

**ALL MEN**  
**April 28, 2019, 6 PM**  
**1 Timothy 2:1-15**

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for **all men**; . . . for this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have **all men** to be saved, and to come unto 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**, to be testified in due time.” 1 Timothy 2:1, 3-6

This passage has been used often by those seeking to disprove the biblical teaching regarding Christ’s atoning sacrifice on the cross. A summation of their argument is: “Christ ‘will have all men to be saved,’ and He ‘gave himself a ransom for all.’ Therefore, when Christ died on the cross He atoned for all of the sins of all who ever live upon the earth.”

Proper analysis of this argument takes this form: If the biblical statement means that Christ atoned for all of the sins of all who ever live upon earth, then either (1) Everyone’s sin is atoned, and everyone will therefore be in heaven, or (2) Christ’s death was not actually an atonement for sin.

If Christ atoned for all sin, yet one soul is lost in hell, Christ’s atoning work did not actually atone for his sin. Thus, #1 cannot be accurate, for Scriptures teach that many will be condemned to eternal torments (Matthew 7:13, 22, 23; 18:8, 9; 25: 41; Luke 13:24, 24; Revelation 20:11-15). The effect of #1 is an unintentional denial of the effectiveness of Christ’s death. But #2 differs from this only in that it is an intentional denial of the efficacy of Christ’s death. Thus, neither statement is biblically acceptable. Therefore, to argue that this passage teaches that Christ “atoned for all of the sins of all who ever live upon earth” must miscomprehend the passage.

What then is the passage teaching? It is teaching the necessity of prayer for men of every kind—not the doctrine of salvation. Everything that follows the exhortation that “prayers . . . be made for all men” must be subjected to that exhortation. That context determines the meaning of all that follows in verses 1-8.

When Paul exhorts Timothy to pray for all men, does he mean that Timothy must name every man on earth in his prayers? Of course not. Does he mean that Timothy must pray, “Lord, I pray for all men?” Such vague generalities are not found in biblical instruction regarding prayer.

Rather, Paul tells what he means by “all men.” “for kings, and for all that are in authority.” Those in authority were persecuting Christians. They were exceedingly wicked; enemies of God’s people. But these were not reasons to omit them from prayers. Christ taught, “pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). The same duty is taught here. We must pray for men of every sort, even those for whom we are most disinclined to pray.

Why are we to pray for them? Several reasons are given. First, in order “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable in all godliness and honesty” (v. 2). Second, because God will have even men of this sort—“all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (v. 4). He saved Saul, a persecutor of the Church. Who could have imagined! Third, there is no other way for such men to be saved, for there is only “one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (v. 5). Therefore, do not exclude them for your prayers. Fourth, “Christ Jesus . . . gave himself a ransom for all” (vv. 5, 6), for men of every sort, even persecuting rulers.

The passage instructs that we must be diligent in prayer, praying even for our enemies and those whom we think to be unsavable. It tells who some of them are: kings, rulers, those who are in authority, yea, men of all sorts—“all men.” The passage says nothing of whose sins are atoned or for whom atonement was made. It speaks rather to the necessity of prayer for all men. Omit no one for any reason. Pray for men of every sort.