

The Gospel of Inclusion: A Biblical Rebuttal to Repackaged Universalism

(Christ Is Not in All, and All Are Not in the Kingdom)
By Anthony D. Baker (last updated on 5/25/26)

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” Jn. 3:35-36 (NKJV)

The “gospel of inclusion” rebrands the old heretical belief that all humanity will eventually be saved and takes it even further by claiming that all humanity is already saved.

In contrast, Christians — those who believe in and follow Jesus Christ — have been saved by grace through faith. This salvation is not automatic; it involves both God’s gracious initiative and our personal response of faith. The Scriptures are clear that God Himself initiates this divine relationship. He draws people to His Son, as Jesus declared: *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them” (Jn 6:44)*. Moreover, God calls us to Himself, giving us everything we need for a godly life and inviting us to participate in the divine nature (**2 Pet 1:3–4**). Note that the word “us” in this passage refers specifically to believers — the Christians to whom Peter was writing.

However, this divine grace does not operate in isolation. It requires an act of free will on our part, a choice to believe or reject Christ. **Rom. 10:17** underscores this, saying, *“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”* This choice of faith is our response to hearing the Gospel.

While Christ’s death was for the sins of the entire world, as **1 Jn. 2:2** affirms, *“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world,”* not all are automatically forgiven or saved. Forgiveness and salvation are not passively received; they require an active faith in Jesus Christ. **Eph. 2:8-9 (AMP)** further illuminates this truth: *“For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favor drawing*

you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation]."

The work completed on the Cross has made salvation possible/available for everyone, but the only way to achieve and receive this salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ. This idea is supported by **Acts 4:12**, which states, *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."* As well as: **Jn. 3:16, 3:36, 6:40, 11:25-26, 14:6 ; 16:31; Rom.10:9, Eph. 2:8-9, 1 Jn. 2:22-23, 5:11-12**. This connection between God's grace and our faith highlights the important relationship between God's divine plan and our individual choice to believe.

I wrote this Bible study because I strongly disagree with the "Gospel of Inclusion" (also called the "All-Inclusive Gospel"), a teaching that has gained popularity within parts of the radical grace movement. This view is deeply connected to universalism, which asserts that all people will ultimately be saved regardless of whether they place personal faith in Jesus Christ. Some versions claim that Christ's death on the cross already saved all of humanity from judgment. Others suggest there may still be a future judgment, but everyone will ultimately receive a second chance at the Great White Throne.

In contrast, the clear teaching of Scripture is that **all are not included**. One must personally believe in Jesus Christ to receive salvation. What follows is an ongoing Bible study that examines key passages I believe directly oppose the idea of an all-inclusive gospel.

Below I am breaking this down into two view points.

Viewpoint 1: **Gospel of Inclusion/Repackaged Universalism**

Viewpoint 2: **The True Gospel (salvation by grace through faith)**

- **Gospel of Inclusion/Repackaged Universalism**

The “Gospel of Inclusion” (also called Inclusionism or the All-Inclusive Gospel) is a teaching popular in parts of the radical grace movement. It claims that all humanity is already saved (“All are in”). According to this view, when Christ died on the cross, He saved every person. All humanity rose with Him and is now seated with Him in heavenly places. Believing in Christ does not obtain salvation — it simply allows you to “experience” or become aware of the salvation you already possess, because you were never truly separated from God to begin with.

In contrast, Christian Universalism teaches that while not everyone is saved now, all people will eventually be reconciled to God and saved in the end.

Inclusionism says everyone is already saved (past tense). Universalism says everyone will eventually be saved (future tense). In both cases, personal faith in Christ is not required for salvation.

Yet Jesus and the apostles consistently declared the opposite: “*Believe and be saved*” (**Mk 16:16; Acts 16:31; Rom 10:9**). Inclusionism reverses this order, saying instead: “You are already saved. Just believe it.”

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- **The True Gospel (salvation by grace through faith)** – One must believe in Jesus Christ to “receive” salvation and reconciliation:

Salvation by Grace Through Faith: **Eph.2:8–9; Rom. 3:24–25, 4:4–5; Tit. 3:5; Gal. 2:16 (NLT, AMPC)**. The new Covenant introduces a new way of faith. This is explained very well in

Rom. 3:9–26. – All people are sinners — Christ took our punishment — We are made right with God through faith in Christ. In the middle of **<22 (NLT)**: “We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.”

25 (NLT): “For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.”

God's grace and mercy shine brightest in how the Father draws us to the Son, and how Christ Himself draws all humanity to Himself (**Jn 6:44; 12:32**). This "drawing" is God's powerful, persuasive invitation—often through the Holy Spirit convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (**Jn 16:8–11**). The sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts the world is unbelief: "*The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me*" (**Jn 16:9 NLT**).

This drawing is not a coercive force that overrides human free will or guarantees universal salvation. Instead, it is a divine enablement—a measure of faith—that restores our ability to respond to God, an ability that sin had completely stripped away (see **Rom 5:12; Eph 2:1–3; Jn 6:44, 65**). All people are being drawn to the Son (**Jn 12:32**), yet every person retains the solemn free-will choice: to believe in Christ and receive salvation, or to reject Him through unbelief and face eternal death and everlasting separation from God's presence (**Jn 3:16–18, 36; Rom 6:23; 2 Thess 1:9**).

Grace: This is God's unearned initiative—the source of the drawing. Through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection, He reaches out to us first, offering what we could never achieve on our own.

Faith: This is our essential response. The drawing brings us to the crossroads: we can look to the crucified and risen Savior, choose to believe and receive His grace, or freely reject Him and remain separated from the Father. Free will to believe or reject.

In essence, salvation isn't a reward for our efforts but a gift received by believing and trusting in Jesus alone through faith.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ receive eternal life and salvation, escaping God's righteous judgment (**Jn. 3:16, 5:24; Rom. 6:23**). Conversely, those who reject Him through unbelief face eternal death and everlasting separation from God (**Jn. 3:18, 36; 2 Thes. 1:9**).

Upon examining the scriptures in their full context, a consistent message emerges: salvation is attainable by believing in Jesus Christ. Through His sacrificial act on the cross, salvation has become accessible, made available to all humanity, as opposed to all humanity was saved because of Christ's finished work.

Prior to a person's belief in Christ, they did not possess salvation, nor were they in union with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They were not yet given the right to become children of God. Their name was not yet written in the Book of Life, they were not yet seated with Christ in the heavenly places, and they were not yet made righteous through Christ. Righteousness was not imputed to all of humanity when Christ died on the cross. People receive Christ's righteousness only through faith in Him (**Rom 3:21–31 AMPC**). As Scripture states, "A person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law" (**Gal 2:16 NLT**).

This shows that prior to faith in Christ, a person is not yet "right with God," nor are they brought into the family of the kingdom of God. Without faith in Christ, one remains outside the kingdom — still unsaved, still a stranger to God's household, and still under the domain of darkness (**Jn 3:3, 5; Col 1:13; Eph 2:19**). A person only becomes a child of God and a citizen in the kingdom of God through faith in Christ (**Jn 1:12–13; Gal 3:26; 1 Jn 5:1**).

Jn. 1:12-13 (NLT) *"12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God."*

It is evident from the Scriptures that unbelievers are not automatically included in salvation. Rather, they too can partake in this divine free gift — but only through personal faith in Jesus Christ. His redemptive work on the cross has provided a pathway to salvation that is available to all humanity, yet it does not automatically apply to all (**Jn. 3:18, 36; Rom. 3:22–24**). The Scriptures repeatedly underscore that faith is the exclusive means by which individuals receive this transformative salvation (**Eph. 2:8–9; Acts 16:31**). There is no "forced salvation" upon humanity.

Each person has the free will either to believe in Christ and be saved, or to reject Him and remain unsaved (**Jn. 3:18; Rom. 10:9–11**).

As the apostle Paul writes: *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"* (**Rom. 10:9–10**).

The finished work on the cross made salvation universally available, but each person must exercise faith in Jesus Christ to personally receive the benefits of His sacrifice. Unbelievers receive salvation only through faith in Jesus Christ. His work on the cross provides a way to salvation for all humanity. Faith in Jesus Christ is the sole means of receiving this salvation.

Yes, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"* on the cross (**2 Cor. 5:19**), yet this reconciliation must be personally received by believing in Jesus Christ. Only through faith do we receive forgiveness of sins, become right with God, enter into the family of God as His children, and receive our eternal inheritance.

One clear example of this is found in **Rom. 3:25 (AMPC)**: *"Whom God put forward [before the eyes of all] as a mercy seat and propitiation by His blood [the cleansing and life-giving sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation, to be received] through faith."*

For the believer there is relationship and union:

Union with the Father Through Christ and the Spirit – **Jn. 14:20,17:21; Eph. 2:18, 4:6; 1 Jn. 1:3**.

Union with the Son (Jesus Christ) – **Jn. 15:4–5; Rom. 6:5; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6; Col 3:3**.

Union with the Holy Spirit (Indwelling and Fellowship) – **Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 2:22; 1 Jn. 3:24**.

Union Involving All Three Persons of the Trinity – **Matt. 28:19; Jn. 14:16-17, 14:23; 1 Pet. 1:2; Gal 4:6**.

For the non-believer there is eternal separation from His presence:

Eternal Separation from God and His Presence – **Matt. 7:23, 25:41,46; Lk. 16:26; Jn. 3:36; 2 Thes. 1:8-9; Rev. 20:14-15, 21:8.**

When a person believes in Christ they are **born again**: **Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Jas. 1:18; Titus 3:4-7; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 22-23; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.**

When a person believes in Christ they **receive a new Identity in Christ**: **Rom. 6:6; 8:1-2, 9, 16-17; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:17; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:17, 21; Gal. 2:20; 3:26-28; 4:6-7; Eph. 1:3-7, 13; 2:4-6, 10, 13-19; 4:22-24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 1:13-14; 2:9-10, 12; 3:1-3, 9-12; 2 Tim. 1:7; Heb. 2:11; 1 Pet. 2:9-10; 1 Jn. 3:1-2; 4:17; 5:11-12.**

As a result of a believer becoming **born again** and **receiving a new identity in Christ**, they **become a new creation**: **2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 2:10, 15; 4:24; Col. 3:10.**

At the moment of faith in Christ a person receives:

- Regeneration / being born again → **Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Jn. 5:1.**
- Justification → **Rom. 5:1.**
- Adoption → **Gal. 4:4-7.**
- Union with Christ / new identity → **2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3-14; Col. 3:1-3.**
- Sealing with the Holy Spirit → **Eph. 1:13-14.**
- Sanctification begins and continues → **Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Thess. 5:23.**

Note: A lot of people mix the two views above, but here I'm sticking with the clear biblical truth which is: Salvation requires an individual's own personal belief in Jesus Christ.

Note how **Eph. 2:5 (AMPC)** describes the believer's fellowship and union with Christ:
"5 Even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ

Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favor and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation)."

Eph. 2:5 describes what God has accomplished for believers despite their prior deadness. The phrase *"He made us alive together"* reflects the result of God's grace applied to those who have faith (**Eph. 2:8**). Theologically, this aligns with the idea that:

Before faith: All people are dead in sin, separated from God (**Eph. 2:12**—"without Christ... having no hope and without God in the world").

At salvation: Through faith, individuals are made alive, united with Christ, and brought into fellowship with Him (**Rom. 5:1-2; 1 Cor.1:9**).

The "fellowship and union with Christ" in **Eph. 2:5**, then, begins at the point of salvation, not before. For unbelievers, this reality remains potential—offered through the gospel—but not actual until they believe.

Prior to salvation I was out of "right relationship with God", I was separated from Him because of my sins and unbelief. We are **made right with God when we believe in Christ**. "Believers" have a "right standing with God", a "right relationship with Him" through our faith in Him.

*"Yet we know that a person is made right with God by **faith in Jesus Christ**, not by obeying the law. And **we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ**, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law".*

Gal. 2:16 (NLT)

How does one turn from darkness to the Light and from the power of Satan to the power of God? By placing your faith in Christ. How does one "receive" forgiveness? By placing their faith in Christ. Believe and receive!

*"I will rescue you from the persecution of your own people and from the hostility of the other nations that I will send you to. And you will open their eyes to their true condition, so that they may turn from darkness to the Light and from the power of Satan to the power of God. **By placing their faith in me they will receive the total forgiveness of sins and be made holy**, taking hold of the inheritance that I give to my children!"*

– Acts 26:17-18 (TPT)

*"But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that **they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.**"*

– Acts 26:16-18 (ESV)

"Take hold of the inheritance offered to God's children and receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those sanctified by faith in Christ." All of this is received by faith in Christ. This is profoundly good news for the believer: being sanctified, set apart, and made holy. How is this achieved? By faith in Christ. It is through faith in Christ that we receive our inheritance and forgiveness of sins. Before salvation and faith in Christ, we were not yet children of God, had no inheritance, and had not yet received forgiveness. Also note: One becomes a child of God through faith in Christ and only then has an inheritance. Being children of God means we have been born again and born into God's family and thus now have an inheritance from being His child. *"But to all who **believed him and accepted him**, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God" Jn. 1:12–13, NLT; Gal. 3:26; 1 Jn. 5:1.* Believers also have to "take hold" of this inheritance that is offered to God's children. This is also done through faith.

Unbelievers are not "in a right relationship with God". They are not in "right standing with Him". They are separated and dead in their sins and will die in their sins unless they

believe in Jesus Christ.

*"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; **for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.**"*

Jn. 8:24 (NKJV)

Consider this scripture: *"those who do not believe will die in their sins."* This implies that unbelievers are not forgiven until they believe in Jesus Christ and accept His completed work on the cross. Yes, on the cross Christ took away the sins of the world by boring them onto Himself: **Isa. 53:4-6; Col. 2:13-14; Mat. 8:17; Heb. 7:25-29, 9:27-28; 1 Pet. 2:24, 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:2.** However, we do not "receive" this finished work of forgiveness until we believe in Him and receive the free gift of salvation. The result of this salvation is that you receive His new life and become born again and are a new creation. If one refuses to believe, they never receive this forgiveness and new life, and as an unbeliever, they will die in their sins with no inheritance and separated from God. *"...eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power"* **2 Thes. 1:6-9 (NLT).**

I mainly disagree with the idea of a "gospel of inclusion" because if all are included, believers and unbelievers, then there is no need to believe in Jesus Christ to "receive" salvation. The gospel of inclusion holds to the idea that there was never any separation from God for humanity and that all of humanity was saved when Christ died on the Cross. It removes faith in Christ, punishment, Hell and judgment from the equation. It attempts to remove damnation for those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. Hell, described as the second death and the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14; 21:8), is both real and eternal. This truth is affirmed in **Isa. 66:22-24, Dan. 12:1-2, Mat. 13:50; 18:6-9; 25:31-46, Mk. 9:42-48, 2 Thess. 1:5-10, Jd. 1:7,13, and Rev. 14:10-11; 20:10,14-15 (NKJV/AMPC).** Scripture teaches that unbelievers will face this eternal judgment (**Mat. 13:41,50; 25:46; Jn. 3:36; 5:28-29; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; Rev. 20:11-15; 21:6-8, NKJV/AMPC).**

Hell is eternal (aiōnios) (αἰώνιος), unquenchable fire, everlasting destruction

- For ever and ever: – **Rev. 10:10, 14:9-11.**
- Eternal / Everlasting: Punishment, Fire, Destruction – **Mat. 18:8, 25:41, 46; 2 Thes. 1:9; Jd. 1:7.**
- Unending Fire/Torment: **Mk. 9:43-48**

However, this clear biblical message is challenged by attempts to redefine core doctrines—such as salvation, heaven, hell, judgment, and the gospel itself—in an effort to align Scripture with an “all-inclusive gospel.” Such redefinitions often undermine the authority of God’s inerrant, God-breathed Word (**Ps. 19:1; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Jn. 16:13; 17:17**), casting doubt on its accuracy and authority, thus proposing the question like Satan did in the garden, “*Did God really say...?*” and leaving it open to wild speculation and to be manipulated, reinvented, deconstructed, redefined, tailored to an agenda and or ideology, etc... A redefining of the original intent of the message so as to have an outcome that is favorable to what one wants to believe. I’ve heard inclusionists say “that they have a hard time accepting a loving God who would allow people to be tortured in hell” and therefore have thrown out those areas of scripture and have redefined them and as a result have created their own theology of all are included. I too have a problem with the concept of judgement and hell, but I cannot just throw out what the Word of God teaches on the subject just because I don’t like it. God is a loving God and a just God. His thoughts are higher than my thoughts and His ways are higher than my ways. **Isa. 55:8-9.**

I recently read this Augustine quote about false teachers who interpret the scriptures so as to come up with a result that there is no eternal punishment for unbelievers, which I feel applies here. “*while not slighting the authority of the sacred Scriptures, . . . nevertheless interpret them wrongly and suppose that what is to happen will not be what the Scriptures speak of, but what they themselves would like to happen*”

To believe there is no Hell is to believe that all of humanity is saved which is universalism, also called the gospel of inclusion or repackaged universalism. The Bible does not teach universalism or the gospel of inclusion, these ideas are based on scripture taken out of context, a misunderstanding of the scriptures, hearsay and or wishful thinking.

All are not saved, one must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved. Saved from what? Saved from eternal damnation. One must believe in Christ to “receive” the finished work of the cross.

Salvation is about the salvation of our souls and where our soul will spend eternity. **1**

Ptr. 1:9 (AMPC) “[At the same time] you “receive” the result (outcome, consummation) of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

Let’s read this in fuller context:

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, **he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.** In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, **so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.** Though you have not seen him, you love him. **Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.**”*

1 Ptr. 1:3-9 (ESV)

The Bible is clear that there is still judgment for those who do not believe in Christ. One good example of this is in **Jn. 3:35-36 (NKJV)**. This is a direct and explicit passage highlighting the dichotomy between belief in Christ and the consequences of unbelief: *“The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. **He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**”* – This passage clearly states: Belief in Christ leads to “everlasting life.” Unbelief results in not seeing life, with the “wrath of God” remaining upon the individual.

This scripture underscores several theological points:

Divine Authority: The Father has given all authority to the Son, affirming Jesus' unique role in salvation.

Eternal Consequences: Belief or unbelief has profound eternal implications—life versus the absence of life under divine judgment.

Present Condition: The phrase “the wrath of God abides on him” indicates that this judgment is not just future but currently applicable to those who do not believe.

This passage is often cited to support the doctrine of salvation through faith in Christ alone, emphasizing both the positive promise of eternal life for believers and the sobering reality of judgment for non-believers. He who hears the good news and believes in Christ will have everlasting life and will not come into judgment: **Jn. 5:24 (NKJV):** *“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”*

Also consider this contrast of storing up treasure or wrath:

Storing Up Treasures in Heaven vs. Storing Up Wrath for judgment

This same idea of “accumulating a fortune” runs through Scripture and shows the daily outworking of **Rom. 3**. The Greek word *thēsauroizō* (“to store up” or “treasure up”) is used in both cases:

For believers: Jesus commands us to **store up treasures in heaven (Mat. 6:20; Lk. 12:33)**. This happens through faith in Christ, generosity, good works, and seeking first the kingdom. These eternal deposits become a firm foundation for the coming age (**1 Tim. 6:18–19**) and will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ.

For unbelievers: Those who refuse to repent are **storing up wrath against themselves** for the day of God's righteous judgment (**Rom. 2:5**). **Jam. 5:3** gives a vivid picture of the selfish rich who hoard earthly wealth — their corroded gold and silver will actually testify against them on the day of judgment, *“eating their flesh like fire.”*

The contrast is powerful: every day we are making deposits into one treasury or the other. Because Christ took our punishment (**Rom. 3:25–26**), believers are freed from storing up wrath and are now able to store up eternal reward instead. Unbelievers who reject the cross continue to accumulate guilt that will be revealed at the Great White Throne (**Rev. 20:11–15**).

Stay with me here, please don't leave this page because I brought up the subject of hell. Actually, hell and judgment is not my focus with this study, the focus is on what happens when you believe in Christ. However, there are dire consequences for unbelief noted above. You can see that unbelief is a sin in the explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit talked about in **Jn. 16:5-15**. Particularly verses **8-9 (NLT)** *"And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me."* Here we clearly see Jesus saying that unbelief is a sin. The only way to everlasting life is through faith in Christ. The consummation of your faith in Christ is the salvation of your soul.

This idea of "all are included" also attempts to redefine Christ being the *"Propitiation for our sins"*. **1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10; Rom. 3:21-26**. There can be no possibility of judgment, punishment (or separation prior to salvation) in this "all are included gospel". Yet, the Bible teaches that Christ took our deserved punishment upon Himself on the cross. He was the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins. This sacrifice, atonement and reconciliation to the Father is to be received only by faith in Jesus Christ. You can see this here:

Christ Took Our Punishment – *"But now **God has shown us a way to be made right with him** without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. **We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ.** And **this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.** For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he **freed us from the penalty for our sins.** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. **People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.** This sacrifice shows that God was being*

*fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, **and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.***"

Rom. 3:25 (AMPC)

Now for a bit more context, let's read **Rom. 3:21-26** in the ESV.

*"But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— **the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.** For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, **to be received by faith.** This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, **so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**"*

Rom. 3:21-26 (ESV)

In **Rom. 3:21-26** above we see the following: 1.) His righteousness is imputed to those who believe. 2.) The Father put forth Christ to be a propitiation for our sins. To take our place for the punishment of sin and that propitiation is to be received by faith. 3.) God is just to all and justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. God is a loving God but He is also a just God.

*"Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since **we believe** that Christ died for all, **we also believe that we have all died to our old life.** He died for everyone so that **those who receive his new life** will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them."*

2 Cor. 5:14-15 (NLT) (Full context: 2 Cor. 5:11-21)

The New Covenant provides a new way of faith. The finished work of the cross made salvation available to all who would believe in Him. Note the phrase “**those who receive His new life**” in **2 Cor. 5:14-15** noted above. We “receive” by “believing. Christ died for all but that did not save all of humanity. **The finished work of the cross made salvation available to all.** Prior to salvation, we are locked under sin, slaves to sin and prisoners of sin. **Only when we believe in Christ** are we set free from the power of sin and brought into “right relationship” with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! We are set completely free into new life when we believe in Him.

Now let's continue on through **2 Cor. 5**

*“This means that **anyone who belongs to Christ** has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, **who brought us back to himself** through Christ.”*

2 Cor. 5:17-18 (NLT)

Note: “*anyone who belongs to Christ*”. Who belongs to Christ? Only those who believe in Him. Also note: “*who brought us back to Himself*”. Note the “us” in “*who brought “us” back to Himself*”. 2 Corinthians intended Audience: The church in Corinth and believers everywhere. The “us” is believers. He did not bring all of humanity back to Himself, He made a way for all humanity to come back to Him and that only way is faith in His Son.

Prior to salvation we were not in right relationship with God. We were “*spiritually dead and separated from Him because of our sins*” **Eph. 2:4-7 (AMP)**. God made a way for us to be made right with Him through Jesus Christ and that way is faith in Jesus Christ.

The result of believing and receiving His new life is you becoming a new creation! You receive a new nature and that new nature is Christ in you. This is all accomplish through faith in Jesus Christ. **Your new nature because of faith in Christ: From darkness to light: Eph. 5:8; Acts 26:18. Put on your new nature: Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:10-12. Our spirit one with and complete in Christ: 1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 2:10. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ: Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27. Walk in the light: Jn.8:12. Created anew in Christ Jesus: Eph. 2:10. Dead in Adam, alive in Christ: 1 Cor. 15:22.** You get the picture. A new creation!

We receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

*"Is the Law then contrary and opposed to the promises of God? Of course not! For if a Law had been given which could confer [spiritual] life, then righteousness and **right standing** with God would certainly have come by Law. But the Scriptures [**picture all mankind as sinners**] shut up and imprisoned by sin, so that [the inheritance, blessing] which was promised **through faith in Jesus Christ** (the Messiah) **might be given (released, delivered, and committed) to [all] those who believe [who adhere to and trust in and rely on Him].**"*

Gal. 3:21-22 (AMPC)

What do you do with something that is **given**? You "**receive it**" with gladness. Believe and receive! Other translations of "prisoners of sin" in **Gal. 3:21-22**. (**NIV, TLV**) – Locked up under the control of sin. (**AMP**) – **Imprisoned; everyone [everything—the entire world] under sin**. (**NASB**) – Shut up under sin. (**TPT**) – Under the power of sin. (**NKJV**) – Confined under sin. (**KJV**) – Under sin. (**MSG**) – Out of right relationship with God. (Not in relationship with, not in union with).

- **2 Cor. 5:14-21 (NKJV)** – (summarized) "Died to old life, new life has begun, walk in newness of life." – There is a change that takes place at salvation when one believes. Note in this passage the phrase "**If anyone is in Christ, he is a new Creation**". Only those who "believe in Christ" are "in Christ". Unbelievers are not "in Christ", they are "not yet a new creation".
- **Rom. 7:4-6 (NKJV)** – (summarized) "Died to the power of the law, **a new way of living in the Spirit**". When one believes in Christ he is filled with the Holy Spirit **Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 1:6-8; 1 Jn. 3:1 (NLT)**, this is how believers can have a "new way of living in the Spirit". An unbeliever is not yet filled with the Holy Spirit and does not yet have "a new way of living in the Spirit". They are dead in their sins until they believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Gal. 2:16-21 (NKJV)** – (summarized) "Died to the law, old self crucified, no longer I live but Christ lives in me". This is speaking of born again believers, not unbelievers.

Christ is not in unbelievers. Christ made His home “in me” at salvation; at the moment I believed in Him.

Before faith in Jesus Christ, we were dead, in prison and a slave to sin. After faith in Jesus Christ, we have new life and are a slave to righteous living, free from the power of sin! This is the good news of the Gospel: The New Covenant provides a new way of faith **Gal. 3:23-25 (NLT)**, and now those who believe in Jesus Christ have full and complete access to His presence by the blood of Christ. **Heb. 10:19-23 (AMPC)**.

*“For it is by free grace (God’s unmerited favor) **that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ’s salvation) through [your] faith.** And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God; Not because of works [not the fulfillment of the Law’s demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]” For we are God’s [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, **[born anew]** that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live].”*

Eph. 2:8-10 (AMPC)

Note: In **Eph. 2:8-10** above, faith is not the gift; Salvation is the gift, and it (the free gift of salvation) is only received by faith. We are born “a new” because of our faith in Him. Born “a new” when we believe. Unbelievers do not yet have this gift of salvation. They have not been born again and are not yet a new creation.

*“There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. “Rabbi,” he said, “we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you.” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, **unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.**”*

Jn. 3:1-3 (NLT)

How does one get “born again”? ONLY through faith in Jesus Christ. Prior to salvation = dead in your sins and separated. Unbelievers must be born again to see the Kingdom of God.

*“Because of Christ **and our faith in him**, we can **now** come boldly and confidently into God’s presence.”*

Eph. 3:12 (NLT)

Unbelievers cannot come boldly and confidently into God’s presence because they are not saved and are still dead in their sins.

Let’s line up **Gal. 3:21-22 (AMPC)** with **Eph. 2:4-7 (AMP)**:

*“But God, being [so very] rich in mercy, because of His great and wonderful love with which He loved us, **even when we were [spiritually] dead and separated from Him because of our sins**, He made **us** [spiritually] alive together with Christ (for by His grace—His undeserved favor and mercy—you have been saved from God’s judgment). And He raised us up together with Him **[when we believed]**, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, [because we are] in Christ Jesus, [and He did this] so that in the ages to come He might [clearly] show the immeasurable and unsurpassed riches of His grace in [His] kindness toward us in Christ Jesus [by providing for our redemption]”.*

Eph. 2:4-7 (AMP)

Please note that in Ephesians Paul is writing to faithful followers of Christ; believers.

Eph. 1:1 *“This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.”* When Paul says “ [because **we** are] in Christ Jesus,” and “He made **us** [spiritually] alive together with Christ” in **Eph. 2:4-7**, note that the “we” and “us” he is talking about is “believers”. Unbelievers are not “in Christ”, they are not “spiritually alive with Christ” and they are not “seated with Christ in Heavenly places”.

*“May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened and spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self, **[indwelling your innermost***

being and personality], so that *Christ may dwell in your hearts through your faith*. And may you, having been [deeply] rooted and [securely] grounded in love, be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God's people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God's presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself].

Eph. 3:16-19 (NLT)

Note: **"dwell in your hearts through faith"**. Christ is not "dwelling in" unbelievers because of their unbelief.

Dwelling in; When does the "Christ in you" occur? At the time of salvation when one believes in Christ. I must point out the importance of the Holy Spirit which one receives when they believe. Unbelievers do not have the Holy Spirit in them. **Note:** The Holy Spirit is the Helper, the Teacher, the One Who guides into all truth and the one who convicts of sin, **Jn. 14:26, 16:5-15, 1 Jn. 27**. The unbeliever does not have in them the one who helps, teaches, guides into all truth and convicts of sin. He, Christ dwells in believers by the Holy Spirit.

I want to touch on "Christ in us believers" a bit more. There are two scripture references that are in my opinion taken out of context by those who adhere to the theology of the gospel of inclusion. Those are **Eph. 4:6** (God in all) and **Col. 3:11** (Christ is all and in all). Both of these are referring to all "believers" when read in full context.

*"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as **ye** are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in **you** all. But unto every one of **us** is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ."*

Eph. 4:4-7 (KJV)

Refer to several Bible commentaries on [Eph. 4:6 Biblehub commentaries](#) for some good insight into this verse. Some I would like to point out here:

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary: – *"There is one Christ in whom all believers hope, and one heaven they are all hoping for; therefore they should be of one heart. They had all one faith, as to its object, Author, nature, and power. They all believed the same as to the great truths of religion; they had all been admitted into the church by one baptism, with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as the sign of regeneration. In all believers God the Father dwells, as in his holy temple, by his Spirit and special grace."*

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary – *"in you all—The oldest manuscripts omit "you." Many of the oldest versions and Fathers and old manuscripts read, "in us all." Whether the pronoun be read or not, it must be understood (either from the "ye," **Eph 4:4**, or from the "us," **Eph 4:7**); for other parts of Scripture prove that the Spirit is not "in all" men, but only in believers (**Rom. 8:9, 14**). God is "Father" both by generation (as Creator) and regeneration (**Eph 2:10; Jas 1:17, 18; 1; 1 Jn. 5:1**)." Note the "you" in vs 4:4 and the "us" in vs 4:7 that surrounds vs. 6. The "you" and the "us" are "believers".*

A quote from Hodge's **Eph. 4:4-6** Commentary on ["Precept Austin"](#) website.

(Also, there is a wonderful breakdown of Eph. 4:4-6 on the precept Austin website.)

*"As there is one body, so there is one Spirit, which is the life of that body and dwells in all its members. "By one Spirit," says the apostle, "are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." **1 Cor. 12:13**. Of all believers, he says, "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." **1 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:19; Rom. 8:9, Rom. 8:11**. There is no doctrine of Scripture more plainly revealed than that the Spirit of God dwells in all believers, and that his presence is the ultimate ground of their unity as the body of Christ. " Note: the "body" spoken of here is the Church. Specifically believers."*

*"Put on **your new nature**, and **be renewed** as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. ¹¹ In **this new life**, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile,*

*circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and **he lives in all of us.***

Col. 3:10-11 (NLT)

Col. 3:11 is talking about believers. Note in vs. 10 “put on your new nature and be renewed” and in vs 11 “This new life” speaking of those who have believed in Christ and now have “New Life”. Again note the “your” and “us” which is speaking of believers.

Col. 3:11 commentary: *“To the redeemed Christ is all; that is, He is everything, and He is what matters most to them. And Christ is ... in all; that is, He dwells in all believers.”*

Believer’s Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments – William MacDonald”

Christ does not “dwell in” unbelievers. He does not “dwell” in all of humanity, He “dwells” in believers through faith as stated above in **Eph. 3:16-19**, *“so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through your faith”*.

*“**He who believes in Me** [who cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me] as the Scripture has said, From his innermost being shall flow [continuously] springs and rivers of living water. But He was speaking here of the Spirit, **Whom those who believed (trusted, had faith) in Him were afterward to receive.** For the [Holy] Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honor).”*

Jn. 7:38-39 (AMPC)

Believers were sealed with the Holy Spirit when they believed:

*“And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And **when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit**, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”*

Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT)

The Holy Spirit is what makes Him abiding in you and you abiding in Him possible. Those who believe in Christ are filled with and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

“By this we come to know (perceive, recognize, and understand) that we abide (live and remain) in Him and He in us: because He has given (imparted) to us of His [Holy] Spirit. ...Anyone who confesses (acknowledges, owns) that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides (lives, makes His home) in him and he [abides, lives, makes his home] in God.”

1 Jn. 4:13,15 (AMPC)

Note that in **1 Jn. 4:13,15** above, the “we” and the “us” is “believers”. Christ in you (**Col 1:26-28**) because of the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in Christ are filled with the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit in believers because of their faith in Jesus Christ. Believers abide in Him and He in them because of the Holy Spirit. Christians receive the Holy Spirit when they believe in Christ: **Eph. 1:13-1 (NLT); 2 Cor. 1:22 (NLT); Gal. 3:1-5, 4:6; Jn. 37-39 (AMPC); Rom. 8:9 (ESV)** and in **1 Cor. 2:12 (AMPC)** *“Now we have not received the spirit [that belongs to] the world, but the [Holy] Spirit Who is from God, [given to us] that we might realize and comprehend and appreciate the gifts [of divine favor and blessing so freely and lavishly] bestowed on us by God.”* – note that the “we” and the “us” is speaking of believers. “We believers have received the Holy Spirit”. You cannot receive that which you already had. If I already had the Holy Spirit in me prior to salvation, I would not have to “receive” Him again when I believe in Christ. There is no “in Christ” and no “Christ in me” without the Holy Spirit. More on this below.

Greek for “Abide” Meno – **To continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, not to depart, to be held, kept, to remain as one. (In Union With)** – The difference between those abiding in Christ and those not abiding in Christ is the difference between the saved and the unsaved, those who believe in Christ and those who do not.

One more note on believers being in Christ. Universalist’s like to point to 1 Cor. 15:22 as all being in Christ. Such as just as all are in Adam all are in Christ. 1 Cor. 15:22 is not saying that, especially when you bring in vs 23 for more context. Let’s read this in multiple translations:

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (KJV)

"Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back".

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (NLT)

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ".

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (ESV)

"For just as [because of their union of nature] in Adam all people die, so also [by virtue of their [union of nature] shall all in Christ be made alive. But each in his own rank and turn: Christ (the Messiah) [is] the firstfruits, then those who are Christ's [own will be resurrected] at His coming".

1 Cor. 15:22-23 (AMPC)

We can see above that only those who belong to Christ will be raised to new life. Only believers "belong to Christ". All of humanity is in Adam, but only believers are in Christ. All of humanity is not automatically in Christ because of the finished work of the cross. As noted above, the finished work of the cross made a way all all of humanity to come to Christ and to be in Christ but that only way is by believing in Christ and as a result receiving the finished work of the cross. Being in Christ is outcome of believing in Christ.

"Because mankind is in Adam, all of mankind die (both physically and spiritually). However, in Christ all who have believed in Him for eternal salvation shall be made alive (both physically and spiritually). Paul in this passage is referring only to the believers in the Church and not the unbelieving dead" (1 Cor. 15:22 – The Grace New Testament Commentary).

"Adam and Christ are presented as federal heads. This means that they acted for other people. And all who are related to them are affected by their actions. All who are descended from Adam die. So in Christ all shall be made alive. This verse has sometimes been taken to teach universal salvation. It is argued that the same ones who die in Adam will be made alive in Christ, and that all will eventually be saved. But that is not what the verse says. The key expressions are in Adam and in Christ. All who are in Adam die. All who are in Christ shall be made alive, that is, only believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will be raised from the dead to dwell eternally with Him. The all who shall be made alive is defined in verse 23 as those who are Christ's at His Coming." (1 Cor. 15:22 Believer's Bible Commentary)

"As in the first Adam all men, that were in him, became subject both to temporal death, and all the afflictions and miseries of this life, which are so many little deaths, Rom. 8:36, and forerunners of natural death, or attendants upon it; and also to that eternal death, which is the consequent of the guilt of sin, Rom. 6:23: so in Christ, that is, through the merits of his death, and through his resurrection, all that are in him, being chosen in him, given to him, and by faith implanted into him, are not only spiritually made alive, (being passed from death unto life, 1 Jn. 3:14), but shall be raised from the dead unto eternal life. But though this text doth not prove the general resurrection, (being only intended of believers, that are members of Christ), yet it doth not oppose it. But that the all here mentioned is no more than all believers, appeareth not only from the term in Christ in this verse, but from the whole following discourse; which is only concerning the resurrection of believers to life, not that of the wicked to eternal condemnation." (1 Cor. 15:22 Matthew Poole's Commentary)

Now I want to take all I just said above regarding "in Adam" and "in Christ" and break it down into a more simple and easy to digest summary.

Here is my breakdown of 1 Cor. 15:22-23 highlighting the stark contrast between "In Adam" and In Christ" and who belongs to Christ:

In Adam (all who are "born" – natural birth) = Second death – the lake of fire; eternal separation from God.

In Christ (all who are “born again” by faith – new life) = Eternal life – no part in the lake of fire; forever belonging to God. All who belong to Christ (Belonging to Christ is conditional on belief)

Everyone begins “in Adam.” However, only those who, by faith, receive Christ are transferred to being “in Christ”, i.e. belong to Christ and are no longer separated. (**Rom 5:12–21; Jn. 1:12–13; Rom 8:1, 9; Gal 3:26–29**).

Why call it **second death** in lieu of just death? Great question—calling it the second death is deliberate and theologically crucial because Scripture itself uses that exact term four times in **Rev. 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8**. Here’s why it matters:

There is already a **first death** – Everyone “in Adam” dies physically because of sin (Rom. 5:12; Heb 9:27). That’s the first death—the separation of body and soul. The **second death** is far worse. It is the final, eternal separation of the whole person (body and soul) from God in the lake of fire after the resurrection and judgment. **Rev. 20:14–15** and **21:8** make clear that death and Hades (i.e., the state of the unbelieving dead) are thrown into the lake of fire. That final casting is called “the second death.”

Believers are exempt from the second death: **Rev. 20:6**: *“Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power.”*

That’s why the contrast is so stark and comforting:

- **In Adam** → first death and second death.
- **In Christ** → first death only (physical), then resurrection to life; no second death.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ belong to Christ. He identified you as his own. He put His seal upon you by giving you the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 1:13-14) Unbelievers do not yet belong to Christ.

And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own [He put His seal upon you] by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s

guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

Eph. 1:13-14 (NLT)

Continuing from 1 Cor. 15:22-23 ... Then there is the resurrection at “the end” (v 24) when wicked dead are raised after the Millennium to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment. All of humanity will be raised, but they will not all be given eternal life. Those are two different issues. The resurrection is for all. (**Dan. 12:1-2; Jn. 5:28-30; Acts 24:14,15**). Eternal life is only for believers. During this resurrection, all of humanity will be raised, including both believers and non-believers. This event culminates in the Great White Throne Judgment, where the actions and choices of individuals will be evaluated. However, it’s important to note that while everyone is resurrected, not everyone will receive eternal life. This brings us to the second event. The text emphasizes that eternal life is not automatically granted to all who are resurrected. Instead, eternal life is specifically reserved for believers, those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

Believer’s receive eternal life while unbelievers receive eternal destruction as mentioned in 2 Thes. 1:6-9 . Let’s take a closer look at this before moving on.

In his justice he will pay back those who persecute you. And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

2 Thes. 1:6-9 (NLT)

If there was ever a perfect definition for Hell, “eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power” is it!

I would like to focus on 2 Thes. 1:9. As mentioned several times throughout the New Testament. Believers receive eternal life. However, unbelievers receive eternal

destruction. i.e. Eternal death. What does this men? 2 Thes. 1:9 says unbelievers will be punished. Punished with what? Eternal destruction.

KJV/NKJV/ESV/ASV//NLT "Eternal Destruction"

NASB/NIV/AMP "Everlasting destruction"

Pulpit Commentary for 2 Thes. 1:9 – Who; namely, the unbelieving Gentiles and Jews. Shall be punished; literally, shall pay the penalty; shall suffer punishment (R.V.). With everlasting destruction; or rather, even everlasting destruction; the words being in apposition. "Destruction" here denotes ruin, death; the word is only used in Paul's Epistles (**1 Cor. 5:8; 1 Thes. 5:3; 1 Tim. 6:9**). The Greek word translated "everlasting," from dogmatic reasons, has given rise to much controversy. Here it appears to denote eternal – eternity to come. The eternal punishment of the wicked seems here asserted; a terrible declaration, which the mind shudders to contemplate. The observation of Olshausen is worthy of attention: "This is the only passage in Paul's Epistles in which everlasting damnation is openly declared, whereas not a few occur in which a bringing back of all the lost ones is apparently assumed as possible;" but he adds, "For the supposition that Paul did indeed in the earliest of his Epistles still teach everlasting damnation, but gave it up in later times, there exists no sufficient foundation, because the bringing back again is nowhere freely and openly declared."

So to truly understand **1 Cor. 15:22-23**, one must fully understand what it means to belong to Christ. Those who are His at His coming. **1 Cor. 15:23** – All of humanity does not belong to Christ. Only those who believe belong to Christ.

Now let's take a quick walk through Galatians in regards to receiving the Holy Spirit.

*"Let me ask you this one question: Did you **receive the Holy Spirit** by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! **You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ.**"*

Gal. 3:2 (NLT)

*"I ask you again, does God **give you the Holy Spirit** and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! **It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.**"*

Gal. 3:5 (NLT)

*"What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight **because of their faith**. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." So **all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.**"*

Gal. 3:8-9 (NLT)

*"So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, **"It is through faith that a righteous person has life."** **This way of faith** is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life." ...But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, **so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.**"*

Gal. 3:11-14 (NLT)

For full context read all of Gal. chapter 3. We see here in Galatians that the Holy Spirit is "received" by faith. You cannot "receive" that which you already had. Unbelievers do not have the Holy Spirit, they have not "received" the Holy Spirit because of their unbelief. This passage points out that when one believes in Jesus Christ that person "receives" the Holy Spirit, shares the same blessings as Abraham, is made right with God and has life! It is also pointing out that you cannot "receive" the Holy Spirit by keeping the law, but rather by this new way of faith. This new covenant of being made right with God

through faith in Jesus Christ. Believe not, receive not. One must believe to receive. Let's go a little farther into Gal. chapter 3 and look deeper into "this new way of faith".

*"Before **the way of faith in Christ was available to us**, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, **until the way of faith was revealed**. Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be **made right with God through faith**. And now that **the way of faith has come**, we no longer need the law as our guardian. For you are all **children of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For **you are all one in Christ Jesus**. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you."*

Gal. 3:23-29 (NLT)

*"But **to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God**. They are **reborn**—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but **a birth that comes from God**."*

Jn. 1:12-13 (NLT)

*"But to as many as did **receive and welcome Him**, He gave the authority (power, privilege, right) to become the children of God, that is, **to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name**. Who owe their birth neither to bloods nor to the will of the flesh [that of physical impulse] nor to the will of man [that of a natural father], but to God. [**They are born of God!**]."*

Jn. 1:12-13 (AMPC)

*"For you are all **sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**."*

Gal. 3:26 (NKJV)

*"For you [**who are born-again** have been reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, sanctified and] **are all children of God** [set apart for His purpose with full rights and privileges] **through faith in Christ Jesus.**"*

Gal. 3:26 (AMP)

Some important things to point out in **Gal. 3:23-29**, **Jn. 1:12-13** and **Gal. 3:26** noted above. Because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross "**a new way of faith**" was made "**available**" to all. The way of faith was revealed when Christ died on the cross, was buried, rose again and ascended to Heaven so the Holy Spirit could come and "**be in**" **all who would believe in Christ**. This is the what the New Covenant is all about. Christ made a **new way** for **us to be made right with God**. That new way is "**faith in Him**" as opposed to keeping the law. **Those who believe in Christ become a child of God** and as a result have an inheritance! Notice the phrase "*all who believed Him and accepted Him, have been given the right to be called children of God*" in **Jn. 1:12-13** and "*you are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ*" in **Gal. 3:26**. Unbelievers are not children of God. Prior to salvation one is not a child of God and as a result does not yet have an inheritance. We "believers" are given the right to be called children of God and as a result have an inheritance. Children of God **only by faith in Jesus Christ**. Also note the phrase "*you who are born-again*". Believers are born-again, unbelievers are not. Note in **Jn. 1:12-13** "*All who believe and accepted Him (received Him) have are reborn.*" Again the emphasis here is on **believing and receiving**.

Let's look at **Jn. 1:12-13** again but this time in the NASB:

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God."

Jn. 1:12-13 (NASB)

NASB Bible commentary on Jn. 1:12 – "*membership in Gods family is by grace alone – the gift of god.* **Eph. 2:8-9**. It is never a human achievement, as vs. **Jn. 1:13** emphasizes; yet the

imparting of the gift is dependent on man's reception of it, as the word "received" and "believe" make clear."

Believer's Bible Commentary on **Jn. 1:13** – *"To become a child in a physical sense, one must be born. So, also, to become a child of God, one must have a second birth. This is known as the new birth, or conversion, or being saved. This verse tells us three ways by which the new birth does not take place, and the one way by which it does. First, the three ways by which we are not born again. Not of blood. This means that a person does not become a Christian through having Christian parents. Salvation is not passed down from parent to child through the blood stream. It is not of the will of the flesh. In other words, a person does not have the power in his own flesh to produce the new birth. Although he must be willing in order to be saved, yet his own will is not enough to save him. Not of the will of man. No other man can save a person. A preacher, for instance, may be very anxious to see a certain person born again, but he does not have the power to produce this marvelous birth. How, then, does this birth take place? The answer is found in the words but of God. This means simply that the power to produce the new birth does not rest with anything or anyone but God."*

Jn. 1:12-13 together are saying that those who believe in Christ receive a new birth. They are **born again**. **Jn. 1:13, 3:1-14, 2 Cor. 5:17, 1 Pet. 1:3, 22-23, 1 Jn. 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 18.**

"...He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light."

Col. 1:12 (NLT)

Those who believe in Christ are in the light and the light is in them and they get to share in His inheritance! WoW!

When one believes in (and receives) Christ, he becomes born-again, a new creation and is now **"in union with Christ"** and now **"belongs to Christ"**. Note the phrase *"And now that you belong to Christ"* in **Gal. 3:29**. When you see the phrase **"those who belong to Christ"** throughout the new testament writings, that phrase is referring to believers. The

end result of “belonging to Christ” is You are now His heirs. **Gal. 3:29** *“And **now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God’s promise to Abraham belongs to you.**”* You, the believer.

*“For once you were full of darkness, **but now you have light from the Lord.** So live as people of light! For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true”*

Eph. 5:8-9 (NLT)

Note the “you” in “**but now you have the light of the Lord**”. The “you” is believers. Unbelievers have no light in them. When one believes in Jesus Christ through faith, He (the true light – **Jn. 1:9**) moves in and replaces darkness with His light.

Jesus said in **Jn. 12:46** that whoever believes in Him will not continue to live in darkness. Meaning they are in darkness until faith in Christ.

“I have come as a Light into the world, so that whoever believes in Me [whoever cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Me] may not continue to live in darkness.”

Jn. 12:46 (AMPC)

*“[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself **out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins.**”*

Col. 1:13-14 (AMPC)

Delivered and drawn us [believers] to Himself; has transferred us [believers] into the kingdom of the Son of His love; we [believers] have our redemption through His blood; [which means] the forgiveness of our [believers] sins. We [believers] are seated with Him in Heavenly places.

Again, full context: **Col. 1** Paul is writing to faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. So, every reference of “we”, “us” and “our” in **Col. 1:13-14** is referring to “believers”. It is not referring to all of humanity. Same goes for **Jn. 1:9**, His light is not in all of humanity. Vs.

1:9 "AMPC *"The true light that illuminates every person"*, NKJ/ESV *"The true light that gives light to everyone"*, CEV *"The true light that shines on everyone"*, etc... This vs. is not saying that all of humanity has the light of Christ. On the contrary, all of humanity is in darkness until faith in Christ. The true light that gives light to everyone... His true light now available for all to receive through and by faith.

The Grace New Testament Commentary on Jn. 1:9 – *"By coming into the world He gives light to every man in the sense that the truth is available to all. He made a way for all to receive the light and that way is through faith in Him."*

BibleRef Commentary on Jn. 1:9 – *"There is no room to see Jesus as one way to heaven, or a possible way. He is the one and only, real and true way. Unlike the law of Moses, which was given only to the people of Israel, this light is given to everyone—to the entire world. The best-known verse in the entire Bible, John 3:16, sums this up by saying that God loved the entire world enough to send His Son for the salvation of anyone who believes in Him. Not all people will choose to accept that light, however. Some will deliberately stay in the dark."*

Jn. 1:9 Believer's Bible Commentary – *"**That was the true Light.** Other persons down through the ages have claimed to be guides and saviors, but the One to whom John witnessed was the genuine **Light**, the best and the truest **Light**. Another translation of this verse is, *"The true Light, which, **coming into the world**, gives light to every man."* In other words, the expression coming into the world may describe **the true Light** rather than **every man**. It was by the coming of the **true Light ... into the world** that every man was given light. This does not mean that every man has received some inward knowledge concerning Christ. Neither does it mean that all men have heard about the Lord Jesus at one time or another. Rather, it means that the **Light** shines on all people, without regard to nationality, race, or color. It also means that by shining on all men, the Lord Jesus has revealed men in their true character. By His coming into the world as the perfect Man, He has shown how imperfect other men are. When a room is in darkness, you do not see the dust on the furniture. But when the light goes on, the room is seen as it actually is. In that same sense, the shining of the true Light reveals man as he actually is." ~ One has to believe in Christ to "receive" His light.*

*"When **you came to Christ, you were "circumcised,"** but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—**the cutting away of your sinful nature.** For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him **you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.**"*

Col. 2:11-12 (NLT)

Again here the "you" is believers". When "you" came to Christ. Who came to Christ? Those who believed in Him. Believers are **raised to new life because of their faith in Jesus Christ**. Unbelievers are still dead and separated in their sins. Unbelievers are out of "right relationship" with God because of their unbelief and still have a sinful nature.

Jesus referring to the Holy Spirit:

*"And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. **The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.** 10 Righteousness is **available** because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more."*

Jn. 16:8-10 (NLT)

Here Jesus is calling unbelief a sin. Unbelievers are dead in their sins until they believe. They actually do not "receive" forgiveness of their sins "until they believe in Christ". Note that Christ made righteousness "available" to all who would believe in Jesus Christ.

*"He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that **everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.**"*

Acts 10:43 (NLT)

Unbelievers do not yet have their sins forgiven. Remember, Christ died for all so that all who believe in Him "could be saved". He made salvation available to all but you still have to believe in Christ and choose Him as your Lord and Savior to "receive" this forgiveness of sins that He made a way for on the cross. The finished work of the cross is not "received" until one believes in Christ. Believe in Jesus Christ and "receive" the

finished work of the cross and all that goes with it. Salvation from hell and freedom from the power of sin.

*"This is the testimony in essence: God gave us eternal life; the life is in his Son. So, **whoever has the Son, has life; whoever rejects the Son, rejects life**"*

1 Jn. 5:11-12 (NLT)

*"Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. And this is the testimony, that **God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.**"*

1 Jn. 5:10-13 (ESV)

Again, the "us" here is "believers". Unbelievers have rejected the son. Believers "have the Son" by believing in Him because when they "believe in Him they are "united with Him".

*"For this is My Father's will and His purpose, that everyone who **sees the Son and believes in and cleaves to and trusts in and relies on Him should have eternal life**, and I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day."*

Jn. 6:40 (AMPC)

Believers are justified and receive the righteousness of Christ when we believe in Him.

*"But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"—that is, the word [the message, the basis] of faith which we preach— because **if you acknowledge and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord [recognizing His power, authority, and majesty as God], and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes [in Christ as Savior] resulting in his justification [that is, being made righteous— being freed of the guilt of sin and made acceptable to God]; and with the mouth***

*he acknowledges and confesses [his faith openly], **resulting in and confirming [his] salvation.***

Rom. 10:8-10 (AMP)

On the cross, Jesus took our sin upon Himself and purchased our salvation. We have “been justified by his blood” (**Rom. 5:9**), and part of that justification is an “imputation” of His own righteousness to those who believe in Him. Paul says: “For our sake [God] made [Jesus] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him “we” (believers) might become the righteousness of God” (**2 Cor. 5:21**). Important note: in 2 Cor. 5:21 the “we” is referring to believers. Paul was writing to believers. ...By God’s grace, “through faith in Jesus Christ,” that righteousness is given “**to all who believe**” (**Rom. 3:22**). That’s imputation: the giving of Christ’s righteousness to sinners. Through faith in Christ, believers receive the righteousness of Christ. Believers receive this gift of God’s grace by faith. This is part of the new creation that happens at salvation, the moment when one believes in Christ. Christ’s righteousness is not given to unbelievers, it is something received by believers when they believe.

*“This righteousness of God **comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those [Jew or Gentile] who believe [and trust in Him and acknowledge Him as God’s Son].***

*There is no distinction, since all have sinned and continually fall short of the glory of God, and are being justified [declared free of the guilt of sin, made acceptable to God, and granted eternal life] as a gift by His [precious, undeserved] grace, through the redemption [the payment for our sin] which is [provided] in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly [before the eyes of the world] as a [life-giving] sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation (propitiation) by His blood **[to be received] through faith.***”

Rom. 3:22-25 (AMP)

Those who “believe in Christ” have eternal life. Unbelievers do not have eternal life. All are not included in the free gift of salvation. Only “believers” are.

I could go on with many more verses that point out the difference between “believers” and “unbelievers”. There is a difference, all are not included. One must believe in Christ

to be saved from damnation.

The all-inclusive gospel idea is that salvation was not an event, it was a person. Well, believing in that person (Jesus) is a real and life changing event for sure! There is no "new creation" without believing in Christ. There is no "Christ in me" without believing in Christ. There is no union; "fellowship and relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit" without believing in Christ. There is no "right standing with God" unless one believes in His son. There is no "Holy Spirit in me to help me and guide me into all truth" unless I believe in Christ and have received His finished work. Union with the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit does not happen without faith in Christ.

"Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also". 1 Jn. 2:22-23 (NASB 1995)

I want to note here a very important prayer by Jesus prayed in **Jn. Ch. 17**. Here we have a very crucial prayer by Jesus to the Father for the disciples in regard to union with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the longest recorded prayer by Jesus in the Bible and it is positioned in a very important moment in time. Just prior to this in **Jn. Ch. 16**, Jesus was telling the disciples about the work of the Holy Spirit that was to come and then He was telling them that He had to go away and be with the Father so the Holy Spirit could come and in **Jn. Ch. 18** things start to change quickly because it jumps into Judas betraying Jesus and He would enter into suffering. Read through all of **Jn. Ch. 17** and make note that Jesus is not praying to the Father for the world, he is not praying to the Father for unbelievers, He is praying to the Father for the disciples and all who would ever believe their message. Read through all of **Jn. Ch. 17** and then take special note to vs. **17:9-10** and **17: 20**. Christ is praying to the Father for these believers to be in union with the Trinity just as much as the Trinity is in union with each other.

*"My prayer **is not for the world**, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. – **"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message."***

Jn. 17:9-10, 20

Note in **Jn. 17:9-10** abv. *“those you have given me, those who belong to you.”* This is speaking of “believers”. Also note in **Jn. 17:20** abv. *“not only for disciples but for all who will ever believe in me though their message”*. Well, here we are reading their message, do you believe it’s true? Do you believe the truth of the Gospel, that Christ is Lord and that He died for your sins and that through faith in Him you will be saved? **1 Cor. 1:20 (NLT); Rom. 5:1-2, 15, 6:23, 10:3-4, 9-13 (NLT); 1 Jn. 4:15 (AMP); Jn. 3:1-8, 16-17, 36, 4:10-14, 5:24, 6:29, 47, 63, 14:6, 20:31; Gal. 2:16; Acts 16:31; Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-10, 13-15, 3:2; Acts 3:19, 4:12; 1 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9 (NLT) and Jn 5:24 (AMP).**

*“Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. But don’t be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man[f] can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval.” They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?” **Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.”***

Jn. 6:26-29

Let’s go back to Ephesians again and focus on His power in us believers and now being near to God because of our faith in Him.

*“I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of **God’s power for us who believe him**. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.”*

Eph. 1:19-21 (NLT)

The same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead is in believers. This power is not in unbelievers.

*"But now **you** have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been **brought near to him** through the blood of Christ."*

Eph. 2:13 (NLT)

The "you" being spoken of here is "believers". (Again see **Eph. 1:1**) You who have believed in and are faithful followers of Christ, used to be far away. You were far away because you did not believe. But now you have been brought near because of the blood of Christ and your faith in Him. When you read **Eph. 2:13** at first glance you only see "you have been brought near because of the blood of Christ". But when read in full context it is your faith in Christ that allows you to receive this nearness. It is faith in Christ that allows believers to receive the finished work of the cross.

*"This includes **you who were once far away from God**. You were his enemies, **separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions**. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. **Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News**. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it."*

Col. 1:21-23 (NLT)

Col. 1:21-23 when read in full context is again speaking of believers. The "you" is specifically referring to those who were unbelievers but now are believers. We again see reference to being separated from God prior to salvation, prior to faith in Christ and being reconciled to God after salvation. *"Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News."* Should be read as *"Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard **and believed** the Good News."* Note the word "received". What did you receive when you heard the good news and believed? You received the assurance of salvation. You received reconciliation to God and are now Holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.

This is accomplish start to finish by faith:

*"For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. **It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes**—the Jew first and also the Gentile. This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. **This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.** As the Scriptures say, **"It is through faith that a righteous person has life."***

Rom. 1:16-17 (NLT)

Throughout the New Covenant writings, "faith in Christ", "The new way of faith" is the constant underlying message of importance. An urging to believe in Christ because that is how salvation is received, through faith in Jesus Christ and no other way does salvation come. To lump in unbelievers with believers in regards to "having prior to salvation" all of God's promises and the finished work of the cross goes against what the Bible teaches. We "receive" all of God's promises and the finished work of the cross only through faith in Jesus Christ.

God desires that all sinners be saved (**1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Ptr. 3:9; Ezk. 18:23; Mat. 23:37**). But not all are saved. Only those who believe in Jesus Christ will be saved.

"It is for this that we labor and strive [often called to account], because we have fixed our [confident] hope on the living God, who is the [a]Savior of all people, especially of those who believe [in Him, recognize Him as the Son of God, and accept Him as Savior and Lord]."

1 Tim. 4:10 (AMP)

The Believer's Bible Commentary by William MacDonald explains **1 Tim. 4:10** noted above perfectly: "God is the savior of all men in the same sense that He preserves them in the daily providences of life. But He is also the savior of all men in this sense: He has made adequate provision for the salvation of all men. He is the savior of those who believe in a special way because they availed themselves of His provision. We might say that He is the potential savior of all men and the actual savior of those who believe." In other words,

God the Father made a way for salvation through Christ's sacrifice on the cross and that way and only way, is by believing in His Son, Jesus Christ: **Mk. 1:15; Jn. 3:1-8, 16-17, 36, 5:24, 14:6, 20:31; Acts 4:12, 16:17,31; Rom. 10:4-17; Gal. 2:16; Rom. 10:9-13, 17: Eph. 1:13-14, 2:8-10; 2 Tim. 1:9. Jn. 3:1-8 Heb.11:1; 1 Jn. 4:15, 5:4.**

Because of Christ and His sacrifice for us, our sins have not only been forgiven but erased! **Isa. 43:25; Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:14–18, 8:12; Rom. 8:1.** Yes, Christ took away the sins of the the whole world when He died on the cross. **Jn. 1:29; Rom. 3:21-26, 5:10, 6:10; Col. 1:20, 2:13; Heb. 8:12, 9:22, 10:12,18; 2 Cor. 5:19, 1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10.** However, one must believe in Jesus Christ to "receive" this forgiveness of sin and reconciliation.

*"Then He said again to them, "I am going away, and you will look for Me, and you will die [unforgiven and condemned] in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." So the Jews were asking [among themselves], "Will He kill Himself? Is that why He says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" He said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. That is why I told you that you will die [unforgiven and condemned] in your sins; **for if you do not believe that I am the One [I claim to be], you will die in your sins.**"*

Jn. 8:21-24 (AMP)

Full context is very important. Example: If you read **Rom 5:10** that I have referenced above all by itself and out of context you may think the word "our" and "we" is referring to the whole world. Let's read it: **Rom. 5:10 (AMP)** *"For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son."* Yes, Christ did die on the cross for our sins while we were still enemies of God but we still have to believe in Christ to "receive" that forgiveness.

Now let's back up and read the beginning of **Rom. 5** putting it fuller context:

Therefore, since we have been justified [that is, acquitted of sin, declared blameless before God] by faith, [let us grasp the fact that] we have peace with God [and the joy of reconciliation with Him] through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed).

Through Him we also have access by faith into this [remarkable state of] grace in which we [firmly and safely and securely] stand. Let us rejoice in our hope and the confident assurance of [experiencing and enjoying] the glory of [our great] God [the manifestation of His excellence and power].

Rom. 5:1-2 (AMP)

Note in **Rom. 5:1-2**, the “we” is believers. i.e. “Therefore, since we (believers) have been justified [that is, acquitted of sin, declared blameless before God] by faith in Jesus Christ. Remember, Paul is writing to believers. You can plainly see this in **Rom. 1:8 (AMP)** “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith [your trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness] is being proclaimed in all the world.”

As noted above in **Jn. 8:21-24**, “for if you do not believe that I am the One [I claim to be], you will die in your sins.”

So how can you die in your sins if your sins were forgiven before you believed in Christ? The answer is, yes your sins were forgiven because of what Christ did on the cross but you do not “receive” that forgiveness and reconciliation until you believe in Christ.

We do not “receive” His righteousness, that is we are not made right with God, not reconciled back to Him until we believe in Him.

*This righteousness of God **comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those [Jew or Gentile] who believe [and trust in Him and acknowledge Him as God’s Son].** There is no distinction, since all have sinned and continually fall short of the glory of God, and are being justified [declared free of the guilt of sin, made acceptable to God, and granted eternal life] as a gift by His [precious, undeserved] grace, through the redemption [the payment for our sin] which is [provided] in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly [before the eyes of the world] as a [life-giving] sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation (propitiation) by His blood **[to be received] through faith.**”*

Rom. 3:22-25 (AMP)

This is all received by faith in Jesus Christ. I do not have it until I “believe” and “receive” it. What is the “it”? Salvation, abundant life now, fellowship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and eternal life in Haven. Salvation is for now and where we will spend eternity.

“And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Heb. 9:27-28 (ESV)

Who is eagerly waiting for Christ’s return? Believers, those who have believed in Christ and as a result have been saved and are eagerly waiting for that full salvation upon His return. Unbelievers are not eagerly waiting for Christ’s return. And what does Heb. 9:28 above say? Christ is coming a second time to “save those who are eagerly waiting for Him”. That is to bring into complete and full salvation, eternal life in Heaven for those who have believed in Him.

*“Here in Heb. 9:27-28, the writer of Hebrews points out that Christ appeared once, and died once, and this death was for the purpose of judgment on sin. This means His Second Coming, which is yet in the future, **will not result in an additional atonement**. Just as each man dies once, Christ will only die for sins once. Just as men die, and then are judged, Christ has already died, and will return only to judge the world. **Christ’s next arrival will be for the purpose of “saving” those who have trusted in Him**. This is meant in the sense that Christ’s ultimate return, in victory, signals the final completion of God’s plan to judge sin and save His people (Titus 2:13).”*

BibleRef Commentary

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.**”*

Jn. 5:24 (ESV)

*"I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, **the person whose ears are open to My words [who listens to My message] and believes and trusts in and clings to and relies on Him Who sent Me has (possesses now) eternal life. And he does not come into judgment [does not incur sentence of judgment, will not come under condemnation], but he has already passed over out of death into life.**"*

Jn. 5:24 (AMPC)

*"Whoever believes in him is not condemned, **but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**"*

Jn. 3:18 (ESV)

*"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge and condemn the world [that is, to initiate the final judgment of the world], but that the world might be saved through Him. **Whoever believes and has decided to trust in Him [as personal Savior and Lord] is not judged [for this one, there is no judgment, no rejection, no condemnation]; but the one who does not believe [and has decided to reject Him as personal Savior and Lord] is judged already [that one has been convicted and sentenced], because he has not believed and trusted in the name of the [One and] only begotten Son of God [the One who is truly unique, the only One of His kind, the One who alone can save him].**"*

Jn. 3:17-18 (AMP)

Those who believe in Christ have eternal life now, have passed from death to life now and are assured of eternal salvation. Those who do not believe have not yet received the finished work of Christ, are still in death, have not received life and are heading for destruction and damnation.

This is why believers should be compelled to share the good news of the gospel which is simply "believe in Jesus Christ" and you will be saved. We believers are to be ministers of this New Covenant.

*"We are confident of all this **because of our great trust in God through Christ**. It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. **He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant**. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life."*

2 Cor. 3:4-6 (NLT) – Full context: (2 Cor. 2:14-3:18)

Warning: Be Cautious of Misleading Teachings.

There is a popular Bible paraphrase that is infused with Universalism, i.e. the Gospel of Inclusion that should be avoided. It is the Mirror Bible by South African Bible teacher Francois du Toit. While du Toit claims to reveal the true meaning of the biblical text, it becomes alarmingly clear that he is injecting his own beliefs into it. Du Toit is a universalist who asserts that all humanity was redeemed through the cross: *"Jesus died humanity's death and when the stone was rolled away, we were raised together with him! Every human life is fully represented in him!"* According to du Toit, the gospel is not about sinners being saved through faith in Christ but rather that humanity is already saved, and the gospel merely announces this supposed fact. This dangerous perspective suggests that people only need to realize this and embrace it to achieve joyful, fulfilling lives—an interpretation that distorts the core message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Rather than clarifying the original text, this teaching twists Scripture as mentioned in **2 Peter 3:15-16 NLT** to promote a so-called "gospel of inclusion"—the false idea that all are automatically saved, there is no hell, and humanity was redeemed entirely at the cross. This is not what Scripture teaches.

The Bible is clear: Christ's suffering and death on the cross provided "the way" and "only way" for all of humanity to be saved, but salvation is received only through faith in Christ. One must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved as mentioned in: **Romans 10:9, John 3:16** and **Acts 4:12**.

The “Mirror Bible,” which supports the distorted message of the Gospel of Inclusion, is not a faithful representation of the gospel. It seeks to invert the true gospel into “another gospel” entirely, contradicting the core biblical truths about sin, salvation, and faith in Christ. Be on guard against teachings that compromise or misrepresent the Word of God as Paul warned about in **Galatians 1:6-9 (NLT)**: *“You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ.”*

For some more details on the false teaching of the Mirror Bible see:

Got Questions? – [What is the Mirror Bible/Mirror Word?](#)

and [Literally the WORST Bible Translation I’ve Ever Seen](#) by Mike Winger

Be discerning and vigilant when encountering such claims, as they may undermine the biblical truth of the gospel.

Here are some scriptures giving us a warning about false teaching:

In **2 Tim. 4:3-4 (ESV/NKJV/AMPC)** Paul tells us: *“The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”*

In **Col. 2:8-10** Paul warns us to: *“Beware lest anyone [a]cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”*

Deception is Satan’s favorite weapon of choice. Satan is the father of lies and there is no truth in Him: **Jn. 8:44 (NLT)**. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light: **2 Cor. 11:12-15 (NKJV)**, beware of this false light!

The false teaching problem is not a new thing. In **Gal. 1:6-10, 5:5-10 (AMP)**, Paul was addressing this problem with Jewish believers that were straying from the truth and going back to the law. There is also a warning to the false teacher in this passage.

In **1 Jn. 4:1-6 (ESV & AMP)**, John tells us: "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God".

In **2 Cor. 11:2-6 (NASB/NLT)**, Paul also warned about believing teachers who are preaching a "different Jesus", a different gospel and 2 Pet. 3:17, Paul warned us about not being carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. We also have Paul's warning about not being conformed to this world and to its culture in **Rom. 12:2 (NKJV/AMP)**.

Full PDF download of this article can be downloaded [here](#).

For a deeper dive into what one "receives" when they "believe" in Jesus Christ please continue onto:

[BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND RECEIVE HIS GIFT](#)

[...the free gift of salvation and of receiving His finished work!](#)

Recommended articles

- [What is the gospel of inclusion?](#) – *Got Questions?*
- [Inclusionism](#) – *Escape to reality.*

