

# God's Love for All Mankind

(Why I Believe in the Salvation  
of all Men through Jesus Christ)

by Brian Albert

The question which seems to me more important than all other questions in religion is this:--What is the ultimate fate of mankind? The vast majority of Christianity today believes that those who do not make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in this short life will suffer eternal punishment, and that countless millions of ages from now they will be no nearer the end of their punishment than when it started. This doctrine has always seemed to me to be unworthy of a great God such as ours who is said to be all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving. Would He really create millions of creatures knowing they would be eternally miserable? Is shutting sin and sinners away in an eternal prison house the best that He can do? Has He no power or desire to save them? When our Lord Jesus Christ died on a cross and purchased our salvation, was it just for a small group He calls His church or was it for the whole world?

I believe that the Bible alone contains the answers to these questions. And while I confess that in many passages it *seems* to support the teaching of eternal punishment, I have come to firmly believe that the true doctrine of the Bible is that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the entire human race. This doctrine is known as Universal Salvation or Universal Reconciliation. It is nothing new. Christians in every age have believed it, and it was the majority opinion in the Church during its first 500 years. I would like to present the main points in the argument for the salvation of all through Jesus Christ in this short article. The thoughts of many Christians have been steeped in the doctrine of eternal punishment for so long that they may reject this argument out of hand. I ask you to keep an open mind and not let preconceived notions influence your opinion. I ask you to turn to the Scriptures to verify what I write here and ask the Holy Spirit, Who alone can teach truth, if what I am saying is truth. I ask you to be like the Bereans who searched the Scriptures daily to see if things were so ([Act 17:11](#)).

## 1. Universal Salvation Passages in the Bible.

There are dozens, perhaps even hundreds, of passages in the Bible that tell us that all will be saved. Please read these passages without any doctrines or dogmas in mind to filter them through. What is the plain common-sense meaning of them?

First of all there are numerous passages that say that God will save all, reconcile all, restore all, have mercy on all, gather all into Christ, and make all alive in Christ: "We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe" ([1Ti 4:10](#)). "And by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" ([Col 1:20](#)). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" ([1Co 15:22](#)). "That He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 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" ([Act 3:21](#)). "That in the dispensation of the fullness of time He may gather together in one all things in Christ" ([Eph 1:10](#)). "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" ([Luk 2:10-11](#)). "For God has committed all to disobedience that He might have mercy on all" ([Rom 11:32](#)). "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, shall draw all unto Myself" ([Joh 12:32](#)). "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" ([1Ti 2:3-6](#), KJV). See also [Phi 3:21](#); [Rom 5:18-19](#); [Rom 11:36](#); [1Co 15:28](#); [Tit 2:11](#); [Act 2:17](#); [Rev 21:5](#).

Then there are a large number of verses that say that Jesus is the Savior of the world, died for the world, reconciled the world, and took away the sins of the world. "And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world" ([1Jo 4:14](#)). "For we ourselves have heard Him, and we know that this indeed is the Christ, the Savior of the world" ([Joh 4:42](#)). "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him should be saved" ([Joh 3:17](#)). "And He

Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" ([1Jo 2:2](#)). "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" ([Joh 1:29](#)). "We judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died. And He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves but for Him who died for them and rose again" ([2Co 5:14-15](#)). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" ([2Co 5:19](#)). "The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" ([Joh 6:51](#)).

Furthermore, a time of universal worship of God and Christ is foretold in the Bible: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" ([Phi 2:10-11](#)). Keep in mind that the Bible also declares that "no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" ([1Co 12:3](#)). "I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall take an oath, and say, Surely in the Lord I have righteousness and strength" ([Isa 45:23-24](#)). "And every creature which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth I heard saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb forever" ([Rev 5:13](#)). See also [Rom 14:11](#).

The Bible says that God is good to all, loves His enemies, and His anger does not last forever! "The Lord is good to all. His tender mercies are over all His works" ([Psa 145:9](#)). "You open Your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing" ([Psa 145:16](#)). "For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry" ([Isa 57:16](#)). "He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in mercy" ([Mic 7:18](#)). "For the Lord will not cast off forever. Though He causes grief, yet He will show compassion according to the multitude of His mercies" ([Lam 3:31-32](#)). "His mercy endures forever" ([Psa 118:1](#); repeated throughout the psalms). "He is kind to the unthankful and evil" ([Luk 6:35](#)). "He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" ([Mat 5:45](#)). God is love ... love does no ill to its neighbor ... love never fails ([1Jo 4:8](#); [Rom 13:10](#); [1Co 13:8](#)). Mercy triumphs over judgment ([Jam 2:13](#)).

There are also many verses that declare that God will release all of creation from the curse of sin and death, and that death and hell will no longer exist. "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" ([Rom 8:20-21](#)). "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" ([Isa 25:8](#)). "The last enemy that will be abolished is death" ([1Co 15:26](#)). "I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be your plagues, O sheol (hell), I will be your destruction" ([Hos 13:14](#)). "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O hades (hell) where is your victory?" ([1Co 15:54-55](#)). "And there shall be no more curse" ([Rev 22:3](#)). "Behold I make all things new" ([Rev 21:5](#)).

Now many of these verses you can explain away if you really want to. For instance, you can say that although Jesus is called Savior of the world and His mission was to save the world, he didn't *actually* save the whole world but just *offered* to save it. Or you can say that God will *force* all men to worship Him right before He throws them into hell forever. But this is really twisting the normal sense of these verses around. There are, however, several passages in which the meaning is so plain that I believe no one can seriously deny that they teach universal salvation. Let us consider [Col 1:15-20](#). If you read this passage carefully you'll see that it says that all things were created by Jesus, all things were created for Him and through Him (v 16), that He existed before all things and holds all things together (v 17), and that He has preeminence over all things (v 18). No Christian denies that each time "all things" is mentioned in this passage it is all-inclusive. It includes everything ever made or that ever existed. But then in verse 20 where it says that He reconciled all things by the blood of His cross, suddenly they say it doesn't really mean "all things," but "all who accept Him." Another passage to consider is [1Co 15:22-28](#). "For AS in Adam all die ..." (v 22a). Everyone accepts that Paul is talking about the entire human race here. We are all *in Adam*. It is obvious that we all die. The verse continues, "EVEN SO in Christ shall all be made alive" (v 22b). The same "all" that die *in Adam* (which of course is the whole human race) are made alive *in Christ*. But when does this happen? The passage continues, "But each man in his own order." Some now and some in later ages. Please carefully read the marvelous passage, [1Co 15:22-28](#). It ends with God being all in all. One more clincher passage is [Rom 5:12-21](#). We read in verse 18, "Therefore, AS through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation ..." (v

18a). One man, Adam, sinned and brought death and judgment and condemnation to all men, the whole race. That's bad, but here comes the good news: "EVEN SO through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life" (v 18b). One man, Jesus, by His righteous act, His death on the cross, undid all the damage that Adam did! Adam spread death and sin to the whole race, and Jesus spreads justification of life to the same race, the same all men. How plain can this be? Those who argue for a partial salvation of the race not only deny the plain meaning of this verse, but they say that Adam was more powerful than Jesus. They say Adam could spread sin and death to all men, but Jesus could only bring some men out of it.

## 2. Eternal or Age-lasting Punishment?

According to the Bible Jesus is the only name in heaven and earth by which a man may be saved ([Act 4:12](#)). No one comes to the Father except through Him ([Joh 14:6](#)). What does God do with sinners who die having never accepted Jesus in this life? As we have seen there is much support for universal salvation in the Bible, but believers in eternal punishment can point to about a dozen verses to support their claim of never-ending punishment ([Dan 12:2](#); [Mat 12:32](#); [Mat 18:8](#); [Mat 25:41](#); [Mat 25:46](#); [Mar 3:29](#); [2Th 1:9](#); [Heb 6:2](#); [2Pe 2:17](#); [Jud 1:7](#); [Jud 1:13](#); [Rev 14:11](#); [Rev 19:3](#); [Rev 20:10](#)). Obviously both sides can't be right. God says He is not the author of confusion ([1Co 14:33](#)), so if the Bible is His inspired book there must be an answer to the contradiction.

Now if such an awful fate as eternal punishment is revealed by God in the Bible we should expect that He would warn us of it right at the beginning and that just about every page would repeat it. We should also expect that He would use language that left no doubt about the eternity of the punishment. God always sent prophets to warn His people of any impending danger, and what danger can be compared to that of suffering eternal torment? But the facts are that eternal punishment is not even mentioned until the book of Daniel, nearly two-thirds of the way through the Bible. And in the relatively few verses that do mention eternal punishment the words that are translated "eternal" are words that are used over and over in the Bible to describe things that have come to an end. In the vast majority of cases these words describe *limited time periods*. These are simple facts that anyone can verify.

Let us start with the Old Testament. When our Bibles say that something is "forever" or "eternal" or "everlasting" in the Old Testament, the word that the Hebrew writers used was "olam" (Strong's #5769). If we trace the Bible's usage of this word we will see that it does not really mean forever. Jonah wrote about his time in the great fish, "The earth with her bars closed behind me forever (olam)" ([Jon 2:6](#)). Yet he was only there for three days ([Jon 1:17](#)). When a Hebrew slave loved his master he would have his ear bored with an awl and would then "serve him forever (olam)" ([Exo 21:6](#)). Of course this could only mean for the rest of his life. God said about Solomon's temple that He would put His name there forever (olam) ([1Ki 9:3](#)), but this temple burned to the ground 400 years later. Israel was not allowed to let a Moabite or Ammonite into the congregation forever (olam) ([Deu 23:3](#)), but in the same verse this is explained to mean "for ten generations." Isaiah wrote that certain places in Israel shall become desolate forever (olam) ([Isa 32:14](#)), but the next verse says, "until the Spirit is poured out from on high and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field." The Levitical priesthood was said to be an eternal (olam) priesthood ([Exo 40:15](#)), but the Bible then tells us that it was superceded by the Melchizedek priesthood ([Heb 7:11-18](#)). The Sinai covenant was called an everlasting (olam) covenant ([Lev 24:8](#)), but the New Testament says it is obsolete and ready to vanish away ([Heb 8:13](#)). Sabbaths and ritual sacrifices were to be observed as a statute forever (olam) ([Lev 6:18](#); [Lev 16:31](#); [2Ch 2:4](#); [Exo 31:16-17](#)), but then we read that they were but "fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation" ([Heb 9:10](#)). So when we read in [Dan 12:2](#) that "some shall rise to shame and everlasting (olam) contempt," never-ending punishment is not what is being taught. God will punish until His people are corrected and repent. The word "olam" should be translated "indefinitely" or "age-lasting." This would clear up many contradictions in our English language Bibles.

Now let us turn to the New Testament where most of the so-called eternal punishment verses are located. We have about a dozen references to eternal punishment here. For instance we are told that some shall go to the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" ([Mat 25:41](#)), some shall go to "eternal punishment" ([Mat 25:46](#)) or suffer "eternal destruction" ([2Th 1:9](#)) or go into the lake of fire "forever and ever" ([Rev 20:10](#)). In all of these dozen or so verses the length of the punishment is described by the

Greek word "aion" (Strong's #165) or its adjective form "aionios" (#166). These words are used over and over again in the New Testament to describe *limited time periods*. Again, it is very easy to prove this by tracing their usage with a concordance. But first let me point out that we get our English word "eon" from the Greek "aion." An eon is an age, a long but limited period of time.

Now the word "aion" is translated as "age" (sometimes as "world") in dozens of passages in most Bibles. Here are some examples: "I am with you even to the end of the age (aion)" ([Mat 28:20](#)), "the harvest is the end of the age (aion)" ([Mat 13:39](#)), "the god of this age (aion) has blinded .." ([2Co 4:4](#)), "the mystery that has been hidden from ages (aions) and generations" ([Col 1:26](#)), "in the ages (aions) to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace" ([Eph 2:7](#)), "might deliver us from this present evil age (aion)" ([Gal 1:4](#)), "by whom also He made the ages (aions)" ([Heb 1:2](#)). Now try putting the sense of eternity into these verses and see how ridiculous it is: "the harvest is the end of the eternity," "the god of this eternity," "the mystery hidden from eternities and generations," "in the eternities to come," "from this present evil eternity," etc. And yet this is the very same word on which the doctrine of eternal punishment stands!

The words "olam" and "aion" have precisely the same meaning. They mean *indefinite time*, not *never-ending time*. They should be consistently translated as "age" or "age-lasting." The wicked are thrown into an age-lasting fire. The lake of fire lasts for an age of ages, not forever and ever. The phrase "forever and ever" is nonsense. What is the need for the second "ever" if the first one means never-ending. It's like saying, "forever plus a day." The proper translation is "for an age of ages" or "to the age of the age." This describes a long but not infinite amount of time. The Bible is remarkably consistent in the original Hebrew and Greek languages in which it was written. In [Mat 25:46](#) the word translated "punishment" is "kolasis" in the Greek and means "to reform by pruning or chastising." Some go away not to "everlasting punishment" but to "age-lasting chastisement." God's punishments are not meaningless and vindictive, but fatherly punishments that correct sinners and bring about righteousness. [Note: [Mat 25:46](#) is translated in the following way in these Bibles: "these shall go away to punishment age-during" (Young's Literal Translation), "these shall go away into the Punishment of the Ages" (Weymouth's NT), "these shall be coming away into chastening eonian" (Concordant Literal Version), "these shall go away into age-abiding correction (Rotherham's Emphasized Bible), "these last will go away into aeonian punishment" (20th Cent. NT).]

### 3. Questions

Q. Doesn't the Bible say that hell is a place of eternal punishment?

A. No. There were four words that were translated "hell" in the King James Bible. The Hebrew word "sheol," used in the Old Testament, merely describes the state of the dead without regard to reward or punishment. Jacob, declared a saint in the Bible, said he would go there ([Gen 37:35](#)), Job asked that he might go there to *escape* his sufferings ([Job 14:13](#)), God says He brings down to sheol and raises up again ([1Sa 2:6](#)), and [Hos 13:14](#) says that sheol will be destroyed. Clearly the word "sheol" does not support the idea of a place of eternal punishment. The greek word "hades" is the exact equivalent of sheol. It is used only 11 times in the New Testament and always as the realm of the dead. It is sometimes seen as a place of punishment such as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, but it is never said to be eternal. Hades gets thrown into the lake of fire which is called the second death ([Rev 20:14](#)). This is precisely how death and hell are destroyed. The purpose of the lake of fire is to purify sinners. Christians are to rejoice in fiery trials because fire purifies ([1Pe 4:12-13](#)). Fire destroys sin and death and is therefore called the second death (the death of death). We are going through our second death now by submitting to trials and sufferings. Death is dying in us. By death God destroys him who has the power of death ([Heb 2:14](#)). Who is to say that those who missed out on salvation by grace in this life cannot still be purified by God's fires in the life beyond? The two other words that are translated hell are the Greek words "Gehenna" and "Tartatus." Gehenna is actually a place on earth, the Valley of Hinnom, which was the garbage dump of Jerusalem in Jesus' day. And Tartarus is used only once ([2Pe 2:4](#)) as the prison house of angels who are reserved until judgment. None of this supports hell as being a place of eternal punishment.

Q. What about unquenchable fire and the worm that never dies?

A. The phrase "unquenchable fire" just means fire that will not go out until it has accomplished its

purpose. The ancient Greeks always used it this way, and so does the Bible. For instance, Jeremiah prophesied that an unquenchable fire would destroy Jerusalem ([Jer 7:20](#); [Jer 17:27](#)). He was right. Jerusalem burned to the ground, but it is not still burning today. When Jesus and John the Baptist warned the people about an unquenchable fire that was coming, they were saying that there is a judgment coming that you won't be able to stop once it starts. They weren't saying it would last for all eternity. Same with the worm that never dies. Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, bred worms *continually* from generation to generation because of all the foul things thrown in there. While there was anything foul to consume there would be worms. And while there is anything foul in our hearts, God has his "fire" and "worms" to destroy it. It doesn't mean that a worm will eat you for all eternity.

Q. Does this mean even Hitler will be saved?

A. Yes, eventually! But God is not mocked. He judges according to our deeds. Hitler murdered millions and so his punishment will fit his crimes. God will give the perfect punishment. Perhaps vast ages will expire before he is released, but even he will one day realize that he blew it by serving bigotry and hatred instead of the one true God Who is love. Like Jonah he will cry from the depths of sheol ([Jon 2:2](#)) and be heard.

Q. If everyone gets saved in the end, why should I bother to be good? Why should I bother to pray or preach the gospel?

A. If you need the threat of hell to make you good, then your love for God is lacking something. You are serving Him out of fear only. And the Bible tells us that our prayers and our preaching are *the means* by which people are saved. Paul says that God will have all men be saved, therefore pray for all men ([1Ti 2:1-4](#)). He says God is reconciling the world, therefore be an ambassador of Christ, preaching and living the gospel ([2Co 5:19-20](#)). God will save the world and He will use His people to do it. If we don't pray, God will raise up another generation of saints who will.

Q. Who else believed in universal salvation?

A. Most of the fathers of the early church clearly stated their belief in the salvation of all men. This includes Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Theophilus, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzus, Didymus, Chrysostom, Eusebius, and Ambrose. These men read the Scriptures in the original Hebrew and Greek languages. Gregory of Nyssa presided over the Nicene council and was one of the most respected leaders of the early Church. The early Church fathers documented every known heresy of their times, but universal salvation was never listed among them. Augustine advocated eternal punishment but admitted in his writings that the majority in the Church at that time believed in the end of all punishments (see *Enchirid. ad Laurent. c. 29*). Augustine didn't understand Greek and read the Scriptures in Latin. In modern times many great minds such as William Law, Henry Ward Beecher, George MacDonald, William Barclay, and Hannah Whitall Smith believed it. Hundreds of ministries today preach it.

Q. How does belief in the salvation of all affect one's faith in God?

A. We become like whatever we worship. If we worship a God who tortures His enemies unmercifully forever, we become unloving towards others. If we believe God loves even the worst of men, we will begin to love them too. Knowing God's goodness also causes us to relax and enjoy God and give ourselves into His hands without reservations. He is not going to torture our unbelieving loved ones in a never-ending torture pit. No matter how many hell-fire and damnation preachers tell me that I will never believe it. I have His book and His Spirit. I know Him. He really is love. He really is a loving Father. He is wise, powerful, and good. He will do good to all His creatures. Praise to His holy name!

Some books and resources to learn more about this teaching are listed below. They can be found online with a simple internet search.

The Restitution of All Things, by Andrew Jukes

Hope Beyond Hell, by Gerry Beauchemin

The Savior of the World Series, by J. Preston Eby

Tentmaker Ministries (web site: [www.tentmaker.org](http://www.tentmaker.org))