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Universal Salvation in Two Verses

by David Sielaff, July 2024

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This article presents facts you already know, but it will help you remember them. You can present these facts in a straightforward manner that will be readily accepted. Given in the right order, these facts, will forestall hasty objections. Your audience of one or many, will be forced to think over what they have read, and begin a process to prove for themselves the words of these two verses. It took me a long time to learn how to teach what people think is impossible, wrong, or evil. Enjoy the experience. All Bible quotes are from the *Concordant Literal Version*, unless otherwise stated.

Learning Universal Salvation

I remember rejecting the teaching of universal salvation when it was first presented to me. Like many, I sought to disprove it from the Scriptures. You, like me, eventually read or heard the verses, proved, and accepted the evidence for yourself.

I learned the truth through reading the writings of the Concordant Publishing Concern, but mostly through the published material and audiotapes by Dr. Ernest Martin from the mid-1970s through the 1980s. Most of that information is updated and on the ASK website. Dr. Martin explained the salvation of all mankind as well as the reconciliation of all creation back to God.

Teaching Others This Truth

If you have the opportunity to speak with someone or a group you believe might be open to the biblical truth of universal salvation, I have some suggestions on a presentation sequence that gives the listener a problem to solve. Their reaction might be negative, but hopefully you will minimize emotional counter-arguments that they might present. Remember, we plant the seeds, God opens their minds, everyone benefits.

If you use a weak approach, your listeners will likely have quick objections and dismiss your argument. By presenting two powerful and clear biblical passages you can prevent most common objections from being expressed. This is because you will have already addressed and refuted the major objections in the two verses.¹

If you lead them to understand the possibility of universal salvation, then they can ask questions without a strong negative reaction. The two verses, to be presented briefly, and later presented in a wider context, can put forth powerful biblical proofs that are difficult to deny.

¹ Even then, regardless of what the Scriptures say, you may be accused of promoting heresy rejected by Christian tradition.

First, try to have the “students” read the two verses aloud. Do this so the words are heard in their own voice, expressed in their own way. **The two verses are: Ephesians 1:11 and 1 Timothy 2:4.** Any translation can be used, preferably the Bible of one of the students. Will the person believe their own eyes and ears to read Scriptures they have not understood before? You will quickly find out.

Second, ask them to explain in their own words what they just read. They are less likely to challenge the true and obvious meanings of the verses when they read it themselves, rather than you reading and explaining the passages to them. They may respond with words like ... “*but we know that cannot be true!*” If so, you have a basis to deal with that objection. Ask them: “*What, then, do YOU think it means?*”

Repeat, the same process with the SECOND verse.

Why This Is Important

The apostle Paul wrote to his younger colleague about the situation in a congregation Timothy was teaching. Paul gave him advice:

“Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil, with meekness TRAINING those who are antagonizing, [Why?] seeing whether God MAY BE GIVING THEM repentance to come into a REALIZATION [Greek: *epignosis*, “full knowledge”] of the truth, and they WILL be sobering up out of the trap of the Adversary, having been caught alive by him [the Adversary], for that one's will.”

• 2 Timothy 2:24–26

Writing to the Corinthian *ekklesia*, Paul writes we cannot know the result of our actions.

“I plant, Apollos irrigates, but God makes it grow up. So that, neither is he who is planting anything, nor he who is irrigating, but God Who makes it grow up. Now he who is planting and he who is irrigating are for one thing. Yet each will be getting his own wages according to his own toil. For God's fellow workers ARE WE. God's farm, God's building, ARE YOU.”

• 1 Corinthians 3:6–9

We should do our part, as Paul tells us, so we will find out “**whether GOD may be giving them repentance to come into a realization [epignosis] of the truth**” (2 Timothy 2:25). When we speak to, teach, or train someone about some aspect of God's truth, we cannot know if the seeds of truth will grow.

In the past I would stop at the end of 2 Timothy 2:26, and not go to the rest of the verse. In 2 Timothy chapter 3, Paul gives information on the last days that were future to him and Timothy.

They are still future to us today:

“Now this know, that in the LAST DAYS perilous periods will be present, for men will be selfish, fond of money, ostentatious, proud, calumniators, stubborn to parents, ungrateful, malign, without natural affection, implacable, adversaries, uncontrollable, fierce, averse to the good, traitors, rash, conceited, FOND OF their own gratification rather than FOND OF God; having a form of devoutness, yet denying its power.

These, also, shun. For of these are those who are slipping into homes and are leading into captivity little women, heaped with sins, being led by various lusts and gratifications, always learning and yet NOT AT ANY TIME able to come into a REALIZATION [Greek, *epignosis*, “full knowledge”] OF THE TRUTH.”

• 2 Timothy 3:1–7

Let us examine in detail the two verses in their larger context.

The First Verse That Teaches Universal Salvation

We start at the beginning — with the will of God. The first verse is Ephesians 1:11; the second verse is 1 Timothy 2:4. Why these two verses? Ephesians 1:11 uses simple and direct words with no theological

ambiguity. It says GOD is in charge of His creation. It states an important principle on how God operates:

“... in Him [God] in Whom **OUR LOT**² was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the one

WHO IS **OPERATING ALL** in accord with THE COUNSEL OF **HIS WILL** ...”

• *Ephesians 1:11*

Focus on the last line “**who is operating ALL in accord with the counsel of HIS will.**” I cannot emphasize enough the power that this verse expresses. The message is simple, profound, and it answers questions before they are asked. This verse tells the reader (or listeners of the verse read aloud) that ...

- Only God’s will is supreme — above the will of any of God’s creatures, above any circumstance.
- God’s will is supreme to human will; human will cannot supersede God’s will.
- God’s will is not subject to criticism by anyone — ever.
- God’s will can be resisted, but it cannot be thwarted or prevented from happening.
- God’s will shall be accomplished — in full — as He wishes, and when He wishes.
- **Christ’s will** has always been subordinate to His Father’s will *in the past*.
- **Christ’s will** is subordinate NOW to His Father’s will *at this moment*.
- **Christ’s will** shall *always be* subordinate to His Father’s will.
- **Christ shall return** ALL power and authority *back* to God His Father (1 Corinthians 15:27–28).

Christ’s will is an interesting subject. Christ was the one through whom all creation was accomplished (Colossians 1:15–20). Then He emptied Himself of all glory and power to become flesh as a human being to redeem every human being (Philippians 2:6–10).

- While on earth Jesus said He came **not** to do His will, but to do the will of God His Father (Matthew 7:21, 12:50; John 1:14, 6:40, 8:29).

The Second Verse That Teaches Universal Salvation

Once you understand that ONLY God’s will is sovereign, then we need to learn WHAT is God’s will for mankind. The second verse tells us exactly what God’s will is for every human being. There are no exceptions. Every human being — and that includes the most sinful and evil people who ever lived: ALL will be saved.

Carefully read 1 Timothy 2:3–6 below. Pay particular attention to verse 4 (with the vertical line to the left of the text numbers [1] and [2] below):

“... for this is ideal and welcome in the sight of our Saviour, GOD,

Who **WILLS** that

[1] **ALL mankind be saved** AND

[2] **come into a realization of the truth.**”

For THERE IS ONE GOD, and ONE MEDIATOR of God and mankind, A MAN, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent ransom FOR ALL (the testimony in its own eras),”

• *1 Timothy 2:3–6*

² This use of the word “lot” is interesting. It is the Greek word for allotment or “lot” as in casting lots as an impartial way of deciding a matter. See the entry in the Fausset’s *Bible Cyclopaedia* article “Lot” on page 439.

First Timothy 2:4 tells us **what God's will is** for **"all mankind."** The word "will" in this verse is a verb *thelei* in Greek. The Greek noun is *thelematos* in Ephesians 1:11.

God does not wish for all mankind to be saved, or hope for some of mankind to be saved. God **WILLS that all mankind be saved AND come into a realization of the truth.** For the second part of 2:4, the phrase connected by **"AND"** means that **"ALL MANKIND"** will learn the **"realization (full knowledge) of the truth"** about God and His salvation of all mankind.

Finally, in 1 Timothy 2:6 Christ Jesus gave **"Himself"** to be **"a ransom FOR ALL ..."** All what? The man Christ Jesus paid that ransom for every human being.

This statement means that His single ransom is sufficient payment for every human being, especially if God **WILLS** it to be so. As Ephesians 1:11 says, God is **"OPERATING ALL in accord with the counsel of HIS WILL."**

We all must rely on God's grace to convince human beings to pay attention to God's message of grace and salvation. When will that happen? It will occur for the vast majority of the dead when they are resurrected from the dead to physical life.

Billions of the Dead Will Be Resurrected to Physical Life

The prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of how that would occur for the people of Israel. It will be similar, and probably identical, for the rest of mankind in the Great White Throne Judgment (Hebrews 9:27–28 and Revelation 20:11–15).

Read about the re-embodiment and re-enfleshment processes that end with their soul being returned to a new physical body and life. Ezekiel's vision is told in Ezekiel 37:1–14. He saw what will happen in the future for the vast majority of people since Adam, most all died without having faith in their Creator or knowing about His Son, Jesus Christ.

In Job 14:14 the patriarch Job asked while still suffering in pain: **"If a master dies shall he live again? All the days of my enlistment I SHALL WAIT until my relief comes."**

Job later said, still in agony:

"Yet as for me, I know MY REDEEMER IS LIVING, And after this [long after Job's trial is over and after Job's death] He [my Redeemer] shall arise on the soil; a vision of the future."

• Job 19:25

When these people are given a new physical body and are raised from the dead, they will be alive again, with strength and good health, and they will pay attention to God's teaching. Their surprise and awe at what happened to their being alive again will be similar to the experience Lazarus had after being dead for days until Jesus raised him from the dead (John 11:1–12:17). A similar experience will occur for every person (many billions of people) who are made alive again for the Great White Throne judgment.

Review of the Process of Explaining Ephesians 1:11 and 1 Timothy 2:4

This is how you present this information.

1. Begin with Ephesians 1:11.
2. Then go to 1 Timothy 2:4. If your "student" or group does not acknowledge truth that God's will is for all mankind to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) ...
3. Then go back and have your "student" or group reread Ephesians 1:11.
4. Then go back to 1 Timothy 2:4.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4. Until they either
 - Walk away, or
 - Acknowledge the truth of the two verses

Remind them:

The God who is active in Ephesian chapter 1 is the SAME God that wills for all mankind to be saved in First Timothy chapter 2.

Both were written by the apostle Paul.

Both were late compositions, written in the last years of Paul's life.

Both reflect the latest and highest revelation to the apostle Paul — the Secret or Mystery given to Paul and later to others.

What If They Accept Ephesians Chapter 1 and First Timothy Chapter 2?

Have them read Ephesians 1:3–5, which ends with a statement about the “will” of Christ's Father:

“Blessed be THE GOD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; IN ACCORD WITH THE DELIGHT OF HIS WILL ...”

Note that in verse 1:3, “our Lord Jesus Christ” has a God. The God of Christ is the same as our God — God the Father Almighty. Be aware that this information is VERY problematic to the assumption by the world's mainline Christian churches (Roman Catholic, Orthodox Christian, Protestant denominations, and many Messianic Jewish groups, etc.) of the world preaching and teaching that their God is a “trinity” of some sort. Note these Ephesians passages

“... making known to us THE SECRET OF HIS WILL (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to HEAD UP ALL IN the Christ — both that in the heavens and that on the earth ...”

• *Ephesians 1:9–10*

Ephesians 1:11 in Other Translations

Please read each of these and note how **the most popular English translations today ALL AGREE**. There is little difference in the translations.

CLV — Concordant Literal Version [the version used in this article *DWS*]

“... according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL.”

ESV — English Standard Version

“... according to the purpose of him who works all things according to THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL”

KJV — King James Version

“... according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL”

NAS — New American Standard

“... according to His purpose who works all things after THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL,”

NET — New English Translation

“... according to the one purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL”

NIV — New International Version

“... according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with THE PURPOSE OF HIS WILL,”

NKJ — New King James

“... according to the purpose of him who works all things according to THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL,”

RSV — Revised Standard Version

“... according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL,

ROT — Rotherham Bible

“... according to the purpose of him who energiseth all things according to THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL,”

YLT — Young’s Literal Translation

“... according to the purpose of him who [is] the all things is working according to THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL,” *[Yes, the YLT text is very awkward! DWS]*

1 Timothy 2:4 in Other Translations

With this verse there are variations of 1 Timothy 2:4. Why? Perhaps the translators disagree with the theology of what the Greek words actually say, so they obscure their translation. Note that several of the most popular English translations disagree with each other. Some even refuse to recognize the plain meaning of the Greek verb “will” or “wills”:

CLV — Concordant Literal Version [the version used in this article DWS]

“... Who WILLS that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth.”

ESV — English Standard Version

“... who DESIRES [?] all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

KJV — King James Version

“... Who WILL HAVE all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

NAS — New American Standard

“... who DESIRES all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

NET — New English Translation

“... since he WANTS all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

NIV — New International Version

“... who WANTS all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

NKJ — New King James

“... who DESIRES all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

RSV — Revised Standard Version

“... who DESIRES all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

ROT — Rotherham Bible

“... Who WILLETH, all men, to be saved, and, unto a personal knowledge of truth, to come.”

YLT — Young’s Literal Translation

“... **who DOTH WILL all men to be saved, and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.**”

Responding to Deniers of Ephesians 1:11 and 1 Timothy 2:4

- The most immediate objection usually is: “What about free will? God offers us salvation through the Gospel, and God has given us “free will” to accept or reject His free gift of salvation. THAT is why some will not be saved. They will refuse God’s gift of His Grace.

Well, no. Human beings do not have “free will.” You and every other human being have “human will” but it is not “free will.” The human will has a multitude of constraints. Human beings rarely make a decision or a choice without constraints, conditions, limitations, or boundaries. We are NOT free to choose God unless God calls us to do so. Jesus said:

“**NO ONE CAN COME TO ME if ever the Father Who sends Me should NOT be drawing him. And I shall be raising him in the last day. It is written in the prophets: ‘And they shall all be taught of God.’ Everyone, then, who hears from the Father and is learning the truth, is coming to Me.**”

• *John 6:44–45*

“**And He [Jesus] said, ‘Therefore have I declared to you that no one can be coming to Me if it should not be given him of the Father.’”**

• *John 6:65*

“**Jesus, then, said to the Jews who have believed Him, ‘if ever you should be remaining in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and THE TRUTH WILL BE MAKING YOU FREE.’”**

• *John 8:31–32,*

- “What about hell? How can all be saved if hell is empty?” There is no “hell” as understood in Christian theology. The Bible never speaks of it as most Christian churches teach.

See Dr. Martin’s 1978 article “[The Biblical Teaching of Hell.](#)”

- Human beings are mortal; they do not have an immortal soul. When you die, you cease to exist ... until you are resurrected at the Great White Throne judgment (1) to learn the truths of God, and (2) to reconcile with those you wronged, and who wronged you.

Children of Adam become immortal only in the order Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:20–28.

- There is no trinity. The goal of God our Father in heaven is for **you** to become a literal child of God just as Christ is a Son of God. If you believe in Christ’s resurrection, you ARE (at this moment) a believer and have been given God’s grace and His Holy Spirit (1 John 3:2).

See Dr. Martin’s, “[Chapter 24 – ‘Our Destiny’: The Final Revelation of God](#)” from his book *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine*.

See also, “[Chapter 32 - The Absurdity of the Trinity](#)” also from *Essentials*.

- Ask for more of God’s Holy Spirit from our Father. That Spirit comes from God, it is in Christ, and in all believers. God’s Spirit is a force linking all to the family of God. In the future all mankind will receive God’s Spirit, all will be saved, and all will have the full knowledge of the truth. The Holy Spirit of God is not a “person” (no matter who tells you it is). The “trinity” is an assertion, and no one has ever proven it to be true in Scripture. There is no biblical evidence for a trinity, only hints, suggestions, allusions, and analogies. Ask to read direct statements.

See Dr. Martin’s 1991 article, “[The Holy Spirit - A Person or Power?](#)”

- The “Gospel” is not a message about “HOW to be saved,” it is an announcement and a powerful declaration that **you are already saved** by God through Christ. All mankind is already saved by God’s will and through Christ’s works, death, and resurrection.. However, only Christians in the past, and those alive now have been given the knowledge to realize this truth. At some time in the future all will be saved:

“Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for this are we toiling and being reproached),

that we rely on the living God, WHO IS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL MANKIND, especially of believers.

These things be charging and teaching.”

• **1 Timothy 4:9–11**

What does it mean **“especially of believers”**? It means that some (a small minority) receive the truth now in their lifetime. The vast majority will become believers after their physical resurrection and judgment, and subsequent glorification to be like Christ is now. See Dr. Martin’s 1989 article, [“The Way to Salvation in the Christian Gospel.”](#)

Two Other Verses about Universal Salvation

The apostle Paul wrote two other specific passages about universal salvation of mankind, AND the reconciliation of all creation back to God our Father, the Creator of all things.

Speaking of the Son of God who was born of Mary and became flesh:

“... for in Him [Christ] is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him,

... and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens.”

• **Colossians 1:16, 20**

“Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing,

celestial and terrestrial and subterranean and every tongue should be acclaiming [confessing] that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father.”

• **Philippians 2:9–11**

Conclusion

If you present this information to individuals or a small group, begin with Ephesians 1:11. Then take them to 1 Timothy 2:4. Ask them to read the verses themselves. They will probably understand immediately that their theology cannot relate to what the verses plainly say. If they acknowledge the two verses indeed state what they obviously say, only then should you go to other verses in Colossians chapter 1 and Philippians chapter 2. There are many other verses that present information about the salvation of all mankind and God’s reconciliation of all creation in John 3:16–17; 1 Timothy 4:10; Romans chapter 5; 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

“[God] Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian, yet NOW is being manifested through the advent of our Savior, Christ Jesus, Who, indeed, abolishes death, yet illuminates life and incorruption through the evangel [Gospel] of which I [Paul] was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher of the nations.”

• **2 Timothy 1:9–10**

David Sielaff, July 2024