

THE RANSOM FOR ALL

As In Adam All Die

“Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all have sinned” (Rom 5:12). The “one man” the Apostle Paul is mentioning is the first man, Adam. He was created perfect; and when he sinned, he lost not only his perfection, but also his right to everlasting life. Adam’s sin and the death penalty that resulted because of it were passed down to and through all his descendants. Everybody throughout history has died because of Adam’s sin.

In Christ Shall All Be Made Alive

“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men” (Rom. 5:17,18). *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).*

We ask you to notice the two great opposites that are contrasted in these texts: DEATH through Adam, and LIFE through Jesus Christ. You will find these two great opposites contrasted throughout the Bible. Death is the penalty that has been passed down from Adam ever since he sinned through disobedience and lost his home in Eden. Christ, however, having conquered death, now offers us everlasting life. Everybody who has lived and died since Adam has died because of Adam’s sin; but these statements by the Apostle Paul truly offer a *real hope* for all mankind. Because of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, the hope of everlasting life is given to all. “So then as through one trespass *the judgment came* unto all men to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness *the free gift came* unto all men to justification of life” (Rom. 5:17, 18 - ASV)

A Ransom

“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 Tim. 2:5, 6). In order to properly understand the Bible, we must not only read its verses, we must also know the meaning of the words found in the verses. Please read this text again, and think about the meaning of all the words found in it. What does the word *ransom* mean to you? It is a corresponding price (according to Young’s concordance) that must be paid before what was lost or taken away can be returned. Think for a moment what it was that our Lord’s life, offered as a sacrifice, corresponded to. It was the price required by God’s justice.

You may recall that after Adam and Eve sinned, they not only lost their human perfection, but they also began the dying process immediately because of their sin. (See Gen. 3:1-4, 6-7, 19, 23-24.) Sin and its penalty of death were passed down throughout all generations. (See Rom.5:12 & Ezek.18:4.) The sacrifices of ancient Israel were used to “cover” the sins of the people from year to year but never really took away or removed their sin. This was because the life of animals was not the price required to redeem the perfect human life of Adam that he lost in Eden. God’s just law required something of equal value to Adam’s perfection, in order to remove sin and death from humanity and bring back what was lost. Thus, only a perfect human being, free of sin, could pay the price as a sacrifice for the human perfection that was lost in Eden. A ransom needed to be paid (a price to correspond)--a perfect human life for a perfect human life. God’s Only Begotten Son left the glory He had with the Father; He “emptied

himself" (Phil. 2:7 NRSV) of all the glory and the rights that belonged to Him as a heavenly being to became a man. He was, therefore, that corresponding price, and able to offer His life as a ransom for that which Adam had lost, not only for himself but for all in his loins. The perfect human life of Jesus, sacrificed on Calvary's Cross, was therefore acceptable to God. We know this because the Father raised Him from the dead. Where mankind once had death in Adam, he now has life extended to him in Christ.

Jesus, a Ransom for All

It is our hope that you noticed the word *ALL* when you read 1 Tim. 2:5, 6 mentioned earlier, and that you realize Jesus *did indeed* give himself "a ransom for all." What does the word *all* mean to you? There are many amazing promises in the Bible which include a hope for *all* the people now living, *in addition to all* who have ever lived or who will ever live on this planet. If we leave anyone out of these promises, it cannot be said that Jesus died for "**all**." We have already quoted Rom. 5:17, 18. Please open your Bible and read those verses again to refresh your memory. Notice how they tell us that all mankind has been dying ever since Eden because of sin passed down through all generations. Verse 18 says, however, that because of Christ's sacrifice, "the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life." It should be clear from this statement that everybody everywhere must have the opportunity of accepting Christ for their salvation. The Apostle Paul did *not* say this opportunity was presented just to the people presently living. The promise was made by God himself and is for every descendant of Adam who ever lived or will live on this earth.

*"...Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to **all people**"* (Luke 2:10). Who is included in the "*all people*" prophesied by the angel of the Lord in this verse? If Jesus did indeed die as a ransom for all, as clearly stated in 1 Tim. 2:5-6, shouldn't *all people* have the opportunity of sharing in the great joy of our Lord's life and death as Savior of all mankind? Should they not also have a chance to benefit from it? John the Baptist, forerunner of Christ, said, as he saw Jesus approaching the River Jordan, "*...Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29)! Notice how John said Jesus would *take away*, not merely cover, everyone's sin. Jesus own words were, "*But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all men** to myself*" (John 12:32). Think for a moment how it would be possible for Jesus to draw *everyone*, even those who had already died before he made that statement. "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death **for everyone***" (Hebrews 2:9).

"The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you" (Gal. 3:8). (Comp. to Gen.12:3 and 22:18.) Notice how even Gentiles can be justified by faith in Christ's sacrifice! Jesus Christ is the true "*seed*" of Abraham through whom all nations will be blessed (Gal. 3:16). He tasted death for every man and has taken away the sins of the world. To date, very few people who have ever lived have benefited from our Lord's sacrifice. Even so, God's promises, as recorded in the preceding verses, will one day be carried out. It is recorded in 1 John 2:2 that Jesus did not die only for the sins of His Church, but also for the sins of the whole world.

God's Love For All

Our God is not just the God of one small group of people. Our God is the God of the *entire world* and the Creator of *everyone* who lives on it. All humanity was lost through sin and suffered the same penalty of death, regardless of what country they lived in or when they lived, or who they believed in. Therefore, all humanity must have the opportunity to become free from sin and death.

God is Love (1 Jn. 4:8,16), and His love extends to all. He has a plan whereby everyone who has ever lived, in the past, present or future will have the opportunity of gaining everlasting life. When we realize the magnitude of God's love for all His creation, we are lost in wonder, love, and praise! *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out"* (Rom. 11:33 - ASV)!

Far too often, the motto of people in various religions is poetically expressed like this: *"God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more."* Thank God for His assurance that His coming blessings will not be for just a few! Yes, indeed, God's grace and blessings will exceed the boundaries of nations, religions, races, and time! They will spread to every part of the earth in His due time!

Benefit of the Ransom to the Church

Jesus offered His perfect life not only for the sins of the Church, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). But each in his own order and time. Not all are being called to a high-calling by God at this present time. The people of the world will have their opportunity of being blessed through our Lord Jesus Christ and His faithful Church. We know that not all of earth's billions now living or who have ever lived have been called by God to understand the true gospel message or shown the road of discipleship. In fact, throughout history, only a small number of people have even heard the name of Jesus Christ, the ONLY name under heaven by which we might be saved (Acts 4:12). *"For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him"* (Acts 2:39 - ASV). This verse bears out the point we are making. The Lord is doing the calling. *Not everyone is now being called.*

A Called out Church

"Church" is translated from the Greek word *ekklesia*, which means "a calling out," or "those called out." The Church is composed of members of Christ's body who have been called out of the world by God. Paul states that these called-out ones are to *"be conformed to the image of God's dear Son"* (Rom. 8:28, 29). According to 2 Peter 1:4, individual members of the Church have escaped the corruption that is in the world. Those who remain in the world have not escaped this corruption, but only as many as God has called and who have accepted the call. 2 Cor. 4:4 tells us how *"the god (Satan) of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not."* Those who have been called by God and who have accepted the call, however, have been enlightened regarding God's truth through His Holy Spirit.

Called In One Hope

"For we were all baptized with one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" (1 Cor. 12:13). Yes, both the Jewish and Gentile believers shared in the one and same hope in which God is calling us. We read in Ex. 19:4-6, Deut. 14:2, Deut. 26:18-19 and Psa. 135:4 how God promised ancient Israel that if they obeyed Him, they would become a *"treasured possession . . . a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* By rejecting our Lord Jesus Christ, most of the Jews failed to acquire these promises from God.

Jesus stated in Matt. 21:43 that after the Jews rejected Him, God's promise to them would then be offered to the Gentiles. In Romans 11:17, Paul presented a picture of the Gentile converts as the "wild olive shoot" being "grafted in" among the Jews who had remained faithful. Those Gentiles replaced the "broken branches," the Jews who had rejected Jesus. Gentiles who are grafted into the Israelite "tree" become as the tree itself, true spiritual Israelites in the full meaning of the word. With this in mind,

consider the following text from 1 Peter 2:9, 10 which was written to the Gentiles: *"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."* Notice the similarity of the titles given to the Gentiles with the titles previously given to ancient Israel. Also please notice how Peter used the word *called* in this text, keeping in mind that the word *church* means "called out." It was the Jews who were first called out by God; now the Gentiles are also being called out of the world. Eph. 4:4 declares that there is one body and one spirit, and that those who are being called are called in one hope.

Called to Reign With Christ

Are you beginning to understand the hope in which the Church is called? It is not the destiny of the Church that they merely become an inactive group of believers, after they are joined with Christ. Rather, their future purpose is to be a "royal priesthood." "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases" (1 Cor. 6:2)? Do you see the magnitude of God's promise to the Church in this verse? From it will come the overcoming body of saints -- true believers, both Jew and Gentile, who will one day with Jesus judge the whole world in righteousness. *"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne"* (Rev. 3:21). One who sits on a throne is reigning; this the glorified saints will be doing after they obtain their crowns. *"To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations--He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery -- just as I have received authority from my Father"* (Rev. 2:26, 27). We can see here how they also will have authority and power.

"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). These texts given in 12 through 14 show very clearly the future work of those of the Church who make their *"calling and election sure"* (2 Pet. 1:10). They will become *"a kingdom of priests"* who will *"judge the world,"* having *"authority over the nations"* and they will *"reign on the earth."*

In Rev. 7:4-8, God's ruling family is pictured as coming from the 12 tribes of Israel. We become true *Israelites* upon our full acceptance of Christ Jesus and obedience to Him. *"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (Gal. 3:29). 1 Cor. 12:13 bears repeating here: *"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."* We have presented a much different picture of what God's purpose is for the saints than what most churches believe and teach. The Bible clearly shows that the saints will reign with God's Son on earth for 1000 years (Rev. 20:6). So many people have no idea at all what they will be doing if they are fortunate enough to go to heaven, except that they will be with Jesus. What God has called them for is *so much more*! Yes, the plans God has for the Church who will be united with their Lord are almost beyond comprehension! It is our hope that you also will be guided by God's Holy Spirit to see the blessed truth we cherish so dearly.

Our Great Creator's Plan

I am so small, and Thou so great; so weak, and Thou so strong;
Yet from my heart there flows to Thee a true and loving song.

Of dust am I, and to earth's dust I'll molder and decay;
This living frame and pulsing heart will soon have passed away;

But is it all of life to live, or all of death to die?
Thy Word proclaims a **ransom** found, on whom we can rely!

Thou art the mighty King, Thy Name, the Holy One,
But unto Thee a living way was opened by Thy Son.

He is our righteousness; through Him comes peace with Thee;
And in His Name we favor seek, and are from sin set free.

He tasted death for every man; He dieth once--no more;
And by His sacrifice secured man's rights which He'll restore.

Death was the penalty of sin, but Love o'er Death hath won;
By God's great Gift is life supreme -- eternal, through His Son.

He died for all of human kind and rose that they might live;
And, as God's Word is ever true, this greater life He'll give!

The one true church, the 'little flock,' the Holy Spirit sought,
As Bride of Christ and Priests of God, are to the Father brought.

'First fruits' are those who slept; joint-heirs with Christ their Lord,
When He, who is their life, appears, He'll bring them their reward.

Made like the One they serve and love, His nature to them given;
His power, glory, honors share; their Home, with Him, in Heaven.

As Abraham's seed, they'll bless the earth and rule with loving sway;
Instruct and teach the way to life -- is to God's laws obey.

Thus up the road to perfect life, on 'highway' wide and broad,
The ransomed race can seek and find full harmony with God.

A race redeemed, an earth made new, riches and wealth untold
A world where righteousness will dwell and man his God behold!

Where pain and sickness, grief and death are memories of the past;
Where loving faithfulness to God forever more will last,

With curse removed, and blight of sin entirely swept away,
Man in God's image evermore abides in perfect day.

This is Thy finished work, Thine own most Glorious Plan;
Oh, such great Love that Thou hast shown to sinful, fallen man.

O, Faithful God, How Great Thou Art! What wisdom, love and grace
The eye of faith will always find -- when we Thy dealings trace!

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