and the eyes of the blind *shall see* out of darkness. Verse 24 affirms that in this day when *eyes are opened*, they that disobeyed in spirit will *at last* come to understanding [seeing, perceiving... John 3:3], and that they that murmured against God will learn doctrine. Such drastic changes are impossible apart from one *receiving* God's grace and salvation.

In **Isaiah 40:4-5**, verse 4 declares the crooked being made straight. As a result, verse 5 states that *all* flesh will *see* the glory of the Lord. The crooked being made straight is synonymous with the restoration of all things, and that cannot occur without a person *receiving* God's salvation.

In **Isaiah 45:22**, God commands all the ends of the earth to "*look* unto Him and be *saved*." In this verse, the

connection between *seeing* and *receiving* God's salvation is plain and direct. Immediately following, Isaiah 45:23 declares that *every* knee will bow and *every* tongue will confess to God. Taking a good *look* at Jesus does result in a person *receiving* the good news!

Hebrews 12:1-2 counsels men to *look* unto Jesus Who initiates and completes our faith (Phlp 2:6). Our faith in God's salvation cannot be completed apart from our acknowledging (seeing, perceiving) it and *receiving* it.

Finally, consider the following from **Acts 3:19:** "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from *the presence* [i.e. *seeing* the countenance] of the Lord."

The word "presence" is translated from the Greek word *"prosopon,"* whose root is from *"pros"* (with, from, toward) and *"opts . . . optanomai"* (*gazing with wide-open eyes*). *"Optanomai"* is a prolonged form of *"optomai."* Obviously our English word "optic" is derived from this Greek word. In Acts 3:19, repentance, forgiveness, and conversion indicate that one has *received* God's salvation, and that, by *seeing* (perceiving, discerning) the Lord's salvation!

Isaiah 54:13... And *all* thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

What will occur when all of Israel's children are taught of God and are at peace? The answer is found in Isaiah 2:2-**5**. This is the good news (gospel) of God's *good will* to *all* people that the angel proclaimed at Jesus' birth (i.e. Luke 2:10, 14, *good will*). Also compare Isaiah 54:13 with Hebrews 8:11.

Jeremiah 31:27... Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of *Israel and* the house of *Judah* with the seed of *man*, and with the seed of *beast*

On the surface, this verse appears to be completely unrelated to universal restoration. However, when

coupled with other passages such as Isaiah 2:2-5; 11:6-10; 14:1-4; and Hosea 2:18-23, the gospel of *all nations* being blessed through Abraham's Offspring becomes more obvious. For additional insights regarding this matter, review Isaiah 14:1-4 and its accompanying notes.

Jeremiah 31:33-34... But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for *they all* shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive [all of them!] their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

Like Romans 11:26, these verses are addressed only to Israelites, not to all nations. How can God make such a promise to Israel alone if He is not partial? Indeed, God is not partial towards any person regardless of his race, but He *is partial* towards those who place themselves under His Laws.

At the establishment of Israel as a nation, God made provision for any stranger to enter into Israel's economy and become naturalized as one born in the land (Ex 12:48-49). Strangers will want to join Israel's nation when they witness Israel's blessings as she walks in God's Laws (Isaiah 2:2-4, 5).

Exodus 12:48, however, also made certain stipulations for any foreigner who desired to become a citizen of Israel's nation. They were required to eat of the Passover and be circumcised. Both of these conditions, under the New Covenant, symbolize an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior. This is God's plan of one-world government! Through Abraham and his seed (i.e. Christ and those in Christ, Gal 3:16), *all nations* were to be *blessed* (i.e. saved, Acts 3:25-26). This is how Israel's stone nation will consume all other nations (Dan 2:35, 44) as foreigners renounce their

former citizenship and become citizens of God's heavenly kingdom (Phlp 3:20).

Thus we see that God is impartial. He will have all nations to come into Israel's economy of salvation through the work of Jesus Christ. God is not partial towards any people, but He is partial towards the righteousness that is found only in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, Abraham's Seed (Gal 3:16), is to be shared with the entire world through God's firstborn nation, Israel.

Lamentations 3:22-36 ESV... The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end [Ps 78:38; 106:45; Ezek 20:8-9, 13-14, 21-22; Mic 7:18-19; Mal 3:6]; 23 they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 The LORD is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him. 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him [Ps 145:9], to the soul who seeks him [Ps 145:15]. 26 It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. 27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. 28 Let him sit alone in silence when it is laid on him; 29 let him put his mouth in the dust — there may yet be hope ["may yet" is added. The literal Hebrew is *"there is hope!"*]; 30 let him give his cheek to the one who strikes, and let him be filled with insults. 31 For the Lord *will not cast off forever,* 32 but, though he cause grief [i.e. remedial punishment, not eternal torment], he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; 33 for he does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men. 34 To crush underfoot all the prisoners of the earth, 35 to deny a man justice [Rom 8:20-21] in the presence of the Most High, 36 to subvert a man in his lawsuit, the Lord does not approve.

This long passage from Lamentations is included in order to reveal God's way with His people Israel. While Romans 11:26 and other verses declare that *all* Israel will be saved eventually, most of the book of Lamentations appears to be absolutely hopeless for Israel except for the above passage. But if all Israel will indeed be saved, then

all other nations must be saved as well, since God is not partial to any race. Israel is simply His firstborn nation.

The last part of verse 29 is rendered incorrectly by most of the translators by inserting the words "may yet" or something similar. When reading the various translations, it is appalling to note the variety of words men have chosen which skirt the truth. The accurate meaning, seen above in the brackets following verse 29, is quite the opposite. The traditions of men have caused the translators to stray far from the literal meaning.

Ezekiel 18:23, 32... Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? ... I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth (Read with Isa 46:10f), saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Chapter 5 of this book (God's Sovereignty) will explain how God will have all of His will, His desire, and His *pleasure* fulfilled. If, therefore, God has no pleasure in the death of him that is dying, that death will be remedied. Death is a necessary part of God's plan of salvation! Resurrection, however, is the final part of that same plan, and it swallows up death in victory. Chapter 7 of this book will supply further insights regarding this critical element of resurrection.

Ezekiel 20:8-9... 13-14... 21-22 ESV... But they rebelled against me and were not willing to listen to me. None of them cast away the detestable things their eyes feasted on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. "Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. 9 *But I acted for the sake of my name,* that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they lived, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing them out of the land of Egypt... 13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not walk in my statutes but rejected my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; and my Sabbaths they greatly profaned. "Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them in the

wilderness, to make a full end of them. 14 *But I acted for the sake of my name,* that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out... 21 But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. "Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. 22 *But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name,* that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out.

> Notice the same scenario repeated three times in 15 verses. God said He would pour out His wrath and anger on Israel because of their rebellion, but then He withheld His anger for the sake of His name. What does "for the sake of My name" signify? God's name represents Who He is. It reveals that He is not like the false gods that are both weak and cruel. On the contrary, He is both Almighty (omni-potent) and All-Loving (omni-beneficent). If God chose Israel for His Own people and promised unconditionally (Gen 12:3) to deliver them, then He will do it in spite of their rebellion - for His name's sake.
>
> There is only one way He could do this and remain a just God. The solution necessitated that He Himself would provide the payment for Israel's sins. This is why Acts 3:18 records that "all the prophets" spoke about the Messiah's death so that God's unconditional covenant to Abraham would be fulfilled, thus providing for *the restoration of all things* which "all the prophets" declared (Acts 3:18, 21, 24). God did this because He is love. This is the good news! This is John 3:16-17.

Ezekiel 34:11-16... For thus says the Lord GOD: Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and *deliver them from all the places* where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their

own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. 16 I will seek what was lost and *bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.*

> Although the majority of this prophecy focuses on the Messiah's deliverance of His sheep, the last phrase adds a sharp contrast saying, "but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment."

The fat and the strong represent the high and mighty, the prosperous and proud. In order to save His sheep, the rebellious element (i.e. the old man) must be destroyed. The wickedness that is destroyed is the pride within men (Col 3:8-10). When God's judgments are in the earth, the people will learn righteousness (Isa 26:9) and every high and lifted up mountain will be leveled, and the humble valleys will be exalted (Isa 40:4; Mat 23:12).

Ezekiel 44:9-16... Thus saith the Lord GOD; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel. 10 And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, which went astray away from me after their idols; they shall even bear [the punishment of] their iniquity. 11 *Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary,* having charge at the gates of the house, and ministering to the house: They shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister unto them. 12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity. 13 And *they shall not come near unto me,* to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near

to any of my holy things in the most holy place: but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed. 14 But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein. 15 *But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok*, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, *they shall come near* to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD: 16 They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come *near* to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.

Since this is a deep and weighty passage, we will devote extra attention to it. It describes details regarding the final Temple. It is plain that there are two groups of servants; the faithful and the unfaithful. What is most arresting is the fact that the unfaithful are not damned to hell forever. Beyond that, they are actually serving in God's Temple while bearing their iniquities! What in the world is this all about? There are a number of New Scriptures that shed light on this, as we will see.

In Revelation 7:1-8 we find a small group of *firstfruit* servants that are sealed in their foreheads. Immediately thereafter, in Revelation 7:9-17, we find a contrasted and larger group of servants who came out of great tribulation (i.e. lake of fire), resulting in white robes (i.e. righteousness) for them. The final verse (v. 17) explains that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them [with His judgments], and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." As in Ezekiel 44:9-16, these two groups manifest different positions of service, even though they are both serving God in His Temple.

1 Corinthians 3:12-17 also describes two groups of people, one faithful and the other not. Like Ezekiel 44:9-16, this text is also about God's Temple:

> Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, *he shall receive a reward*. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, *he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved;* yet so as by fire [i.e. great tribulation... lake of fire]. 16 Know ye not that ye are *the temple* of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man [i.e. the old man] defile *the temple* of God, him shall God destroy; for *the temple* of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

How can a person be *destroyed* and yet still be *saved* by fire? Our God is a consuming fire. Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire in order to burn up man's chaff (Mat 3:11-12). The new man (Christ) is *put on* so that the old man of sin can be destroyed and *put off*.

Finally let us consider one last example of two different groups of servants in Matthew 24:45-51:

> Who then is a *faithful and wise servant*, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant [Rev 20:6], whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that *evil servant* shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; 49 and shall begin to smite his fellows servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; 50 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

How is Matthew 24:45-51 connected with Ezekiel 44:9-16? Since both people are described as servants (i.e.

ministers, priests), and this is under the New Covenant era, it is about a Temple where the Spirit of God dwells. The faithful servant is rewarded when the Master returns in due season, while the evil servant bears his iniquity as he is purged clean by fire during a time of great tribulation and weeping (i.e. mourning for his sins, Mat 5:4).

Since the above examples from the New Scriptures are indeed companion passages with Ezekiel 44, they reveal that the *unfaithful servants are not lost forever in hell*, but are rather judged and cleansed with God's fire which results in wiping away all tears from their eyes (Rev 7:17). As Paul reminds Christians in Acts 14:22, through much tribulation, we enter the kingdom of God. Hebrews 12:4-7 also agrees.

Hosea 6:1-3... Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. 2 After two days will he *revive us*: in the third day he will *raise us up*, and we shall live in his sight. 3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

While Hosea's prophecy is addressed to the Northern Kingdom of Israel (i.e. Ephraim), most Bible students apply this passage to the *resurrection* in general since it is not just for Ephraim but for all Israel. Since all Israel will be revived, there is also the same hope for *all of mankind* because of the unconditional gospel that was preached to Abraham (Gen 3:8).

What about those in Israel's past who have died in their sins? What good will the resurrection be to them? Do they get a second chance after they die? Actually, no one ever has even a first chance, let alone a second one. Salvation does not rest upon chance! "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD" (Pr 16:33).

After taking a second look at the very first verse of this passage and those verses that preceded it in the previous chapter, it becomes evident that Ephraim's condition at this very time was that of being dead in their sins (Compare Ephes 2:1). Hosea 6:1-2 affirms that God will heal and restore His errant child. As Fredrick Lehman wrote in his hymn, *The Love of God,* "His erring child [i.e. Adam] He reconciled and pardoned from his sin."

The ultimate purpose of God's resurrection is revival, not simply correction. Scripture repeats over and over that there is a resurrection of the just *and the unjust*. It also presents the just ruling over the unjust in a new administration of justice (Rev 11:15) in order to restore liberty and justice to all the world (Isaiah 32:1-5; 61:1-4; Dan 7:22, 27; 12:1-3; Mat 19:28; 1 Cor 6:2; Jude 1:14-15; Rev 14:1-6-7).

Amos 9:11-15 HCSB... In that day I will *restore* the fallen booth [i.e. tabernacle] of David: I will *repair* its gaps, *restore* its ruins [Isa 58:12], and *rebuild* it as in the days of old, 12 so that they may possess [Ps 2:8] the remnant of Edom and all the nations that are called by My name — ⌊this is⌋ the Lord's declaration — He will do this. 13 Hear this! The days are coming ...The mountains [i.e. nations] will drip with sweet wine, and *all* the hills will flow ⌊with it⌋. 14 I will *restore* the fortunes of My people Israel. They will *rebuild* and occupy ruined cities, plant vineyards and drink their wine, make gardens and eat their produce. 15 I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them. Yahweh your God has spoken.

In the book of Acts, James cites Amos 9:11-15 as follows:

Acts 15:16-18 HCSB... After these things *I will return* and will *rebuild* David's tent, which has fallen down. I will *rebuild* its ruins and will *set it up again*, 17 so that those who are left of mankind may seek the Lord — *even all the Gentiles* [i.e. nations] who are called by My name, says the Lord who does

these things, 18 which have been known from long ago.

An opponent of universal restoration would naturally argue that "all the Gentiles" in verse 17 is immediately qualified with "who are called by My name." If this phrase was intended to limit God's salvation, however, it would contradict the main thought just established in verse 16 and the first part of verse 17 concerning God's returning for the purpose of saving those who were not yet saved. Furthermore, it would contradict all of the many other references that are listed in this book regarding all Israel being saved so that they are enabled to be God's ambassadors to bring His salvation to all people in all the nations of the earth.

"All the Gentiles who are called by My name" is in reference to the Israelites mentioned in Amos 9:11-15 who were fallen (i.e. in captivity among the Gentiles). At that time, they were not His people (i.e. they were Gentiles). But as Hosea 1:10 reminds us, those who became "not My people" (i.e. Gentiles) would once again in the future be called "the sons of the living God."

Obadiah 1:17-18 HCSB... But there will be a deliverance on Mount Zion, and it will be holy; the house of Jacob will dispossess those who dispossessed them. 18 Then the house of Jacob will be a ⌊blazing⌋ fire, and the house of Joseph, a ⌊burning⌋ flame, but the house of Esau will be stubble; Jacob will set them on fire [with God's Truth, Deut 4:12, 24; 5:5; Ps 148:8; Isa 5:24; **10:17**; Jer 20:9; **23:29**; Zech 12:6; Mat 3:11-12; 2 Pet 3:7] and consume Edom. Therefore no survivor will remain of the house of Esau, for the LORD has spoken.

The people of Esau will not disappear forever, but the name of Esau will become stubble forever. Anything and everything that represents evil will be cleansed from Esau. When the Light of God's fire begins consuming Esau's chaff (i.e. lies, evil philosophies & deeds), its inhabitants will flee out of her and migrate to Israel. See Isaiah 2:2-5;

11:4-10; 14:1-4; 60:1-5; Hosea 2:18-23; and Zech 14:12-17.

Obadiah 1:21 HCSB... Saviors [deliverers] will ascend [be caught up, raised/resurrected to] Mount Zion to rule over [i.e. judge] the hill country [Like mountains, hills also symbolize pride.] of Esau, but [and] the kingdom will be the LORD's [see Rev 11:15].

Hopefully the inserted brackets above are more helpful than distractive. No one translation captures all of the potential of this verse. It is noteworthy that the word "rule" [Greek *shapat*] in this verse is usually rendered "judge" in other verses, but in this case many translations chose the word "rule" or "govern" instead.

For what purpose are these saviors ascending or being resurrected? They are rising up to rule over Esau. Obadiah's prophecy just happened to be aimed at Esau who, like Egypt and Babylon, represents the world or those against God. These saviors are rising to take their place on thrones (Dan 12:3; Mat 19:28; Rev 3:21) in God's newly established and everlasting kingdom in order to govern *all the world* with God's Law-Word. Praise God, there will indeed be a one-world government in due time, but it will be overseen by God's Truth, not man's deceptive lies.

Many other references attest to the event in this passage. See Isaiah 2:2-5; 24:23; Daniel 2:44; Micah 4:7; Psalms 22:28; 47:7-9; 67:4; Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 11:15; etc.

Jonah 2:1-10... Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, 2 and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of *the belly of hell* cried I, and thou heardest my voice. 3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; *yet I will look again toward thy holy temple*. 5 The waters compassed

me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: *yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption,* O LORD my God. 7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. 10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

The restoration of all things in this 2nd chapter of Jonah remains hidden to many people. If God will be merciful to His disobedient prophet who knew Him, He will certainly also be merciful to others "who don't know their right hand from their left" (Jonah 4:11; Luke 12:47-48; Jam 3:1).

A large part of this 2nd chapter flows with symbolic imagery that depicts the plight of all Adam's race. When one is at his wit's end, he cries out to the Lord and the Lord hears and delivers (Ps 107:6, 13, 19, 23-28, 42-43).

But what about those who never cried out to the Lord before they died? We frail beings must remember that death is no obstacle for God. Death is not the end of God's program. Jonah was in "the belly of hell" when he cried out. He was as good as dead. Yet *all* that are in the grave (i.e. *sheol*) shall hear His voice, and those who hear shall live (John 5:25, 28-29).

Notice Jonah's words in verse 9. Not only do they reveal his renewed commitment to obedience, they also disclose Who raised him out of hell. The Hebrew word *"sheol"* that is translated hell in verse 2 means nothing more than the grave.

Jonah 4:10-11 NASB... Then the LORD said, You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which

you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight. 11 Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?

> Jonah's message regarding universal reconciliation is seen especially in these final two verses, but it also permeates the entire four chapters. If God will be merciful to His disobedient prophet who knew His Word, how can He not also be merciful to foreigners who do not know His Word? Luke 12:47-48 and James 3:1 affirm the same justice.

Micah 4:1-7... But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. 2 And *many nations shall come,* and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and *he will teach us of his ways,* and *we will walk in his paths:* for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 And *he shall judge* among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, *neither shall they learn war any more*. 4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it. 5 For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever. 6 In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; 7 and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

> Verse 5 seems to contradict the bulk of this passage. Since we know that God never contradicts His own

Words, the only reasonable explanation is that verse 5 is interjected as a description of what these people were like prior to this event. Verse 6 then resumes what began in verse 1.

Some may also be troubled that verse 2 states that *many*, not all, nations will come. The Hebrew word for "many" has numerous possible meanings including *number, size, rank,* etc. For example, it may be rendered "many or multitudes" or "great and mighty." If it is translated as "great nations, mighty nations, or super-power nations," this minimizes the doubt that all nations will come up to Jerusalem.

Since there are many other Scriptures that do describe all nations coming to worship Him, it can be assumed that either the translators did not convey this verse properly, or that timing or other details are not included in this verse to reveal that *all* nations will come to God in the end. No single verse can contradict the prevailing message of God's Word.

Micah 7:18-20... Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities [Phlp 3:21; 1 Cor 15:25-28]; and thou wilt cast *all* their sins into the depths of the sea. 20 Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

If God will do this for Jacob and Abraham, He will also do it for all people since He is not partial towards any one people. See Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34-35; and Romans 2:11. Most important of all, however, His promise to Abraham was designed to bless *all the nations* through his Offspring, the Messiah (Gen 12:3; 22:18; Gal 3:16).

Nahum 1:15 NKJV... Behold, on the mountains [i.e. nations] the feet [Ps 110:1; Ezek 1:7; Dan 10:6; Rev 1:15] of him who brings good tidings, who proclaims peace [*to all* people, Luke 2:10, 14]! O Judah, keep your appointed feasts [which are figures of God's plan of universal restoration], perform your vows. For the wicked one shall no more pass through you [Job 1:6-7; Zech 14:21]; He is utterly cut off.

> Who is "the wicked one" who will no more pass through them and will be utterly cut off? In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 8, Paul describes "the wicked one" as "the man of sin." While some quickly gravitate to the common conclusion that this is an individual Anti-Christ, this "man of sin" is simply the old man, the first Adam. This is the reason that Christ came - to utterly destroy the works of the devil (Heb 2:14) so that he would no longer pass through man (Heb 2:15).
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> Compare Nahum 1:15 with Obadiah 1:17-18, 21 and Micah 4:1-7 (just previously discussed) regarding the wicked one's future with Israel. As Acts 3:21 announced, all of the prophets have spoken about the same good news of God's restoration of all things.
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> Also compare Nahum 1:15 with Isaiah 52:5-10. The larger context of Isaiah 52 regarding "the feet of those who bring good tidings" is very revealing as it begins with "Awake, awake" (verse 1) and concludes with sprinkling many nations so that they will finally see and hear that which they have never seen or heard before (verse 15)!

Haggai 2:6-9 ESV... For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. 7 And I will shake *all nations,* so that the treasures of *all nations* shall come in:, and I will fill this house with glory [Isa 2:2-4; Zech 14:14, 16; Rev 21:24], says the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former [Isa 60:22], says the LORD of

hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.

> Many people have been so inculcated with the KJV in verse 7 (i.e. "*the desire* of all nations shall come") that they are inclined to reject the more recent translations of this verse. However, regardless of whether verse 7 is translated according to the KJV or the ESV, this passage can be interpreted at least three different ways. First, it could mean that Jesus is the desire of all nations and that He will return when this shaking occurs. Secondly, it could mean that the treasured, desirable riches of all nations will flow into God's Kingdom when their pride is shaken and destroyed (Isaiah 60:1-22; 14:1-2; 2:2-4; Rev 21:24). Thirdly, it could mean a combination of both (Isa 11:1-16). In any case, *all nations* are shaken, and the desire and/or the treasures of *all nations* will come into God's Latter [and final] Temple. All of this foretells of the restoration of all things when God will be All in all (1 Cor 15:28).

Zechariah 8:22-23 ESV... Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts: In those days *ten men* from the nations *of every tongue* shall take hold of the robe of a Jew, saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you [Isa 2:2-4].

> Adam Clarke suggests that *ten men* "may signify a great number without comparison." Barnes Notes of the O.T. holds that "ten is the *symbol of a whole,* all the numbers before it meeting in it and starting again from it." Others believe that the number ten also symbolizes trials (as in Gen 31:7; Lev 26:26; and Num 14:22). If this is the case, Acts 14:22 certainly adds significance to this passage as it declares that by much tribulation will people enter God's Kingdom.
>
> One thing is certain: Zechariah 8:22-23 is similar to many other passages such as Isaiah 2:2-5; 14:1-3; 60:1-5; Jeremiah 16:19-21; 31:27; and Malachi 1:11 that

describe *all nations,* not just ten men from each nation, coming to the Lord. Furthermore, even the larger context of this same passage (i.e. verses 20-22) depicts many being converted.

Zechariah 9:9-11... Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace *to the nations;* His dominion shall be *from sea to sea,* and from the River [i.e. the Euphrates] *to the ends of the earth.* 11 As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

This is a companion passage with Isaiah 40:1-11. In both texts we see God's Kingdom being established not by chariots, horses, and the force of man's warfare (Ps 20:7; 33:17; Zech 4:6; 2 Cor 10:3-5), but by meekness and humility symbolized by a donkey (Mat 11:28-30). By comparing both passages side by side, we see that man's warfare will cease, *every* crooked thing will be made straight, and the gospel of salvation is declared to and seen by not only Jerusalem, but by *all nations* [Isa 40:5; Rev 1:7]. God's Kingdom will extend from *sea to sea* and to *the ends of the earth* (Mat 28:19; Acts 1:8).

Zechariah 14:8-10 ESV... On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them to the eastern sea and half of them to the western sea [Mat 24:27; Ezek 47:1-9]. It shall continue in summer as in winter. 9 And the LORD will be king *over all the earth.* On that day the LORD will be one and his name one. 10 *The whole land* shall be turned into a plain [Isa 40:4-5]... But Jerusalem shall remain aloft [i.e. exalted, Isa 2:2-4] on its site...

Notice the all-inclusive language that is employed to describe the extent of God's living waters reaching east to west during winter and summer. This passage is about *all*

the earth being refreshed, renewed, restored. These living waters cover the whole earth. As many other Scriptures testify, God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom that will fill the entire earth (Ps 72:19; Isa 11:9; Dan 2:35. 44; 7:14; Habk 2:14; Luke 1:33; 1 Cor 15:24-28; Rev 11:15, etc.).

Matthew 9:13 ESV... Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners [to repentance].

At first glance, this verse may seem unrelated to universal restoration. It does, however, have a ring of good news (gospel), doesn't it?

In both Matthew 9:13 and 12:7 Jesus rebuked the harsh, vindictive Pharisees for their lack of mercy and for their legalistic burdens which led to dead works. While Hosea 6:6 was the Scripture Jesus quoted, Micah 7:18-20 is also very similar, and it offers a context that includes *the gospel* that was preached to Abraham.

It is easy for anyone to speculate on what Matthew 9:13 might mean, but it is prudent to allow Scripture to interpret itself (1 Cor 14:32-33). Jesus said, "Go and learn what this means." Look at the source of this Scripture and meditate well on its context and other related verses.

Hosea 6:6 is identical to Mat 9:13 and offers helpful insight in its context, particularly in Hosea 6:1-3 where God promises to have mercy on Israel by resurrecting her with a revival that heals her rebellion. Micah 7:18-20, however, is perhaps even more enlightening as it refers to Genesis 12:3 for the establishment of its truth:

> "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because *He delights in mercy.* 19 He will again have *compassion* on us [compare Hosea 6:1-3, 6], and will subdue [Phlp 3:21; 1 Cor 15:25, 28] our iniquities. You will cast *all* our sins into the depths of the sea. 20

You will give truth to Jacob and *mercy* to Abraham, which You have *sworn* to our fathers from days of old (Micah 7:18-20)."

God delighting in mercy is directly related to the unconditional covenant of mercy that He swore to Abraham! Surely this is why Paul was inspired to write the following about Israel's destiny in Romans 11:29-33:

"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained *mercy* through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the *mercy* shown you, they also may obtain *mercy*. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have *mercy on all*. 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!"

"Go and learn what this means." How few Bible students grasp the amazing depth of Matthew 9:13? It attests to the restoration of all things by returning mercy and good for evil. Luke 6:35-36 declares the same glorious truth.

Matthew 18:11-14... For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? 13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14 Even so *it is not the will of your Father* who is in heaven that *one* of these little ones should perish.

It is sad that such a passage as this should require any comment at all. Except for man's narrow view of God, it should stand by itself as a bold testimony of the restoration of all things. *"The Ninety and Nine,"* a Christian hymn by Elizabeth Clephane, expounds on this

Matthew 18:11-14 passage. The significance of this passage is not that Jesus will save *some* of the lost sheep, but *all* of them. It couldn't be stated any plainer. Yet, due to the inculcation of man's tradition, many eyes are blinded to its obvious truth.

Will Jesus be successful in accomplishing what He came to do (Isa 55:11)? Will He seek and save all of the lost (Ezek 34:11-16)? Can God's will and pleasure be thwarted by man's free will or Satan's power? Isaiah 46:9-10 and many other verses mentioned in chapter 5 of this book (i.e. God's Sovereignty) answer with a resounding "No!" Jesus will succeed in what He came to do and will restore every lost sheep back to the fold.

Luke 15:4-7 records this same parable of The Lost Sheep. Luke's account, however, follows up with four successive parables, all of which present the same theme of *the restoration of all things*. In Luke's account, the other parables that follow The Ninety and Nine are The Lost Coin, The Lost (prodigal) Son, The Unjust Steward, and The Rich Man and Lazarus. (See my book *The Rich Man and Lazarus*.) Luke 19:10 repeats this same principle again saying, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Matthew 20:13-16... But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So *the last shall be first, and the first last:* for many be called, but few chosen.

This passage is an excerpt of a parable regarding God's vineyard kingdom. How does it have anything to do with universal restoration? By stating that the last will be first, and the first last, Matthew 20:13-16 presents a similar truth as Matthew 21:31 which is the next verse listed in this book. As we will see, it declares that tax collectors and harlots will enter the Kingdom of God *before* others

who were righteous in their own eyes. Such a statement infers that, eventually, no one is cast away forever, but will indeed enter God's kingdom in due time.

Matthew 21:31... Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God *before* you.

Jesus addressed these sharp words to the hypocritical priests, scribes, and elders, His greatest adversaries. It was also to them that He pronounced His seven woes in Matthew 23:13-29. Yet in this verse, He did not say that they would not enter the Kingdom of God, but that tax collectors and harlots would enter it *before* them. The word "before" is translated the same in over a dozen translations that I examined. It definitely means "before." While this word is not caught by many readers, contrary to orthodox belief, it reveals that even Jesus' worst enemies will eventually enter God's Kingdom, though they may be the last to enter it. This being the case, the passage plainly testifies to the restoration of all things.

Matthew 22:12-14... And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For *many are called, but few are chosen.*

Too many people jump to conclusions about the meaning of "many are called, but few are chosen" based on what they are taught. They suppose that many are called by God, but only a few that are called will be chosen to go to heaven, while the many will go to hell.

This passage should not be interpreted out of its context, the marriage of the King's son. The marriage of the King's son is about Christians who have followed the Lamb wherever He goes (i.e. to Calvary to be crucified with Him, Rev 14:4; Gal 2:20; Rom 6:5). Revelation 19 describes the marriage of the Lamb as the saints ruling and reigning

with Him to subdue *all* enemies, thus restoring justice and righteousness *in all the earth.* Only *the few* Christians who overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil will be chosen to rule and reign with Christ. *The many* do not go to hell, but will be judged (i.e. ruled over and fed with God's judgments) on the earth by Christ and His Body for a thousand years (Rev 20:4-6; Mat 19:28; Dan 12:2-3).

Mark 10:23, 26-27, 31... Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! ... 26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27 But Jesus looked at them and said, With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible... 31 But *many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

As with the verse in Matthew 21:31 on page 67, when read carefully, this verse discloses that those who have been first in worldly status will be saved, even though they will be among the last to be saved. That is, they will not be in the first resurrection (Rev 20:6; 1 Cor 3:15).

Also do not overlook the word "many." It implies that a few of those who were *first* in worldly status *did* repent and lose their old life so they would find a new and abundant life. In doing so, they became a part of the *last* by earthly standards so that they would be in the *first* and best resurrection.

Luke 6:27-36... But I say unto you which hear, *Love your enemies,* do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you [see Jesus' prayer ("Father, forgive them") in Luke 23:34]. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 For if ye love

them which love you, what thank [i.e. grace] have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But *love ye your enemies,* and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: *for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.* 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful**.**

> This well-known passage proves how many of us do not meditate very carefully on the Scriptures we read! Not only do these verses command us to love our enemies, but they plainly declare that our heavenly Father also loves His enemies and is kind to those who are evil! Essentially, this text is an elaboration of the principle of returning good for evil [Rom 12:20-21]. While *the restoration of all things* is not mentioned, its inference is as plain as day.
>
> How blind we can be to truth when the traditions of men have brainwashed us. Because God is holy and not hypocritical, He never asks man to do what He, Himself, does not do. Since we are to return good for evil, He also does the same. As Jesus was dying on the cross, His prayer was "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Let us not forget that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb 13:8).
>
> This passage in Luke 6:27-36 (and Mat 5:38-48) is one of the most convincing passages of God's restoration of all things, and yet most people are blinded to it due to the conventional, theological bias of men.

Luke 19:10... For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

> Since the Son of man is coming to seek and save the lost, how can He possibly fail to save them all? Neither man's

free will nor Satan can interfere with God's will. God and His Anointed are far greater than Satan (Mat 28:18; 1 Cor 15:24; Ephes 1:21; Col 1:16-18; 1 John 4:4). God created Satan to destroy the flesh so that the spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord (1 Cor 5:5; Isa 54:16). Furthermore, verses such as Isaiah 55:11 and 1 John 4:14 declare that God sent His Son to be the Savior of the World and that His Word will not return to Him empty, but will accomplish that for which it was sent. Chapter 5 of this book firmly establishes this vital fact in connection with God's sovereignty.

Luke 23:34... Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...

Many passages such as John 14:13-14; John 16:23; and 1 John 5:14-15 promise us that if we ask anything in His name or in His will, He will answer it. If this is true for us, it was also true of Jesus. Being perfect, Jesus would never ask anything that was not in His Father's will. Since He did ask the Father to forgive those who crucified Him, it was surely in the Father's will and the Father will do it.

This is profound and of monumental significance since those who crucified Jesus include everyone who ever sinned (i.e. *all,* Rom 3:23). Jesus asked His Father to forgive those responsible for His crucifixion because providing forgiveness to sinners was the purpose of His coming to earth! The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14; 2:2).

John 3:16 HCSB... For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

Considered the most familiar of all the New Scriptures, this verse ought to be a litmus test of the gospel's true significance. Salvation is dependent upon people believing in Jesus Christ. Few Christians, if any, would disagree. The main question at stake is whether all will believe, or only some. How many people will believe,

bow the knee, and worship is plainly repeated over and over throughout the Scriptures in verses such as Ps 22:27. It is the very purpose of this book to compile many of these references for a more careful consideration.

As we have just seen in Matthew 21:31 and Mark 10:23-31, some will believe *first* (James 1:18; Exodus 4:22; Jer 31:9) or *before* others, while some will believe *last* or *after* others. This is the significance of the word "firstfruits." 1 Cor 15: 22-24 declares that Christ is the *first* fruit. This same passage states that after the firstfruit, *then* those who belong to Him (i.e. His Body) at His coming will be delivered; and *last* (at the end) the Kingdom (which will eventually absorb all nations) will be delivered.

1 Timothy 2:3-6 states it this way:

> ... God our Saviour 4 Who *will have all men to be saved,* and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom *for all,* to be testified in due time.

John 3:17 is seldom quoted with John 3:16.

> *For* God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that *the world* through him might be saved.

Though it has been mentioned already, it bears repeating that God will have whatever His will, purpose, and desire is. He's God! Chapter 5 in this book confirms this as it addresses God's sovereignty.

Few Bible students have ever considered that John 3:16-17 is the fulfillment of the unconditional promise to Abram in Genesis 12:3. In that famous verse, God swore to bless *all* the families of the earth through Abraham's Offspring, Christ (Gen 22:18; Gal 3:16). Whether one believes that God will bless *some* of all the families of the earth, or *all* of all the families of the earth, depends on one's understanding of God and His Word. In Romans

4:13 Paul declared Abraham to be "heir [possessor] of the world." On what basis could Paul make such a claim? One basis is Psalm 2:8 which includes a promise by God to Abraham's Offspring, Christ:

> Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen [i.e. nations] for *thine inheritance,* and the uttermost parts of the earth for *thy possession.*

Why do so many Christians limit John 3:16 to mean that Jesus is only a *potential* Savior, and that His life, death, and resurrection will affect only a few, *good* people? They do so because it has been instilled in them for centuries by the traditions of their forefathers, generation after generation (Amos 2:4; Isa 29:13; Mat 15:3, 6f, 9; Titus 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18). And the reason their forefathers have believed it is because they have walked by sight instead of by faith (2 Cor 5:7).

Not surprisingly, almost every translation handles John 3:16 a little differently. Some choose the word "whoever," while others chose the word "everyone." Some insert added words such as "should" or "may," while others add the word "will." Consider the following translation suggested by A. P. Adams where a punctuation change makes an enormous and significant difference:

> God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that all, believing in Him, [will] not perish but have everlasting life.

Realize that the word rendered "whosoever" in the KJV in this verse is translated as "all, everyone" or something similar over 90 percent of the time in its 1,243 references in the KJV. One should also be aware that words such as "should, may, might, will" etc. have been added, and are not in the original, inspired text.

John 6:37... *All* that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

According to Psalm 2:8, the Father will give the Son "the nations and the ends of the earth" for His possession. Since this has not been manifested yet, many still walk by sight (2 Cor 5:7) rather than by faith, choosing to believe that the Father will not give His Son everything.

John 6:45... It is written in the prophets, And they shall *all* be taught by God. Therefore *everyone* who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. [Compare Isaiah 54:13.]

Some could claim that being taught does not guarantee belief or submission to the instruction. In this case, however, Jesus was quoting from Isaiah 54:13 which describes *the results* of *all* the children of Israel being taught by God as that of great peace. Furthermore, the larger context of Isaiah 54:11-17 portrays Israel's complete restoration just as Paul also describes it in Romans 11:25-32.

John 6:51... I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of *the world*.

Mark the condition: "*If* any man eat of this bread..." Without debate, one can never live forever *until* he eats of this bread. But according to verses such as Psalm 22:27-29; 72:10-11; and Isaiah 60:3-5, *everyone* will indeed eat of this bread in due season (1 Tim 2:4-6f).

Moreover, since Jesus did give His flesh (Heb 10:5) for the life of *the world,* we can be confident that His sacrifice alone is sufficient to accomplish what He was sent to do (Isaiah 46:10; 55:11; 1 John 2:2; 4:14; and John 3:17).

John 17:20-23... I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that *the world* may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have

given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that *the world* may know that You have sent Me, *and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

> While Matthew 6:9-13 is often referred to as "The Lord's Prayer," it is really the pattern that He taught His disciples to pray. The classic prayer that Jesus Himself prayed to the Father lies here in John 17. Surely Jesus would never ask the Father anything that was not in His Father's will. And whatever He did ask, His Father would fulfill. Jesus taught His disciples that whatever they asked the Father in His name [i.e. His will], they would receive (John 14:13-14; 15:7, 16; 16:23).
>
> On the basis of this principle of receiving whatever is asked in God's will, it only stands to reason that when Jesus asked that *the world* would believe in Him, it had to have been also the will of His Father, and that the Father will grant His prayer. If this is not the case, God has a different standard of law for Jesus than He does for us. That is unthinkable since we are called to follow in His footsteps.

Romans 5:15-21 HCSB... But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man's trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift overflowed to the many by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. 16 And the gift is not like the one man's sin, because from one sin came the judgment, resulting in condemnation, but from many trespasses came the gift, resulting in justification [not just the *potential* for justification]. 17 Since by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. 18 *So* then, *as* through one trespass there is condemnation *for everyone, so also* through one righteous act there is life-giving justification *for everyone*. 19 For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the

one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 The law came along to multiply the trespass. But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more, 21 so that, *just as* sin reigned in death, *so also* grace will reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

While Christians have different ideas regarding how many people will be saved (i.e. few, many, all), this passage plainly declares that God's grace is more powerful and effective than man's sin. That being the case, why does this passage sometimes use the word "many" instead of the word "all?" The Greek word used here for "many" is *polys*. Our English equivalent is "poly." Some other words that Strong's Concordance supplies for this word are *"much, largely, mostly, abundant, altogether,* and *plenteous."*

Since the repeated principle throughout this passage is that grace abounds far beyond man's sin, it appears that the reason that "many" was sometimes employed instead of "all" is because there was one individual among humanity that did not require any sin to be erased, namely Jesus Christ. Since Jesus, Himself, did not need to be justified, "many" is exactly the word that is appropriate for this passage. Therefore, this passage declares that *all* except Jesus will be justified from sin. Verses 18-19 demand this reasoning as they balance the *condemnation of everyone* with the *justification of everyone*. To interpret this passage otherwise is simply not doing justice to the text.

Carefully observe how Romans 6:23 and Romans 8:20-21 present a similar balance between the effects of sin and the contrasted effect of God's gift which overwhelms the sin.

While a few of those who do not embrace universal restoration believe that the majority (but not all!) of mankind will be saved, most Christian non-universalists believe that only a very few will be saved while most will

go to hell. This passage in Romans 5:15-21 categorically refutes any such notion.

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 ... Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall *all* be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet [i.e. God's Word, Ex 19:19; Isa 58:1; John 5:25, 28-29] shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who would limit this passage's application to Christians only have lifted it out of its context. This entire chapter is not only about the resurrection, but specifically regarding the resurrection of the Adamic race! This is clearly evident in Corinthians 15:20-28.

Ephesians 3:8-11... 8 ...that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ [Rom 11:33]; 9 and to make *all men see* what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold [i.e. multi-faceted] wisdom of God, 11 according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's desire was "to make *all men* see" certain unsearchable riches of the Messiah that, up until Paul's day, had been unrevealed since the beginning of the world. Later in Colossians 1:27, Paul describes this mystery as the Messiah living in His people in order to make them partakers of the Divine nature!

But did Paul ever make *all men* see these hidden riches in the Messiah? Just as Jesus' work is ongoing until every enemy has submitted to God (1 Cor 15:24-28), even so Paul's *gospel* (Rom 2:16; 16:25; 1 Tim 1:11; 2 Tim 2:8) continues to minister through the inspired Words that he wrote. Paul will rise again in the resurrection and his works will follow him (Rev 14:13) and accomplish their purpose (1 Peter 2:12).

Colossians 1:27-28... To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may ["may" is not in the original Greek] present *every man* perfect [i.e. complete, Phlp 1:6] *in* Christ Jesus [compare Ephes 1:9-10].

1 Timothy 1:15... This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

If Paul was the worst of all sinners, and God saved him, would God not be partial by showing favoritism to Paul if He did not also save lesser sinners? Some may counter that man must do his part of repenting and accepting (or choosing) God before God will save him, but God declares no such thing! God chooses us first (John 15:16). God loves us first (1 John 4:19). God gives to us first (Rom 11:35) while we are yet sinners (Rom 5:6-8).

Consider how Paul persecuted the church. Also observe that God called and saved him before he had chosen God (Acts 9:1-6-). This matter involves the fundamental Christian truth regarding being saved by grace or by works. Of course men choose, love, and serve God, but only *after* He initiates the relationship by implanting His life in them.

1 Timothy 4:10 NKJV... 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.

While most translations of this verse are quite similar, men's interpretations naturally conform to their overall understand-ing of the Scriptures. The phrase *"especially those who believe"* does seem somewhat odd at first glance. This is because most of us have been taught that either a person is saved or he's not. While this is true, it is also true that salvation is a process that begins with justification, continues with sanctification, and is completed with glorification.

With this premise, the above passage becomes easier to grasp. The more a justified person believes, the more his sanctification process (i.e. cleansing of the soul) is advanced. In other words, even if a person is born again, his sanctification will continue to grow according to the degree that he feeds on God's Word so that he can believe more. Faith (i.e. believing) comes by hearing God's Word (Rom 10:17).

Regardless of this unusual qualifier "especially of those who believe," don't get side-tracked from the central truth of this verse: "God Who is *the Savior of all men.*" As with 1 Timothy 2:4 and other similar verses, some will choose to interpret this verse as meaning God is a *potential* Savior of all men. The problem with such an interpretation is that it places God's absolute sovereignty below man's free will and/or Satan's power. Moreover, it also denies the multitude of other verses such as those we are addressing in this book which establish the restoration of *all* things.

Titus 2:11 NASB... For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men...

This verse is similar to Luke 2:10 in which the angel announced Christ's birth as bringing good news of great joy which will be *for all the people*. Many interpret both

of these texts as if God's gospel regarding His grace is *potentially* for all people. What about the third world, bush people that had never seen or heard of God's grace and His salvation before they died? For many, this is an enigma at which they stumble to answer. For those who embrace the gospel of Christ's universal restoration, this seeming enigma is easily resolved with two words - resurrection and ages. 1 Corinthians 15 declares that everyone will be made alive in the resurrection, eventually leading to God being "All *in all*." The word "ages" leads us to understand that the restoration of *all* things will not be completed in this present age, but in future ages (Ephes 1:21; 2:7; Heb 2:5-6; 6:5).

God has unequivocally declared that "*every* eye *shall* see Him" (Isa 40:5; Zech 12:10; Rev 1:7)... in due season (1 Tim 2:6). And when they see Him, they shall "mourn." This mourning is not because they expect to go to hell, but because they see their failure in the midst of His grace. This is why the resurrection of the dead is so very vital to understand. Chapter 7 of this book discusses this subject.

Hebrews 1:2... in these last days [God has] spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of *all things*...

What does it mean to be heir of all things? Psalm 2:8 explains it this way: "Ask of Me, and I will give you *the nations* for your inheritance, and *the ends of the earth* for your possession."

If the Father has appointed His Son to be the heir of all things, this means that Jesus will own and possess everything. As it is written in Ephesians 1:9-10,

> ... having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 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.

Hebrews 2:8-9 NKJV... You have put *all things* in subjection under his feet. For in that He put *all* in subjection under him, He left *nothing* that is not put under him. *But now* [in contrast to 1 Tim 2:6, *in due season*] we do not yet see *all things* put under him. 9 But we see Jesus [the **first** fruit, 1 Cor 15:23], who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death *for everyone*.

> How can anything be more evident regarding universal restoration? If Jesus' death does not cancel the sin debt of *all* people, then *part* of His death was in vain! While some may attempt to circumvent this fact by saying that Jesus Christ was indeed a *potential* Savior for all, they fail to grasp the immense significance of the inspired words *"But now"* in verse 8. It is of the utmost importance not to pass over these words lightly. They reveal that the work of Christ has not yet been fully manifested. This evidence will appear at the resurrection! As Christians, we are instructed to walk by faith, not by sight (Hab 2:4; 2 Cor 5:7).

Revelation 7:9-17... After these things I looked, and behold, *a great multitude* which *no one could number*, of *all* nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, *clothed with white robes,* with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, *saying, "Salvation belongs to our God* who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen." 13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "*These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation,* and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne

will dwell among them. 16 They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away *every* tear from their eyes [Rev 21:4]."

> "A great multitude which no one could number," while being a gigantic number, still is not *all*. Verses 4-8 of this chapter present another group in contrast to those in verses 9-17. When combined, these two groups of people equal *the entire population of the earth.* This is confirmed in verses 1-3. There, the boundaries of this chapter are specified as being the entire world (i.e. earth's 4 corners)! This entire chapter, therefore, is a description of God's salvation for two different groups of people and during two different ages.
>
> Since Revelation 7:9-17 parallels Ezekiel 44:10-16 and 1 Corinthians 3:16, please refer to those texts on pages 51-54 for further insights regarding these two contrasted groups of people in this Revelation passage.

Revelation 11:15 HCSB... The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying: *The kingdom of the world has become the [kingdom] of our Lord* and of His Messiah, and He will reign forever and ever!

> The kingdom of the world (all of it) has been conquered by God's kingdom. As such, it has submitted to God's government and will be absorbed into His economy.
>
> > Psalm 102:15-16... So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and *all the kings of the earth* thy glory. When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. (Also compare Ps 138:4; 148:7-14; & Zech 14:9.)
>
> Other verses such as Daniel 2:35 (and 44-45) speak of Babylon's (i.e. the world's kingdom) destruction as it is overtaken by God's Kingdom that will never end. Daniel

2:35 describes this everlasting Kingdom as *filling the earth* with God's Way, Truth, and Life.

Indeed, verses 16-19 that follow Revelation 11:15 describe God's wrath and the destruction of wickedness. But one must stop and consider the nature and purpose of God's wrath, judgment, and destruction upon those who destroy the earth. God's work is always remedial, not returning evil for evil. What He destroys are the lies, carnal thoughts, and wicked desires and works of men.

Why did God send His Word (Jesus) into the world? 1 John 4:14 declares that "the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." Many other verses testify to this truth. And since God's will cannot fail to be accomplished, it follows that the entire world will be saved - in due season.

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

All nations? Every person in every nation? What about those who died without Christ before this comes to pass? God's Reply: What about the resurrection?

Let us realize that this final chapter of the Bible describes the final deliverance of what befell creation in Genesis 3. It also elicits other Scriptures *regarding the resurrection* such as 1 Corinthians 15:42-57 which mentions corruptible mankind putting on incorruption!

Ezekiel 47:1-12 is another parallel passage that provides further insights regarding Revelation 22:2. Both passages depict a River of Life that brings healing *to everything*.

In short, Jesus is the River of Life and the Tree of Life. The leaves of the tree represent healing medicine for the nations. This medicine from the Tree of Life will be administered by the branches of the Tree (John 15:5) that

are ruling and reigning in the New Israel Kingdom (i.e. New Jerusalem, Rev 21:1-2). Those who are ruling and reigning with Christ are servants elected by God for this healing of the nations - all the people in all the nations. See Genesis 12:3 (the gospel, Gal 3:8) and Isaiah 2:2-5.

Chapter 3

Ambiguous or Seemingly Contradictory Universal Restoration Verses

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While Christians ought to believe that God's Word never contradicts itself, certain Scriptures may seem as though they do. The purpose of this chapter is to study some examples that appear to describe universal restoration and the destruction of the wicked within the same context of only a few verses. How can these verses be reconciled with each other so that there is no contradiction or confusion?

A key to understanding such perplexities is a recognition that God's judgments are primarily spiritual in nature. Yes, the wages of sin results in both physical and spiritual unrest and pain. Many of the ambiguous passages that we are about to observe, however, are indicative of spiritual warfare and death to the old man. When God's spiritual weapons (2 Cor 10:4-5; Ephes 6:10- 18; Rom 7:9-13; Ps 45:3-5) kill the old man, a new man is born (1 Cor 5:5) or matures. Never forget that the central focus of God's program is a resurrection of the spirit and soul, as well as the body.

With this in mind, let us proceed with some examples that include both restoration and destruction within the same context:

Exodus 34:5-7... And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed *the name of the LORD*. 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering,

and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, *and that will by no means clear the guilty;* visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

> "The name of the LORD" is most significant. A name denotes everything that represents an individual. So it is with God's name. It declares His character, His nature, His being. As 1 John 4:8 and 16 declare so succinctly, "God is love." The greater part of Exodus 34:5-7 agrees with John that God is love - until the final part regarding God not clearing the guilty. In examining this passage, one should be careful not to gravitate towards natural and unwarranted ideas of what God means by these words.
>
> First of all, the final part is not about an everlasting punishment in hell. His "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and grandchildren" is *limited* to the third and fourth generation. That, in itself, is merciful. This is a warning to parents that if they care about their children's future, they will do well to obey Him. The wages of sin is always sorrow, suffering, and death.
>
> It is true that God does not clear the guilty. Sin requires an atonement. Why are we so slow to realize that the Christian gospel shouts to the mountaintops that Christ has provided that necessary atonement "once for all" (Heb 10:10; 1 John 2:2) on Mount Calvary, thus clearing the guilty by bearing the wages of sin upon Himself (2 Cor 5:21)?

The principle in Exodus 34:5-7 is codified in the second commandment regarding graven images (Ex 20:4-6). Those who obey the second commandment will receive God's mercy, but those who disobey it will suffer the consequences of sin, namely suffering, dissatisfaction, and eventually death**,** *but not hell* as most people imagine. The next passage from Numbers provides an illustration of how this commandment operates:

Numbers 14:17-24 NASB... "But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared, 18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.' 19 "Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." 20 So the LORD said, "I have pardoned them according to your word; 21 but *indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD*. 22 "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, 23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. 24 "But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

The background of this text is about Israel's evil response to stone Joshua and Caleb for the good news they gave about the Promised Land. God's anger was roused and He tested Moses by saying that He would abandon Israel and establish another greater nation through Moses. In reply, Moses appealed to God regarding His unconditional covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:3).

In these verses, we see God's blessings and curses declared. We also have God's oath that *all the earth* will be filled with His glory! To some, this oath means that all the earth will be restored because all of the wicked people will be cast into hell. To others, it means that all the earth will be restored because all the wickedness in people's hearts will be cleansed because of a new administration of righteousness that is ushered in at the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

Finally, it is all-important to recognize that God answered Moses' appeal to pardon Israel based on His promise to

Abraham that in His seed (i.e. Christ), *all* the families of the earth will be blessed. While those who rebelled in Moses' day lost the blessing of entering the Promised Land of their day, they will yet be restored to obedience at the resurrection of the just and the unjust in a better Promised Land (Heb 7:19; 8:6; 11:16).

Psalm 64:7-10... But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; suddenly shall they be wounded. 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away [Isa 66:23-24]. 9 And *all men* shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing. 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

When verse 8 mentions "their own tongue" falling upon themselves, it is evident that this passage is describing a *spiritual* battle between truth and lies. When these enemies of God are wounded, they are convicted of their sins by God's arrows of truth (Ps 45:5; 2 Cor 10:3-6; Ephes 6:10-). Thus, in these four verses, we see the destruction of the old man and the rising of the new man *in all men.*

Psalm 110:1-7... The LORD said unto my lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3 *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,* in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. 6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: *therefore shall he lift up the head.*

Verse 1 declares that God's enemies will submit to Him (i.e. "footstool" symbolizes bowing under His feet). It doesn't specify

if all or some will be under His footstool. But other verses such as Isaiah 45:23 and Philippians 2:9-11 do establish that *all* will be under His footstool.

Verse 2 mentions ruling "in the midst" of His enemies. Surely He will not be "in the midst" of hell ruling over them. When His kingdom takes over the kingdom of this world (Rev 11:15), it will be on this earth (Mat 6:10), not in hell.

Verse 3 informs us that His hard-hearted, rebellious people will finally be *willing* at this future time. This alone is a striking statement!

Then **verses 4-6** describe the LORD as the head of a new priesthood of Melchizedek (i.e. *king* of peace) that is to strike through kings in the day of His wrath, and judge the heathens, leaving many dead bodies (i.e. the old man) behind. Because He served as a faithful priest, offering Himself as a sacrifice for rebellious people, He will also be exalted to rule as the King of peace (Mat 20:26-28; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Peace is the result of His acceptable sacrifice.

Finally **verse 7** explains that this Priest-King (i.e. Christ & His Body) will *lift up the head* by drinking from a brook. Since the Father sent His Son to redeem (i.e. "lift up") His people, this head is surely Israel's head that had been wounded by her enemies because of her sins (Isa 1:5-7; Deut 28:43-44). The brook, of course, is God's River of Life (Gen 2:10; Ps 42:1-2; Rev 22:1).

While verses 1-3 and verse 7 describe healing and restoration, verses 4-6 are describing destruction. From the above comments, it can be concluded that verses 4-6 are in reference to a spiritual battle that destroys the old man. A priest cannot absolve sin and cause restoration until the old man has been slain with God's Word that proceeds out of the mouth of the King (Consider *Melchizedek:* The Priest - King).

Psalm 145:9-17 vs 18-21... The LORD is *good to all:* and his tender mercies are over *all his works.* 10 *All thy works* shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee. 11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; 12 to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. 13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations. 14 The LORD *upholdeth all* that fall, and *raiseth up all* those that be bowed down. 15 The *eyes of all* wait upon thee; and thou givest *[all of] them* their meat in due season. 16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of *every living thing.* 17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. 18 The LORD is nigh unto all them *that call upon him,* to all that call upon him in truth. 19 He will fulfil the desire *of them that fear him:* he also will hear their cry, and will save them. 20 The LORD preserveth all *them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy*. 21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let *all flesh* bless his holy name for ever and ever.

Verses 9-17 proclaim a *restoration of everything*. In verses 18-19, however, certain conditions for restoration (i.e. salvation) appear. This should not surprise us, however, since salvation always occurs under conditions of repentance, even under God's unconditional covenant. One is saved under the New Covenant by grace alone when God leads him to repent and call upon Him (Rom 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25-26). Yes, repentance is a gift from God, even while it is also a condition for restoration. In essence, God fulfills even the conditions of salvation as He works in His creatures. Praise His name!

In verse 20 we read that all the wicked will be destroyed. The very next verse is the final verse and concludes by charging *all flesh* to bless His holy name forever. How can these last two verses speak of destroying the wicked while at the same time charge all flesh to bless His name?

Depending on one's overall knowledge of God's plan for His creation, it is understandable that various explanations

will be presented. My understanding leads me to conclude that "all the wicked" that are being destroyed in verse 20 is in reference to the old man within the first Adamic creation. Because of this, the final verse instructs *all flesh* to bless God for the price that was paid on their behalf at Calvary so that the works of the devil would be destroyed (Heb 2:14-15).

Isaiah 25:6-9 vs 10-12... And in this mountain the LORD of hosts will make *for all people* a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. 7 And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over *all people,* and the veil that is spread over *all nations.* 8 He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from *all faces;* the rebuke of His people He will take away from *all the earth;* for the LORD has spoken. 9 And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." 10 For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest, and Moab shall be trampled down under Him, as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. 11 And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim, and He will bring down their pride together with the trickery of their hands. 12 The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, down to the dust.

Verses 6-9 proclaim absolute victory and freedom for *everyone.* Why, then, do verses 10-12 speak about Moab being trampled down? During the time of this prophecy, Moab represented the enemies against God's Israel Kingdom. Moab did not embrace God's Laws (Ps 147:19-20). Notice the specific things of Moab that God promised to destroy: Their pride, trickery, and high fortress walls that represented their arm of flesh. Even verse 7 describes a destruction of "the surface [face] of covering," and not the people themselves. Whether this covering is referring to sorrow as in 2 Samuel 15:30, or whether it might refer to the vail of the Old Covenant law (2 Cor 3:15) that hid them

from the glories of Jesus Christ's fulfillment of the law at Calvary, this destruction is not applied to the people themselves, but to the pride and lies that affected them. Such destruction prepares them for *future restoration*.

Ezekiel 34:16... I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick . . . . . but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

First of all, mark the contrast between the first and last parts of this verse. *Every* Adamic person has been lost, driven away into the bondage of sin, become broken and bruised, and weak and sick. Will this Shepherd *restore all* of them or only a few? The first part of the verse was repeated by Jesus in Luke 19:10 and conveyed that He came to *restore all.*

The first word that can be misleading is the inserted word "but" which introduces that last part of the verse. This *assumed* conjunction suggests a contrast from that which preceded it. Both the ESV and Young's Literal Translation added the conjunction "and" instead of "but." The conjunction "and" suggests something that is *working together with* something else, rather than *in contrast to it.* Actually, there is no reason for either conjunction since both are added by the translators for supposed clarification.

The HCSB and the NIV employ the word "shepherd" instead of "feed." The basic meaning of this Hebrew word is "to tend or to pasture." (I will *shepherd* the flock with justice.)

Finally, realize that the HCSB, ESV, and NRSV translators chose the word "justice" rather than "judgment" which is usually chosen. Chapter 6 will elaborate on the nuances of this word "judgment."

The bottom line regarding Ezekiel 34:16 is that different readers, like the different translators themselves, will draw varying conclusions from this verse, depending on their theological background. Those who believe that all the prophets spoke about the restoration of all things (Acts 3:21, 24) will interpret this verse to mean that God's judgments will destroy the old man of pride (i.e. "the fat & strong") so that the new man will be raised to life and cause a restoration of all things in the new creation (1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 5:17).

Hosea 13:9-16... O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help [Rom 6:23]. 10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? 11 I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath. 12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid. 13 The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children. 14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes [Rom 11:29]. 15 Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind [i.e. Assyria] shall come, the wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness, and his [i.e. Israel's] spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he [i.e. the east wind] shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. 16 Samaria [i.e. Northern Israel] shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

The Thomson Chain Reference Bible has entitled this passage as "God's Promise of Mercy." By the time the final verse in this passage is read, however, it seems questionable if God's "Promise of Mercy" will be fulfilled to Samaria. As in so many other passages in the Bible, it is important to recognize that God's Word is not always presented in chronological order.

In verses 9-14, God states that Israel has destroyed herself, but that He will help her and be her king. He further promises to ransom her from death and the grave. Beginning in verse 15, however, hope of God's deliverance appears to fade as the Scripture prophesies that Assyria will bring desolation on Israel due to her sins.

Which is it, then? Will God help Israel and ransom her from death and the grave, or will He deliver her to Assyrian captivity because of her sins? He does both, but they don't occur in the order that they were predicted. First, God used the Assyrian as His rod of chastisement because of Israel's sins (Isa 10:5-6...34). Later, under the New Covenant, His resurrection plan begins ransoming her from death and the grave.

> As we've seen many times already, if God will redeem His firstborn Israel from destruction, death, and the grave, it only follows that He will do the same for His second born, third born, etc. in due season.

Zechariah 14:16-19... And it shall come to pass that *everyone* who is left *of all the nations* which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year *to worship the King, the* LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

> While verse 16 states emphatically that everyone will worship the King, verses 17-19 appear as though everyone might not worship the King. How are we to resolve what looks like a contradiction? Verses 17-19 are simply describing the punishments that will occur *until* people humble themselves, bow down to God, and seek His mercy and deliverance. Psalm 107 illustrates this exact pattern repeated four times. Read the first 9 verses of this

Psalm to see its first illustration of God delivering people after they humble themselves. As soon as this obvious truth is brought to light, the seeming contradiction of Zechariah 14:16-19 vanishes.

What about those who never humbled themselves before they died? What hope can there possibly be for them? These questions are resolved with the resurrection of the unjust, a subject addressed in Chapter 7 of this book. Most people assume that the resurrection of the unjust automatically assigns them to hell. Nowhere does the Bible state any such thing. To the contrary, resurrection raises them out of hell (i.e. the grave). Revelation 1:18 states that Jesus has the keys to death and hell. This truth verifies that people in hell have *a Way* to escape it. It is not forever. What a shocking and revolutionary truth for many people! "... Awake... arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Ephes 5:14).

Matthew 7:13-14... Enter ye in at the strait [i.e. narrow] gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Before commenting on this text, let us compare Luke's record of the same account:

Luke 13:23-30... Then said one unto him, Lord, *are there few that be saved?* And he said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate [Phlp 3:14; Acts 14:22; Lu 16:16]: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are [Ten Virgins parable, Mat 25:1-13]: 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity [Mat 7:21-23]. 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the

kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God [Mat 8:11-12]. 30 And, **behold**, *there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.*

At first glance, many readers will assume that *the many* are thrust out into a literal, eternal, hell fire, while only *a few* will go to heaven. This is the traditional assumption, and it is sadly mistaken.

The final verse (v. 30) of this passage in Luke is critical to an accurate understanding regarding the few and the many. It begins with "behold." When employed, that word always indicates that a profound truth will follow. Those who have been *last* (i.e. the minority who oppose corrupt, worldly standards) shall be exalted as *first* (i.e. rulers with Christ) in due season. On the other hand, those who have been *first* (i.e. the majority who agree with corrupt, worldly standards) will be abased and cast out of their leadership status (Mat 23:12) in due season.

These *few* and *last* will become first and foremost when "the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ [i.e. anointed ones]," (Rev 11:15). At that time, *these few* will be turning *the many* to righteousness (Dan 12:3). In Matthew 19:28, Jesus told His *few* disciples that in the re-generation, they would be exalted on thrones, making rulings (i.e. judgments) on what is right and wrong among the 12 tribes of Israel. Similarly in Luke 12:32, Jesus told His "little flock" that it was their Father's pleasure to give them His Kingdom.

In short, *the last* who become *first* are the humble servants of God who were rejected by the world, being considered least worthy of any favor. These shall have part in *the first* (i.e. best) *resurrection* (Rev 20:6), namely the resurrection of the just (Acts 24:15), whereas those who were first in godless affairs will be in the *last* resurrection of the unjust (Acts 24:15).

The preceding view is presented in the hope that some readers will be as eager and courageous as the Bereans in Acts 17:11 who diligently searched to rightly divide the Scriptures for their intended significance.

John 3:16-17... For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Although we have already examined this passage in both chapters 1 and 2, we include it once again due to it's vital significance.

While verse 17 mentions no conditions for *God saving the world* through His Son, the word "whosoever" in verse 16 implies that there is a condition that may prevent some people from being saved. While it is true that one must believe in order to obtain everlasting life, numerous other verses confirm that *everyone* will believe in due season.

What is even more noteworthy, however, is that the Greek word that is translated "whosoever" in this verse is also translated in the KJV as "all" (748 times), "all things" (170 times), "every" (117 times), "all men" (41 times), "everyone" (28 times), "whole" (12 times), "all manner of " (11 times), "every man" (11 times), "everything" (7 times), and "always" (3 times) for a total of 1148 times out of 1243 times where the Greek word appears. In the KJV it is translated over 92% of the time with the idea of "all, every, always, and whole." It is translated as "whosoever" only 34 times (2.7% in the KJV). As mentioned in chapter 2, Arthur P. Adams believes that the following translation is more valid:

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, *that all,* believing in him, not perish but have everlasting life.

Finally, consider God's sovereignty with Isaiah 46:9-10 and Isaiah 55:11 when reading John 3:17. If God sent His

Son to be the Savior of the world, then the Savior of the world He will be! This will become evident in due season (1 Tim 2:4-6 KJV).

John 3:36... He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Who can argue with John 3:36? It is absolutely true. What is often overlooked, however, is the fact that *in due season everyone will* believe in the Son. In fact, it is a lack of contentment, combined with God's wrath, that actually leads people to Christ. Galatians 3:24 explains that the Old Covenant letter of the Law, which was a minister of death (2 Cor 3:7-9), was ordained to lead us to Christ.

John 5:25, 28-29 ESV... "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when *the dead will hear* the voice of the Son of God, and *those who hear will live*... 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when *all* who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out; those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Verse 25 declares that the dead will hear Jesus Christ's voice, and that when they hear it they will live. Later, verse 28 clarifies that *all* who are in the tombs will hear His voice. So far it seems like a clear-cut case for universal restoration. Verse 29, however, complicates things for those who don't understand the outcome of God's judgment for the unjust. For those who are curious to learn more about the word "judgment" which is mentioned in John 5:27, Chapter 6 and Appendix 6 in this book are about judgment. That chapter and appendix elaborate on the truth found in Isaiah 26:9 that "when the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the people will learn righteousness."

Acts 3:21-23... [Jesus Christ] Whom the heaven must receive until the times of *restitution of all things,* which God hath

spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. 22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. 23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

> This is a classic illustration of how a short passage speaks of both the restoration of all things and of certain people being destroyed. Is the Bible a legitimate source that we can trust? Absolutely! Any confusion over passages such as this is not because of the Bible or even its translators, but is simply a matter of our lack of understanding that restoration only transpires as the old man is destroyed.
>
> Anyone, Christian or non-Christian, who does not hear that Prophet, will suffer certain loss, but he himself shall be saved in the end by the fire of God's Holy Spirit. That fire will burn up his chaff with the fire of Pentecost or later in the lake of fire with brimstone (Mat 3:11-12; 1 Cor 3:15, Rev 21:8).

Summary of Chapter 3

Because of a wrong perception of God's character, many people still believe that the consensus of Scripture describes most people as being condemned to hell forever, and only very few being saved and going to heaven. A number of these same people are aware that there are some Scriptures that declare *all people* will be saved, but they assume that such references are few and simply misunderstood.

The main purpose of this book is to list many of the Scriptures that declare God's will to reconcile all of His creation. This is done to help people realize that this theme is a dominant one that begins in Genesis and continues to the last book in the Bible. For those who believe that the Bible is infallible and incapable of contradicting itself, a challenge arises to come to an honest and reasonable resolution of how universal restoration verses are compatible with other verses that *seem* to contradict them. It is my hope that each reader is now better equipped to explain how such passages as the following are not contradictory:

> "[Jesus Christ]... whom heaven must receive until the times of *restoration of all things,* which God has spoken by the mouth of *all His holy prophets since the world began."* Acts 3:21 NKJV

> But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of *eternal damnation*. Mark 3:29

Chapter 4

Hell-Bent Verses Straightened Out

(Validating Universal Restoration in passages
that are purported to refute Universal Restoration,
particularly **Matthew 25:46** and **2 Thessalonians 1:4-10**)

For those people who will not embrace a love of the Truth (Rom 1:28; 2 Thes 2:10), God stated that He would send them strong delusion and they would believe a lie (2 Thes 2:11-12). While there are many lies that people believe, one of the most fundamental ones is that God will not ultimately restore all of His creation (Ps 22:29-31; Isa 45:22-23; Rom 8:20-21).

Having their eyes blinded to the truth by rejecting the truth (Isa 6:9-10; Mat 13:13-15), people at large have adopted the commonly accepted belief that most of God's creation will be lost to an eternal damnation of barbarous torment. How could it possibly be otherwise, they reason, with Scriptures such as Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; and 2 Thessalonians 2:12?

While these same Christians believe that God's Word never contradicts itself, there are certain Scriptures regarding God's judgments that *seem* as though they do contradict each other. For example, a verse such as Matthew 25:46 may lead one to think that God's judgment of "everlasting punishment" confirms the traditional view of an eternal hell, while verses such as Isaiah 26:9 and Hebrews 12:4-11 lead one to think that God's judgments result in people learning righteousness and holiness. In some cases these *seeming* contradictions are

because of faulty translations. In other cases, the confusion may be due simply to an immaturity in rightly dividing the Scriptures.

Another reason why some people are confused with certain Scriptures regarding judgment is because they hold a wrong premise regarding God's character, presuming that He would allow a majority of His creation to languish in hell forever, while saving only a very few for Heaven. Although some of these same people realize that there are other Scriptures that declare *all* people will be saved, they assume that such passages are few and somehow are misunderstood or mistranslated.

The challenge before every sincere reader of the Bible is to come to an honest and reasonable deduction of how universal restoration verses agree with other verses that seem to contradict them. Is God's Word always consistent with itself, or do some verses actually contradict others? The validity of Luke's weighty words in Acts 3:21 are at stake:

> [Jesus Christ] ... Whom heaven must receive until the times of *restoration of all things,* which God has spoken by the mouth of *all His holy prophets* since the world began.

The original intent of this book was to organize an anthology of Scriptures regarding the gospel of the restoration of all things (Gal 3:8; Acts 3:21). Some readers might object, however, that any verses related to hell have been conveniently omitted. Therefore, this chapter will introduce a few significant insights regarding hell, while recommending Appendix 11 for a list of other books on the subject of hell. From those books an extended examination of hell can be continued if so desired.

Hell

One Hebrew word and three Greek words are sometimes translated "hell," especially in the KJV. The Hebrew word is *"sheol."* The three Greek words are *"hades, tartaroo,* and *gehenna* (or *geena*)." *Sheol* and *hades* are equivalent words and mean nothing more than the grave. They account for 78% of the time that the word "hell" appears in the KJV. *Tartaroo* is used only once in the KJV and applies to angels.

Gehenna occurs 22% of the time that the word "hell" appears in the KJV. The word is derived from "Hinnom" in the Old Scriptures. The Valley of Hinnom was a place where gross abominations occurred, including the burning of babies to Molech. Later it became the garbage dump outside of Jerusalem where a continual (i.e. eternal, everlasting) fire burned, providing purification from the rotting waste. The bodies of criminals were sometimes thrown into these *eternal* flames.

As in the following example, when Jesus mentioned certain ones being cast into "hell fire," it was this word "gehenna" that He used.

> **Matthew 5:22**... But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of *hell fire* [i.e. "gehenna," the Valley of Hinnom].

That is, he will be in danger of wasting away his life until he finds himself in Jerusalem's garbage dump. Jesus may also have been referring to the Old Testament's Valley of Hinnom whose abominations represented a loathsome, destructive, sad life. While this explanation flies in the face of the orthodox view of hell, it is based on historical and Biblical facts.

The orthodox view of hell has inappropriately merged the following five words into one doctrine: Everlasting, damnation, torment, fire, and hell. For brevity's sake, the following list provides a concise description of the true Biblical meaning for each of these words:

- Everlasting: age-lasting (a definite period with a beginning and an end)
- Damnation: remedial judgment unto restoration
- Torment: testing, purifying, refining (Greek *basanos* - a touchstone)
- Fire: from God, not from Satan... on earth, not beneath it
- Hell: the grave (out of sight, unseen, covered) 78 % of the time; the Valley of Hinnom (ge-henna) 22 % of the time

With this brief introduction regarding hell, we will now proceed to examine the critical, hell-related word, "everlasting."

Everlasting:

(also translated *eternal, forever,* and *for ever and ever*)

The Greek words that are sometimes translated "everlasting" are *aion* (noun, Strong's 165) and *aionios* (adjective, Strong's # 166). The equivalent word in English is "eon." Even a person without any knowledge of Greek can easily discern from the context of the following examples that these Greek words cannot possibly mean "everlasting," but rather "an age." Even the translators were cornered into rendering *aion* as something other than forever, eternal, or everlasting in the following examples:

Matthew 12:32... And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this *world* [*aion*,.. singular], neither in the *world* [assumed *aion*] to come.

> How ridiculous it would be to translate the above verse as "... neither in this *forever,* neither in the *forevers* to come." Therefore the translators were compelled to avoid

translating *aion* as "forever" by inventing an alternative meaning such as "world," in this case.

Matthew 24:3... And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the *world* [*aion*... singular]?

Unlike the KJV that renders *aion* in this verse as "world," most of the modern translators accurately render it as "age" since the word "forever" would make no sense at all. Is it possible that the Greek *aion* can mean both "an age" and "forever"? That would be the same as concluding that "hot" can also be translated as "cold!"

Luke 20:34... And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this **world** [*aion*... singular] marry, and are given in marriage.

"The children of this *forever*" would be senseless. Therefore the translators were again forced to avoid the word "forever."

1 Corinthians 2:7-8... But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the *world* [*aion*... plural] unto our glory: 8 which none of the princes of this *world* [*aion*... singular] knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

"... which God ordained before the *forevers* [or everlastings, or eternities]"... If words have any meaning, it is impossible to have more than one forever! Thus in this instance, the translators had to supply another word besides "forever."

1 Corinthians 10:11... Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the *world* [*aion*... plural] are come.

"...upon whom the ends of the *forevers* are come" is senseless.

Ephesians 2:2... Wherein in time past ye walked according to the *course* [*aion*... singular] of this world [*kosmos*, i.e. earthly order], according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

> "... according to the *forever* of this earthly order" would be silly. The Bible declares that this present earthly order will come to an end. This present earthly order (kosmos) can't possibly be "forever." Realizing this, the translators allowed another exception to "forever-everlasting-eternal."

Hebrews 1:2... Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the *worlds* [*aion*... plural].

> "...by whom also He made the *forevers*" would be absurd. It is impossible to have more than one forever! Therefore, the translators avoided "forever" again in this case.

Hebrews 9:26... For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world [*kosmos*]: but now once in the end of the *world* [*aion*... plural] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

> "...but now once in the end of the *forevers*..." As in each of the preceding examples, the translators were required to omit the word "forever." In each of the above examples, observe how the context is always the final interpreter of words.

Psalm 103:17... But the mercy of the LORD is from *everlasting* [*olam*... Hebrew] to *everlasting* [*olam*... Hebrew] upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children...

> This verse and the next one (Jonah 2:6) are supplied as examples of the Hebrew counterpart *olam* to the Greek *aion*. In Psalm 103:17, the majority of translators actually did translate this verse without any common sense! If *everlasting* means everlasting, then what does "from

everlasting to everlasting" mean? The HCSB translation chose "from eternity to eternity." Thank God, a few versions such as Young's Literal Translation rendered this phrase as it ought to be - "from age to age."

Jonah 2:6... I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me *for ever* [*olam*... Hebrew]: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.

Obviously, Jonah was not in the sea "for ever," but for a duration or a brief period (i.e. age) of 3 days and 3 nights.

The Hebrew language often employs couplets for emphasizing a concept. Notice how the couplet in Psalm 89:1 clarifies the meaning of the words "for ever" with "to all generations:

Psalm 89:1... I will sing of the mercies of the LORD *for ever:* with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness *to all generations*.

After perceiving that the Greek *aion* (or Hebrew *olam*) cannot possibly mean forever, the following challenge arises: If indeed the Greek word "*aion"* means *age*-lasting and not *ever*-lasting, then how is one to rightly divide the following verse that is often submitted to refute universal restoration? This is one of the main hell-bent verses which is rarely rightly divided:

Matthew 25:41, 46 HCSB ... Then He will also say to those on the left, Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the *eternal* [*aionios*, i.e. the same as *everlasting*] fire prepared for the Devil and his angels... 46 And they will go away into *eternal* [*aionios*] punishment [*kolasis*], but the righteous into *eternal* [*aionios*] life.

One of the best analyses of this verse is found on pages 57-59 of Bob Evely's book *"At the End of the Ages."* The following are a few excerpts from those pages:

"Everlasting punishment" is *'kolasin aionion'* in the Greek. William Barclay, well known Greek scholar, professor and

author of the popular Bible commentary 'The Daily Study Bible Series' (Westminister Press) says:

'The Greek word for punishment is *kolasis*, which was not originally an ethical word at all. It originally meant the pruning of trees to make them grow better. I think it is true to say that in all Greek secular literature, *kolasis* is never used of anything but remedial punishment.' (Page 66, 'William Barclay, A Spiritual Autobiography')

'... there is no instance in Greek where *kolasis* does not mean remedial punishment. This would enable us to argue that God's punishment is always for man's cure... It is the simple fact that in Greek, *kolasis* always means a remedial punishment.'

(Quotation by William Barclay on Page 84 of 'Universal Reconciliation, A Brief Selection of Pertinent Quotations' by Michael Phillips, Sunrise Books.)

On page 58 of Evely's book, he includes another quotation from Michael Phillips' book *Universal Reconciliation* in which Phillips quotes the following from A. R. Symonds:

'The distinctive meaning of this word *kolasis* is corrective punishment, being derived from a verb which means to prune. I say its distinctive meaning is this in relation to another word, *timoria*, which signifies vindictive punishment.

Next, Evely refers to a quotation from Samuel Cox's book, *Salvator Mundi,* or *Is Christ the Saviour of All Men?*

'The Greek has two words for 'punishment;' *kolasis*, the word used by our Lord [in Mat 25:46], and *timoria*, a word also used in the New Testament (Heb 10:29): and the distinctive meanings of these two words are defined by Aristotle himself. The one word, that used by Christ, denotes, he says, that kind of punishment which is intended for the improvement of the offender; while the other denotes that kind of punishment which is intended for the vindication of law and justice. And even the advocates of endless torment admit that the word selected by Christ

means, according to the Greek usage, remedial discipline, punishment designed to reform and improve men, to prune away their defects and sins.' (Page 141 [*Salvator Mundi*])

On page 59 of his book, Evely writes the following:

'The argument was introduced by Augustine [354 - 430 A.D.] that if *"aionios kolasis"* [Mat 25:46 a] did not mean "endless punishment" then there is no assurance for the believer that *"aionios zoe"* [Mat 25:46 b] means "endless life." It is very interesting to note that it was not until the 5th century A.D. that theologians began for the first time to introduce the sense of endlessness, rather than eonian (or age-abiding) which had been the interpretation prior to that time.

'It seems, then, that the new meanings for the words *"aionian"* and *"kolasis"* crept in out of a fear that eternal life could not be supported unless there was also eternal punishment. And if punishment was eternal it could not be corrective in nature, so it must be vengeful. As a result, we have come to associate the passages referring to judgment as punishment to repay for past wrongs. Instead, God's Word refers to judgment as a correction, chastisement, or discipline.' (End of quotes from *"At the End of the Ages"* by Bob Evely, p. 59)

It is important to realize, however, that although "eternal life" [*aionios zoe*] does not mean eternal or everlasting life, there are indeed other Greek words that actually do mean everlasting life. They are applied to those who have Christ in them (Col 1:27), thus assuring the Christian of actual *ever*-lasting life as well as *age*-lasting life. Note the following examples:

John 11:26... And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall *never die* [*ou mē apothnēsko*]...

Luke 20:34-36 ESV... And Jesus said to them, The sons of this age [aion] marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age [*aion*] and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, 36 for *they cannot die anymore* [*oute dynamai*

apothnēsko eti], because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:42... So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in *incorruption* [*aphtharsia*].

1 Corinthians 15:53... For this corruptible must put on *incorruption* [*aphtharsia*], and this mortal must put on *immortality* [*athanasia*].

1 Peter 1:3-4 ESV... Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused
us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is *imperishable, undefiled, and unfading* [*aphthartos amiantos amarantos*], kept in heaven for you.

Hebrews 7:15-16... 15... after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, 16 who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of *an endless life* [*zoas akatalutou*].

There are other similar examples, but these should suffice to help in understanding that those who are partakers of the Divine nature do have "everlasting, unending, undying, incorruptible, immortal" life. If this is true, however, why does Matthew 25:41-46 refer to *aionios* fire, *aionios* punishment, and *aionios* life? This question is of utmost importance as it provides a missing link that many Christians have yet to discover. Matthew 25:41-46 employs the word *aionios* because it is describing a specific ***age*** [*aion*]. It is an age that few Christians have yet envisioned due to the veil that has covered their eyes because of the conventional, erroneous hell doctrine. As we proceed to examine this *everlasting* [aionios] *fire,* notice how Matthew 25:31, which introduces this Matthew 25:41-46 passage, sets the scene:

Matthew 25:31... When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels [messengers] with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.

> This event when the Son of man comes in glory with His holy messengers is *an age* [*aion*] of judgment [*kolasis* - i.e. remedial correction]. Notice other complimentary verses in Daniel 12:1-3, Matthew 19:28, and Revelation 20:4-6. Revelation 20:4-6 states that this age will exist for a thousand years. During this millennial age [*aion*], those in the previous ages who have been faithful and righteous by submitting to and following Jesus Christ wherever He leads them, will be sitting in Christ's throne with Him (Rev 3:21) ruling with the life of Christ, shepherding and turning many unjust ones to righteousness (Dan 12:3; Isa 26:9; Ps 110:3).

This passage in Matthew 25:31-46 is not about *everlasting* torment, but about *age-lasting,* remedial correction that turns the unjust to righteousness (Dan 12:3; Gal 3:24; Rev 20:4-6). It is also about an *age-lasting* life for the righteous during that same period. This does not mean, however, that the righteous will not continue their Divine life after the 1000-year age. How can Divine life not continue? It is immortal, incorruptible, endless life (Heb 7:16, 24-25) in Christ (2 Pet 1:4; Col 1:27).

> As in Revelation 20:4-6 where some live and others don't live until that millennial age is completed, Matthew 25:41-46 also contrasts the just with the unjust in that same millennial eon (*aion*). During that age, the just will be reigning in life (i.e. age-lasting life) and the unjust (i.e. the dead, Ephes 5:14) will be corrected by just administrators (Rev 11:15; Dan 12:3) who are turning the unjust to righteousness (Isa 26:9; 30:20-22...).

In summary, Matthew 25:31- **41-46** is concerning Christ's glorious *age* when His judgments are ruling (i.e. over-ruling and conquering) the nations (See Mat 25:31-32.). The *aionious* fire that is mentioned in verse 41 is the same spiritual fire of the Holy Spirit as is mentioned in Matthew 3:11-12, yet spanning a broader dimension known as "the lake of fire." By contrast, the *gehena* "fire" that appears in Matthew 5:22 was the physical fire of Jerusalem's garbage dump that is no longer burning today.

The next monumental hell-bent passage for our consideration in this chapter is a favorite of universal restoration opponents. It includes the words "flaming fire, vengeance, punishment, and everlasting destruction" in the KJV. On the surface, the passage appears indisputable and intimidating for the universal-restoration proponent. But when carefully scrutinized, it becomes apparent that after certain wrong implications or translation errors are recognized and rectified, this passage is parallel to other Scriptures such as Daniel 12:1-3 that gloriously embrace universal restoration. Here is the verse:

2 Thessalonians 1:4-10... 4... we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and *tribulations that ye endure:* 5 which is a manifest token of *the righteous **judgment** of God,* that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer [Acts 14:22]: 6 seeing it is *a righteous thing* [i.e. **judgment**] with God to recompense *tribulation to them* that trouble you; 7 and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 in *flaming fire* taking *vengeance* on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 who shall be *punished* with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10 when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day [1 Pet 2:12 and John 17:20-22 agree with verse 10.].

Like Matthew 25:31-46 that we just analyzed, this passage also depicts that which will occur "when He shall come to be glorified in His saints..." (Compare 2 Thes 1:10 with Mat 25:31.). Therefore, rather than viewing these two passages through the negative lenses of an everlasting hell fire, may God give us fresh eyes to perceive them as He sees them, namely as a time of justice that cleanses and renews the earth by destroying every lie with the sword of His truth (2 Cor 10:4-5; Ps 38:2; 45:5). The word "destruction" in verse 9 is the same Greek word used for "destruction" in 1

Corinthians 5:5 where carnal ideas (i.e. the flesh) are destroyed so that the people are saved!

Secondly, observe that verses 4-5 describe the *tribulation* of the saints as being a token of *God's righteous* ***judgment*** on them! Immediately following, verse 6 describes *God righteously* ***judging*** the saints' adversaries also with *tribulation*. Notice that tribulation works together for good for both saint *and sinner!* Tribulation works patience (Rom 5:3-5). Acts 14:22 and Luke 16:16 testify that no one can enter God's kingdom without much *tribulation*. The point is this: The tribulation that is prophesied on the saint's adversaries in this passage is a righteous judgment that will destroy the old man and lead them to Christ (1 Cor 5:5).

2 Thessalonians 1:4-10 is very similar to 1 Peter 4:12-17 where Peter declared that ***judgment*** must *begin first* at the house of God. Everyone must go through God's fire of purification, but each man will experience it in his own order (1 Cor 15:22-24; 1 Tim 2:4-6).

Now observe 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 again with the following brackets for clarification:

> ... them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished [i.e. judged, and thus learn what is right and just, Isa 26:9; 2 Tim 3:16-17] with everlasting [i.e. *aionios*... age-lasting] destruction [i.e. destruction of the old man, the flesh, death to self, the 2nd death, Rev 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8; 1 Cor 5:5] from [i.e. by, in, or because of - NOT away from!] the presence [or face, Rev 1:7; 2 Thes 2:8; and esp. Rev 14:10] of the Lord, and from [i.e. by, in, or because of] the glory of his power [Ps 110:3].

The reader is urged to investigate for himself all of the added comments in the brackets above since they dramatically transform the meaning from what is commonly taught in most Christian circles. Consider my paraphrase of these verses:

> ... them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be judged in an age that destroys the old man of sin by the truth of God [i.e. in God's presence or face, Num 6:25-27; Ps 27:8] and by the glory of His power that is being administered in His perfect, millennial Kingdom [Rom 8:19-21].

Now compare Revelation 14:10 which is a companion verse to 2 Thessalonians 1:9 and confirms that the ungodly are being judged *in* the Presence of God rather than *from* His Presence:

> The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he [i.e. the ungodly] shall be tormented with fire and brimstone ***in*** *the presence* of the holy angels [messengers], and ***in*** *the presence* of the Lamb. Rev 14:10

Paul revisits the same scenario of 2 Thessalonians 1:9 in the following passage from 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, another hell-bent favorite of universal restoration opponents:

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 ESV...For the mystery of lawlessness [of the old man of sin, v. 3] is already at work. Only he [i.e. the Holy Spirit] who now restrains it [or him, i.e. the lawless one] will do so until he [i.e. the lawless one, the old man of sin] is out of the way [Isa 14:4-8]. 8 And then [i.e. at the time the lawless one is taken away] the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath [Holy Spirit] of his mouth [Isa 11:4; Rev 19:11] and bring to nothing by the appearance [i.e. bright light. See Isa 9:**2**-7!] of his coming [*parousia*, i.e. Divine Presence of Truth via the Holy Spirit].

> While some readers may wonder if the added brackets corrupt the truth of the original text, quite the opposite is the case. On the contrary, the translators have added inaccurate, assumed words into the text, thus corrupting the intended meaning. As can be discovered from various translations and commentators, there is much disagreement regarding the identity of the pronouns "he," "the one," or "it," depending on which translation is examined.

Consider my paraphrase of 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8:

For the mystery of lawlessness and the man of sin is already in operation. The Holy Spirit will keep this lawlessness in check until it is completely destroyed by Christ and His Body. During that age of destruction, the old man of sin will be exposed, convicted [Jude 1:14-15], and slain by the sharp sword of the Spirit that proceeds out of Christ's mouth. The old man of sin will be destroyed and vanish away because of the brilliant truth of His Presence [& *His Body's* Presence, Dan 12:3; Mat 13:31-43; Mat 19:28; Rev 3:21; 11:15].

Finally let us follow 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, down to verse 12:

2 Thessalonians 2:12... that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

It is critical to understand the fundamental meaning of the Greek word [*krino*] in this verse that is translated *damned*. Today, the usual connotation of this word is associated with someone being condemned to the flames of hell forever. Strong's Concordance, however, gives the primary meaning as *"to distinguish, i.e. decide."* Almost 80% of the time, this same Greek word in other verses is rendered as "judge" in the King James Version. Other than long held tradition, there is no reason why this word in 2 Thessalonians 2:12 should not also be rendered as "judged." Thank God, some of the modern versions such as NASB, Wuest, Young's Literal, WEY, and others have acknowledged this more accurate rendering.

This Greek word denotes *distinguishing* right from wrong, and *coming to a decision,* whether the decision is reached by a judge or any individual. God's Word frequently mentions a day of judgment. The question is, how will God judge? Will He sentence unrepentant sinners to an eternal torment in hell fire as many still insist? Even Pope Benedict revised his view on such a cruel and atrocious thought, announcing that hell is not literal as the Roman Church taught in the past! What saith the Lord? The following

verses describe God's fundamental character, revealing that He judges with mercy rather than damnation in hell forever:

Psalm 30:5... *His anger is but for a moment,* His favor [desire, pleasure, satisfaction] is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.

Psalm 136:1... Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His *mercy* [not His anger or punishment] *endures forever* (repeated in all 26 verses!).

Hosea 11:9 ESV... I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for *I am God and not a man,* the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Jeremiah 30:11... I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations [i.e. evil governments and laws, not the people] whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee [i.e. Israel]: but I will correct thee *in measure,* and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

Since God is not partial, He will act the same to all who join Israel's economy under the shadow of His wings of Truth [Isa 2:2-4; 14:1; Ezek 47:22-23]. And according to Genesis 12:3, all nations will be blessed through this unconditional covenant to Abraham.

The reason that God does not destroy Israel's economy completely is because He gave His Laws to them alone (Ps 147:19-20; Deut 4:32-34; Amos 3:1-2).

Hebrews 12:10 HCSB... For they [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but He does it *for our benefit,* so that we can share His holiness.

The preceding Scriptures illustrate God's judgments correcting the sin, not damning the sinner. While He certainly does punish sinners as a wise and good parent, He does so only for their benefit. His punishments are always remedial.

If God's judgment is not about sending the incorrigible sinners to hell, of what does His judgment consist? It is about administering just and righteous laws that will restore those in bondage. Few of man's jails and penitentiaries have been successful in rehabilitating most criminals. A better system of law and justice is required - one that is based exclusively on God's perfect Laws being written on the hearts of men:

> The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. Psalm 19:7
>
> The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. Galatians 4:24

How will this ever be established in Israel, let alone the entire world? Again, let us allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves. The following list of passages describes God's day of judgment (not damnation) and correction **by** the just, **for** the unjust, and **to** the glory of God - as is presented in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and 2:7:12:

> **Psalm 149:6-9**... Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind [i.e. prohibit] their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: This honor have all his saints [Dan 12:3; Mat 13:41-43; Mat 19:28; Rev 20:4-6].
>
> **Psalm 72:1 - 7 - 20**... (This passage is too long to quote in its entirety. Be sure to read it carefully on your own. It's absolutely awesome! Note the following brief excerpt:)
>
> **Psalm 72:1-2, 7-9**... Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. 2 He shall *judge thy people with righteousness,* and thy poor *with judgment*...

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. 8 He shall have dominion *also from sea to sea,* and from the river *unto the ends of the earth*. 9 They that dwell in the wilderness [i.e. symbolizing the barrenness of sin] shall bow before him [Isa 45:22-24; Phlp 2:10-11]; and his enemies shall lick the dust [i.e. bow down].

Isaiah 32:1-5... *Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment*. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more called liberal [i.e. generous], nor the churl [i.e. stingy] said to be bountiful.

Isaiah 60:1-5... Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee [Rom 8:19, 21]. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising... *the abundance of the sea shall be converted* unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

Isaiah 61:4... they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations [Dan 12:3... the wise will turn many to righteousness].

Daniel 7:9-14, **18, 22, 27**-28... I beheld till the [wicked] thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit [i.e. on the Throne] ... 18 the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom [Rev 11:15], and possess the kingdom for ever ... 22 the Ancient of days came, and *judgment was given to the saints of the most High;* and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom ... 27 And the kingdom and

dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and *all dominions shall serve and obey him*. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart.

Daniel 12:1-3... And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble [tribulation, Acts 14:22], such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt [i.e. shame of their sin]. And *they that be wise shall shine* as the brightness of the firmament; and *they that turn many to righteousness* as the stars [i.e. rulers, Gen 1:14-18] for ever and ever. [Who are the wise ones *turning to righteousness* if everyone else is in hell?]

> Those awaking to *age-lasting life* are those in the first (i.e. best) resurrection during the millennium as described in Revelation 20:4, 6. Those awaking to *age-lasting shame* are those who are *not* in the *best* (i.e. first) resurrection during the millennium as described in Revelation 20:5.

Malachi 4:1-3... Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble [old man destroyed, so the new man comes forth, 1 Cor 5:5]: and *the day that comes shall burn them up* [Does Satan burn them in hell, or the Holy Spirit burn up their chaff with God's fiery Word, Mat 3:11-12?]... but unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings [i.e. rays]; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And *ye shall tread down the wicked* [with God's just laws, ruling on thrones of judgment, Mat 19:28; Ps 149:6-9].

Luke 22:28-30... Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table [enjoying God's just Laws] in my kingdom, and sit on thrones [Rev 3:21] *judging* the twelve tribes of Israel.

1 Corinthians 6:2... Do ye not know that *the saints shall judge* the world?

> Why and how will they judge the worldly, evil ones if they are all in hell? Will they join Satan in poking them with pitchforks and trampling on them in the flames? Is that the "damnation" mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 2:12? God forbid! Instead, see Isaiah 26:9.

Jude 14-15... *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all* [Deut 33:2-3], and *to convince all that are ungodly* among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Revelation 2:26-27... And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, *to him will I give power* [i.e. authority as a ruler] *over the nations;* and he shall rule them with a rod of iron [judgment of God's Word]; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers [Jer 18:1-4; Rom 9:21-26]: even as I received of my Father.

Revelation 5:10 (similar in Rev 1:6)... And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall reign on the earth.*

> Over whom will they rule and reign, and for what purpose? (Daniel 12:3 answers this question clearly and succinctly!)

Revelation 11:15-18... *The kingdom of this world* is become *the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ* [i.e. anointed ones]; *and he* [i.e. Christ *and His Body*... overcomers] *shall reign* for ever

and ever... thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou should give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and should destroy [the chaff in] them which destroy the earth.

Revelation 14:1-8... And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts [i.e. living creatures], and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth [1st resurrection... to rule & reign, Rev 20:6]... 4 ...These were redeemed from among men, being *the firstfruits* [others will follow...in due season] unto God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. 6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting [i.e. age-lasting] gospel to preach *unto them that dwell on the earth,* and to *every* nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; *for the hour of his judgment is come:* and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city [Rev 11:15!], because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

> Verse 3 mentions the 144,000 that were redeemed from the earth. They are in the *celestial* resurrection (1 Cor 15:40) *during this time of judgment.* Verse 6 refers to another order (1 Cor 15:23) of people that is described as those dwelling on the earth (i.e. terrestrial, 1 Cor 15:40). This order of terrestrial beings is having the age-lasting gospel preached to them! Both of

these two groups are also mentioned earlier in Revelation 7:1-17.

The preceding long list of verses presented on the preceding 4-5 pages beginning with Psalm 149:6-9 provides ample witness that the saints will someday be ruling with God's judgments to rebuke, correct, and reconcile wayward souls to God. This is the subject that Jesus addressed in Matthew 25:41-46, and what Paul wrote about in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 and 2:7-12.

If the just are rewarded with heaven while the unjust are condemned to hell forever, how can the numerous, preceding Scriptures that describe the just ruling and reigning be interpreted? Who is left for them to rule over (Dan 12:1-3; Mat 19:28)? They won't be reigning over people in hell, but over the unjust on earth. These are matters of weighty significance.

While there are other hell-bent Scriptures similar to Matthew 25:41-46, 2 Thessalonians 1, and 2 Thessalonians 2 that some will submit in an attempt to refute universal restoration, it is my prayer that this chapter 4 will have provided sufficient evidence to move Christians to investigate beyond the widely endorsed hell doctrine.

Chapter 5

God's Sovereignty

Can man's free will or Satan's power thwart God's will and purpose?

The next three chapters dealing with God's sovereignty, judgment, and resurrection present the basic building blocks upon which universal restoration (i.e. the gospel) stands securely. Many books have been written on each of these subjects, and not without good reason. A proper understanding of God's sovereignty, judgment, and resurrection are absolutely essential for a proper understanding of God's plan and purpose.

After having read all of the four preceding chapters of this book, you should already have some idea of how important these three elements are in interpreting the Bible. Though many Christians profess to embrace them, their interpretations of each of these issues vary immensely.

The first of these three issues is sovereignty. The Oxford University Press Dictionary describes sovereignty as follows: *"1. supreme power or authority. 2. a self-governing state."* Being a created being, mankind may be given a limited degree of authority, but he is not completely sovereign in the true sense of the word. On the contrary, as Creator, only God is absolutely sovereign. He is the blessed Controller of all things (1 Tim 6:15-16). God's sovereignty is established by His abundant mercy and truth, not to

mention His other limitless assets. "*Mercy* and *truth* preserve the king; and his throne [i.e. sovereignty] is upholden [upheld, established] by mercy" (Pr 20:28).

In the preceding verse, the *throne* represents power, while *truth* encompasses wisdom, knowledge, and understand-ing. *Mercy* consists of numerous virtues such as love, compassion, forgiveness, grace, longsuffering, patience, kindness, gentleness, etc.

In short, God's sovereignty as King of kings and Lord of lords is established by His power, wisdom, and love. Because He is all-mighty, all-wise, and all-loving, He is completely in control of everyone and everything, including man's will and Satan's limited power (Job 1:12; 1 Cor 5:5).

It is the premise of this book that God's will and purpose for His creation include the complete restoration of all of it. His absolute sovereignty is essential for this to occur. Everyone's salvation rests completely on His absolute sovereignty, not his or her own efforts. Consider the following observation by Al Stahl:

> "The words 'sovereignty' and 'omnipotence' denote absolute power. God cannot be in control 99% of the time and still be sovereign. It is 100% or nothing. Either He is Lord of ALL or He is not Lord at all!"

Rather than attempting to explain God's sovereignty any further, the following Scriptures present God's own Words on this subject. While this list of verses is lengthy, it is included purposely in order to emphasize God's heart on this critical matter:

Genesis 14:18-20 HCSB... Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest to *God Most High.* 19 He blessed him and said: Abram is blessed by *God Most High,*

Creator of heaven and earth, 20 and [I] give praise to *God Most High* who has handed over your enemies to you...

1 Chronicles 29:11-12... Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and *thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*

Job 23:13-16 HCSB... But He is unchangeable; who can oppose Him? He does what He desires. For He performs the thing that is appointed for me [i.e. People are saved by God's grace, not by their own works].

(Job 9:12; 11:10; 34:29; 38:37 are very similar to Job 23:13-16.)

Psalm 47:2 HCSB... For the Lord *Most High* is awe-inspiring, a great King over all the earth.

Psalm 89:6-14... For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD [i.e. the self-existing One]? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD? 7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. 8 O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? 9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. 10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. 11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. 12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon [i.e. high and glorious mountains] shall rejoice in thy name. 13 Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. 14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

Psalm 115:3... But our God is in the heavens: *he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*

Psalm 135:6... *Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he* in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Proverbs 19:21 ESV... Many are the plans in the mind of a man, *but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.*

Proverbs 21:1...The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD. As the rivers of water, *He turns it whithersoever He will.*

Proverbs 21:30 HCSB... No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel [will prevail] against the Lord.

Isaiah 43:13 ASV... Yea, since the day was, I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who can hinder it?

Isaiah 46:9-11 ...I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and *I will do all my pleasure.*

Isaiah 55:11 HCSB... My word...will not return to Me empty, *but it will accomplish what I please,* and will prosper in what I send it [to do]. [God sent His Word, Jesus, to save the world, 1 John 4:14; Rev 19:13.]

Daniel 4:35... All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing. *He does according to His will* in the army of heaven and *among* the inhabitants of the earth. *No one can restrain His hand* or say to Him, What have You done?

Matthew 6:13... For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Acts 2:23 NASB... this Man [Jesus], delivered over by the *predetermined plan* and foreknowledge of God...

Acts 4:27-28 NKJV... For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose *determined before* to be done.

Acts 5:38-39 NKJV... if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to fight against God.

Romans 8:31... If God is for us, who can be against us?

Romans 11:33-36... O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For *of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:* to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Ephesians 1:9-11... Making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose... to unite all things in Him... We... have been *predestined according to the purpose of Him* who works all things according to the counsel of His will.

Colossians 1:16-17... For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: All things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

> How wise would it have been for God to have created thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers that He was unable to control?

1 Timothy 2:4... [God] Who *will have all* men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 6:15-16 NKJV... He who is the blessed and *only Potentate* [i.e. great authority], the *King of kings* and *Lord of lords* [including Satan... See Job 1:12], who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no [unregenerated] man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Hebrews 6:16-18... For men verily swear by *the greater:* and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the

immutability [i.e. unchangeableness] *of his counsel* [i.e purpose and will], confirmed it by an oath: 18 that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us...

2 Peter 3:9... The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us, *not willing* that any perish, but that all come to repentance.

Revelation 17:14... These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings...

Revelation 19:6, 15-16... And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God *omnipotent* reigneth... 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Sovereignty Conclusion

The only sovereign ruler in this world is the Almighty One, the Most High. If God wills anything (Isa 46:9-10; 55:11; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9), the devil or man's will cannot prevent it. Job certainly understood this (Job 9:12; 11:10; 23:13; 34:29).

Our heavenly Father is far more successful than earthly fathers in guiding children to do what is good and right (Heb 12:9-10). He created the seemingly incorrigible children of this world (Rom 8:20). He has also made provisions that will cause such children to turn and change for the better in due time. Romans 8:20 assures us that mankind was not only made subject to vanity, but was also subjected to hope. Verse 21 adds to verse 20, declaring that mankind will be delivered from bondage to liberty, and from corruption to glory. This will be accomp-

lished through both the Old and New Covenants. The Old Covenant reveals mankind's inability to keep God's Laws (Rom 3:20; 7:7-13). The New Covenant supplies a Way for mankind to obey it (Gal 3:24). The Old Covenant kills the old man, while the New Covenant provides a new man with an abundant life (2 Cor 3:6; Rom 7:7-13).

Does our Heavenly Father desire that some of His children suffer and die, or worse (Ezek 18:32; 33:11; Isa 46:9-10)? Is He helpless to successfully rear all of His children, leading them to the glory for which He created them (Gen 1:26-28)? Is He less successful than Abraham (Gen 18:19) whom God said would rear his children to do what is right and just? Such questions are critical, and they deserve our diligent investigation.

Consider the degree of sovereignty that is at stake in such fundamental verses as Genesis 12:3 and John 3:16-17. God's sovereignty assures blessings to all the families of the earth. He sent His Son into the world *not* to condemn it, but that the world, through Him, be saved. These divine declarations will be achieved by God's sovereignty, and are not limited by man's "free" will or Satan's restrained, and limited power.

* * * * * * *

God's Purpose

"In accord with the purpose of the eons,
which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord..."
(Ephes 3:11 Concordant Literal Version)

Purpose means that God "made up His mind" concerning the outcome of creation. The ages are unfolding the determination of God. The puny rudder of man's misnamed "freewill" cannot resist the surging tides of God. Always remember that what we find in the ages is not a possibility, but a purpose. Humanity is not a divine speculation, but rather one of God's investments. God is the God

of certainty and not of chance, and He has “made up His mind” and the ages are working out His plan.

- Alan Burns

Chapter 6

Judgment

In my opinion, the word "judgment" is one of the most misconstrued words in the Bible. Since many people associate this word exclusively with the negative connotation of punishment, this chapter will devote extensive attention to establishing that God's judgments are always good and positive, even when they include chastisements.

> For when Your *judgments* are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. Isaiah 26:9

> ... O LORD, You have appointed them [Israel's enemies] for *judgment*. You, O Rock, have marked them for correction [i.e. to make straight again]. Habakkuk 1:12

God applies both chastisement and mercy in all of our lives (Hab 3:2; Deut 32:36). His judgments are not always punishments as many people imagine. Essentially, they are His laws, and they result in rewards for the obedient, and penalties for the disobedient.

When Moses or Samuel *judged* Israel (see Ex 18:13; 1 Sam 7:15), they did not always prescribe punishments to the people. They simply discerned whether the actions of the people were righteous or unrighteous according to God's laws, and then applied the appropriate rewards, punishments, acquittals, or vindications as prescribed by God.

When most people hear the word "judgment," some form of punishment usually comes to mind. The words "damnation" and "condemnation" often conjure up the infamous hell tradition. Yet the general meaning of the various Hebrew and Greek words that are translated "judgment, damnation, and condemnation" in the Bible are simply related to God's standards of right and wrong. Moreover, these righteous, moral standards that include specific penalties for violations of God's law, also include blessings and mercy *for the sinner.* For God's ultimate judgment against sin was the death of His Son, which opened up His floodgates of grace and mercy for undeserving sinners (Rom 5:20).

The most severe punishment connected with any of God's judgments is death (Rom 6:23a). Because of that judgment, God also provided a resurrection (see Chapter 7) from the dead. Resurrection is the result of God's Son paying the *judgment* price for mankind's sin, thus releasing them from death (Isaiah 26:19-21; Hosea 13:14; 1 Cor 15:21-22; Rev 1:18). Yet because of long-held human traditions that have crept into Christian doctrines, many people believe that God will judge unrepentant sinners with eternal torment in a literal fire called hell. But Jeremiah 7:30-31 records the following:

> For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it. 31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, *to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.*

How can God's judgments burn any of His creatures in fire when He Himself denounces burning children in fire as an abomination? Furthermore, God declares that He never commanded such horrific cruelty, neither did it ever enter His heart! Yet millions of people not only ascribe such an atrocity to God's nature, but they claim that He will afflict such

torment *forever* to the *majority* of His creation. Such a doctrine is an insult to God's character!

Because no discussion about judgment can be complete without addressing the subject of hell, a brief overview regarding the word "hell" as it appears in the KJV Bible seems appropriate. The following four words are translated "hell" in the KJV:

- ***Sheol*** 31 times (OT, # 7585) = GRAVE, pit, place of the dead. Literally it means "covered" (therefore "unseen, unknown").

- ***Hades*** 10 times (NT, # 86) = GRAVE (NT equivalent to OT *sheol*)

- ***Tartaros*** 1 time (NT, # 5020) = The deepest abyss of hades (i.e. GRAVE); to incarcerate. It is applied to angels only.

- ***Geena*** 12 times (NT, # 1067) = Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna)

Of the 54 times "hell" occurs in the KJV, 42 times (78%) it is referring to *the grave* and 12 times (22%) to *the Valley of Hinnom.* It would have avoided much confusion if the translators had rendered them as such. They didn't, because even translators are affected by the traditions of men that, in turn, were inspired by fictional literature such as Dante's classic, "The Inferno." Such false ideas recall Jesus' rebuking words to the religious leaders of His day:

> ... Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. (Mat 15:6)

Note carefully that *sheol* and *hades* are God's judgment for sin (i.e. death, Rom 6:23a), not eternal fire. As for the word *geena* (or *gehenna*), we just read in Jeremiah 7:30-31 where God declared that burning people in fire never entered His heart! In fact, this merciless torment that is mentioned in Jeremiah actually occurred in the Valley of Hinnom (i.e. "gehenna").

Why then did Jesus mention *geena* hell eleven times as a judgment for sin? The answer to this important and critical

question is that Jesus was referring to the garbage dump outside of Jerusalem's gates (i.e. the Valley of Hinnom... *gehenna*) where the bodies of criminals sometimes were burned. In effect, Jesus was saying that if a person continues in sinful behavior, his future is destined for the garbage dump (i.e. *geena*, or the Valley of Hinnom) where a fire burned continually for the sake of sanitation. That fire, however, is no longer burning in Jerusalem today! It was not eternal, but simply endured for *an age*, just as the Greek word "eternal" should be rendered.

Although God's judgments are accompanied with certain penalties, none of which mention burning in physical fire or forever, their overall purpose is that of providing a just standard for living a quality life. His judgments are often mentioned in conjunction with His commandments, laws, and statutes:

> Leviticus 26:46... These are the *statutes* and ***judgments*** and *laws* which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.
>
> Deuteronomy 5:31-33... But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the *commandments,* the *statutes,* and the ***judgments*** which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I am giving them to possess. 32 Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess.

Sometimes translators, especially those of the KJV, wrote what should have been rendered *judgment* as *damnation* or *condemnation*. Thank the Lord, many of the later translators have acknowledged the misuse of the word "damnation," and have corrected their versions to read *judgment* or *punishment*

instead. Please refer to Appendix 7 for a critical and extensive examination of the words "damnation" and "condemnation." There are many Hebrew and Greek words that are translated judge or judgment. As most scholars agree, the ultimate way of discerning the true meaning of any Hebrew or Greek word is to study it in its context as well as comparing the same word in other similar contexts. This we will do in a moment. First however, observe the following basic information from Strong's Concordance, in conjunction with my comments, regarding a few words from the Hebrew and the Greek that are translated "judge, judgment, damnation, or condemnation" in the KJV.

Hebrew Words

1. ***"Mishpat"*** (# 4941. Its root is # 8199): Its main idea is that of "verdict" (**favorable or unfavorable**). In English, "verdict" means a final decision, conclusion, or judgment of a matter. Out of **421** occurrences, it is rendered **"judgment"** over 70% of the time in the KJV. It is used as a noun, not as a verb.

2. ***"Shapat"*** (# 8199, a root word): Its main idea is "to judge" (**for or against**). It is rendered in a wide variety of ways. Out of **203** occurrences, it is rendered **"judge"** over 88% of the time in the KJV. It is used both as a verb (i. e. to judge) and as a noun (i. e. a judge).

3. ***"Din"*** (# 1777, a root word): Its main idea is "to rule" (i.e. to umpire). Out of its **24** occurrences, it is rendered **"judge"** 75% of the time in the KJV. It is used as a verb.

Greek Words

1. ***"Krino"*** (# 2919, a root word): Its main idea is "to distinguish," i.e. to decide. Out of **114** occurrences, it is rendered **"judge"** over 77% of the time in the KJV. It is used as a verb.

2. ***"Krisis"*** (# 2920, a root word): Its main idea is "decision" (**for or against**). Out of **48** occurrences, it is rendered "judgment" over

85% of the time in the KJV. The English word "crisis" means a time of intense difficulty or danger, and **a turning point** (juncture) toward right or wrong. A crisis does not necessarily end negatively. It is used as a noun.

3. ***"Krima"*** (# 2917. Its root it # 2919.): Its main idea is "decision" (**for or against** a crime.). Out of **28** occurrences, it is rendered **"judgment"** over 46% of the time in the KJV. The next highest percent of occurrences is "damnation" at 25% in the KJV. Most of the more current versions have replaced "damnation" with the either "judgment, punishment, sentence, or condemnation," depending on the verse. It is used as a noun.

4. ***"Bema"*** (# 968. Its root is # 939, "basis," which means "a walking pace," i.e. a base, by implication "foot" [i.e. foundation]): Its main idea is a "step" (from its root word, "basis."). In 10 out of its **12** occurrences, it is rendered **"judgment seat"** in the KJV.

5. ***"Kriterion"*** (# 2922. Its root is # 2919.): Its main idea is "a rule" of judging (criterion). It appears only **3** times ("**to judge**, **judgment**, & **judgment seat**") in the KJV.

From the preceding, brief overview of Hebrew and Greek words, one thing is evident. In every case, the general significance of these words is *judge* or *judgment*. The exact details of these judgments can be determined by only two things: First, the context. Second, one's view of God's nature or character. Is God's character similar to man's, or is it different? Hosea 11:9, Numbers 23:19-20, and Isaiah 55:8-9 convey the vast difference between God's character and that of man's.

As mentioned earlier, context is a better interpreter of a word's meaning than linguistic sources such as a Bible Concordance. Moreover, it is not just the context of a single passage, but also the context of the same word in other passages. In the mouth of two or three witnesses, let every word be established (Mat 16:18; 2 Cor 13:1).

As we will soon discover, God's judgments not only include His rebukes and punishments, but also His comfort and blessings. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul explains that all of Scripture (including His judgments) is profitable for accomplishing four things that will result in man's perfection. The King James Version describes these four profitable things as follows: "Doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness." What exactly did Paul have in mind when he penned these four things?

In my opinion, *doctrine* and *reproof* are related to God's Old Covenant that served to provide a moral code that convicted man of his own inability to obey it. After doctrine and reproof fulfill their purpose, God's New Covenant supplies *correction* and *instruction in righteousness.* As Galatians 3:24 states, "The Law [which includes God's judgments] was our schoolmaster to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." Christ is the only Way to *correct* a sinful life. And the Holy Spirit is the One that Jesus promised to send for *instructing us in righteousness* (John 16:13-15). God's Word, which includes His *judgments*, not only destroys the old man but also creates a new man which lives righteously and "judges righteous judgment" (John 7:24; Deut 16:18).

In essence, the *judgments* of God's Word are profitable for destroying the old man, and for correcting the damages caused by the old man. Those damages are corrected by putting on the new-creation man, Jesus Christ (Col 1:27; 2 Cor 5:17). In Deuteronomy 32:36-43, observe God's own description of His *judgments* not only killing, but also making alive again:

> "For the LORD will *judge* His people *and have compassion* on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining [that can help], bond or free. 37 He will say: 'Where are their gods, the rock in which they sought refuge? 38 who ate the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise and help you, and be your refuge. 39 'Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill **and I make**

> **alive** [Rom 6:23]; I wound **and I heal**; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. 40 For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, "As I live forever, 41 if I whet My glittering sword [His Word, 2 Cor 10:4-5; Ephes 6:10-], and My hand takes hold on *judgment*, I will render vengeance to My enemies [The vengeance was rendered at Calvary, Isa 63:1-4-9.], and repay those who hate Me. 42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh [i.e. the old man, 1 Cor 5:5], with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy." ' 43 "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; *He will provide atonement for His land and His people."* Deut 32:36-43

God's judgments under the Old Covenant are a ministry of death (2 Cor 3:7-11) since they slay the old sinful man (Rom 7:9-11). God's judgments under the New Covenant through Jesus' blood are a ministry of life (Rom 8:1-2-4) since He paid the price of vengeance for the sins of the old man (2 Cor 5:21). As Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The purpose of God's judgments, then, is twofold: They both destroy and give life. Just as they bring death to *every* person, they also bring life to *every* person (Rom 5:18-21; 6:23; 1 Cor 15:21-22). True, this life comes only *when* people submit to Jesus and receive His free gift, but the Scriptures record numerous times that, in due season, *every person* will bow and submit to Him. See Isaiah 45:22-23 and Psalm 110:3 for two witnesses to this fact. It is noteworthy that the New Testament quotes from Psalm 110 more often than any other Old Testament Scripture.

Jesus paid the judgment price (i.e. vengeance) for the sins of the world by shedding His innocent blood for them (John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:19; 1 John 2:2). Just as sin causes death, even so righteousness causes life. This is the bold declaration of both Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-57. We see, therefore, that God's

judgments include both death *and life*. They are not limited to punishment, death, and hell as many suppose.

Important Judgment Verses

The remainder of this chapter will list some significant passages where the subject of judgment is especially important to rightly divide. Because this subject is so misunderstood, an extensive list of examples will follow:

Genesis 18:23-26... And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? 25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: *Shall not the Judge* [# 8199] *of all the earth do right?* 26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

> Since God's judgment destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18, consider the following verse where Jesus mentions a time when Sodom and Gomorrah will experience *another day of judgment:*
>
> > Matthew 10:15... Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the *day of judgment* [# 2920], than for that city [also see Mat 11:20-24].
>
> Obviously, this latter judgment will be at the resurrection. What is especially noteworthy, however, is that Jesus said the future day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah will be *more tolerable than* it will be for others.
>
> This is critically significant to grasp. The reason Jesus said this is revealed in Matthew 11:20-24, a similar passage, where He explained that Sodom and Gomorrah never saw the truth revealed to them as others had seen it. As Luke

12:47-48 and James 3:1 explain, those who are given the truth are more accountable than those who have not seen or heard it.

The point is this: The future day of God's judgment for the unjust is remedial, not a matter of revenge. God will not lock up sinners in hell forever. Rather, He lays His judgments on them *until* they pay the last farthing (Mat 5:26; 18:34). As applied in Matthew 5:26 and 18:34, the last farthing symbolizes a genuine acknowledgment of sin, and a plea for mercy in the name of Jesus Christ. And so in time, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess (willingly and sincerely, Ps 110:3) that Jesus Christ is Lord, and a most gracious Lord at that!

The following verses disclose the final result of God judging all the earth to which Abraham referred in Genesis 18:25:

> 1 Chronicles 16:30-33... Fear before him, *all the earth:* the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. 31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let men say among the nations, The LORD reigneth. 32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein. 33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the LORD, *because he cometh to judge* [# 8199] *the earth.*
>
> Psalm 82:8... Arise, O God, judge [# 8199] the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.
>
> Psalm 96:13 (and Ps 98:9 also)... for he cometh, for he cometh to judge [# 8199] the earth: he shall judge the world *with righteousness,* and the people *with his truth* [or *faithfulness,* HCSB, ESV, NASB. Compare Rev 19:11].

What is His truth? John 17:17 defines God's truth as being His Word. As we have already learned from 2 Timothy 3:16-17, His Word is for the purpose of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness so that the man

of God may become perfect at doing everything right [i.e. justly].

Leviticus 18:4-5... Ye shall do [i.e. obey] my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, *and my judgments:* which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD.

This text, along with other similar ones such as Deuteronomy 5:1 and Psalm 119:105-106 reveal that God's judgments are not merely punishments as many suppose, but righteous laws to be obeyed.

Psalm 19:9-11... The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; *the judgments* [#4941] of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is *great reward.*

Judgments that are sweeter than honey and more to be desired than gold certainly include something more than punishments! They also involve rewards - *great reward* to those who obey them. If God's judgments were merely punishments and hell, how are they to be kept, and who would desire to keep them? These are not idle, impertinent questions, but very significant matters to contemplate, investigate, and rightly divide.

Psalm 82:8... Arise, O God, judge [#8199] the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

Consider two possibilities for interpreting this verse. Some may think that by judging the earth, God will cast the rebellious people into hell so that He can possess the righteous that remain. These righteous ones would amount to *a few* among *all* nations.

Others, however, believe that since God's Law converts the soul (Ps 19:7), and since God uses His Law as a basis for

judgment, the entire creation will be redeemed from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom 8:20-21). In this view, God will possess (i.e. inherit) *everyone* in *all* nations as His children.

The final book of the Bible with the age-enduring gospel (Rev 14:6) presents a restored Garden of Eden. It depicts Christ having redeemed *everything that was lost* in the first Garden so that God is All and in all (1 Cor 15:22, 25, 28; Rev 21:5). Such is the final outcome of God *judging* the earth.

Isaiah 2:3-4... Many people shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall *judge* [#8199] between the nations, and rebuke [compare 2 Tim 3:16-17, reprove/convict] many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

The reason many people do not fully appreciate this passage is because it has not been manifested yet on a national scale. Man's natural inclination is not to believe something until he sees it occur. God bids us to walk by faith and not by sight (Hab 2:4; 2 Cor 5:7). The essence of this passage illustrates God's judgments causing worldwide peace, not damnation and the eternal torment of people.

The result of God judging the nations is that they will not learn war anymore! This will occur not because they are in hell, but because they are learning and submitting to God's Word. What caused the sudden change? The same thing that caused a sudden change at Pentecost to a small, elect remnant. In mercy and grace, God poured out His Spirit and opened eyes and hearts (Joel 2:28; Isa 29:18, 24). Pentecost was God's early rain. The feast of Tabernacles [Ingathering of *all nations,* Zech 14:16-19] is His latter rain (Deut 11:13-15; Hosea 6:1-3; Joel 2:23).

Isaiah 26:9... when Your *judgments* [# 4941] are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. This verse reveals the purpose of God's judgments. They are to teach the world righteousness. What happens when God's Laws of judgment (i.e. justice) are learned? In Romans 7:9-12, Paul declared that he died when he saw God's law! That is, the old man in him died. When his old man died, the new man (Christ, Col 1:27) was conceived and began to mature into Christ (Ephes 4:13-15; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 4:19).

Isaiah 42:1...Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth [Mat 3:17]; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth *judgment* [# 4941] to the Gentiles.

> Abraham's seed (i.e. Christ, Gal 3:16) was promised to be a blessing, not a curse, to all the families of the earth. Pointing to Christ, Isaiah 42:1 proclaims that He will bring forth *judgment* to the Gentiles. The context of this passage further indicates in verses 3-4 that this judgment "shall bring forth judgment *unto truth*. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, *till he have set judgment* [i.e. justice] *in the earth* [Isa 26:9]: and the isles shall wait for his law." This is not a message of damnation, but rather one of good news. Notice that this judgment is directly connected with His Law that is not burdensome [1 John 5:3].

Isaiah 28:17-18 HCSB... And I will make *justice* [*judgment* in KJV, # 4941 in Strong's] the measuring line and righteousness the mason's level. Hail will sweep away the false refuge, and water will flood your hiding place. 18 Your deal with Death will be dissolved, and your agreement with Sheol [i.e. hell - the grave] will not last. When the overwhelming scourge passes through, you will be trampled.

> In this verse, the Holman Christian Standard Bible translation correctly renders the KJV word "judgment" as *justice* and describes it as *a measuring line*. That is precisely what God's judgments are, a measuring standard of what is right and wrong. Not only does it define judgment this way, it also discloses that God's judgments do not cause death and *sheol* [i.e. hell in the KJV] forever, but

rather dissolve them by sweeping away the false refuge of lies.

Isaiah 53:8 HCSB... He was taken away because of... *judgment;* and who considered His fate? For He was cut off from the land of the living; He was struck because of my people's rebellion.

Since God's judgments require death as the consequence of sin (Rom 6:23), God so loved the world that He sacrificed His only begotten Son to pay the judgment price for the world's sin. Now the weighty issue at stake is this: If Jesus paid the price of God's judgment for the sin of the world, *all* of the world has been forgiven for their sin, and *none* of them need to pay anything more *beyond the price of Jesus' Blood* for their sin. They simply need to believe the good news.

In conjunction with Isaiah 53:8, we should also consider what Jesus meant in John 14:19 when He said, "Because I live, you shall live also." It is my belief that Jesus was explaining that because He died in place of sinful man and yet He rose again, therefore all those that He died for will also be raised to life in Him - in their own order (1 Cor 15:22-23). Indeed, God's *judgments* are to be desired (Ps 19:9-10).

Jeremiah 10:24... O LORD, correct me, but with *judgment* [# 4941]; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

If judgment is as horrible of a curse from God as many people imagine, why is Jeremiah advocating that God correct him with judgment? Many of the newer translations have replaced the word "judgment" in this verse with "justice" - a completely valid translation. It is also a very appropriate choice of words since today's generation tends to equate *judgment* exclusively with severe punishment if not hell itself, while they equate *justice* with rulings of reward or penalty in a legal case.

The question arises, however, as to why this Hebrew word is not translated as "justice" in numerous other instances? The answer is that it should be, and in fact, it is in certain

translations. Many of the places where it is rendered as "judgment," it occurs because of a lack of understanding the true meaning of the word, namely justice.

Ezekiel 34:16... I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed [i.e. rule] them in [or with] *judgment* [# 4941, or justice]."

Who were those that were *lost* and driven away into captivity except those who had sinned? Those who were *broken and sick* were also those who had sinned (Isa 1:4-7). The fact that these will be restored and strengthened indicates that they would be drawn to repentance. *The fat and the strong* that God will destroy are the proud and hard-hearted who have not yet repented. When God's judgments are revealed to them (Rev 1:7), their old man will be destroyed also (Rom 7:9-12; 2 Thes 2:3-4, 8; Deut 32:41-43). When the man of sin is destroyed, the Sun of righteousness appears with healing in His rays (Mal 4:1-2 Moffatt).

Ezekiel 36:27... And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall *keep my judgments* [# 4941], *and do them.*

Judgments are not simply something that destroys sin, they are also something that those who have God's Spirit living in them *keep* and *do*. It is very significant to recognize that this word for *judgments* (# 4941) is the same Hebrew word that appears in Psalm 1:5; Ecclesiastes 11:9; 12:14; Isaiah 1:27; 28:17; Ezekiel 34:16; and Daniel 7:26 where translators often misconstrue it by attaching the negative rendering of *condemnation* or *damnation!* This verse, therefore, is a great aid in clarifying these other verses. How silly Ezekiel 36:27 would appear if it were translated "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statues, and ye shall keep my *damnations,* and do them."

Ezekiel 39:21... And I will set *my glory* among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my *judgment* [# 4941] that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.

> What will be the outcome when God sets *His glory* among the heathen (i.e. the nations)? Isaiah 46:13 states that someday Israel will be His glory (i.e. when they keep His judgments). Furthermore, Isaiah 2:2-4 explains that when the nations see Israel's glory (through God's laws & judgments), they will ask to be taught about the God of Israel. Indeed, someday God will reveal and execute His judgments not only in Israel (Ps 147:19-20), but also in all the nations so that they, too, will be blessed like Israel. Israel was simply to be God's *firstborn* son among the nations (Jer 31:7, 9; Ex 4:22). Israel's role was to be a blessing to all the nations through her witness (Isa 43:10), so that the other nations would eventually embrace her economy (Gen 12:3; Ex 12:48-49; Ezek 47:22-23; Isa 14:1).

Hosea 6:4-5 ESV... What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away. 5 Therefore I have hewn them *by the prophets;* I have slain them *by the words* of my mouth, and my *judgment* [# 4941] goes forth as the light [i.e. illumination].

> Observe the following three elements in the passage above: *Prophets,* the *words* of His mouth, and His *judgments*. All of these represent light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the day star (Christ, Rev 2:28; 22:16; 2 Cor 4:6) arises in man's heart (2 Pet 1:19; Gal 3:24).

Micah 4:3-4... And he shall *judge* [# 8199] among many people, and rebuke [2 Tim 3:16] strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 4 But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

This is very similar to Isaiah 2:2-4, describing the result of God's judgments. In verse 4, however, Micah adds that not only will they no longer learn war, but they will also sit under their own vine and fig tree, a symbolic picture of rest from oppression.

A world without war is a dream that man has longed for since the beginning of war in Genesis 3:1-8 and 4:8. While Christians accept that world peace will come someday because of Scriptures like this, many believe that it will only be for those who are on the earth at that time. Is that just? What about those who were born too early to experience this world peace? Is this only for future generations? As we will learn in the next chapter about *Resurrection*, those who are raised to glory will be rebuilding the old waste places from past generations so that they also will someday enjoy this world peace. These old waste places are not in reference to geographical locations or material buildings, but to the ruins of wasted lives of disobedient people.

John 7:24... *Judge* [# 2919] not according to the appearance, but *judge* [# 2929] righteous *judgment* [# 2920].

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus instructed His hearers, "Judge not, that you be not judged." In that text of Matthew 7:1, Jesus used the same Greek word for "judge" that appears here in John 7:24 [i.e. # 2919]. The lesson to be learned is that *judging others with judgments* can be good or bad, depending on what standard of judgment is employed.

The prophet Isaiah conveyed a similar view of judgment when he wrote the following in Isaiah 11:3-5 NKJV:

> 3 ... He shall not *judge* [# 8199] by the sight of His eyes, nor decide [or reprove, KJV] by the hearing of His ears; 4 but *with righteousness He shall judge* [# 8199] the poor, and decide with equity [i.e. justice] for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

From the above passages in John 7:24, Matthew 7:1, and Isaiah 11:3-5, one discovers that judgment is good when it proceeds from God, but evil when it proceeds from carnal humanity.

John 16:7-11, 13... It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will *reprove* [i.e. convict and convince] the world of ***sin***, and of ***righteousness***, and of ***judgment*** [# 2920]: 9 Of *sin,* because they believe not on me; 10 of *righteousness,* because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 of *judgment* [# 2920], because the prince of this world is judged [# 2919] ... 13... when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. The comfort He brings is the result of a conviction of ***sin*** (Isa 61:1-3; Isa 40:1-11; Mat 3:11-12; 1 Pet 4:6, 17) followed by healing and restoring after the sin is acknowledged. Notice the perfect progression of salvation: First the Comforter *reproves* (convicts and convinces, 2 Tim 3:16) the world of its ***sin*** because it rejected the Truth (v. 9). Think on this. When the Holy Spirit is poured out on all flesh (Joel 2:28; Mat 3:11-12), the first result is conviction of sin (Jude 14-15)!

Secondly, He convinces the sinner that the only solution for his guilt is the ***righteousness*** of Christ. What convinces a person that Christ is righteous? The proof lies in His resurrection to the Father (see John 16:10 with Rom 1:4). The wages of sin [death] could not hold Him in the grave because of His righteousness.

Thirdly, after sin is confessed and God's free gift of righteousness is received, the Holy Spirit builds up the new Christian with His ***judgments*** (instructions in the way of life, 2 Tim 3:16). How so? After Christ's righteousness is received (Isa 26:9), the Holy Spirit convicts and convinces the believer that God's judgments are true and completely just (Ps 19:9b).

It is also enlightening to compare Jude 1:14-15 with John 16:8 since they both employ the same exact word, "reprove," in the context of God's *judgment:*

> "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute *judgment* [# 2920] upon all, and to *convince* [same Greek word as "reprove" in John 16:8] all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 1:14-15

While God's judgments have already *begun* in Christians (1 Pet 4:17), there is coming another day of judgment (i.e. the latter rain, Joel 2:23) in which the Spirit will comfort many more who will mourn because of their sin (Isa 61:2), and God will *finish* pouring out His Spirit on *all* flesh (Joel 2:28).

1 Peter 4:5-6, 17... [the Gentiles] who shall give account to him that is ready to *judge* [# 2919] the quick and the dead. 6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead [in sin, Ephes 5:14], that they might be *judged* [# 2919] according to men in the flesh [1 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 3:6-11], but [thereafter] live according to God in the spirit [Rom 6:23b]...17 For the time is come that *judgment* [# 2917] must *begin* at the house of God: and if it first begin at us [James 1:18], what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Many readers mistakenly assume that the answer to Peter's question in verse 17 is that the end of these disobedient ones will be an eternity in hell. For those who have read all of the preceding selections in this chapter regarding judgment, a very different response should come to mind. Peter's own words explain what he had in mind when he stated that judgment must *begin* at the house of God. If it *begins* at the house of God, it only follows that it must *continue* with those who are not yet members of the house of God. (2 Thessalonians 1:4-10 agrees.)

While God *judges* some people [i.e. firstfruits] before others, His standard of judgment and His successful results of judgment are always the same. God's judgments result in death to the old man (via the Old Covenant, 2 Cor 3:7-11) followed by life in the new man (via the New Covenant, Rom 6:23b; 2 Cor 3:7). Furthermore, everyone is called and chosen (John 15:16) in his own order by God's grace, not by their good works.

2 Peter 3:7-10... But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of *judgment* [# 2920] and perdition [i.e. ruin, destruction] of ungodly men [i.e. *the man of sin* in the first Adam, 2 Thes 2:3, 8; 1 Cor 15:45]. 8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Wow! This is an emotional verse for many readers. What are "the heavens and the earth which are now" except the corrupt rulers (heavens, Gen 1:14-18) that cause a wicked, sad, and dying earth? These rulers include every individual and national ruler before they submit to Christ. God's remedy for these old heavens is to create new heavens to overcome and replace them:

Psalm 104:29-32... You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. 30 *You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth***.** 31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in His works. 32 He looks on the earth [i.e. the earthiness of the old man], and it trembles; He touches the hills [i.e. proud], and they smoke.

Smoke is symbolic of God's Word (Ex 19:18) burning up the chaff. *Hills* are symbolic of proud, high-minded people or nations. When the *judgments* of the Lord are in the earth, the people of the world will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9). 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Peter 4:6, as well as many other verses, explain that God hides His face from the proud (i.e. turns them over to Satan) in order to bring them to their end (Ps 107:27-28) so that their spirit of pride will be slain and then replaced with His Holy Spirit. Observe in 2 Peter 3:10 that it is not the people themselves that are burned up, but rather their *works* and the *elements* (i.e. the principles, the arrangement) of the old earth.

Revelation 11:15-18 describes worldly kingdoms being conquered by the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ [anointed ones, the Body of Christ]. It continues by explaining that Christ will reign for ever and ever. To reign is to rule with *judgments*. Over whom is He reigning? Verse 18 states that He will be judging those who have destroyed the earth. How will He judge them? 2 Thessalonians 2:8 states that He will judge them by destroying their pride with the brightness of His coming (Greek = *parousia:* His Divine Presence. His Spirit enters them to burn up their chaff, Mat 3:11-12).

In 2 Peter 3:9, most translators have chosen a different word for the KJV word "willing" (i.e. *not "willing" that any should perish*). Words such as "wanting, wishing, or desiring" have been substituted instead. Strong's concordance, however, states that "willing" is the fundamental meaning. Doctrinal bias, no doubt, has caused some translators to shy away from the stronger word "will," since they realize that God will have whatever He wills since He is sovereign (Isa 46:9-10). But God not only will have whatever He wills, but also whatever He wants, wishes, or desires! He is God, the only good and righteous God. He only wants, wishes, and desires that which is right and good, and He will have it.

Finally, notice that 2 Peter 3:7 sets verse 9 in the context of God's day of *judgment*. His judgments are such that none of His creation will perish (Rom 8:20-21), but all will come to repentance and thus, to complete restoration (1 Cor 15:21-28).

Hebrews 9:27-28 ESV... And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes *judgment* [# 2920], 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

This is an awe-inspiring passage! Most Bible students interpret this judgment as the final decision of whether a person goes to heaven or hell. Let us consider these verses again with fresh eyes. After stating a general principle regarding death and judgment in verse 27, verse 28 continues to apply that principle to Jesus' death and the resulting judgment (i.e. justice) because of His death. Verse 28 plainly declares that Jesus' second appearance is *not to deal with sin* since that was resolved at His first appearing. Rather, His second appearance is in order *to save.*

Meditate on these two verses in light of John 12:32-33 and Hebrews 12:2 which describe the type of death Jesus would die at His first appearance, and why He took joy in it. Because Jesus' death *paid the price for all* sin, the judgment that occurs at His second appearing is *to save all* (v. 28). Hebrews 9:27-28 does not mention or even hint about hell. How many will He save? He will save "those who are eagerly waiting for Him" (v. 28). How many will that be? According to 1 Corinthians 15:21-28; Isaiah 45:22-25; Philippians 2:10-11; and Psalm 110:3, the answer is *all*. These verses testify that *every* soul will submit to God willingly.

Christ's second appearing will have nothing to do with canceling sin because He already completely dealt with sin the first time He appeared. His second appearing is in the Spirit (John 14:3, 16-23) and for the purpose of giving life to those who are eagerly looking for Him (Rom 5:8-10; 2 Tim 4:8).

When does Christ's second appearing occur? John 14:2-3, 16-23 and John 16:5-14 reveal that Jesus' second appearing (Heb 9:28) is in the form of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us (John 14:17-18). His second appearance *began* occurring at

Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Such a statement may disturb some readers. May God give them courage to believe John 14:2-3, 16-23, and John 16:5-14 instead of the doctrines of men. How is all of this related to *judgment* in Hebrews 9:27? Since Christ paid the complete price for *all* sin the first time He appeared as the Lamb of God, what follows at His second appearing is the *judgment* that results from His work at Calvary during His first appearing. This judgment manifests the degree of success that His first appearing accomplished. Did it indeed pay for *all* sin as 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 19, 1 John 2:2, and other verses declare? The answer will be revealed when the *judgment* during His second appearing is completed.

If this chaff-burning judgment began at Pentecost (1 Peter 4:17; Mat 3:11-12), how long will it continue? 1 Corinthians 15:22-25 states that His work of judging the resurrected dead will endure until *every* enemy has submitted to Him and until there is no more death. The Holy Spirit's working in us during Jesus' second appearing includes an early and latter spiritual rain (Deut 11:13-15; Jer 5:24; Hos 6:1-3; Joel 2:23; Jam 5:7). The prophecy in Joel 2:28 regarding God's Spirit being poured out on *all flesh* simply *began* at Pentecost. Obviously, it has not been entirely finished yet. The judgment of Jesus' first appearing to deal with sin marches on until all enemies are under His feet (Ps 110:1-7; 1 Cor 15:22-25; Heb 2:8-9-).

Further Verses on Judgment

(for those readers who may desire even more evidence)

Leviticus 19:15...You shall *do no injustice in judgment* [#4941]. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. *In righteousness you shall judge* [#8199] your neighbor.

Not only does God judge, but He commands us to judge others! Our judgment towards others is not to damn them to hell, but to treat them justly according to God's standards. We are to judge them the same way that God judges us.

How does God judge us? How merciful is He? Notice the following passage from Luke 6:27-38 that instructs us to be like our Heavenly Father:

> "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, 28 Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. 29 And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. 31 And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: ***for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*** 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. 37 Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: 38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:27-38

Matthew 5:44-45 is parallel to the above passage. There, Jesus' reason for us judging in mercy is "that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for *he maketh his sun to rise on the evil* and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just *and on the unjust."* This is nothing short of an exposition of God returning *good for evil* instead of evil for evil. Even sinners return *good for good* in hopes of gain for themselves.

How many times have we heard the familiar verses above and not caught the profound implication of God returning good for evil? That truth speaks volumes regarding the restoration of all things! After all, what needs restoring except that which is evil? God does not repay evil with an eternal torment in hell-fire, but with His good news, grace, and mercy. "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," Jesus prayed. He never made a request outside of God's will, and His Father will answer this request in due season.

Psalm 48:11... Let mount Zion *rejoice,* let the daughters of Judah be glad, *because of thy judgments* [# 4941].

Mount Zion represents God's Law (Isaiah 2:3). Why would Mount Zion rejoice if God's judgments included punishments such as an eternal hell? It would be contrary to His righteous judgments of returning *good for evil.*

Psalm 67:4... O let the nations be glad and *sing for joy: for thou shalt judge* [# 8199] the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth...

Observe that God's judgments are associated with Him *governing,* not merely punishing the nations with His Laws.

Psalm 98:1-9... Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. 2 The LORD has made known His salvation; His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations. 3 He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; *all the ends of the earth* have seen the salvation of our God. 4 *Shout joyfully* to the LORD, *all the earth;* break forth in song, *rejoice,* and sing praises. 5 Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm, 6 with trumpets and the sound of a horn; *shout joyfully* before the LORD, the King. 7 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; 8 let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills *be joyful* together before the LORD, 9 *for He is coming to judge* [# 8199] the earth. *With*

righteousness He shall *judge* [# 8199] the world, and the peoples *with equity.*

Verses 1-8 = restoration.
Verse 9 = judgment which results in the restoration.

Psalm 9:7-8... But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for *judgment* [# 4941]. 8 And he shall *judge* [# 8199] the world *in righteousness,* he shall minister *judgment* [# 1777] to the people *in uprightness.*

Proverbs 21:15... It is joy to the just *to do* judgment [# 4941]...

Judgment is not only something that God does, it is also something that godly people *do,* and they do it with joy. The just enjoy doing what is good and right [i.e. judgment, Ps 19:9-10].

Zephaniah 3:7-9 NRSV ...I said, "Surely the city will fear me, it will accept correction; it will not lose sight of all that I have brought upon it." But they were the more eager to make all their deeds corrupt. 8 Therefore wait for me, says the LORD, for the day when I arise as a witness. For my decision [i.e. *judgment,* # 4941] is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all the heat of my anger; for in the fire of my passion all the earth shall be consumed. 9 *At that time* I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that *all of them* may call on the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord. [The word "may" is an added word that is not in the Hebrew text.]

In verse 8, the word "decision" is the Hebrew word "mishpat" which is rendered "judgment" over 70% of the time in the KJV, thus assuring us that this passage is concerning judgment. Notice that when *all the earth is consumed* by God's anger and fiery passion (v. 8f), *all the people* will call on the name of the LORD and serve Him. But if all the earth is consumed, how can all the people serve Him? Furthermore, does Zephaniah 3:8 contradict

Isaiah 11:9; 45:18 and Matthew 6:10 which prophesy of all the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord?

The answer to the above questions can be discovered in parallel passages such as 2 Peter 3:7-10 and Revelation 19:17-21 which describe the earthly, fleshly elements being eaten up (i.e. consumed), burned up, or melted. *The earth* that is being consumed is the earthly, lower, fleshly elements of man - the old man. God's anger and fiery passion is His zealous, divine love to deliver His creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Rom 8:20-21).

John 12:31... Now is the *judgment* [# 2920] of this world: now shall the prince of this world [i.e. the man of sin] be cast out. [Read with Isa 26:9.]

While the text does not identify the prince of this world, most people rightly assume him to be the devil. There are also children of the devil (Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:10). Both the devil and his children are cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10; 21:8).

But *from where* are they cast out? It is my conviction that they are cast *out of wayward mankind.* Because Jesus paid the judgment price for the sin of the world, the old man of iniquity (2 Thes 2:3-12) will be cast out of mankind. But how can that be, if they are cast into the lake of fire? Simply speaking, the lake of fire is God's super cleansing program of refining the strong-willed soul with His Holy Spirit's fire (Mat 3:11-12; Heb 12:29; Mal 3:1-6; 4:1). Anyone who researches the word "fire" in the Bible will discover that over 95% of the time it comes from God, not the devil. The few times that it is associated with the devil, it still originates from, and is controlled by, God.

Hebrews 4:12 HCSB... For *the word of God* is living and effective and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow; *it is a judge* [# 2924 = from roots # 2923 and # 2919] of the ideas and thoughts of the heart. [Read with Ezek 44:23-24.]

Revelation 11:18... And the nations were angry, and thy wrath [Habk 3:2] is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be *judged* [# 2919], and that thou shouldest *give reward* unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great [Dan 12:2-3]; *and shouldest destroy* them which destroy the earth. [Read with Isa 14:8-12, 15, 20-23.]

These dead ones who are to be *judged* are those who were outside of Christ (Ephes 5:14). This time of judgment is also described in Daniel 12:1-3 when some will be rewarded and others will be turned to righteousness by the wise who are ruling over them with God's judgments. Matthew 19:27-30 is also parallel to Revelation 11:18 and Daniel 12:1-3.

Who was it that destroyed the earth except the old man (Isa 14:16), the king of Babylon, symbolically (Isa 14:4-8, 16-17). Babylon means confusion. Indeed, the old man of sin and confusion will eventually be destroyed in every man by the sword of the Spirit (Rev 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21).

Revelation 15:4... Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for *all nations* shall come and worship before thee; for thy *judgments* [# 1345] are made manifest.

How can it be stated any more clearly that God's judgments result in all nations worshiping the true God?

Conclusion on Judgment

A common paradigm in today's Christian circles is that there is *a day of grace*, but in the future there will be only *a day of judgment*. Such a notion suggests that there is a time when grace will no longer be available for being saved. This view places grace and judgment in opposition to each other. Yet the Scriptures plainly maintain that grace and judgment work simultaneously in God's process of salvation. Observe the two following Scriptures that testify to this fact:

> Isaiah 26:9... With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy *judgments* [# 4941] are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. [Righteousness comes only by faith *through grace*.]
>
> 1 Peter 4:17... For the time is come that *judgment* [# 2917] must begin at the house of God [*where grace is active*]: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

"*The end* of them that obey not the gospel" is that their lives will also be judged, thus *completing* what was *begun* at the house of God. The difference is that theirs will be later - in a different order (1 Cor 15:23a) - a different age.

Some people refer to Isaiah 61:1-3 as evidence that grace and judgment belong in two different dispensations. Observe the passage carefully:

> Isaiah 61:1-3... The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings [the gospel] unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 to proclaim *the acceptable year of the LORD,* **and** *the day of vengeance* of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Verse 2 will be the focal point of our consideration in establishing that the two phrases "the acceptable year of the LORD" and "the day of vengeance" do not represent two different ages. "The acceptable year of the LORD ***is*** "the day of vengeance" - in every age! God makes people "acceptable" in the day that they see God's "vengeance" satisfied by the Lamb of God. This is the very picture presented to us in

Zechariah 12:10-14. In that passage, the spirit of grace is poured out on God's people. The result is them mourning, a sign of repentance. Thus, grace (i.e. the acceptable day of the Lord) leads to men to see God's vengeance in their behalf, which in turn, leads them to repentance.

Observe Isaiah 61:1-3 once again:

Verse 1 announces that *the gospel* is for the purpose of ministering to those who are broken, captive, and bound in prison. Verse 2 proceeds to describe this good news of the Spirit as "the acceptable year of the LORD." Immediately after this phrase, verse 2 adds "and the day of vengeance" followed by "to comfort all that mourn." Verse 3 then describes the end result of verses 1-2 as that of righteousness. Finally, observe that all 3 of these verses, including the vengeance phrase, appear in a context of glorifying God.

"The acceptable year of the Lord" which results in comfort and righteousness for sinners is also similar to the *time of judgment* mentioned in Isaiah 26:9 and 1 Peter 4:17. Most people equate judgment with vengeance, and so it can be. God's vengeance, however, is unlike man's vengeance. He does not repay evil with evil (Rom 12:17-21; 1 Thes 5:15; 1 Pet 3:8-9; Mat 5:39; Pr 20:22; 24:29; Lev 19:18). Instead, **He repays good for evil** (1 Pet 3:9; 1 Thes 5:15; 1 Cor 4:12; Luke 6:26-27, 35; Mat 5:44; Rom 12:20-21; Pr 25:21; Ex 23:4-5). *Jesus' Blood was God's vengeance for sin,* not punishing sinners on earth, or tormenting them in hell forever. Such ruthlessness could never satisfy God's vengeance. Neither is it representative of God's judgment throne of *mercy* (Ex 25:17; Pr 20:28). Consider Jesus' blood satisfying God's vengeance in Isaiah 63:1-**4**-19.

God is not a Father who tells His children to do one thing while He, Himself, does just the opposite. He commands us to be like Him. Since He commands us to return good for evil, therefore, how can He send wicked people to hell forever? Some people have not yet seen that God has a perfectly

successful rehabilitation program of love, mercy, pity, forgiveness, and appropriate punishments by which He *con-victs´ con´victs* of their sin (Jude 1:14-15), thus converting them to Christ.

God's day of *vengeance* is a day of *judgment* in which the unjust, because of Christ's good-for-evil sacrifice, will learn righteousness under Christ's Kingdom administration. During that time, the Lord will justify all of the remaining unjust souls as He draws them (John 12:32-33) to Himself through His good tidings (Isa 61:1; 2 Cor 5:14-15). As Isaiah 61:2 declares, this vengeance/judgment results in comfort!

Observe God's hour of judgment in the following passage regarding the age-enduring gospel:

> "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting [i.e. age-enduring] gospel to preach *unto them that dwell on the earth,* and to *every* nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7 saying with a loud voice, *Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment* [# 2920] *is come*; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev 14:6-7

Revelation 14:1-5, which precedes the above passage, presents a celestial group of saints referred to as the 144,000. They are viewed in contrast to a terrestrial group (1 Cor 15:40) that is described in verses 6-7 as "them that dwell on the earth." Yet it is this earthly, terrestrial group to whom the age-enduring gospel is being preached (1 Pet 4:6; Ephes 5:14; John 5:24-29). Even though the 144,000 saints are already sealed with the Spirit and standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb (Rev 14:1), *grace and judgment* (justice unto righteousness) continue to be poured out to "them that dwell on the earth" [i.e. them that live according to earthy standards].

God's judgment is about making people right and whole. It's about restoration, not about an evil-for-evil vengeance. Jesus paid the vengeance price for sin (Isa 53:4-8; 59:17; 61:2; **63:1-4-6**;

2 Cor 5:21). His judgments definitely include trials, suffering, and chastisement for every soul, but only for the sake of transforming them into His image (Rom 8:28-29-32; Phlp 3:21; Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 3:18) so that they can be partakers of His holiness (Heb 12:5-10; 1 Pet 3:15-17).

Finally, I invite the reader's attention to Appendix 6 where an exceptional article by A. P. Adams is included on the nature and purpose of God's judgments. Mr. Adam's keen insights substantiate that God's judgments are something to be desired rather than something to be dreaded. He also explains how the Greek word *krisis* that is most often translated "judgment" is equivalent to the English word "crisis," and that both *krisis* and crisis signify a critical decision and *turning point.* He applies this turning point (i.e. judgment) with **God turning man's heart** away from the old creation and towards the new creation.

> *. . . Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the* LORD *my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth* [i.e. the first man Adam, 1 Cor 15:45-46]. Jeremiah 31:18-19

Chapter 7

Resurrection

Having considered the vital issues of God's sovereignty and judgment, we now arrive at the third pillar upon which universal restoration stands securely, resurrection. One of the reasons that most people don't believe in universal salvation is that they fail to understand that the majority of humanity will be restored during the resurrection of the unjust. At that time, their judgment *unto life* begins.

Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of the Christian faith. While many Christians agree that this is true, very few of them understand the ramifications of resurrection. In this chapter, we will investigate the significance of Jesus' resurrection upon the entire world instead of its effects on only Jesus and a few others.

Since nobody today has seen a body rise from the dead, many suppose that the resurrection is simply a mystery that cannot be understood until it occurs. Since resurrection is the basis of Christianity, however, we can be sure that the Bible has much to reveal to us about it.

While many people mistakenly assume that the resurrection is a one-time event that will occur sometime in the future, the Bible maintains that resurrection is a process that begins as soon as the Holy Spirit enters a person's life (Ephes 2:6; Col 3:1-4), thus creating a completely new creature (2 Cor 5:17; Ephes 4:24; Col 3:9-10). That new creation's soul then continues to mature

into the fullness of the measure of the stature of Jesus Christ (Ephes 4:13).

The resurrection that most Christians anticipate, and rightly so, is the resurrection of the body (Rom 8:23). While that resurrection is indeed a glorious hope that we should desire, it can never transpire until a person's spirit and soul are resurrected.

Some may contend that the unjust will be raised in a physical (i.e. terrestrial, 1 Cor 15:40) body for judgment. While that is true, it shouldn't be assumed that the resurrection of the unjust is a *glorious,* bodily resurrection. The unjust will not be raised with a glorious body until their spirit and soul have been resurrected through God's judgments. Scriptures such as 1 Peter 4:1-7, 12-**17** and 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 establish this fact.

Have you ever seen a dead person being resurrected? So far, very few people have witnessed such an earth-shaking event. It seems unnatural to believe in something that we have not witnessed for ourselves. Faith is absolutely imperative to accept such a concept as resurrection. We should never believe, however, that faith is simply imaginary and unreal. On the contrary, "faith is a *substance* of things hoped for [i.e. expected], the evidence of things not seen" (Heb 11:1). Christians are directed to live by faith in God's Word, not by the physical perception of things around them (2 Cor 5:7). In fact, "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6).

The prophet Joel foretold that when God's Spirit was poured out in the last days, those touched by His anointing would dream dreams and see visions (Joel 2:28). These dreams and visions were not human imaginations but Divine inspirations. Joel simply described the results of God opening eyes so that they could see the same dreams and visions about which all the prophets were moved to write (1 Pet 1:10-12). Proverbs 29:18

states that "without a prophetic vision, the people cast off restraint" (ESV).

By faith in God, we hold to a vision that the universe was created by His Word (Heb 11:3). Likewise, it is by faith that we long for the resurrection of the dead since it is the foreordained plan of God for *all* of the first generation of the Adamic race (i.e. the first Adam, 1 Cor 15:45). By faith we also embrace a vision that the ultimate outcome of the resurrection of *all* the dead will be a second generation of Adam's race, a re-generation (Mat 19:28), a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), a new Adamic race (1 Cor 15:45-57) with new heavens (rulers & administrators) and a new earth that is cleansed and at rest (Isa 14:7-8; 1 Chron 16:30; Ps 93:1; Heb 12:28). Such visions form a heavenly hope that comes by diligent attention to hearing God's Word (Heb 11:1 with Rom 10:17) concerning resurrection.

Resurrection is a concept that is foolish to the natural man (1 Cor 2:14) and the carnal mind (Rom 8:5-7). Since it cannot be seen in the present world around him, he perceives it to be simply an imagined fantasy for gullible, religious people.

Not only is the idea of a dead person being raised to life a difficult belief to accept, it is just as difficult to grasp God's *details* regarding the resurrection. Even many Christians who believe in resurrection, do not accept that it holds any hope for the unjust. Yet God's Own Word says otherwise. Daniel 12:1-3 supplies a bold testimony that describes a resurrection of the just *and the unjust*. In verse 3 of that passage it states that the wise (i.e. the just) will be turning many to righteousness! Who could they be turning to righteousness if not the unjust? Likewise, who are the faithful Christians judging in the regeneration that Jesus declared in Matthew 19:28? Too few people stop to consider what is meant by this future regeneration (i.e. by means of the resurrection).

Resurrection is a mysterious phenomenon, whether to intellectual Athenians on Mars Hill (Acts 17:18, 32), Jewish

religious leaders (Acts 23:6-8), secular Roman officials (Acts 24:21-22; 26:6-8, 23), or even some Christians (1 Cor 15:12). Although many Christians profess that resurrection is the foundation of Christianity, few of them grasp very much about God's plan of resurrection for restoring *all* of Adam's race (1 Cor 15:21-28).

Along with God's grace, resurrection was the apostle Paul's signature message wherever he spoke. In fact, in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, he describes the resurrection as the essence of the gospel. That is altogether noteworthy. If resurrection is at the heart of the gospel, Christians ought to be diligently seeking to discover its every dimension. While speaking to King Agrippa in Acts 26:6-8, Paul connected the resurrection with the promise that God made to Israel's forefathers!

> And now I stand on trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers, [the promise] our 12 tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve Him night and day. Because of this hope I am being accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it considered incredible by any of you *that God raises the dead?* Acts 26:6-8 HCSB

The hope of the promise that Paul mentioned 3 times in this passage is that of the resurrection. When and what did God promise Israel's forefathers about resurrection? While there are various references throughout the Old Scriptures regarding resurrection, they are all founded upon the unconditional promise that God made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3:

> I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you *all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*

Although there is no conspicuous reference to resurrection in this initial promise to Abraham, God expanded the revelation of this same promise in Genesis 22:16-18 as follows:

> 16 ... By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, *and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son;* 17 that in blessing I will bless thee, and in

> multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 and in thy seed [i.e. Christ, Gal 3:16] *shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;* because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Hidden between the lines of the above passage is the resurrection of the dead. Hebrews 11:17-19 expounds it this way:

> By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19 accounting that *God was able to raise him up, even from the dead;* from whence also he received him in a figure [i.e. as a pattern of Calvary, John 3:16].

Abraham is not called the father of our faith without good reason. Consider how He believed in impossible things such as the miracle birth of Isaac just because God promised it. Abraham's faith, however, grew ever deeper. In the above passage from Hebrews 11, Abraham fulfilled the pattern of Calvary because he trusted and obeyed God. In this case, for what did he believe God? Hebrews 11:19 informs us that he believed that God was able *to raise his son* Isaac from the dead. Although Isaac was a type of Christ, most Christians agree that it would be wrong to assume that this pattern in Isaac signifies the future resurrection of Jesus Christ alone.

The point of this discussion about God's unconditional promise to Abraham is to grasp *how many* people will be raised. To what measure did God's promised blessing to Abraham extend? God's Word declares that the blessing was promised to *all the families of the earth* because of God's covenant-promise to Israel. Yet many people, even Christians, limit this Divine promise by assuming that it will affect only *a few among all* of the families of the earth.

Such a narrow interpretation of God's promise to Abraham reveals at least two things about such a belief: First it

demonstrates that such a faith fails to understand God's agenda of raising every Adamic creature in order to set them free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (Rom 8:20-21; Heb 2:14-18; 1 Cor 15:21-28). Secondly, it conveys that, apart from a revelation of God's resurrection plan, man doubts the extent of goodness in God's good news of sending His Son to be the Savior of the world.

The Scriptures clearly declare over and over again that there will be a resurrection of both the just *and the unjust* (Dan 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15). The critical question is, what happens then? The way that seems right to orthodox, traditional Christianity is that the just will go to heaven while the unjust will go to hell. Why would God raise people that are supposedly already in hell, only to officially pronounce eternal damnation on them and then cast them back into hell again? Such a view of God is most uncharacteristic of Christ Who, being the exact image of God, said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The common objection to the preceding explanation is this: God is not only loving, but He is also just and holy. I completely agree. True, holy, equitable justice, however, will be sure to make the punishment fit the crime (Gen 18:25). Does an eternity in hell fit the crime of man's rebellion for a few years on earth?

Furthermore, what does the Bible say is God's reason for correcting people? Hebrews 11:10 plainly records that God's judgments are not for revenge, but for reformation into His holiness! As unsuccessful as most of today's correctional institutions are, most of them at least attempt to reform their inmates. Is our wise, heavenly Father any less able or willing to reform His inmates who are incarcerated in the bondage of sin (Isa 61:1-4; Heb 2:14-15)?

The remainder of this chapter will cite Scriptures that declare what will happen to the just and the unjust *in the resurrection*.

This list of references is intentionally long since there is such a lack of awareness regarding God's resurrection program. In general, these verses depict those who will rule with Christ at the resurrection of the dead, those over whom they will be ruling, and the purpose for which they are ruling them:

Daniel 7:22, 26-27 HCSB... 22 until the Ancient of Days arrived and a *judgment* was given in favor of the holy ones of the Most High, for the time had come, and the holy ones took possession of the kingdom [Rev 11:15; Mat 19:28 = regeneration/ *resurrection*] ... 26 But the court will convene, and his [i.e. the 4th beast's] dominion will be taken away [2 Thes 2:7], to be completely destroyed forever [Dan 2:34-35, 44-45]. 27 The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High [Luke 22:29-30; Rev 11:15]. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom [Luke 1:33; Isa 9:7], and *all* rulers will serve and obey Him [Ps 72:11; 1 Cor 15:24-28].

How is this passage related to resurrection? When Jesus spoke of the regeneration (i.e. resurrection) in Matthew 19:28, He explained that His faithful followers would be judging during that time. Just judgments result in righteousness (Isa 26:9) which is the first outcome of being resurrected in spirit from the dead (Ephes 2:5-6).

Daniel 12:2-3 NIV... Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will *awake* [i.e. be raised]: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and *those who lead many to righteousness,* like the stars for ever and ever.

> There are only two groups mentioned in the above resurrection passage - the wise and the unwise (implied). Who are the "many" that the wise are *leading to righteousness?* It only stands to reason that they are the unrighteous (i.e. the unwise) before they are turned to repentance.

Many are troubled immediately by the word "everlasting" in Daniel 12:2, and rightly so. For those who have not yet come to understand that the Biblical words "everlasting, eternal, and forever" are equated with our English word "eon" which means *an age,* it is of the utmost importance for them to research this matter with all thoroughness and honesty. To begin, they should observe the similarity between the Greek word "aion" (Strong's Concordance # 165) and the English word "eon." The Greek word "aion" is the equivalent to the Hebrew word "olam" which is translated in Daniel 12:2 as *everlasting,* but should be translated *age-lasting* or *age-enduring.*

Some will dismiss such an idea by saying that if there is no everlasting punishment, then neither can there be everlasting life since the same word is employed for both in passages such as Daniel 12:2 and Mat 25:46. The simple answer to such a seeming dilemma is that both punishment and life are present in every age (i.e. eon). Just because a godly person enjoys God's divine life in this age, doesn't mean that he won't continue to enjoy it in future ages.

Furthermore, there are Greek and Hebrew words that do mean endless life. Some examples include the following: Luke 20:36; John 11:26; 1 Cor 15:42, 53; Heb 7:3, 16, 24, 25; 1 Peter 1:4; and Psalm 102:27. Read them to discover that Christians inherit both age-lasting life as well as actual everlasting (i.e. literally endless) life. More insights regarding the misuse of the word "everlasting" can be reviewed in chapter 4 of this book. Appendix 11 also lists other books that elaborate more on the words "everlasting, eternal, and forever.

Psalm 72:1-2, 9-11, 18-19... Give the king [& His princes, Isa 32:1] thy *judgments* [i.e. for ruling in the resurrection, Rev 11:15; Isa 32:1; Mat 19:28], O God, and thy *righteousness* unto the king's son. 2 He [and His Body... Rom 8:17-21; Rev 2:26-29; 3:21; 19:14] shall *judge* thy people *with righteousness,* and thy poor with *judgment*... 9 They that dwell in the wilderness [i.e. the barrenness of sin] shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. 10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the

kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. 11 Yea, *all kings* shall fall down before him: *all nations* shall serve him...18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. 19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let *the whole earth* be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

> Notice in verses 1-2 that judgments and righteousness are intimately connected just as they are in Isaiah 26:9. Verse 19 describes the final result of God's judgments and righteousness when the whole earth will be filled with His glory. *Glory* is a term associated with *resurrection*. One is impossible apart from the other.

Psalm 149:6-9... Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword [i.e. God's Word] in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron [i.e. judgment]; to execute upon them the *judgment* written: *This honor have all his saints* [in the resurrection, Rev 20:6]...

> This passage is not about the saints tormenting heathens with God's Word, or about binding ungodly kings with chains in hell. Instead, this honor is regarding the saints ruling with Christ (i.e. shepherding or feeding others) in the *resurrection*. Revelation 20:6 describes this honor as being "blessed."

Isaiah 32:1-5... Behold, a king shall reign in *righteousness*, and princes shall rule in *judgment*. And a man [i.e. Christ, 1 Tim 2:5] shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place [i.e. of sin], as the shadow of a great rock [Ps 91:1-2] in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken [Isa 29:18 - 24; 30:18-20-21-22]. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly. The vile

person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl [i.e. greedy, miser] said to be bountiful.

> From passages such as Daniel 12:2-3 and Matthew 19:28, it is apparent that the above passage in Isaiah 32 is describing the resurrection of the just and unjust. God's *judgments resurrect* the blind so that they can see, and the deaf so that they can hear. If princes are ruling with the king, who is it that needs a hiding place from the wind except the unjust? And who is the hiding place for the unjust except Christ? This restoration can begin only when a person's spirit is *resurrected* through a spiritual conception (1 Pet 1:3).

Isaiah 60:1-5... *Arise* [i.e. resurrection], shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is *risen* upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the LORD shall *arise* upon thee, and his *glory* shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles [i.e. nations] shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy *rising*... the abundance of the sea [i.e. the masses of mankind] shall be *converted* unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee [Isa 2:2-4].

Isaiah 61:4... *they* shall build the old wastes [i.e. people's wasted, destroyed lives], they shall *raise up* the former desolations, and they shall *repair* [i.e. restore] the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

> Who is the "they" who will be *restoring* the old wastes, *raising* up the *former* desolations, *repairing* the wasted cities and the desolations "of many generations"? Isaiah 61:1-3 reveals that they are those who have been touched by the Spirit of God and thus have been united with Christ. Consider their ministry with Christ in Revelation 3:21; 20:6; and Matthew 19:28. They are *the wise* in Daniel 12:3 who are turning many (i.e. multitudes) to righteousness during *the resurrection*.

Malachi 4:1-3... Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven [not orthodox hell, but the Holy Spirit's fire]; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up... but unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness *arise* with healing in his wings [i.e. rays, NCV & Moffatt]; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked...

This day is "the day of the Lord" and is directly linked with *judgment* and *resurrection.* What is it that burns up the chaff except the Spirit of God Who is a consuming fire? John the Baptist spoke of this fire in Matthew 3:11-12. The first Christians at Pentecost experienced this cleansing fire, and their chaff (i.e. old man) began being burned up. 1 Peter 4:12 and 17 describe God's justification and sanctification as a fiery trial of judgment.

Furthermore, how will the saints "tread down the wicked"? They will tread them down with the judgments from God's Word as is seen in the following Scriptures:

Psalm 149:5-9... Let the saints be joyful in glory [i.e. in the resurrection]: let them sing aloud upon their beds [of rest]. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; 7 to execute vengeance [i.e. Christ's atonement] upon the heathen, and punishments [Heb 12:6, 11; Jude 14-15, punishments that convict and convince] upon the people; 8 to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; 9 to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints...

This surely paints a different view of the saints in heaven than most people imagine!

2 Corinthians 10:4-5... For *the weapons of our warfare* are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Ephesians 6:11-13... *Put on the whole armor of God,* that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness *in the heavenly places* [i.e. in the heart and mind, Rom 8:5-7]. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

For any who think that the verses above apply only to present-day believers, Revelation 19:11-16 portrays a scene that depicts those ruling and reigning with Christ as employing these same methods of warfare in His coming Kingdom in the *resurrection*.

Matthew 13:43... Then shall the righteous shine forth [Isa 60:1-3; Dan 12:1-3; Mat 5:14-16; 1 Pet 2:12] as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Matthew 13:43 is referring back to Daniel 12:1-3 which describes this time as one of *resurrection.* As always, the purpose of shining forth is to be a witness to draw others into the light of Christ's gospel of His love and mercy.

Matthew 19:28... ye which have followed me, in the *regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, *judging* the twelve tribes of Israel.

Regeneration and *resurrection* are all but synonymous. If all Israel will be saved as Romans 11:26 affirms, then Matthew 19:28, which states that the faithful will be *judging* the 12 tribes of Israel, leads to the logical deduction that *judging* is the process that leads to resurrection and salvation, not the orthodox hell.

Luke 22:28-30... Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom [Rev

11:15], as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones *judging* [during the resurrection] the twelve tribes of Israel.

John 5:25, 28-29 ESV...25 Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when *the dead* will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear *will live*... 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when *all* who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment [i.e. justice resulting in righteousness, Isa 26:9].

> Judgment is a key word to understand in the text above. In short, God's judgment involves a rehabilitation process that issues in righteousness (Isa 26:9) for everyone. See chapter 6 to review additional insights regarding judgment.

1 Corinthians 6:2... Do ye not know that the saints [i.e. holy ones, Dan 7:22 HCSB] shall *judge the world* [during the resurrection]? and if the world shall be *judged* by you, are ye unworthy to *judge* the smallest matters?

> Mark the context surrounding the word "judgment" in this verse. After stating that the saints will judge the world in the future, the verse continues to charge today's saints with the responsibility of judging present-day matters in the church. Both present and future judgment is about promoting righteous standards and discouraging unrighteous standards. Yes, these judgments will include God's prescribed penalties when applicable, but they are not about damning people to hell.
>
> Sometimes God prescribes the death penalty for various crimes. Today's culture, including some Christians, view the death penalty as being too harsh and unmerciful. The death penalty is also rejected by some because they don't understand that God's resurrection plan will raise up these hardened criminals in a dispensation that is equipped to restore them (i.e. Rev 11:15). If only we believed and obeyed

God's Word regarding the death penalty, many criminals would think twice about committing their evil deeds. Our jails would not be overcrowded, and our economy would be strengthened for many reasons, including less need for police and less funds for housing, feeding, and caring for incorrigible criminals.

2 Timothy 4:1... I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom [Rev 11:15; Dan 7:22].

At Christ's appearing (i.e. manifested brightness), the living (i.e. those in Christ) who have been last and least in the world's kingdom, will be judged and promoted to be rulers in Christ's Kingdom (Dan 7:22; Rev 11:15). They will be ruling (i.e. judging) over those who are dead (i.e. not in Christ "yet," Rev 20:4-6) in order to lead them toward a *resurrection* from the dead (in spirit, soul, & body).

1 Peter 4:5-6, 17 ESV... but they [i.e. the Gentiles] will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead [in spirit], that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit [1 Cor 5:5] the way God does... 17 For it is time for judgment to *begin* at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

As mentioned earlier, many quickly assume that this is a rhetorical question with the obvious answer that the disobedient ones will end up in hell. However, since judgment *began* being administered to Christians *in order to perfect them* (1 Pet 4:17), the logical conclusion must be that the disobedient souls whose judgment has not yet begun, will also experience perfection in time. How can the ultimate results not be the same? God's judgments are the reason for a Christian's justification and growth in sanctification. Those same judgments will eventually touch all mankind with the same result of *resurrecting* their spirits, souls, and finally their bodies.

> Isaiah 26:9... when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.
>
> Psalm 19:9-11... 9 ...the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. 10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and *in keeping of them there is great reward.*

From the preceding insights, consider how God's *judgments* are the transforming instrument in His *resurrection* process.

Hebrews 12:26-29... Once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven [i.e. evil in high places of authority]. And this word, yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken [Ps 15:1-5; 16:8; 112:6; Isa 24:13; Dan 3:23-25; Rev 11:15], as of things that are made [by human hands, Dan 2:31-35], that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved [Dan 2:44; 7:14], let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

> When God shakes the heavens, the kingdom of this world will fall and be overcome by God's kingdom [Rev 11:15]. According to Daniel 12:1-3, this occurs at *the resurrection.* Notice that during this time of judgment, God is the consuming fire [Mat 3:11-12], not Satan in hell.

Jude 14-15... Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to *convince* [and *convict*] all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

> Observe Deuteronomy 33 that inspired Jude's words. It is a combination of history and prophecy that describes this *judgment* as a *blessing*:

> Deuteronomy 33:1-3... And this is *the blessing,* wherewith Moses the man of God *blessed* the children of Israel before his death. 2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and *he came with ten thousands of saints:* from his right hand went a *fiery* law ***for*** them. 3 Yea, *he loved the people;* all his saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet [Ps 110:1-7, submitted under His feet]; *every one* shall receive of thy words.

> Jude 14-15, Deuteronomy 33:1-3, and Psalm 149:6-9 all describe a time when the Lord is coming... with His saints [i.e. at the resurrection]... to execute *judgment*... with fire... in order to convict and convince *all the ungodly*. This event will result in *everyone* receiving His words and submitting under His authority [Ps 110:1-7]. Since this prophecy has not yet occurred, only the eyes of faith can see it. The Lord's coming and *resurrection,* of course, are linked together.

In Deuteronomy 33:2, Sinai, Seir, and Paran are mentioned in connection with the Lord's Coming. Sinai represents God's Law-Word. Seir represents Esau-Edom's territory that God's Law will subdue at this time (Isa 63:1-7). Paran means *ornamental* and its root word means *to gleam, embellish, glorify, or beautify*. It calls to mind Ezekiel 16:8-14 when God spoke of embellishing Israel with His glory. Habakkuk 3:3-4-13 also confirms that Paran is associated with God glorifying the earth. All of these verses are connected with God's judgments and *resurrection* (Isa 26:9).

Revelation 2:26-27... And he that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power [authority, rulership] over the nations [during the resurrection, Rev 20:6]; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father [Rev 3:21].

> Jesus is the Great Shepherd. Overcomers are to be like Him and share in His throne of inheritance (Rev 3:21; 20:6; Mat 19:28). To *rule* the nations with a rod of iron means to *shepherd* them with *righteous judgments*. "As vessels of a potter shall they be broken" is based upon Jeremiah 18:4

and Romans 9:21-23 which illustrate God breaking those under the Old Covenant and restoring them under His New and better Covenant (Heb 8:6-13).

Revelation 3:21... To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

By now it should be evident that *resurrection* is directly related to ruling and reigning with Christ (Rev 20:6).

Revelation 5:10... And hast made us unto our God kings and priests [Rev 1:6]; and we shall reign [i.e. rule] . . . on the earth [during the resurrection, Dan 12:1-3... thus restoring the old waste places, Isaiah 58:12].

Revelation 11:15-18... The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ [including those *in His Body*]; and he [Christ and His Body] shall reign for ever and ever... thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be *judged* [at the resurrection of the unjust, 1 Pet 4:17-18], and that thou should give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth.

The Wicked One (i.e. the man of sin, the old man) would destroy the earth. According to 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8, however, he will be destroyed with the bright manifestation of Christ's Presence (Gr. *parousia*.). In that passage, Paul states that the Wicked One will be destroyed "with the Spirit of His mouth." This denotes spiritual warfare and is in reference to destroying the old man, the man of sin, the first Adam. This destruction occurs by the Spirit of His fiery Law (i.e. the Words that proceed out of His mouth).

Revelation 11:15-18 and Isaiah 14:16-20 also refer to a time when those who have destroyed the earth will be destroyed. The opening four verses of Isaiah 14 set the scene of this

great event that results in mercy and rest for the earth. At that time, not only Israel is saved, but all nations convert to her economy after the king of Babylon is destroyed.

This passage in Revelation 11:15-18 parallels the vision of Daniel 12:1-3 where a *resurrection* of the just and the unjust results in the righteous becoming "stars" with authority to rule over the unjust, thus turning them to righteousness. We see then that the resurrection of the just is for the purpose of *restoring* the unjust to righteousness as their old man, alias the king of Babylon, is destroyed.

Revelation 14:1-8... Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand [12 x 12 symbolizes perfected government], having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne [of judgment], before the four living creatures [i.e. kings, Rev 20:4], and the elders [i.e. priests, Rev 20:6]; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth [i.e. *resurrected* with glorified bodies]. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits [implies more "good" fruit in the future!] to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God. 6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the *everlasting gospel* . . . to preach *to those who dwell on the earth* – to *every* nation, tribe, tongue, and people – 7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His *judgment* has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." 8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen [Isaiah 14:4-24; Rev 11:15; 18:2], that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

While there are numerous insights to observe in this lengthy passage, verse 6 is strikingly dynamic: *The everlasting gospel*… to preach to *those who dwell on the earth.* Isn't it too late for those who are not prepared when the Lord returns? It may be too late for being in the *first* resurrection to rule with Christ and deliver the remainder of His unregenerate creation, but it's never too late to hear the age-enduring gospel. It is heralded throughout every age, including the great day of the Lord (Joel 2:11, 31; Zeph 1:14; Mal 4:5). Remember that according to Galatians 3:8, the Bible's own definition of the gospel is God's promise to bless *all* of earth's families through the Messiah.

This gospel of God's grace does not complete its mission at the end of the church age. Neither does judgment *begin* in a future age. As Scripture declares in1 Peter 4:17, judgment *begins* from the church, the House of God.

For those who already realize that the Greek word for "everlasting" actually means *age-lasting,* this verse confirms that the gospel continues throughout the age of resurrection and judgment. How else can the just help turn the many unjust souls to righteousness? The gospel will continue to ring throughout all the ages until there is no more time nor ages remaining.

Those who dwell on the earth are those outside of the 144,000. They are in the *terrestrial* resurrection in contrast to the *celestial* resurrection, (1 Cor 15:40-42a; Rev 20:6). Revelation 7:9-17 states that those who are not in the 144,000 will eventually wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and have all their tears washed away!

The next and final passage for consideration in this chapter about resurrection is lengthy and intense. It includes many excerpts from both Revelation 19 and 20. It is well worth reading, however, since it illuminates many things about resurrection:

Revelation 19:6, 11, 15-21... 6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters,

and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth... 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth *judge* and make war [spiritual war, Ex 15:3; Isa 42:13]... 15 And *out of his mouth* goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule [i.e. shepherd, feed, supervise] them with a rod of iron [i.e. judgment]... 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls [i.e. those in the *celestial* resurrection] that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper [i.e. meat in due season, Mat 24:45] of the great God; 18 that ye may eat [i.e. consume] the flesh [i.e. carnal ways] of kings... 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast [i.e. unjust State government] was taken, and with him the false prophet [i.e. unjust Church government] that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone [Rev 18:2, 8-10]. 21 And the remnant [i.e. the unjust citizens] were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded *out of his mouth* [v. 15; Ephes 6:17]: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh . . . . .

. . . . . **Revelation 20:1-6**... And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years [This confirms a new age with *resurrected* saints ruling with Christ. Compare Rev 19:6; 11:15], 3 and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and *judgment* was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for

the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and *they lived and reigned with Christ* a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead . . . lived not again *until* the thousand years were finished. This is the first [i.e. best] *resurrection*. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests [i.e. ministers - administrators] of God and of Christ, and shall reign [Mat 19:28] with him a thousand years.

Many of the latter verses listed in this resurrection passage describe the righteous *ruling and reigning* with Christ. Just as Christ is presently sitting on the right hand of the throne of God while ruling and reigning over the Church, even so will the Church [i.e. His Body, Col 1:22-23] begin sharing this role of ruling and reigning with Christ during the first resurrection (Rev 3:21; John 14:12).

Revelation 20:5 and 6 are the only two verses in the Bible that refer to "the first resurrection." While "*first* resurrection" is a fair and accurate translation, it is my opinion that "*best* resurrection," which is also a legitimate rendering, offers more insight regarding the nature of this resurrection. Hebrews 10:35 speaks of a "better" resurrection, though it is a different Greek word than the one used in Revelation 20:5-6 for "first."

In Luke 15:22, where the prodigal son is given the "best" robe, the same Greek word that is translated "first" in Revelation 20:5-6 is rendered as "best." This is extremely significant since translating Revelation 20:5-6 as "the best resurrection" infers that there is also a less desirable resurrection. These two resurrections are what other verses describe as the resurrection of the just and the unjust, or the resurrection of the living (those in Christ) and the dead [John 5:28-29; Acts 10:42; 24:15; 2 Tim 4:1; 1 Pet 4:5; Luke 14:13-14; Dan 12:2]. And while the resurrection of the unjust is a less desirable one, it still works together for good, even though it is not the best.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27... Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize [i.e. the best prize]? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25 And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26 Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27 But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Philippians 3:14... I press toward the mark for *the prize* of the high [i.e. highest, best] calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Other Scriptures that offer further insights about this *first* or *best* resurrection include references that speak of the last being first and the first being last (Mat 19:30; 20:16). The Greek word that is translated "first" is the same Greek word that is translated "first" in Revelation 20:5-6. This reveals that this word "first" indicates rank or quality, not only chronological order.
Consider also Matthew 21:31 where Jesus said that harlots and publicans would enter the kingdom *before* the corrupt religious leaders. Even though Jesus accused the scribes and Pharisees of being hypocrites, He did not say that they would *never* enter God's Kingdom, but that unless they repented, they would be among the last to do so, and not the first. The fact is, everyone will be made alive (resurrected and born again), but each one in his own order (1 Cor 15:22-24).

Those in the best or first resurrection will be *ruling and reigning* with Christ for 1000 years. Just as Christ has been sitting at the right hand of God interceding for His Body during the last 2000 years, even so will the Body of Christ also be sitting in His throne at the right hand of God (Rev 3:21; John 14:3, 12), interceding for the remaining unperfected souls in Israel (1 Cor 15:20-28, the resurrection chapter) during the millennium. With all of this in mind, verses such as Daniel 12:1-3; Matthew 19:28; and John

5:25-29 become much more meaningful regarding the gospel.

This concludes the long but important list of Scriptures regarding the awesome significance of resurrection. How many sermons do we hear today about the saints sitting in Christ's throne as they rule and reign with Him during the millennium? How often do we hear Christian teaching that connects the *judgment* of God with cleansing and restoring *many* to righteousness during the resurrection? And finally, though most Christians profess to believe in God's sovereignty, how many understand that His sovereignty incorporates judgment during the resurrection in order to fulfill His sovereign will in blessing all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8)? As stated at the beginning of this chapter, *the restoration of all things* rests assured on a proper discernment God's sovereignty, judgment, and resurrection.

Chapter 8

All The Prophets

> [Jesus Christ] ...whom heaven must receive until the times of *restoration of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth of *all His holy prophets* since the world began. Acts 3:21

The above verse is a dynamic statement that should provoke every reader's attention. Does it really mean what it says? It is earth-shakingly profound!

When God opened my eyes to Acts 3:21, I took up the challenge to search all of the prophets, as well as every book in the Bible, for any verses that addressed *the restoration of all things.* What I've discovered since that time has changed my entire perspective about God's nature, and His plan.

> O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken... And beginning at Moses and *all the prophets,* he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:25, 27

There are at least two different methods of searching the prophets to discover if all of them did, in fact, mention *the restoration of all things.* First, one can simply search for at least one verse regarding universal restoration from each prophet. Chapters 1-3 of this book are a result of that approach. The other method of searching the prophets for universal restoration is to study each prophet's *overall* message

to discover if it affirms this teaching. This is the approach followed in this chapter.

Prophets have a twofold ministry. First, they rebuke the sinner as a means of bringing him to repentance. Secondly, they declare hope to the sinner because of Israel's coming Messiah who was to redeem them from their sin and captivity. As we explore the prophets, we will find them offering this hope of *all Israel being redeemed* by their Messiah so that they will indeed be a blessing to *all the families of the earth* (Gen 12:3).

This chapter will include a brief survey of the following five prophets: Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Haggai, and Malachi. These prophets were chosen not because they are unusually unique, but simply because their accounts are the shortest, while still containing all of the essential dynamics of the lengthier prophets. In each of these prophets, as well as every other prophet of God, the prevailing gospel of the restoration of all things is present.

JOEL

In chapter 1, Joel illustrates the devastatingly sad state of God's people due to their sins. In chapter 2, he delivers a call to repentance in verses 12-14, followed by amazing hope in verses 18-27. Finally he completes the chapter with the following verses:

> 28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon *all flesh;* and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. 30 And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood [i.e. death to old ways], and fire [i.e. purifying], and pillars of smoke [i.e. evidence of destroying chaff]. 31 The sun [i.e. the rulers of the old heavens and the old earth] shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. 32 And it shall come to pass,

> that *whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered* [Isa 45:22-25]: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. Joel 2:28-32

True, only those who call on the name of the Lord will be delivered. As indicated in Isaiah 45:22-25, however, *everyone will* call on the name of the Lord and be saved (1 Cor 15:22-23-28; 1 Tim 2:4-6; Eccles 3:11a). Joel 2:28-32 is a statement of *how* to be saved, while Isaiah 45: 22-25 declares *how many* will be saved.

Now consider the first two verses of Joel's final chapter:

> 1 For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again [i.e. turn back, or take away] the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather *all nations,* and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with [i.e. judge] them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. Joel 3:1-2

Many who read these words interpret this passage as God taking revenge on the nations who were Israel's enemies. It should be understood, however, that those ungodly nations were God's instrument of judgment to Israel because of her sins (see Isa 10:5-6 and Jer 25:9, for example). When God completes His judgment on Israel, Israel will not be damned to hell forever, but will eventually be redeemed, cleansed, and pardoned (Joel 3:20-21). Once again, we discover that God's judgments, while being severe, are remedial.

Since this is the case for the nation Israel, how could God not deal similarly with the other nations since He is impartial? In fact, according to Luke 12:47-48 which states that those who have been blessed to know more about God will be held more accountable, God's judgments upon the other nations ought to be less severe than those judgments He placed on Israel since only Israel was given His Laws (Ps 147:19-20).

Remember, Israel is eventually to come through her judgments cleansed, as is seen in Joel's final verse (i.e. Joel 3:21. Also compare Isa 1:27; 4:4). The same will be the case with the other nations that Joel mentions in 3:2 that are being gathered into the *valley* [i.e. difficult times that humble people] of Jeho-shaphat (Jehovah's judgment), or "the valley of decision" in verse 14. This word "decision" may also be translated "threshing" and can be applied to Matthew 3:11-12 concerning God's threshing floor. Just as God will gather His people Israel back to Himself through His judgments (Gal 3:24), even so will He also gather all of the other nations to Himself. Israel is simply His firstborn nation (Ex 4:22; Jer 31:9).

Some may argue against my analysis of Joel's prophecy since Joel 3:19 plainly declares that Egypt and Edom will be a desolation. My reply is that Egypt and Edom represent worldly governments that embrace laws contrary to God's laws. Many verses such as Jeremiah 51:20-21 and Daniel 2:44 foretell of God's perfected kingdom (i.e. new Israel) breaking in pieces and consuming all other kingdoms. What becomes of the people that once gave allegiance to those kingdoms? In time, they will be converted, become super-naturalized citizens, and be absorbed into God's Kingdom that will last forever and fill all of the earth (Isa 2:2-4; 14:1; Jer 31:27; Dan 2:35-36; Zech 14:16-). The population of these ungodly kingdoms will not be utterly annihilated, but their ungodly governments will be.

Finally, observe the parallel passage in Zephaniah 3:8-9 with Joel 3:1-2 in which Zephaniah employs added insights of God gathering the nations:

> 8 Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for *all the earth shall be devoured* [2 Pet 3:10] with the fire of my jealousy. 9 For then will I turn to the people a pure

language, that they may ["may" is an assumed word] *all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.*

Consider Zephaniah's words again very carefully since they are concerning the same subject that Joel addressed: He prophesied that when God gathers the nations, *all the earth* would be devoured with His fire. This consumption is said to result in God turning these nations to Him so that *all of them* will call upon him and serve Him. Obviously, the fire that consumes all of the earth is God's Holy Spirit (Mat 3:11-12). Indeed, both Joel and Zephaniah speak of *the restoration of all things* as a result of God gathering all of the nations for judgment. Isaiah joins Joel and Zephaniah as a third witness when he writes,

... when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of *the world* will learn righteousness. Isaiah 26:9

OBADIAH

Obadiah's prophecy contains only 21 verses, but it includes, in miniature, all of the essential factors of God's good news. It's main focus is identified in verse 1 as God's victory over Edom. Most Bible students realize that Edom is Esau's country. The name "Edom" (Strongs # 123) is a Hebrew word whose root is from "Adam" (Strongs # 122). The essential meaning of both names is "red," and both are associated with *the earth* that has a reddish hue. Since Edom represents all that is earthly in contrast to the heavenly, the gist of Obadiah's prophecy is that all carnal, earthy elements in those who cling to Edom's nature will be burned up with the fire of God's Spirit.

A vital issue that ought to be determined from the start is whether God's underlying intent in this prophecy is to destroy Edomites or "Edomism" (i.e. evil Edomite laws, philosophies, and customs). Surely it is the latter. As such, God's victory over Edom concerns His victory over anyone who embraces the evil, *earthly* ways of Esau who, for a bowl of soup (i.e. earthly appetites), sold his spiritual heritage (Heb 12:14-17). The truth is that God is not partial to any ethnic people, but He is partial to truth and righteousness in all people.

The point is this: The battle that is mentioned in verse 1 is not primarily a physical battle, but a spiritual one. It is a battle for truth and righteousness. Edom (or Esau) represents earthiness.

> The first man [i.e. Adam] is *of the earth, earthy*: the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And ***as we*** have borne the image of the earthy [i.e. Edom], we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [i.e. Christ]. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall *all be changed* [after wrestling with the angel, Jacob's name was changed to Israel, representing a heavenly order], 52 in a moment, in the

twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible [i.e. earthy, Edomite form] *must* put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality [i.e. You *must* be born again, John 3:7]. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? [If one single soul remains in the grave, the grave has grounds for partial victory!] 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:47-57

While Obadiah 1:1-16 provides a summary of ethnic Edom's history, it is provided in this prophecy as a type of all humanity that still bears the image of *the earthy*.

Obadiah's final words in verses 17-21 declare God's victory over Esau through His people, Jacob-Israel. Jacob is described as fire and Esau as stubble. Fire and stubble symbolize God's purifying fire (i.e. Holy Spirit) consuming all stubble (i.e. earthiness) just as John the Baptist announced in Matthew 3:11-12. Obadiah 1:17 describes this event as a deliverance that will transpire on Mount Zion. Isaiah 2:3 reveals that Mount Zion is the place of God's Law. God's Law-Word is a fire (Deut 33:2; Jer 5:14; 23:29).

Obadiah's final verse (v. 21) states that saviors will be promoted on Mount Zion. Zion represents the administration of God's Law (Isa 2:3-4). In Mount Zion these saviors (or deliverers/ judges), will *judge* all Esau-like people with God's laws. This truth is echoed by other prophets in such passages as the following:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains [i.e. Mt. Zion], and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations shall flow unto it.* 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the

LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And he shall *judge* [with savior-deliverer judges] among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: *nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.* Isaiah 2:2-4

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool [i.e. submissive]. 2 The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion [the place of His judgments/ laws, Isa 2:3]: *rule* thou *in the midst of* thine enemies. 3 Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. 4 The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. 5 The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. 6 *He shall judge among the heathen* [i.e. nations], he shall fill the places with the dead bodies [Rom 7:9-13; Gal 2:20]; he shall wound the heads over many countries. 7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head [i.e. cause restoration]. Psalm 110:1-7

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes [i.e. saviors-deliverers-judges] shall rule in judgment. 2 And a man [i.e. Christ] shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. 3 And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. 4 The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and *the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly*. Isaiah 32:1-4

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world [i.e. Esau's kingdom] has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ [saviors-deliverers-judges, Christ & His Body, Rev 3:21; 20:6; Mat 19:28], and he shall reign forever and ever." 16 And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones [saviors-

deliverers that judge with God's Laws] before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign [Rev 20:6]. 18 The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead [i.e. earthy... dead to righteousness, Ephes 5:14] to be *judged,* and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." 19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened [i.e. opened for blind eyes to see - opened for spiritual business!], and the ark of his covenant was seen [Rev 1:7; Isa 29:18, 24] within his temple [1 Cor 3:16; Rom 8:19]. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail [i.e. all symbols of God's Word, Ex 19:16-19]. Revelation 11:15-19 ESV

For those who desire further companion verses to Obadiah's final verse regarding Mt. Zion's saviors-deliverers judging Mt. Esau, see the following passages that portray the saints (i.e. saviors-deliverers-judges) ruling and reigning (i.e. judging) with Christ: Psalm 72:1-20; 149:6-9; Daniel 7:9, 18, 22, 27; 12:1-3; Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:2; Jude 1:14-15; Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 14:1-8; and 20:1-6-15.

In summary, Mount Zion's judgments upon Mount Esau (Ob 1:21) are designed to burn up the chaff so that Edomite natures will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 5:5), thus resulting in complete regeneration and restoration for all mankind (1 Cor 15:48-57).

JONAH

For me, the most challenging book for discovering any verses that specifically describe universal restoration was the book of Jonah. After a few months of searching, meditating, and praying, it finally dawned on me that the entire book, as a whole, is one of the greatest examples of all concerning the restoration of all things. At first, I simply could not see the forest for the trees!

In the opening verses, God commanded Jonah to travel to Nineveh and preach against it because of her sins. Nineveh, like Edom, Egypt, Babylon, and other ungodly nations, represented the world, and thus was Israel's avowed enemy. Jonah, who had been commissioned by God with His Word, disobeyed Him because he thought that Nineveh might actually repent, thus diminishing God's punishments upon Israel's enemy. In essence, though God had been merciful to Jonah in revealing His Word to Him, Jonah was not willing to be merciful to his enemies who did not know God's Word.

The account is similar to Matthew 18:23-35 where an indebted servant was forgiven a very large debt by his master. Shortly afterward, that same forgiven servant refused to forgive a very small debt of one who was indebted to him. When the master of the first servant learned of his lack of mercy, he delivered him to prison until he paid his full debt.

Because of Jonah's sin of rebellion to God and his lack of pity and mercy for the Ninivites, God prepared a great fish of the sea to *imprison* him for three days and three nights. The second chapter of Jonah is most profound in describing God's judgment on Jonah:

> *Then* [i.e. after being under God's judgment in the fish's belly] Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly [i.e. his prison], 2 and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of *the belly of hell* [*sheol*, i.e.

> the grave] cried I, and thou heardest my voice. 3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; *yet I will look again* toward thy holy temple [Jonah believed in God's enduring mercy]. 5 The waters compassed me about, even to *the soul:* the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about *my head*. 6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains [i.e. humility]; the earth with her bars was about me *for ever* [i.e. 3 days and 3 nights, Jonah 1:17]: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption [i.e. resurrection], O LORD my God. 7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that observe lying vanities [such as thinking of self more than others] forsake their own mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. 10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. Jonah 2:1-10

Over and over the Scriptures tell of others like Jonah who cried out to God during times of judgment (See Ps 107:5-6, 12-13, 18-19, 23-30). In response, God delivered them by His judgments. Though Jonah had sinned and was being judged for his sin, he realized God's hand of mercy was yet extended to him. It is important to recognize that God delivers us *with* His judgments (Isa 26:9), not *from* them.

God's message to Jonah is similar to Romans 11:13-36 in which Paul warned Christians not to think too highly of themselves since God's mercy would extend to everyone in due season. Romans 11:11-12, 30-32 particularly corroborates this fact.

As with many of the prophets, Jonah's message of universal restoration is capsulized in the last couple of verses:

> Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!" 10 But the LORD said, "You have had

pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 11 And *should I not pity Nineveh,* that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons *who cannot discern between their right hand and their left* - and much livestock?" Jonah 4:9-11 NKJV

It is noteworthy that even though Jonah repented, and God resurrected him from the grave (i.e. the fishes' belly of hell), he was yet immature in pity and compassion. Regardless of his imperfect condition, however, mark God's long-suffering in continuing to instruct him.

The lesson of Jonah is one of pity, love, forgiveness, and mercy toward those who don't deserve it, whether they be Jonah or the Ninevites. God's grace and mercy apply to all humanity! God's love knows no bounds, neither is it partial to prophet, priest, king, or stranger. "For God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son, *that all* ["whosoever" is rarely used for this Greek word.], believing in Him, perish not... For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that *the world,* through Him be saved." God rejoices in mercy (James 2:13; Mat 9:13) to all the world. After all, He is its Father-Creator.

Another outstanding lesson in the book of Jonah is that those who have been given more are accountable for more. James 3:1 explains that those who know God's Laws will be judged more strictly than those who have not received them. Luke 12:47-48 confirms that those who know better and still disobey will be beaten with more stripes than those who were not aware of the truth. This same principle is repeated in other passages including Matthew 10:15 and 11:23-24 where Jesus declared that Sodom and Gomorrah's judgment will be more endurable than the judgment of those who have heard the truth and rejected it.

To say that Sodom and Gomorrah's judgment *will be* more endurable conveys that their final judgment is yet future. Yes,

they died a terrible death, and that judgment of God, like all of His judgments, was "true and righteous altogether" (Ps 19:9). One day, however, they will be raised from the grave just like Israel will be (Ezek 37:11-14). That final judgment will eventually result in their receiving mercy and forgiveness (Isa 54:7; 60:10; Micah 7:18; Habk 3:2).

The principle of being accountable for what has been given to us means that those who grew up with no exposure to God's Word will not be punished as severely as those who did hear it and yet rebelled against it. There is a day of reckoning coming when each of us will be judged according to the gifts and talents that were entrusted to us. Since Sodom and Gomorrah were not given God's Word as Israel was (Ps 147:19-20), God will be merciful to them in the final day of judgment. Likewise, if God will be merciful to His disobedient prophet, Jonah, He surely will be merciful to Niniveh who had not yet heard God's Word.

But what about those who hear God's Word and still reject it? We have only to read Jonah 2:5-10 for God's answer. In those verses, Jonah found himself in the belly of hell due to his disobedience. Yet through God's judgments, Jonah was *resurrected* (Jonah 2:5-6) from hell. So important was this event in Jonah's life that Jesus applied its significance to His own death and resurrection in Matthew 12:40. Hosea 6:1-3 also describes disobedient Israel being resurrected on the 3rd day (See the context of Hosea 5:11-15). Resurrection is a vital lesson in Jonah's testimony, and when properly understood, the final victory of the resurrection is universal restoration (1 Cor 15:21-28).

HAGGAI

In keeping with the other prophets, Haggai begins his message by declaring Judah's sins to them. God had released them from their captivity so that they could rebuild His Temple. The freed people, however, had been focusing more on their own selfish plans and pleasures than on rebuilding God's House.

The final verses of chapter 1 depict the governor, the high priest, and *the remnant* being convicted by Haggai's words, and thus obeying. After their obedient response, God declared "I am with you" (verse13). These encouraging words are even more applicable for a future fulfillment under the New Covenant where God dwells in His people to complete His heavenly, human Temple (1 Cor 3:16; Phlp 2:12-13).

In the opening 5 verses of chapter 2, Haggai encourages the people to be strong, reminding them again "I am with you." Verse 5 continues by commanding them not to fear since *God's spirit remains among them* because of the covenant He made with them when He brought them out of Egypt (Ex 29:43-46; 19:5-6, based on obedience).

Next, Haggai 2:6-9 presents a *restoration-of-all-things* text for those with eyes to see it:

> For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. 7 And I will shake *all nations,* so that the treasures of *all nations* shall come in [to My Temple], and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts. 8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, declares the LORD of hosts. 9 The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former [2 Cor 3:6-11, 18], says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.
> Haggai 2:6-9 ESV

When the Scriptures speak of God shaking things, it is in reference to His Spirit and His Word shaking carnal authorities (i.e. old heavens), man's lower nature (i.e. the earth), the troubled billows and raging waves of mankind at large (i.e. the sea), and empty, vain, lifeless humanity (i.e. dry land). One example that illustrates such a shaking is Ezekiel 37:7 which illustrates Israel's "valley of dry bones" shaking when they hear God's Word. Even more remarkable is the fact that the outcome of such shaking resulted in life that resurrected them from the grave!

The context in Haggai 2:6-9, however, is not directed to Israel alone this time, but to *all* nations. The by-product of shaking all of the nations is described in various ways depending on the translator, but in every case the outcome is very good news - the gospel! Whether verse 7 is rendered "the desire of all nations... the desired of all nations... the desirable things of all nations... or the treasures (or wealth) of all nations" is not as significant as recognizing that God's shaking of all nations results in good news for *all* the nations. Malachi 3:12 also presents a very similar scene as Haggai 2:7 using almost the identical descriptive word, "delightsome" [i.e. like desirable]. Of course, Jesus Christ is the One in Whom the Father delights (Mat 3:17) and the One Who initiates this entire process of *shaking* up the dead by His death and resurrection.

When God sent His Spirit at Pentecost, there was "a rushing, mighty wind" (Acts 2:2). Ezekiel 3:12 presents a similar description that employs a Hebrew word that is also rendered "rushing." It is from the same Hebrew word that is translated "shaking" in Haggai 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:7. These four verses are mentioned to confirm that this *shaking* in Haggai is related to God's Spirit at work, especially from Pentecost and forward until the *restoration of all things* that was spoken of by all the prophets (Acts 3:21) is completely fulfilled.

When Haggai 2:9 proclaims that "the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former," it is obviously referring to

the latter house of Christ that would be built from the *shaking* of the Pentecostal Spirit under the New Covenant [See 2 Cor 3:6-11, 18]. Haggai 2:9 can be compared to Jesus saying "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19). He was referring to His own body as a temple, not the earthly temple in Jerusalem. Likewise, Haggai's latter house envisions the final, spiritual Temple that was to be built by the Spirit, beginning at Pentecost. The apostle Peter confirmed that Pentecost *began* to fulfill Joel's prophecy regarding God pouring out His Spirit upon *all* flesh (Acts 2:16-21; 1 Pet 4:17).

About two months later, "in the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month" (Hag 2:10-17), Haggai admonished the people once again to consider their ways. This warning is followed by verses 18-19 which mention this twenty-fourth day as being the day that *the foundation* of the Temple was laid. This foundation represented Jesus Christ, the type for the foundation of the final Temple.

> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building [i.e. Temple]. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid *a foundation,* and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a *foundation* other than the one which is laid, *which is Jesus Christ*. 1 Corinthians 3:9-11 NASB

> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a *foundation,* a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure *foundation;* Whoever believes will not act hastily. Isaiah 28:16

> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God [i.e. Temple], 20 having been built on *the foundation* of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into *a holy temple* in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22

Haggai 2:18-19 ends this segment of his prophecy by announcing that from the time that *the foundation* is laid [i.e. figurative of Christ], "I will bless you" (i.e. with the latter glorious Temple).

Haggai concludes in verses 20-23 by repeating for a second time *the shaking* of the heavens and the earth which, in turn, overthrows the thrones of *all* the nations (1 Cor 15:24-28). Such emphasis provides a double witness that this event will surely occur. Verse 22 includes additional imagery of this victorious conquest of overthrowing ungodly thrones, and serves as a reminder of Israel's deliverance at the Red Sea when Egypt's horses, chariots, and their riders were defeated. Eventually, the entire worldly system will be subdued and submit to God's kingdom *which will fill all the earth* (Zech 14:9; Dan 2:34-35, 44; 1 Cor 15:24-28... *God shall be all and in all*.).

Haggai's final verse mentions Judah's Governor, Zerubbabel, being exalted in that day as God's signet ring (i.e. ensign or standard... Isa 11:10, 12) and chosen one (Isa 42:1). Realizing that this prophecy presents a pattern for the final Temple of Christ dwelling in Christians, it should be plain that Zerubbabel is a type of Christ since Christ is to be Governor over all the nations:

> *All* the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and *all* the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S: and *he is the governor* among the nations. 29 *All* they that be fat [i.e. rich, prosperous] upon earth shall eat [heavenly manna] and worship: *all* they that go down to the dust shall bow before him... Psalm 22:27-29

> 1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold, *my chosen*, in whom my soul *delights*; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice [i.e. judgment, # 8199] to the nations ... 4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged *till he has established justice in the earth* [Ps 110:1-2]... Isaiah 42:1, 4 ESV

Additional verses that declare Christ being governor over *all* the nations include Psalm 47:7-8; Daniel 7:14; Zechariah 14:9; and Revelation 11:15.

While *the restoration of all things* is not plainly spelled out in Haggai's short, 38 verses, it becomes apparent between the lines to those seekers who add line upon line from the other prophets that compliment Haggai's prophecy. All the prophets proclaim the same gospel (Acts 3:21) and are subject to each other (1 Cor 14:32).

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter. Proverbs 25:2

MALACHI

Malachi addressed his message to Judah's priests. He accused them of denying God's love for them (Mal 1:2), despising the Lord's table, and eating polluted bread instead. The Lord's table is symbolic language for spiritual food, God's Word. Jeremiah and Ezekiel ate the scroll of God's Word (Jer 15:16; Ezek 3:1-3). David also counsels us to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8). The apostle John describes the saints eating at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:9, 17-18), which also is related to the table of the Lord. When Malachi rebuked the priests for despising the table of the Lord, therefore, it was not that the priests despised the flavor or tenderness of the sacrificial animals. Rather, he was rebuking these religious leaders for despising the goodness and greatness of God and His Word. Instead, they were offering up less worthy offerings that represented a way that seemed right to a man. They offered inferior, unacceptable sacrifices to God, thus exposing their lack of respect and gratitude to Him in spite of His love for them.

The idea of magnifying the Lord and His name (i.e. the table of the Lord) is expressed in Malachi 1:6-14 where God insists that someday His name will be magnified and become so great among the other nations that *"in every place,* incense [i.e. prayer] shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." Isaiah 56:6-8 also affirms that God's name will be magnified in *all nations.* This should be of no surprise since this is the very fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12:3 where *all* nations were promised to be blessed through him.

If only a small portion of the heavenly Father's creation will be reconciled and go to heaven, while the majority will be doomed to hell, how does that magnify God's love, wisdom, and power? To the contrary, that would be evidence of God's lack of goodness and greatness. Malachi's opening words accuse the priesthood of denying God's love. In verse 11 of chapter 1, God protests "... *from the rising of the sun to its*

setting [i.e. from East to West!] my name will be great among the nations, and *in every place* incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts."

Some may reply that it is not God's fault if most people go to hell since they bring doom upon themselves by their rebellion. While this response seems to be plausible at first, verses such as Romans 8:20-21 expose it as being an unfounded argument:

> For the creature was made subject to vanity, *not willingly,* but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because *the creature* [i.e. creation - all creation] *itself also shall be delivered* from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Romans 8:20-21

Granted, most translations of the above passage render it differently than the KJV that is quoted above. Either by way of punctuation or different wording, many versions have chosen to convey that God *hopes* to deliver creation from bondage. God is not like us, however, and whatever He wills to be done, will be done. He doesn't *hope* to do anything! See Isaiah 55:11 and chapter 5 regarding God's Sovereignty.

Although most translators are sincere, like all of us, they can make mistakes. Most of them are bound by the orthodox traditions that have been passed down through the centuries (Josh 24:14; Jer 11:10; Ezek 20:18; Amos 2:4). When one has been inculcated with an idea long enough, it eventually becomes conviction to them whether it is based on truth or not. This was also true of the priesthood to which Malachi wrote. Regardless of sincerity, however, sometimes our words or actions are a bad witness, if not a disgrace, to God's high and holy name.

Malachi 3:1-6 foretells of the Messiah coming to cleanse the priesthood with *refiner's* fire (not hell-fire) by burning up the chaff, the old man of sin. The result of His coming is reported

in verses 3-4 as a *restoration* that is pleasing in God's eyes. Verse 5 continues this *refining* scene, describing it as one of *judgment*. Observe similar words in Isaiah 1:25-31...

> And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: 26 And *I will restore* thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. 27 Zion shall be *redeemed with judgment,* and her converts with righteousness. 28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed [2 Thes 2:8]. 29 For they shall be ashamed of the oaks [i.e. the arm of flesh, human strength] which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. 30 For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. 31 And the strong shall be as tow [i.e. chaff or kindling], and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn [compare Mal 3:1-6] together, and none shall quench them.

Malachi 3:6 declares that the sons of Jacob (which include the Levite priests) are *not consumed* because God doesn't change (see James 1:17). What doesn't He change? Besides His unchanging nature of love, He also doesn't change His unconditional covenant that He promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3. That covenant secures not only Abraham and his seed's reconciliation blessing, but also that of *all the families of the earth:*

> And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall *all families* of the earth be blessed. Genesis 12:2-3

Above, I described Genesis 12:2-3 as a *reconciliation blessing* because of the New Testament commentary on this passage that appears in Acts 3:25-26. There, Luke defines the word "bless"as that of "turning every one of you from his

iniquities." It is fitting, therefore, to describe the blessings to Abraham and to all the families of the earth as being a reconciliation blessing to all.

Next, mark God's *refined*, perfected Israel in Malachi 3:12. There, God declares that "all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land..." He doesn't say that Israel *can* be, or *might* be, but rather that they *will* be a delightsome land - after God's refining fire has completed its work in them.

When Malachi's fire is compared with the fire that John the Baptist describes in Matthew 3:11-12, it is apparent that both fires are one and the same. They are not a physical fire, but the spiritual fire of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not destroy people, but the sin that lies in their hearts. After the Holy Spirit purges and refines people, they indeed become delightsome in God's sight because they become born anew in Christ, the delightsome One of God.

Malachi 3 concludes with God accusing the priests of being harsh and arrogant against Him (vv. 13-15), followed by the *good news* of reconciliation in verses 16-18 for those who fear Him and have high regard for His name:

> At that time those who feared the LORD spoke to one another. The LORD took notice and listened. So a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared Yahweh and *had high regard for His name*. 17 "They will be Mine," says the LORD of Hosts, "a special possession on the day I am preparing. I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him. 18 So you will again see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him." Mal 3:16-18 HCSB

The above passage describes restoration for those who fear God. It is *not* about universal restoration - not yet. It is regarding the few faithful priests (i.e. symbolizing Christ's Body) who

will eventually rule and reign with Christ in order to restore all creation through God's fiery judgments of righteousness.

Though chapter 4 of Malachi proceeds with the same subject of refining fire, it now spreads beyond the priesthood to all creation. Verse 1 mentions a day that will burn like an oven and *all* the proud (i.e. chaff-stubble-Esau, Obad 1:18) will be consumed. A critical observation in this verse is recognizing that the fire is spiritual, not physical. This is plainly evident since that which is consumed is the pride in people rather than the people themselves (1 Cor 5:5). Sometimes, people are too quick to relate God's consuming fire with man's traditional concept of hell-fire. Another significant fact to note in this verse is that the fire consumes *all* pride - implying in *all* people in *all* the earth. The following passages add further insights regarding God's day of burning up the earthly, proud elements in mankind: Psalm 46:6; 97:5; Isaiah 51:6; Amos 9:5, 13; Nahum 1:5; 1 Corinthians 3:13-15; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; and 2 Peter 3:7-13.

Malachi 4:2-3 depicts the few faithful priests treading down the wicked. Ask God for new eyes to grasp the true meaning of "tread down the wicked" in verse 3. Compare it with verses such as 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:10-18; or Psalm 45:5 and 38:2 that describe *spiritual* warfare. The wickedness that Christians are to tread under their feet consists of wicked thoughts, words, and deeds of the old man of sin (Col 3:5-10; James 4:1-7). These need to be "tread down" (i.e. subdued and conquered) within themselves (Jam 4:1), as well as in others.

As we approach the final three verses of Malachi's prophecy, let us be very careful to rightly divide them. Closing verses are especially significant as they frequently summarize the heart of the book. In light of the foregoing words regarding God's fire consuming *all* pride, Malachi 4:4 commands us to remember God's Law (which is like a fire). Immediately following, in verse 5, Malachi connects God's Law with Elijah

who represents God's Word anointed with His Spirit and power (Luke 1:17; 1 Cor 2:1-5).

Elijah's ministry is associated with *fire* (1 Ki 18:25; 2 Ki 1:10, 12; 2:11) and *spirit* (1 Ki 18:12; 2 Ki 2:9, 15). In 1 Kings 18:25, 36-40, the fire for which Elijah prayed was for the purpose of turning hearts back to God through repentance. While this fire was physical fire, it represented a type or pattern for the spiritual fire of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant.

Because of the final two verses of the Old Testament (i.e. Mal 4:5-6) regarding the coming of Elijah, the scribes expected Elijah himself to return some day (Mat 17:10). In Matthew 11:9-15, however, Jesus said that John the Baptist was that Elijah that was prophesied to come (Isaiah 40:3-5; Mal 4:5-6). As we will soon discover, however, John the Baptist was only the tip of the iceberg regarding the coming of Elijah.

The final verse of Malachi records that Elijah will restore people by turning their hearts back to God. How successful would this future Elijah be? How many hearts were to be turned back to God? Both Jesus (in Mat 17:11) and Isaiah (in Isa 40:3-5) testified that this latter day Elijah-voice-in-the-wilderness would *restore ALL things!* John the Baptist alone, however, certainly did not restore all things.

John the Baptist was only a part of this Elijah ministry of power and spiritual fire that would lead all people to repentance. In Matthew 11:14-15, Jesus qualified His words about John the Baptist being Elijah by saying, "And *if ye will receive it,* this is Elias [i.e. Elijah], which was for to come. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*." Jesus used such language to indicate that there was deeper, hidden truth beneath the surface of His words.

Clearly this new Elijah Ministry continues beyond the work of John the Baptist, for Jesus said that this new Elijah would "restore all things" [Mat 17:11]. John the Baptist confessed that

he was not Elijah (John 1:21-23), but that he was a voice crying in the wilderness (of sin) for people to repent. He was not the original, literal Elijah of the past, but he was come *in the spirit and power of* Elijah [Luke 1:17] in order to prepare sinners to repent.

How is it, then, that *all things are to be restored* by the spirit and power of Elijah if John the Baptist didn't restore all things? That same spirit and power of Elijah and John the Baptist were about to be "poured out upon all flesh" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16-18). This outpouring of God's Spirit and power *began* at Pentecost and will continue until *the restoration of all things* that was spoken of by the mouth of all the prophets (Acts 3:21). Consider the Christian Elijahs that are described in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21...

> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us *the ministry of reconciliation* [i.e. restoration]; 19 to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling [i.e. restoring] *the world* unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; *and hath committed unto us* the word of reconciliation [i.e. restoration via repentance]. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye *reconciled* [i.e. restored] to God. 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

This Christian, Elijah ministry of restoration is comprised of those whom God equips with His Word and the fire of His Holy Spirit to turn hearts back to Him just as Elijah did in 1 Kings 18:

> 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that **thou** hast *turned their heart back again*. 38 Then *the fire of the LORD* fell... 39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God... 41 And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for

there is a sound of *abundance of rain*... 45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was *a great rain*. 1 Kings 18:37-39, 41, 45

Likewise at Pentecost, there was "a rushing mighty wind" that brought the *refreshing rain* of God's Spirit:

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

1 Kings 18 is a pattern for spiritual rain when hearts would once again be turned back to the Lord by the power of God's fire:

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD [Joel 2:28-31]. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, *so that I will not* come and smite the land with a curse." Malachi 4:6 NASB

Elijah and John the Baptist shared something very special. Both were anointed with an abundant portion of God's Spirit (1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:9, 15; Luke 1:15, 41, 44). Even though they were both under the Old Covenant dispensation, each of them was empowered with God's Spirit for using God's Law as a tutor to lead people to repentance so that they could be justified by faith in Christ (Gal 3:24).

Malachi's message proclaims *the restoration of all things* (John 1:6-9; Isa 40:3-5; Mal 4:5-6) by the refining fire of God's Elijah, namely His Holy Spirit in conjunction with His Word in His ruling, flaming, Elijah ministers (Ps 104:4).

Elijah is coming; and will *restore everything…*
Matthew 17:11 HCSB

The voice of him [Elijah, John the Baptist] that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Every* valley shall be exalted, and *every* mountain and hill shall be made low: and *the crooked shall be made straight,* and the *rough places plain:* And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and *all flesh* shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it.*
Isaiah 40:3-5

Chapter 9

Conclusion

This book has focused on three main methods for illuminating the gospel of universal restoration. First and foremost, the first three chapters have provided a basic anthology of Scriptures that declare the restoration of all things. In these three chapters alone, over 150 passages from Genesis to Revelation illustrate how frequently the theme of universal restoration permeates the Bible. Chapter 8 also conveys how the overall message of *all* the prophets affirms God's good news of universal restoration.

A second method used in this book to advance the gospel of universal restoration has been that of responding to the common objections that are raised to refute it. Answers have been presented with pertinent, reasonable, and Scriptural insights. The two main objections were addressed in chapter 4, "Hell Bent Verses Straightened Out," but other controversial issues have been confronted throughout the book, as well.

The third method employed in this book to assure readers of the validity of the gospel of universal restoration appears in chapters 5-7 where God's sovereignty, His judgments, and the resurrection of the dead create a sure foundation for it. Any one of these three components, by itself, is sufficient evidence for establishing the credibility of universal restoration. When all three factors are added together, they form a platform for it that is difficult to deny or refute.

It is my hope that this book will inspire the reader to search the Scriptures with fresh eyes, and thus come to a deeper appreciation of the *really good news* of God's glorious character and of His plan for restoring all of His creation. This was Jesus' heart-cry to His Father in John 17:20-23. May it be ours, as well.

> I do not pray for these [firstfruits] alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that *they all* may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that *the world* may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that *the world* may know that You have sent Me, *and have loved them* **as You have loved Me.** John 17:20-23

(Also compare 1 Cor 15:28; Ephes 1:10, 22-23; 4:10 & John 3:16-17.)

Appendix 1

Good News

Good news is the premise of this book and of the Bible. The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is good news because it is all about Jesus. He is the author and the finisher of our faith. In Him, everything is positive to the glory of God (2 Cor 1:19-20).

Gospel means good news, not bad. Is it good news that God will save a few "good" people while exterminating the majority of mankind, or worse yet, damning them to be tormented in an eternal hell fire? G. Campbell Morgan, hailed as "The Prince of Expositors" of the 20th century, didn't endorse such a view. See Appendix 8 to read his remarks concerning the gospel.

Good News passages for fresh eyes:

Romans 8:28-32 ... And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose [All will be called, but not in the same order, 1 Cor 15:23]. 29 For whom he did foreknow [*all* of His creation!], he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son [1 Cor 15:21-22, **28**, 42-51; Ephes 1:9-11; Heb 2:6-18], that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate [*all* of His creation], them he also *called* [in due time]: and whom he *called*, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us [*all* of His creation], who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son [given for *the world.* John 1:29; 3:16-17; 1 John 2:2; 4:14], but delivered him up for *us all,* how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

2 Corinthians 1:19-20... For the Son of God, Jesus Christ... was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. 20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Isaiah 54:11-14... O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires... 13 and *all thy children* shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. 14 In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression...

Galatians 3:8 records that Genesis 12:3 is *the gospel*. If Genesis 12:3 does not mean that all nations will be saved through Abraham's Offspring [i.e. Christ, Gal 3:16], what other alternative meaning could it have? If one believes that it means *some* of all nations will be saved, how good is that? How much honor and glory does that give to God's name? Is He unable to perform that which He has promised (Num 14:11-15-16-20)?

Israel of old belittled God and His laws (Ps 78:41 KJV). Malachi 1:6-12 as well as other godly prophets reveal that even the priests despised God, offering measly gifts of recognition to Him. God rebuked them saying that He was a great God and that His name would be great among *all the nations!*

Appendix 2

If all will be saved, why try?

When a person *tries* to do something, his attempt involves work or obedience. Therefore "Why try?" might also be stated as follows: Why *obey* God, if salvation will occur regardless of obedience? The fact is, however, that salvation cannot occur without obedience.

> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Romans 5:19

Our faith in *Christ's obedience* on our behalf is the only true and effective basis of a sinner's salvation. Once he places his faith in *the work* of Christ, his *trying* (i.e. working of obedience) is not his own, but Christ working in him. God's grace saves the sinner and gives him a desire and power to serve His Savior. The apostle Paul advises those who have Christ living in them to...

> ... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Philippians 2:12-13

Reasons To Try

- **Because we love Him** (1 John 4:19; 2 Cor 5:14-15; John 14:15).
- **Obedience is rewarding**, beneficial, valuable, and profitable. A special reward comes to those who win the prize by applying the faith that is given them (1 Cor 9:24-27; Phlp 3:14; Rev 20:6). It's a good thing to be a Christian (Mat 5:3-12; Ps 19:10-11; 1 John 5:3; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Rev 20:6).
- **The alternative to obedience is punishment**, though not eternal (1 Thes 5:9; Ps 2:12; Isaiah 13:11-12; John 3:36; Rom 2:8; Heb

10:26-27). God motivates man with both His judgments of punishment, as well as His judgments of grace, mercy, and love (Rom 6:23).

- **To avoid eternal torment in hell is not a legitimate reason** for trying, since salvation is not obtained by trying to do good works. Besides, if all will be saved, there is no eternal hell.

- **Trying, in order to be saved, is bad theology.** It is not a man's good works that save him, but rather God's free grace. A Christian works not to be saved, but because he is saved (Ephes 2:8-10; Phlp 2:12-13).

Appendix 3

"Re" Words

Webster's Definition of "re":

re- . A prefix denoting: 1. Back, *esp. back to an original or former state or position;* backwards; as in **re**trace, **re**cede; also, back from advancing, as in **re**frain. 2. Again; - used chiefly to form words denoting repetition (of the action of the verb), or *restoration* (to a previous state).

"Re" Words in the KJV

Acts 3:19... the times of **refreshing** shall come from the presence of the Lord...

Acts 3:21... [Christ] Whom the heaven must receive until the times of **restitution** of all things...

1 Cor 15:12... How say some among you that there is no **resurrection** of the dead?

Mat 19:28... In the **regeneration** when the Son of man shall sit in the throne...

Ps 104:30... Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are [re]created (2 Cor 5:17; Col 3:9-10); and Thou **renewest** the face of the earth.

Jer 31:25... I have satiated the weary soul, and I have **replenished** *every* sorrowful soul.

Heb 9:10... in meats and drinks, & divers washings, & carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of **reformation**.

Isa 11:11... in that day, the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to **recover** the remnant of His people, which shall be left...

Acts 1:6... Lord, wilt Thou at this time **restore** again the kingdom to Israel (Isa 42:22)?

Ephes 1:10-14... which is the earnest of our inheritance until the **redemption** of the purchased possession...

Isa 66:8 ("born") & Jer 31:4 ("again") = **rebirth**: ...shall a nation be *born* at once... *again* I will build thee... O virgin of Israel: thou shalt *again* be adorned... (with John 3:3-7; 1 Pet 1:3; 2:9).

2 Cor 5:19... God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto Himself…

Ezek 36:10... the cities shall be [re]**inhabited**, and the wastes shall be [re]**builded**.

Ps 85:6... Wilt Thou not **revive** us again; that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?

Jer 3:12, 22; 30:10... Jacob shall **return**, and shall be in rest and be quiet…

Isa 58:12... they that shall be of thee shall [re]**build** the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shall be called the **repairer** of the breach, the **restorer** of paths to dwell in.

Appendix 4

Mistaken Assumptions
from the TMV Bible (Traditions of Men Version)

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 1:3-4

What is God's will for fallen man (see Isa 45:22-24 with Ezek 18:23, 32)? How sure is His will (Isa 46:9-10)? Our thoughts are so inferior to God's ways and His thoughts. Because of his own feeble imaginations, man underestimates God (Ps 78:41 KJV). He would make God like himself (Rom 1:23). Fallen nature is conditioned to expect failure with which it is most familiar. God, on the other hand, is Perfect. He is All-Knowing, All-Merciful, All-Loving, All-Mighty, and All-Sovereign. He will have what He will have (Num 23:19-20; Hosea 11:7-9; Mal 3:6). The well-known verse John 3:16 describes God's will perfectly, but it must be interpreted in the context of John 3:17. Earthly factors of time (2 Peter 3:9) and death (2 Cor 1:9) are not impossible obstacles for God (Mat 19:25-26). Consider the intentional, underlined mistranslations in the following Scriptures. The

alterations illustrate how man's finite mind often misinterprets God's loving plan of good news:

- [John the Baptist] came... to bear witness of the Light, that a few good people... might believe. John 1:7

- God so loved a few in the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that the few who might believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that those who were good, through Him, might be saved. John 3:16-17

- And I [Jesus], if I be lifted up from the earth, will invite all men to be saved, but I will win only a few! John 12:32

- Many are called, but few are chosen to be saved. Matthew 22:14 [Scripturally, the few are called to rule and reign with Christ.]

- As by the offense of one, judgment came upon ALL men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon a few men unto justification of life. Romans 5:18

- As in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ, a few will be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:22

- At the name of Jesus every knee ought to bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue ought to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord... But everyone will not do so because God is not able or willing to convince every man of His love for them. Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:9-11

- Having made peace through the blood of His cross... to reconcile a few things unto Himself. Colossians 1:20

- [God] will have a few to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

- The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us. However, He

is willing that many should perish, since only a few are humble enough to repent. 2 Peter 3:9

- He [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins. And not for ours only, but also for the sins of a few others. 1 John 2:2

- Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? For Thou only art holy, even if only a few nations shall come and worship before Thee. Revelation 15:4

* * * * * * *

How Readest Thou?

It is one thing to read the Bible through,
Another thing to read to learn and do.
Some read it with design to learn to read,
But to the subject pay little heed.

Some read it as their duty once a week,
But no instruction from the Bible seek;
While others read it with but little care,
With no regard to how they read nor where.

Some read to bring themselves into repute,
By showing others how they can dispute;
While others read because their neighbors do,
To see how long 'twill take to read it thru.

Some read it for the wonders that are there-
How David killed a lion and a bear;
While others read it with uncommon care,
Hoping to find some contradictions there!

Some read as though it did not speak to them,
But to the people at Jerusalem.
One reads it as a book of mysteries,
And won't believe the very thing he sees.
One reads with father's specs upon his head,

And sees the thing just as his father said,
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed,
Hence understand but little that they read:

For every passage in the book they bend,
To make it suit that all-important end!
Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the book, instead of being taught.

And some there are who read it out of spite.
I fear there are but few who read it right.

So many people in these latter days
Have read the Bible in so many ways,
That few can tell which system is the best,
For every party contradicts the rest!

But read it prayerfully, and you will see,
Although men contradict, God's words agree.

For what the early Bible prophets wrote,
We find that Christ and his apostles quote:
So trust no creed that trembles to recall
What has been penned by one and verified by all.

- Author Unknown

Appendix 5

The Translators

Where would we be without translators? We'd be lost without them, wouldn't we? But sometime we are also lost because of them! While we thank God for those gifted with the ability and desire to translate the Bible, we should always remember that translators are imperfect human beings with opinions that naturally gravitate towards whatever theology they've learned. When difficult or questionable passages arise that do not seem to coincide with their theological background, it is only natural that a translator would do his best to render these texts to conform to whatever he believes.

While it is true that Hebrew and Greek, like any other language, have definite meanings for their various words, there are always times when a word can be taken in more than one way. There are also certain texts that, for one reason or another, are questionable as to what the original words intended to convey. Some of these challenging, evasive passages are extremely critical for representing God's character accurately.

By comparing questionable verses in various translations, it becomes evident how Bible translators struggle with particular passages of Scripture. For example, check out the following variety of translations such as the KJV, NASB, ESV, HCSB, NRSV, NIV, AMP, YLT, Rotherham, and the Concordant Literal to see how the translators varied in their analysis of the following texts:

- Exodus 34:10 (terrible, fearful, or awesome?)

- 1 Samuel 2:6 (Compare "some" & "others" in HCSB in contrast to others)

- 1 Samuel 15:32 (HCSB & ESV contradict one other! Other translations also)
- Psalm 68:18 (received gifts from, among, or for men? A big difference!)
- Luke 2:14 (peace, good will toward men; or... peace to men of good will?)
- Romans 9:5 (Who is God over all... or Who is over all, God blessed?)
- Revelation 4:6 (KJV *beasts* vs *living creatures* in other translations)

How can a layman who is unlearned in the Hebrew and Greek languages dare to challenge the academic scholars of Hebrew and Greek languages? As we've just learned above, even those experienced scholars of Hebrew and Greek do not agree among themselves on how to translate certain verses. That's precisely why we have numerous translations. How can a layman without a familiarity of Hebrew and Greek arrive at an understanding of a text, especially if it contradicts the scholars? He does so exactly as the early church disciples did:

> Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned [i.e. formally uneducated] and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that *they had been with Jesus.* Acts 4:13

> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26 NKJV; (Also see John 16:13-15)

> But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 1 John 2:27 (Also see 1 Cor 2:15-16.)

It is important, then, for readers of any translation of the Bible to be on guard for any text that is incompatible with the context or that seems to conflict with God's character and His will for His creation. Before a reader can do this, of course, he himself must know what is the true character of God and His will. My own searching of the Scriptures has led me believe that God's essential character consists of love, wisdom, and sovereignty, and that His underlying will, plan, and purpose is to restore all of His creation.

FIRST, God's essential character is **Love**.

> And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. *God is love,* and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. 1 John 4:16
>
> For *God so loved the world,* that he gave his only begotten Son... John 3:16

Love is not merely an attribute of God, it is the essence of Who and What He is. His Love includes other related characteristics such as mercy, grace, forgiveness, compassion, goodness, kindness, long-suffering, etc.

SECONDLY, God is **Omniscient**. He knows everything, including a foreknowledge of everyone and everything before any of it transpires in time.

> ... Him who is perfect in knowledge? Job 37:16
>
> ... His understanding is infinite. Psalm 147:5
>
> ... God... knows all things. 1 John 3:20
>
> … this Man [i.e. Christ], delivered over by the *predetermined plan and foreknowledge* of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. Acts 2:23 NASB

Elect according to the *foreknowledge* of God the Father...
1 Peter 1:2

THIRDLY, God is **Omnipotent**. He is Al-Mighty, Sovereign.

... I am the Almighty God... Genesis 17:1; 28:3; 35:11

Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. Psalm 135:6; 115:3

... I am God, and there is none else. I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and *I will do all my pleasure*. Isaiah 46:9-10

Realizing that God's character is comprised of Omni-agape (or Omni-benevolence / LOVE), Omniscience, and Omnipotence, the final vital key to discover is: What is His will? It should be obvious that, whatever His will is, it will assuredly come to pass because of His unsurpassed character. His will is displayed in Scriptures such as the following:

Making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose ... *to unite all things in Him* ... We ... have been predestined according to the *purpose of Him* who works all things according to the counsel of *His will*... Ephesians 1:9-11

[God] Who *will have all men to be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us, *not willing that any perish, but that all come to repentance*. 2 Peter 3:9

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son *to be the Savior of the world*. 1 John 4:14 ESV (with Isa 55:11)

> *I have sworn by myself,* the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that *unto me every knee shall bow,* every tongue shall swear [& that, willingly, Ps 110:3]. Isaiah 45:23
>
> ...whom heaven must receive until the times of *restoration of all things,* which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21

As I read any translation of the Bible, I carefully investigate any verses that conflict with an All-Loving, All-Knowing, and All-Powerful God Whose will it is to restore all of His creation into His image and His likeness [i.e. Gen 1:26-27].

The KJV ONLY Camp: There is a group of Christians who believe that the King James Bible is infallible, while all other translations contain certain errors. Although I continue to use the KJV as my main study Bible today, I do so mainly because it is the translation that I began reading 40 years ago. That being the case, I have become familiar with the pros and cons of the KJV. Besides archaic language such as the word "several" which actually meant "single or individual" in the 17th century, the KJV contains a few very inaccurate or poorly translated words. Some of the main words that are translated incorrectly are the words "everlasting, hell, and damnation." Unfortunately, these three words are especially detrimental as they malign God's character and deny His will.

This is not to say that other translations do not also contain inaccuracies. They do. Just as the Body of Christ has different members with different gifts, all of them still contain leaven (Lev 23:17). Even so, the various translations have good insights to offer, but not without some leaven as well. Compare them side by side to discover with which verses the translators struggled. Then, let us be as kings in searching out the deep and difficult matters (Pr 25:2) as we see how each verse aligns itself with the true character and will of God.

Translations are a very serious matter not to be taken lightly. We should be thankful for them, but also be ever vigilant as we read them, realizing that every translation is imperfect and can be misleading in certain words, phrases, or entire passages.

Appendix 6

Judgment

by A. P. Adams (1845 - 1925)

The word that forms the title of this article is one of momentous import. Judgment! The Judgment Day! The Judgment Seat of Christ! How full of awful significance are these Bible expressions. What do they mean? We can ask no more important question than this.

The common, orthodox idea about this subject is that the Judgment Day will be a *short* period of time somewhere in the future, when every individual of the human race will be assembled before Jesus the Judge, and sentence will be pronounced upon each, according to their deserts. This sentence will be irreversible and final, fixing the eternal destiny of each person either for weal or woe. A vast number (according to many, the great majority) will be condemned at that dread tribunal, and given over to eternal despair. Hence the Day of Judgment is represented as a fearful time of almost universal doom. Thus orthodox hymns describe it,

"The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away!
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?"

Now if we examine this view in the light of Scripture we shall find that it is like many another "orthodox" doctrines, an absurd mixture of garbled Scripture and crude, human tradition, with just enough truth in it to mislead the unthinking, and not enough to save it from the rubbish-hole of cast-off and worn-out theological conceits. I invite the reader's attention to the teachings of the Bible on this subject.

Krisis:

The principal word rendered judgment in the New Testament is *krisis*, which word we have incorporated into the English language, simply changing the initial letter - crisis. This word in English means, "A critical period of time, decisive moment, turning point, deciding time." The Greek word has a similar meaning: "a

separating, choosing, deciding, determining, judging, trial, judgment." In the New Testament the word is used to denote the deciding time or trial of man, and is spoken of in such a way as to indicate that this time of trial or **judgment is given to man as a blessing and favor**, and when such time arrives for any individual, class or individuals, or the world, **it is cause for great rejoicing and thanksgiving**.

Read, for example, the 96th Psalm, and notice how all people and even inanimate nature are called upon to exult and rejoice *"before the Lord, for he cometh to JUDGE the world. He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth."* This presentation of the nature of the time of judgment as a period of great rejoicing and special blessing is in most **striking contrast with the orthodox view** which makes the judgment day a time of almost unmitigated horror and dread.

The first point that I would call attention to is, that according to the apostle Peter, the day of judgment is *not a short period* of time - a day of twenty-four hours, but a long period of at least a thousand years. *"The heavens and the earth which are now,"* says the apostle, *"are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment;"* and then he adds the caution, very emphatically: *"But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."* (2 Pet 3:7-8). From this we may fairly infer that the judgment day may be a long period of time of perhaps a thousand years, or even longer, as the thousand years seems to be mentioned indefinitely to denote the greater vastness of God's days in comparison to man's. This view is still further confirmed by Rev 20:4 where John says, *"And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and JUDGMENT was given unto them... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."* Here is a reference to the judgment day with the saints, who shall *"judge the world"* (1 Cor 6:2) sitting upon thrones (Rev 3:21) - and again it is intimated that the duration of **that judgment period is a thousand years**. What is the work of this long day of judgment? Simply to pronounce sentence upon those who have already had their trial or judgment? No. This period is the time of judgment for all those who have not previously had such trial.

Judgment is the period of man's education, instruction, development and perfecting, but very few thus far have had any such judgment. It was not in God's plan that the world as a whole should have their judgment in this life. As it is written, *"It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment"* (Heb 9:27). The word here is krisis, and that, as we have seen, means trial, the deciding time, or judgment. . . . By God's express appointment, the great mass of mankind do not have their judgment until after death. This is the rule as it pertains to mankind in general, but there is an exception to this rule in the case of a single class, viz., *"the Church of the first born"* (Heb 12:23).

The judgment of man began with Christ, the first finished man, as he himself said, *"Now is the judgment* [krisis] *of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"* (John 12:31-32). That is to say, the judgment of the race began with Jesus, mankind's "Forerunner." Then also began the process by which ultimately, Satan, the prince of this world, will be cast out (Compare Rom 16:20, and Heb 2:14-15).

Jesus passed through his trial and *"brought forth judgment unto victory."* That is, his trial was brought to a successful issue, and he shall ultimately *"bring forth judgment to the Gentiles,"* plainly implying a blessing for the Gentiles:

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto victory" (Mat 12:20).

Another evidence that judgment shall result in blessing: *"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law"* (Isa 42:1-4).

Here is yet another indication that judgment is for man's benefit. When judgment is set in the earth it will be a glad hour for all mankind as we have already seen, and as this same prophet declares still more plainly in the 26th chapter; *"Yea in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek*

thee early, for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."
We see then that the prophet had a good reason for earnestly desiring the Lord *"in the way of his judgments"* because then, *"when his judgments were in the earth, the inhabitants of the world would learn righteousness."*

During this gospel age *"they that are Christ's - the church of the first born - the house of God"* (1 Pet 4:17 and Eph 2:19) are having their judgment, trial, or probation. Peter says, *"The time is come when judgment must* ***begin*** *at the house of God."* Thus does it appear that a certain class is having their trial during this age; and this view is fully confirmed by other Scripture. Says Christ, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life."* (John 5: 24 RSV). Here is a class spoken of who escape the future general judgment. How? Because they have their judgment here and now, as Paul says, *"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned* [judged against] *with the world."* (1 Cor 11:31-32).

This is the idea exactly: A class or group is having its judgment or trial now that they may not come under the general judgment of all mankind. They judge themselves, Paul says. They voluntarily take the place where God's just judgment puts every sinner - as dead and lost. Seeing their helpless, lost and dead condition, they fall on Christ as their only hope and thus the sooner pass through the educating, developing, perfecting process of judgment, and reach the image of God. These have *"part in the first resurrection."* They voluntarily yield themselves to God (Rom 6:16-19); they *"present their bodies living sacrifices unto God"* (Rom 12:1); they *"humble themselves"* (Mat 18:4), they *"mortify the deeds of the body,"* they *"crucify the flesh,"* they "*reckon themselves dead,"* they *"judge themselves that they may not be condemned with the world."* That is to say, they freely give themselves up to God's molding hand, and do not *"resist the truth"* (2 Tim 3:8), nor *"frustrate his grace"* (Gal 2:21), and thus they come to *"know the power of his resurrection"* and gain *"the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Phil 3:10, 14).

Now all this is set forth in figure in Mat 21:42-44, *"Whosoever shall fall on this stone* [Christ] *shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder."* If we voluntarily fall on Christ we must submit to being *"broken," "crucified," "mortified,"* i.e. ***"perfected through suffering."*** But the prize is worth all this and more: *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."*

But what of those who will not submit? Those who will not fall on the stone? The stone will fall on them, and what then? They shall be winnowed. The latter part of this verse is a gross mistranslation. The original word does not mean *to grind to powder*, or any thing of the kind. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and means *"to part the grain from the chaff, to winnow."* (See footnote in Rotherham's translation).

If we would know what is signified by winnowing, turn to Jer 4:11 and see that to "fan" or winnow (the word is exactly equivalent to the one in Mat 21:44), is to "cleanse" from "wickedness," verse 14. Hence we should read the passage, *"upon whosoever it shall fall it will winnow them."* Though the process will be violent and severe, yet **they will be benefitted in the end**, - separated from the "chaff" of sin, "cleansed" from their wickedness, and made pure. Those who will not humble themselves, shall be humbled (Mat 23:12), those who will not *"reckon themselves dead"* and *"die daily,"* shall be killed, but mark you, *"The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up"* (1 Sam 2:6), *"He maketh sore, and bindeth up, he woundeth, and his hand make whole"* (Job 5:18); *"He turneth man to destruction, and saith, return ye children of men"* (Ps 90:3); *"Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."* (Hos 6:1).

The Psalmist says, *"For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins; thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water* ***but thou broughtest us OUT into a wealthy place****."* (Ps 66:10-12).

The same God that brought them into trouble for their discipline and improvement, brought them out again into a wealthy place. *"He turneth man to destruction and saith return ye children of men."* Some are *"saved by grace"* (Eph 2:5), others are *"saved so as by fire"* (1 Cor 3:15). But however God deals with us, whether in mercy or in wrath, we may be sure that the end, (i.e. the purpose in view) is always the same, *"that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."* (Jam 5:11). Hence, though *"the stone which the builders rejected"* (and are still rejecting) shall fall on many, those who are not willing to fall on it, **shall not thereby be utterly undone and ruined** as would seem to be indicated by the rendering in the common version, but rather winnowed, cleansed, and purified.

We have seen that some have their judgment now, and will not come under the general judgment of the world; why are they thus judged now? To fit them for judges in the day of judgment, I reply. Christ is the great judge of the quick and the dead, but there are to be associate judges with him, as he himself said: *"Ye that have followed me, in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Mat 19:28 and Rev 3:21). Again we read, *"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"* (1 Cor 6:2) and yet again John saw this company of saints seated upon thrones, and executing judgment, *"and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years"* (Rev 20:4; compare Ps 149).

What is the "end" of this judgment? To save, I reply. See Psalm 22:27-28. When "*the kingdom is the Lord's and he is the governor among the nations"* then, *"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him;"* and at that same time, *"when the kingdom is the Lord's," "SAVIORS"* (not one, but many saviors) *shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau"* (Ob 21). The *"Saints shall **judge the world**"* - to *"**save the world**"* (John 12:47), for they are the *"Sons of God"* for whom the whole creation waits (Rom 8:19), and they are the promised *"Seed in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

This idea of judges being saviors is fully illustrated in the book of Judges. Joshua, Gideon, Samson and the rest **judged Israel to save**

them; **the judges were deliverers and saviors** (Judges 2:16). The word rendered judge in this book also means savior, and is so rendered in Young's Bible translation. Nehemiah also calls these judges of Israel, Saviors (see Neh 9:24-27).

Thus the process, nature and purpose of judgment is made plain. Judgment **begins** *"at the house of God."* **The head of that house** (Heb 3:6) **is the first to pass through his trial**, and to *"bring forth judgment unto victory."* Then the members of the household, *"the church of the first born"* undergo their trial during this gospel age, and are *"made alive at his coming"* (1 Cor 15:23) and are constituted *"kings and priests"* and *"judges of the world"* in the *"ages to come."*

Then comes the general Day of Judgment, the period of the world's judgment, as it is written, *"It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment."* Now what will be the result of that general judgment? The deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption (Rom 8:21). For thus saith the Lord, *"There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear"* (Isa 45:21-23). Paul quotes this passage in Phil 2:10-11, and tells us that this universal homage will be *"to the glory of God the Father,"* hence it must be voluntary, coming from hearts in harmony with Him, at the time when *"God is all in all."*

Paul still further confirms this glorious prediction of the final universal triumph of God's saving power in Rom 14: 10-11 where he quotes this same passage we have been noticing: *"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God"* (compare Rev 5:13). This last passage is very significant; **it plainly indicates** that the final result of standing before the judgment seat of Christ will be **every heart** brought into harmony with God, so that every tongue shall praise him.

Now see 1 Chronicles 16: 29-34. This time when the Lord comes to judge the earth, it is represented as a period of universal joy and

gladness. So it is in many of the Psalms we have already intimated; see the 67th, 72nd, 96th, 98th, etc. So it is in other passages of the Old Testament, some of which I have cited.

I will notice one more: In Isaiah 2 and Micah 4, we find a prophecy of the establishment of Christ's kingdom on the earth. *"The law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off."* What will be the result of this judging and rebuking - blessing or cursing? Blessing most assuredly, for *"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."* Thus we find God's judgments spoken of in such a way that we are sure that they are always the expression of his love, and for the good of mankind.

I have referred to some passages to show how the Lord "*kills and makes alive"* as another illustration of this wonderful way of God. In Ps 83:16-18, the Psalmist speaking of God's enemies says, *"Fill their faces with shame."* What for? *"...**that they may seek thy name**, O Lord. Let them be confounded and troubled forever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish."* Again I ask, what for? *"...**that they may know that thou whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth.**"*

Thus are we taught that through shame, confusion, and death, men are led to seek the Lord, and to know him as the one supreme, most-high Jehovah. *"He turneth man to destruction and saith return ye children of men,"* (Ps 90:3). Truly O Lord, *"**thy judgments are as the light** that goeth forth"* (Hos 6:5).

How strangely the Psalmist speaks, *"When he slew them, THEN they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God!"* (Ps 78:34). But this is God's way; through evil to good, through curses to blessings, through darkness to light, through death to life. This is the method of Him whose *"way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."*

We will consider now a few passages from the New Testament. First, John 5:17-29. I can only notice this passage very partially now. Jesus says, *"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."* The great work of creating man in the divine image and likeness, in which the Father and the son are co-laborers, as is indicated in the first announcement of that work, *"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."* This great work is yet unfinished. Hence both are still working and will continue to work until *"all things are made new."* But there is division of labor in this divine co-partnership; *"for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son."* Passing over several verses, in the 27th we find the reason given why all judgment is committed unto Christ - *"because he is the son of man."* Judgment and trials have to do with man. All must have their trial before they can be made alive in Christ.

Jesus has himself passed through this trial - *"tempted* [i.e. tried] *in all points like as we,"* and *"brought forth judgment unto victory."* Hence he is eminently fitted to have all judgment (i.e. the work of man's judgment) committed to his hand; *"For in that he himself hath suffered being tried, he is able also to succor them that are tried."*

Thus, *"all shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ,"* and each one may be sure that he has one for his judge *"who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,"* and *"can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way for that he himself also* [was] *compassed with infirmities."*

Now see verse 28 and 29 in John 5. *"The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his* [Christ's] *voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."* The last word is krisis and means as we have already shown, judgment or trial. This passage then confirms the one we have already noticed that *"it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment."* We are taught that those that do evil here - those who fail to *"make their calling and election sure"* or who have no light and knowledge, come forth from their graves at Christ's voice, not to be consigned to an endless hell or to be eternally destroyed, but to have their trial before the judgment seat of Christ. We cannot stop to notice many interesting points in

connection with this passage, especially the subject of the two resurrections - *"the resurrection of life,"* and *"the resurrection of judgment."* But surely we can see that the passage is in harmony with that view of the judgment that makes it a blessing to mankind.

There is still another passage that confirms this same view - Acts 17:31: *"God hath appointed a day* [the day of judgment] *in the which he will judge the world in righteousness,* (compare Ps 96:13) *by that man* [Christ] *whom he hath ordained. Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

Is it not plainly indicated here that the period of the world's judgment is one of blessing? **Christ's resurrection is presented as an assurance** that the world shall one day be judged in righteousness. This declaration is in the nature of a promise, **an assurance of good**, and the most glorious event that ever took place is the pledge to all men of their ultimate realization of this promise. In conclusion, see Jude 14-15. The Lord's coming with his saints *"to execute judgment"* (1 Cor 6:2 and Ps 149:9) will result in *"convincing the ungodly"* of their error, and thus bringing them to a better mind. So from Rev 14:6-7, we learn that when the hour (i.e. season or time) of God's judgment is come, the everlasting gospel shall be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and *"when his judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness."*

Thus on every hand, by many and plain Scriptures, do we learn **the nature and purpose** of God's judgment. The judgment day is not a period of dread and almost universal doom, as many represent it, but a time of gladness and joy for all mankind. The assurance of such a day is given to man as a promise of good, and the pledge thereof is the resurrection of Jesus. He is *"the first fruit of them that sleep,"* and *"if the fire fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."*

If the prevalent idea of the Judgment Day were true, we should dread its coming, and pray that it might be delayed as long as possible. But in harmony with the foregoing Scriptural view of that period, we can heartily join the prophet and say, *"in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; with our soul have we*

desired thee, for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa 26:9).

Editor's Note: A few words and punctuation markings from the original article by A. P. Adams have been edited in order to improve its readability. Also, the embolden words are my emphasis.

Appendix 7

Damnation and Condemnation

Consider the following definitions of seven similarly related, yet uniquely different, English words:

Judge: To accurately discern between right and wrong; to call right - good, and wrong - bad.

Justice: Making things right again; restoring things to their original state.

Condemn: To declare wrong.

Damn: To suffer damage or loss.

Punish: To inflict a penalty for violating a law.

Vengeance: Retribution, paying back, carrying out the necessary price of punishment.

Revenge: Returning evil for evil. Note Webster's 1828 Dictionary regarding the difference between vengeance and revenge: "Vengeance... The infliction of pain on another in return for an injury or offense. Such infliction, **when it proceeds from malice or mere resentment, and is not necessary for the purposes of justice** [my emphasis], is revenge, and a most heinous crime. When such infliction proceeds from a mere love of justice, and the necessity of punishing offenders for the support of the laws, it is vengeance, and is warrantable and just. In this case, vengeance is a just retribution, recompense, or punishment. In this latter sense, the word is used in Scripture, and frequently applied to the punishments inflicted by God on sinners."

In our culture, the word "damnation" has taken on far more severe connotations than merely a certain amount of "damage

or loss." More often than not, it immediately conjures up an association with the eternal hell fire of Greek mythology as portrayed in *The Inferno* from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Such false notions should be put to rest once and for all with one blow of the Sword of the Spirit such as 1 Corinthians 3:15...

> If any man's *work* shall be *burned,* he shall suffer *loss:* but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 1 Corinthians 3:15

First of all observe that it is a man's *work* that is burned, not the man himself. Peter verifies this truth with the following double witness:

> But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and *the elements* [i.e. fundamental, wrong principles] shall melt with fervent heat, the earth [i.e. earthiness- the old earthy order] also and *the works* that are therein shall be burned up. 2 Peter 3:10

The *fire* mentioned in both 1 Corinthians 3:15 and 2 Peter 3:10 is plainly the fire of the Holy Spirit Whose mission is to burn up the chaff and the dross so that the man himself can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

Our present age has lost the original meaning of the word "damn" and "damnation" by reducing it to a curse word or to a destiny in a literal hell fire. While there remains a significant number of people who continue to read the word "damnation" in the KJV Bible, we can be thankful that at least the majority of the other translations of the Bible have finally replaced this abused word "damnation" with accurate words such as "punishment" or "condemnation." Even though the word "condemnation" has the potential of arousing thoughts of a mythological hell, it is less likely to do so than the word "damnation."

As seen from the opening list of definitions, the word "condemn" simply means to declare something as being in violation of what is right and good. Any other meaning that is attached with the word "condemn," such as the prescribed penalty of hell for the condemnation, is entirely spurious and unwarranted.

From my observations, only the KJV employs the word "damnation," and that only 11 times, with two of them being repetitious accounts. All the other versions that I have studied have chosen the word "punishment" or "condemnation" in place of "damnation."

Consider the following examples where the words "damnation" and "condemnation" appear in Scripture:

DAMNATION

(The *italicized* passages that follow each of these next examples are amplified paraphrases that express how each example might be rendered more accurately.)

Matthew 23:14 ... Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater **damnation** [# 2917, *krima*]. (Repeated in Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.)

- *Krima* means "a decision *for or against*: a judgment." Its root is *krino* [# 2919] and means "to distinguish" [between right and wrong].

*... ye shall receive a more severe **decision against you*** [Luke 12:47; Jam 3:1]*, resulting in a more severe punishment as prescribed by God's Law.*

Matthew 23:33 ... Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the **damnation** [# 2920, *krisis*] of hell?

- *Krisis* means "decision" *for or against*.

*... how can ye escape God's **decision against you** based on "the wages of sin is death?" After dying, your body shall*

be cast into the garbage dump in the Valley of Hinnom [i.e. ge-henna... hell] where criminals' corpses are disposed.

Mark 3:29 ... But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal **damnation** [# 2920, *krisis*].

*... but is in danger of **age-lasting judgment** against him* [i.e. during the millennial age] *that will burn up his chaff so that he can be restored to the truth and praise of God.*
[1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tim 1:20; Heb 12:10]

John 5:29 ... And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of **damnation** [# 2920, *krisis*].

*... and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of **justice** under the new administration* [i.e. new heavens] *of God's Kingdom rulership during the millennium* [Rev 11:15]. *This perfect justice will eventually result in their re-generation* [Mat 19:28, i.e. re-birth, rehabilitation, restoration] *in due time.*

Romans 3:8 ... And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose **damnation** [# 2917, *krima*] is just.

*...whose **decision** against them is proper, and will result in the destruction of their flesh so that the spirit may be saved* [1 Cor 5:5; Gal 3:24].

Romans 13:2 ... Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves **damnation**. [# 2917, *krima*]

*... and they that resist shall receive a **just decision against them** that will slay their old man* [Rom 7:9-13; 2 Cor 3:7-9], *and thus lead them to humble themselves and cry out to God for His salvation in Christ* [Gal 3:24].

1 Corinthians 11:29 ... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh **damnation** [# 2917, *krima*] to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

> ... *For he that partakes of Christ's "Body"* [i.e. the ministry with Christ] *without picking up his cross and following Him, will receive a Divine* ***decision****, resulting in many* [not everlasting] *stripes against him* [Luke 12:47].

1 Timothy 5:11-12 ... But the younger widows refuse [to assist with aid from the church]: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; 12 having **damnation** [# 2917, *krima*], because they have cast off their first faith.

> *But refuse to put younger widows on the list for receiving assistance from the church; for when their sensual desires distract them from Christ, they want to marry, and so they incur this appropriate* ***decision against them*** *for having violated their first pledge to Christ* [Rev 2:4].

2 Peter 2:3 ... And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment [# 2917, krima] now of a long time lingereth not, and their **damnation** [# 684, *apoleia*] slumbereth not.

- The Greek word here for "damnation" is *apoleia.* It means "ruin or loss; destruction, waste."

> ... *and their Divinely-measured* ***destruction of the flesh*** *is soon to come, so that the spirit will be saved in the day when the Lord Jesus calls them and enters their life* [1 Cor 5:5].

CONDEMNATION

Luke 23:40 ... But the other [criminal] answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same **condemnation** [# 2917, *krima*]? (Why didn't the KJV render it "damnation" in this verse?)

> ... *seeing thou art in the same* ***decision against you****?*
> (The decision against them was death, not the mythical hell.)

John 3:18-19 ... He that believeth on him is not **condemned** [# 2919, *krino*]: but he that believeth not is **condemned** [# 2919, *krino*] already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the **condemnation** [# 2920, *krisis*], that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

> *He who believes in Him is not **ruled against*** [or decided against, or judged against]*; he who does not believe has been **ruled against** already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the **ruling*** [or judgment or decision - based on their belief and actions]*, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, because their deeds were evil.*

John 5:24 ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into **condemnation** [# 2920, *krisis*]; but is passed from death unto life.

> *... and shall not be **accused of any wrong doing**... but is graduated from being dead to self unto an abundant life in Christ.*

Romans 5:16 ... And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the **judgment** [#2917, *krima*] was by one to **condemnation** [# 2631, *kata-krima*], but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

- # 2631 (*katakrima*) is a compound word derived from #2596 (*kata* = according to) and # 2919 (*krino* = to judge against)

> *... for **the decision** to violate God's Law occurred by one, resulting in **a decision against** him for its violation...*

Romans 5:18 ... Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment [this word, *judgment*, is an added word, not being in the original manuscripts] came upon all men to **condemnation** [# 2631, *katakrima*]; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

> *Therefore just as one man's trespass led to **a Divine ruling against** all men* [i.e. death, not eternal hell, Rom 6:23]*, so*

One Man's act of righteousness leads to the free gift of righteousness and life for all men [1 Cor 15:22].

Romans 8:1 ... There is therefore now no **condemnation** [# 2631, *katakrima*] to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

*... There is therefore now no **sentence against** those who are in Christ Jesus...*

1 Corinthians 11:34 ... And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto **condemnation** [# 2917, *krima*]...

*... so that when you gather together, it will not result in **a Divine decision against** you for violating your love to each other.* (Read verses 1 Cor 11:17-21 to understand this context.)

2 Corinthians 3:9 ... For if the ministration of **condemnation** [# 2633, *katakrisis*] be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

- # 2633 (*katakrisis*) is a compound word derived from # 2596 (*kata* = according to) and # 2919 (*krino* = to judge against)

*... For if the Old Covenant administration which dealt with the letter of the Law had a degree of glory in bringing the **sentence of death against** the old man, the New Covenant administration of righteousness far surpasses it in glory.*

1 Timothy 3:6 ... Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the **condemnation** [# 2917, *krima*] of the devil [i.e. false accuser].

*Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into **a Divine ruling against** himself by his pride.*

James 3:1 ... My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater **condemnation** [# 2917, *krima*].

*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that those who are entrusted with more gifts, will be **examined and judged** with greater strictness* [Lu 12:47].

James 5:12 ... But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into **condemnation** [# 5272, *hypokrisis*]. (*Hypo* is # 5259 and means "under" or "below." When combined with *krisis*, # 2919, it means below a true decision, or "hypocrisy.")

*... lest ye fall into the **hypocrisy** of swearing and placing your confidence in a low, false, unjust standard.*

Jude 1:4 ... For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this **condemnation** [# 2917, *krima*], ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

> *... For certain intruders have sneaked in among you, people who long ago were designated for this **Divine ruling against** them, ungodly men who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

The preceding 12 verses include every reference in the New Scriptures where the KJV employs the word "condemnation." There are, however, other verses in the Old and New Scriptures that include other forms of the word such as "condemn" and "condemned."

By a better understanding of God's intent behind these Greek words that are translated "damnation" and "condemnation" in the KJV, may God cleanse our minds of the false concepts created by man's traditions which lean towards marring God's character, likening Him to the abominable men who cast their children into the fires of hell (i.e. *gehenna*, The Valley of Hinnom, Jer 7:31).

Appendix 8

Two Quotes from Dr. G. Campbell Morgan

Dr. Morgan was dubbed "The Prince of Expositors" and "the leading Bible expositor" of the 20th Century by Revell Publishers on the back dust jacket of Morgan's book, "An Exposition of the Whole Bible" (25th printing, January 1993). Before presenting two quotations from Dr. Morgan, the following excerpts from the dust jacket are included so that the reader can better appreciate the man who Dwight L Moody called to help him during the founding of his ministry:

"This volume, containing material by G. Campbell Morgan never before published in book form, is the result of an inspired lifetime of reading and meditation of the Word - not just occasionally, but day after day with intensive devotion. Through this method, the 'Prince of Expositors' has charted paths that all can follow with ease and fascination.

Thoroughly familiar with the original languages, Dr. Morgan examines the meaning of key words and presents in his uniquely practical, devotional style the central thoughts in every chapter of the Bible...

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, respected and loved throughout the Christian world, had a vast following in this country from coast to coast. He preached to congregations from Los Angeles to London, making the Bible vibrant and alive to children, ministers, and laymen. His more than fifty books have been read by nearly a million people, and his writings are continuing to bring the light of his incomparable exposition to new generations.
Dr. Morgan's splendid powers of Biblical analysis and synthesis made him the leading Bible expositor of this century...

> 'I have been moved by others, in one way or another, but no Bible teacher in the world, in the twentieth century, could cast over his audience, without flash, without show, that mystic spell that G. Campbell Morgan cast when he was at his best.' - WILBUR M. SMITH

'Dr. Morgan's expository and exegetical gifts have become a household word on two continents . . .' - MOODY MONTHLY"

Finally, here are two excerpts from Dr. Morgan's writings in which he declares that eternal hell is unbiblical:

"We cannot conceive of a Creator who knows the end from the beginning, one who is Love, who has infinite wisdom, and infinite power, giving to any being life, life which is never to end, but to continue in suffering to all eternity. The Bible does not teach it anywhere in the original languages. God's punishments are remedial and take place within the span of the ages during which he is accomplishing the making of man in His image and likeness. Punishment will last no longer than is necessary to bring man to hate his sin and be reconciled to his Saviour. As the judgment came unto all men, even so the free gift came unto all men [Romans 5:18-19]."

From a sermon in Westminster Chapel, London
"The Cross and the Ages To Come"

"If you take away from me the doctrine of the Second Advent of Christ which is to be a crisis in human history as definite as the first coming, I am the most pessimistic of men. If you tell me that the work of the missionary is to convert the world by preaching, I am hopeless indeed.

"But when I realize that the work of missions is to evangelize the world by preaching the Gospel for a witness, and that beyond the Advent there will be a new age in which human history will be perfected, then I wait with patience for the crisis [i.e. judgment] *which is to come, and serve, as God helps me in order to hasten that coming, the coming of our Lord Himself.*

"May God deliver us from taking so great, so stupendous and sublime and far-reaching a vision of the wisdom which transcends our finite theory, in order to formulate a doctrine that God has chosen a few people to be saved and left the rest to be damned forever. That is an unwarranted deduction!"

From Ephesians and 1 Thessalonians in his book
"Living Messages"

Dr. Morgan made a number of other statements affirming his belief in Christian universal restoration, but the preceding two examples provide unequivocally evidence of his faith in it.

Appendix 9

Israel vs Other Nations

All <u>ISRAEL</u> shall be saved.

Rom 11:26

All <u>NATIONS</u> shall be saved.

Gen 12:3; Ps 22:27

All <u>CREATION</u> shall be saved.

Ps 148:1- <u>7-10</u> - 14; Rom 8:21

As in Adam all die,

even so in Christ
shall all be made alive,
but
each man in his own order.

1 Corinthians 15:22-23

If God so loves the entire world (John 3:16) and is not prejudiced toward any particular nation (Deut 10:17; Acts 10:34-35; Rom 2:11), why does Romans 11:26 state that God will redeem ALL Israel, and other Scriptures such as Daniel 2:44 declare that He will utterly destroy all other nations? Furthermore, if God is not prejudiced toward any particular people, how can He consider Israel *His chosen people* (Deut 7:6-11; Ps 147:19-20; Amos 3:1-2)?

ANSWERS: God does indeed love the entire world and is not partial toward any particular people. In His wisdom, He has chosen Israel to be His instrument to bring salvation to all other nations of the earth (Gen 12:3) just as a firstborn child is seen as being a mentor to his younger siblings.

When God states that He will *destroy all nations* except Israel (Dan 2:44; Isa 60:12; Jer 51:1-19-20; Rev 2:26-27), it is the wicked laws, philosophies, and idols of those nations that will be destroyed, not the people themselves. Yes, God does allow physical destruction and death of some of these people just as He allows the physical destruction and death of some of Israel's people. All people, however, will be raised again one day (John 5:25-29). In that day of resurrection, all people will be saved, but no national government with ungodly beliefs and practices will be restored. As the old and true cliché goes, God loves the sinner but He hates and eventually destroys the sin inside of the sinner. God will completely destroy Babylonian *governments,* but He will restore the Babylonian *people* as they yield to His enduring, righteous Kingdom which expands until it fills the entire earth (Isa 2:2-4; 14:1-4; Dan 2:35; Ezek 47:22-23; Zech 14:16-21; Ex 12:48-49).

Observe the following passages that refer to strangers (i.e. non-Israelites... foreign nations) joining/clinging to Israel:

Isaiah 2:2-4... And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and ***all*** *nations shall*

flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and *he will teach us of his ways,* and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 And *he shall judge among the nations,* and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more [Compare Isa 11:6-9.].

Isaiah 11:10... And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; *to it shall the Gentiles seek* [Gen 12:3]: and his rest shall be glorious.

Isaiah 14:1... For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the *strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob*.

Isaiah 60:3-5... And the *Gentiles shall come to thy light,* and kings to the brightness of thy rising. 4 Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. 5 Then thou shalt see, and flow together [i.e. be radiant, bright], and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because *the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.*

Jeremiah 31:27... Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I *will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast* [Compare Isa 11:6-9].

Hosea 2:21-23... And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, *I will hear the heavens, and they* [i.e. the heavens] *shall hear the earth;* 22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. 23 And I will sow her unto me *in the earth;* and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God. [Compare Isa 45:22-25.]

Revelation 21:24… And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

Genesis 12:3... And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall *all families of the earth* be blessed.

> Remember that in Galatians 3:8, the apostle Paul proclaims Genesis 12:3 to be *the gospel.*

Exodus 12:48 HCSB... If a foreigner resides with you and wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover, every male in his household must be circumcised, and then he may participate; *he will become like a native of the land.* But no uncircumcised [i.e. symbolic of one without Christ] person may eat it. [Also Ezek 48:22-23]

> This is "the law of the stranger." It was ordained at the time God called Israel out of Egypt (i.e. the world) to become His Chosen People. God provided this special law so that, in due season, all people had access to salvation through Israel's Messiah.

Appendix 10

The Marriage of Genesis 12:3 and John 3:16-17

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you *all the families of the earth* shall be blessed.

John 3:16-17 (A.P. Adams)

For God *so loved the world,* that he gave his only begotten Son, that *all, believing in Him, not perish,* but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that *the world through him be saved.*

Galatians 3:16 *marries* Genesis 12:3 with John 3:16-17. Observe carefully that Galatians 3:16 clarifies that it is the Seed of Abraham (i.e. Jesus) in John 3:16-17 that provides salvation for *all the families of the earth*. For God sent not the Seed of Abraham into the world to condemn the world, but that *the world through Him be saved*:

> Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. Galatians 3:16

Genesis 12:3 and John 3:16 are the basis of Appendix 10. They are arguably two of the most foundational and familiar verses in the Bible. Even most of the literate, non-Christian world is familiar with them. America's politicians are especially familiar with Genesis 12:3, drawing upon it and exploiting it as a basis for many of their decisions in foreign affairs.

While multitudes are familiar with these two monumental verses, very few people truly appreciate the significance of their unity. This is apparent by the fact that these two verses are seldom, if ever, seen as companion verses. The purpose of this Appendix is simply to draw attention to the fact that both

of these prominent, familiar passages not only are founded on the work of Christ, but they also declare universal restoration. Observe universal salvation (*all the families of the earth . . . the world*) in the italicized words noted above in Genesis 12:3 and John 3:16-17 at the beginning of this Appendix.

Genesis 12:3 is a foundational verse in the Bible. All Scripture after Genesis 12:3 is based on this fundamental covenant-promise that God established with Abraham and his offspring who shared his faith in the Messiah. Furthermore, it was Adam's sin and the degeneration of mankind as seen in the first eleven chapters of Genesis that created a need for God's covenant with Abraham. In that covenant, God provided "a Seed" (Gen 22:18; **Gal 3:16**) that would eventually absolve Adam's sin, and result in blessing *all the families of the earth.* This being the case, Genesis 12:3 provides not only the bedrock for all Scripture which follows it, but it is even intimately related to the first eleven chapters of Genesis which preceded it. In short, Genesis 12:3 is a notable landmark passage in the Old Scriptures just as John 3:16-17 is in the New Scriptures. Both of these verses are directly related to *the Seed* of Abraham, and both of them communicate universal salvation!

Thank God that Genesis 12:3 is an *unconditional* covenant. Unlike other Bible covenants such as the one that God made with Israel through Moses, the Abrahamic covenant is unilateral. God promised to do everything Himself without any conditions on Abraham's part. It was a promise based on God's *grace alone.* This is why Paul, in Romans 4:13-18 and 9:16, explained that Christ's salvation is a *gift* of God's mercy by *faith* alone, and not because of any of man's efforts (Ephes 2:8).

In the New Scriptures, this same universal salvation is found in John 3:16-17. Both Genesis 12:3 and John 3:16-17 are based on God's grace. And while Genesis 12:3 involves a covenant, the statement in John 3:16-17 affirms the outcome of the Genesis 12:3 covenant. Both passages are dependent

upon the work of Jesus Christ, and both of them describe the same result of salvation for the entire world.

While some translations of John 3:16-17 convey *a condition* on man's part in order to receive God's *gift* of salvation, numerous other verses such as Isaiah 45:22-23 and Philippians 2:10-11 assure us that the condition will be met for everyone. For those who understand the vital doctrine of being saved by grace rather than works, it is evident that any *condition of believing* is made possible by God's grace, not by man's works.

> Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* Romans 2:4

> For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as *God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Romans 12:3

> In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if *God peradventure will give them repentance* to the acknowledging of the truth... 2 Timothy 2:25

Appendix 11

A list of recommended Universal Reconciliation books

An Analytical Study of Words (especially hell & everlasting)
- Louis Abbott

At the End of the Ages (*ages* in contrast to *everlasting*)
- Bob Evely

A Cloud of Witnesses (lists those who embraced U. R.)
- J. W. Hanson

Counterfeit Christianity
- E. Raymond Capt

Creation's Jubilee
- Steven E. Jones

Destined For Salvation
- Kalen Fristad

The Evangelical Universalist (for Bible scholars - not easy to read)
- Gregory MacDonald

Every Knee Shall Bow
- Thomas Allin & Mark Chamberlain

G. Campbell Morgan: See Appendix 7 for a few excerpts

God's Ultimate
- A. E. Saxby

Hope Beyond Hell
- Gerry Beauchemin

The Inescapable Love of God
- Thomas Talbott

Is Hell Eternal (Will God's Plan Fail)
- Charles H. Pridgeon

My Spiritual Autobiography
- Hannah Whitehall Smith (original edition, 1903)

The Origin & History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment
- Thomas B. Thayer

The Outcome of Infinite Grace
- Joseph Kirk

The Restitution of All Things and The Second Death
- Andrew Jukes

Sacred Secrets of the Sovereignty of God
- James Bruggeman

Scotland's Beloved Storyteller
- George MacDonald

The Sovereignty of God
- Steven E. Jones

Universal Reconciliation:
A Brief Selection of Pertinent Quotations
- Michael Phillips

What Does the Bible Really Say About Hell?
- Randy Klassen

Appendix 12

An Index of *Universal Restoration Verses* used in this book

The purpose of this final Appendix is twofold: First and foremost, it lists a preponderance of Bible references that display a golden thread from Genesis to Revelation regarding God's good news of the restoration of all things. Secondly, it provides a quick reference for finding the page numbers where certain of these verses are presented and analyzed.

Due to revisions, a few page numbers in this index may be "off" by one page number or so.

Page numbers in this Appendix are listed in 12 sized font, **bold** 12 sized font, or in a smaller 9 sized font that is enclosed in brackets – exactly as they are typed in their given pages. Those numbers that are <u>not</u> **embolden**, or are in the 9 sized font are not as easy to find quickly.

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