

All doesn't mean all men are saved

By David and Wendy Burnfield

One of the objections to *Patristic Universalism* is that *all* doesn't mean *all* men are saved.

Objection: In the original Greek "All" does not mean the entire creation, but means "collectively, some of all types" it is the same word used when it says "all" men have gone after him, speaking in past tense regarding the life of Christ. We know that while Christ was alive not "all" men went after Him. This particular word is used only 7-8 times in scripture and rarely means a literal "all" but is used to indicate various people groups. I also want to add that yes He is indeed the Savior of "all" but whether you receive this is a choice. A course in Greek would do a Universalist's well.

Reply: The word 'all' (Greek 'pas' Strong's 3956) "is only used 7 - 8 times in scripture" that is not correct. Actually, this word is used hundreds of times throughout Scripture. True, it's not translated as 'all' in each case but it's translated as 'all' over 400 times in the NAS so it's clearly used more than 7 or 8 times. The word 'all' has 7 or 8 senses so perhaps that is what was meant. I agree that in John 12:19, 'all' is used in a collective rather than a literal sense and does not mean every person. But 'all' does mean every person in many passages such as Romans 3:23 ("*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*" - NASB) or Romans 5:12 ("*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned*" - NASB). To say that the word 'all' is "rarely" used in a literal sense is simply not true. And finally, the comment about needing to know Greek is irrelevant for this discussion. The Greek word 'pas' has been translated as 'all' and so the argument is not over the word but the intended meaning the author had in mind and all the Greek in the world can't answer that question. For example, presumably we both know English but if I wrote the sentence, "I don't like my car because it rides too rough." you wouldn't know if I was complaining about the performance of the engine or the performance of the suspension. A Ph.D. in English wouldn't help you interpret the meaning of my sentence. We have the same situation here. 'Pas' has been interpreted as 'all' and nobody disagrees this is correct. The question is what the author meant when he used the word 'all' and only he would know for sure. Knowing Greek cannot determine the author's intent. Regarding 1 Timothy 4:10, if you read it without any presuppositions it certainly seems to imply that all men will be saved. But nobody comes to the Bible with a clean slate. Everyone reads every line of scripture through a lens. If you believe God will not save all men, then you don't interpret this passage as teaching all will be saved. And at this point, it's not one's knowledge of Greek that determines the interpretation, it's one's presuppositions.

Thought: If Christ has not accomplished what He said He would do, doesn't this make evil a success and God's Grace a complete failure?

Verses: Colossians 2:15, Luke 18:27 Psalm 98:3, I Timothy 2:4.

Prayer: Thank you Father for all you have done let us focus on the Victory of Christ. Amen

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