

Exegetical Analysis – 1 Timothy 2:1-6

1 – First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.
(1. Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις προσευχὰς ἐντεύξεις εὐχαριστίας ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων)

The first thing to notice is that Paul is clearly entrusting Timothy with prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of [all men]. Now obviously Paul was not telling Timothy to pray for "every single man in existence". So we can see that all has a restriction in the sense that he should pray for all kinds of men. This will become apparent in the next verse.

2 – for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. (2. ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι)

The prepositional word "for" at the beginning of vs.2 links us back to vs.1 to see who those prayers, petitions, thanksgivings were for. They were for "kinds of men" [kings and all who are in authority]. So it cannot be concluded that "all men" in vs.1 is exhaustive.

3-4 – This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, [4] who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (3. τοῦτο καλὸν καὶ ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, 4. ὃς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν)

The phrase "this is good" at the beginning of vs.3 denotes connection with vs.2 and that a new theme has not been introduced. The desire of God is that "all men" be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. The all men here is still restrictive based upon the statements Paul has made from vs.1-3. God's desire is not that all men without exception are saved. His desire is to save all kinds of men [John 6:37,44,65; Rev 7:9]. If God desired to save all men without exception it is [a] true that God has failed and not gotten what he desired making him impotent to save or [b] that universalism is true and everyone without exception is saved. Neither [a,b] are viable options.

5-6 – For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6] who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time. (5. εἰς γὰρ θεός, εἰς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων, ἀνθρωπὸς Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, 6. ὃ δοὺς ἐσυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, τὸ μαρτύριον καιροῖς ἴδοις)

Christ Jesus is the mediator for all who believe [all the believing ones]... He doesn't give himself as a ransom for everyone without exception but still for all kinds of people. The reason this carries over is because of his mediatory role as Saviour who intercedes for his people not for the world and not for those in hell.

Hebrews 2:17 NASB

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 6:20 NASB

where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 9:7 NASB

but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year, not without taking blood, which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in ignorance.

Hebrews 9:15 NASB

For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

I would also like to point out how this logically does not function to say that God desires to save everyone without exception but man thwarts his desire. God accomplishes all that he desires. Nothing thwarts his will. If he desires to save everyone he would. He only desires to save his sheep, which is why he lays his life down for his sheep, for his friends, for the Church and not for the whole world.