

The “All” Series...Session 1



Is That All There Is?

Some people have the idea that the end is “all there is!”

To them (those “some people”) life has been a puzzle from the start. They don’t see passed their involuntary understanding, their experiences, and their thoughts as to why we are here on earth in the first place.

“All means all and that’s all all means.” This was the title to a Sermon by Eric Hankins (2014).

In the Bible, does “all” mean “all” with no limitations?

How many times is all mentioned in the bible?

- ✓ The word "all" is in the King James Version of The Bible 5621 times. It is in 4664 verses.
- ✓ The Greek word for all is “*pas*.” It can mean each, every, any, all, the whole, etc. The word “*pas*” is used over 1200 times in the New Testament.

Is there a Scripture that you know whereby the word “all” is exaggerated” and where the word has “stretched the truth?”

An examination of a concordance will show that the term *all* is almost *always* limited to some category.

The meaning of *all* in Scripture is *always* determined by the context, and rarely, *if ever*, means “all without any kind of limitation.”

This does not mean that the written Word has errors. It means that you have to consider the context before you come to a conclusion.

It is like taking one Scripture and basing your whole theology on that one main thought or truth.

For instance, if you read one verse in the Old Testament like *Judges 3:6*, “*The Israelites took their daughters as wives for themselves, gave their own daughters to their sons, and worshiped other gods.*” You would look at this verse and say, “Gracious, the Israelites were into incest and God forbidden acts (abominations).”

The context has to be observed with intense scrutiny and we see where “their” means the foreign ungodly classifications/nations of people where the Israelites had settled (Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites).

God looked on the intermingling/intermarriage of these nation’s inhabitants with God’s chosen people as an abomination since they (foreigners) worshiped created gods...and not the Lord God Jehovah.

Do we mean it when we say, “Honey, please wash all the dishes.”

Or... “This guy talks about politics all the time!”

All...dishes that are dirty.

Does the guy know anything to say without it being political?

So...we have to use common sense when we see or hear the word all.

Notice the first ten occurrences of the term “pas” in the Greek New Testament.

- Matt 1:17 – “There were **fourteen generations** in all”
- Matt 2:3 – “All **Jerusalem**”
- Matt 2:4 – “All the people’s **chief priests**”
- Matt 2:16 – “All **the boys in Bethlehem**”
- Matt 2:16 – “All **that region**”
- Matt 3:5 – “All **Judea**”
- Matt 3:5 – “All **the region of the Jordan**”
- Matt 3:10 – “Every **tree that does not produce good fruit**”
- Matt 3:15 – “Fulfill all **righteousness**”
- Matt 4:4 – “Every **word that comes from the mouth of God**”

In each of these occurrences of the word “pas,” (all and every) there’s some kind of categorical limitation. Since the biblical writers used the word “pas” in a variety of different ways, interpreting the word requires careful attention to context.

“*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that **all** the world should be taxed.*” Luke 2:1 KJV Now, a “first look” at the meaning of the word “all” here would lead us to believe that every single person in the world was to be taxed based on the decree from Caesar. The problem with this reading is that every person was not under Roman rule. Rome’s empire during the first century extended to much of the

area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, so it would be unreasonable to expect that Caesar would tax the Far East, a region over whom he had no control. Instead, context allows us to realize that this tax sent out from Caesar was for **all** the Roman world.

*“And **all** the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” **Mark 1:5**.* Here we are given a picture of the ministry of John (the Baptist). John was preparing the way for the Messiah by baptizing people as a symbol of their hearts preparation for the Gospel. But again, if we were to take the word **all** here to mean literally every single individual man, woman, and child, then we would be led to believe that John was baptizing over 500,000 people, the conservative estimate of Judea alone during the first century. Is that possible? Certainly, **all** things are possible with God (**Matthew 19:26**, pun again), but was it likely? Incidentally, the all in “all things are possible with God” is to be taken literally and, in my thinking, would be right on!

There’s only one way to use the word *all* such that it means “all” without qualification, and it isn’t very useful because it’s so comprehensive. *All* only means “all without any kind of limitation” if it refers to all things, created, existent, abstract and concrete, actual and potential, true and false, and good and evil. Understand, “all” is not a word to be misunderstood from such liberal thinking as “there are no absolutes; it all depends on what is is;” or, “It depends on what it is ALL about.” The Bible is truth (no false).

What About “All” in Romans 3:23?

Some may suggest that the word *all* in Romans 3:23 is a place where “all means all without any limitation.” Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” But I submit that the meaning of the word *all* is limited here too.

(Don’t throw things at me at this point. Hear me out!

Romans 3:23 doesn’t mean that all of the angels sinned, and it certainly doesn’t mean that Jesus sinned.

If we look at the wider context of Romans 1-3, we’ll see that Paul uses the word *all* in Romans 3:23 to speak of all humanity since creation, both Jews and Greeks (exception: Jesus). But in Romans 3, Paul goes even further to show that the word *all* in Romans 3:23 doesn’t just mean “all ethnic groups have sinned,” “all in general have sinned,” or that “every kind of person has sinned.” Rather Paul shows that each and every individual of fallen humanity has sinned. In Romans 3:10-11, Paul makes this crystal clear: “**None** is righteous, **no, not one**; **no one** understands; **no one** seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; **no one** does good, **not even one**.” The fact that Paul denies the goodness of *any* fallen individual in Romans 3:10-11 clarifies his meaning of *all* in Romans 3:23.

What About “All” in Romans 11:32?

“For God hath concluded them **all** in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon **all**.” (KJV)
“For God has made all people prisoners of disobedience, so that he might show mercy to them all. (GNT))

So, Romans 11:32 says that God has “**mercy on all**.”

But, does *all* mean “all” and is that really “all all means” in Romans 11:32?”
Does this Scripture say that God has mercy on Satan and his angels? In other words, we have to *limit* the meaning of “all” to human beings and exclude the devil and his demons.

What about human beings who have already died and are under punishment at this very moment? Does God have “mercy on all” human beings, including those currently under punishment? **Again, we have to limit the meaning of “all” even further to something like “all fallen human beings while they are alive.”**

Don’t make something so simple into a questionable “it depends on” answer. Always search for the truth in God’s Word.

I know this is elementary, but it is important that we understand the context of any Scripture. It means what it says, but we have to qualify our understanding to our God-given “spiritual insight” and “Holy Spirit unction.”

Uction definition: *The act of anointing as a rite of consecration or healing; Something used for anointing : ointment, unguent; Religious or spiritual fervor or the expression of such fervor.*

If our understanding of Scripture is “watered-down” or “off-base” with that which the Holy Spirit is prompting, we have to go with the Word over our thinking, our instincts, and even our theology. Remember, it is only when the Holy Spirit is added to the equation that we have truth and can know the truth.

How does clarification and interpretation of Scripture work in our lives? It is when we are totally controlled and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It is our spirit working parallel with (alongside) the Holy Spirit living within us.

Let me make this perfectly clear...I believe the Bible is infallible, the truth, and inspired by God. I am as conservative as any Bible student I know. I do know, however, that we must let the Holy Spirit interpret the Scripture for us. We must be obedient and use God’s insight in our life to seek the truth and be guided by the truth.

Home work: What do you think Paul meant when he said, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:”²⁷ For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.” Romans 11:26-27