SHORT STUDIES

"SAVIOR OF ALL PEOPLE": 1 TIM 4:10 IN CONTEXT

STEVEN M. BAUGH

The defenders of universal atonement regard 1 Tim 4:10 as a key proof text for their position. For instance, Millard Erickson writes:

> We find that some of the verses which teach a universal atonement simply cannot be ignored. Among the most impressive is 1 Timothy 4:10, which affirms that the living God "is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe." Apparently the Savior has done something for all persons, though it is less in degree than what he has done for those who believe.[1]

Erickson describes his position as "the most moderate form of Calvinism" (probably Amyraldianism), but Arminian theologians likewise utilize 1 Tim 4:10 to support their doctrine of a universal atonement.[2] There are various ways that we can exegete Paul's statement as relating to eternal salvation and still maintain that the atonement is confined particularly to God's elect. However, I will show that this passage does not, in fact, relate to the atonement directly, or even to eternal salvation, but to God's gracious benefactions to all of humanity, i.e., his common grace. This is not a new understanding of 1 Tim 4:10 among Calvinists, but I will try to advance the discussion through introduction, as background, of some epigraphical material from Ephesus that is not usually considered by the participants in the debate over the interpretation of this passage. I do not think that 1 Tim 4:10 is actually a problem text for Calvinists.

I. *Savior as One Who Saves Eternally*

Assuming that the word σωτήρ, "Savior," in 1 Tim 4:10 relates to eternal salvation, we could still raise some objections to the Arminian/Amyraldian interpretation. The most obvious objection is that, strictly speaking, the atonement is not mentioned by Paul in this verse or its context. One must

---

[1] Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985) 2. 834.
[2] E.g., three writers in a recent collection defending Arminianism cite 1 Tim 4:10 in support of unlimited atonement. See Clark Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God, The Will of Man* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989) 38, 57, 75 and passim.

make several theological connections to move from God being a Savior to Christ providing an atonement for all people. I do not wish to pursue this line of argument, but I simply point out that the connection between God being a Savior and Christ's universal atonement is not as direct as proponents of universal atonement, such as Erickson, often assume.

Even if we were to take "Savior" in 1 Tim 4:10 in the sense of "one who saves eternally," we might further object to a universal understanding of the passage because of the phrase "especially of believers." What does it mean that God is "one who saves eternally" all people, i.e., both believers who will enjoy eternal life and nonbelievers who will suffer eternal damnation, but he especially is "one who saves believers eternally"?

Erickson, in the passage quoted above, says, "Apparently the Savior has done something for all persons, though it is less in degree than what he has done for those who believe." The problem with this statement is that eternal salvation is not an action performed in degrees. It is an absolute. Either God saves someone or he does not.[3]

Let us introduce a human analogy here. The Arminian position teaches that Christ's atonement was made for all of mankind, but only those who exercise their free volition to receive it are actually forgiven and saved. This is like a lifeguard who throws life rings to two drowning men. One man takes the life ring and is saved, the other refuses the life ring and drowns. In what sense is the lifeguard the savior of *both* men, but especially of the one who lived? How is the lifeguard the "savior" of the drowned man?

The notion of a potential, universal atonement is introduced by the Arminian theologian at this point. God is (potentially) Savior of all people, because Christ's atonement was accomplished for the sake of all individuals. But the notion of a potential application of the atonement is at the very least not clearly implicit in the passage as it stands.

One could further argue the Arminian case that "Savior" is a title of God here and is therefore true regardless of the people who reject his salvation. The lifeguard is still called "lifeguard" if someone drowns in his pool. But this argument fails to note that the noun σωτήρ is anarthrous in 1 Tim 4:10, implying that this is not a title of God, but a description of his actions. He is "a Savior" of all people, because he acts as a Savior toward all.[4]

---

[3] Of course, nonevangelicals who hold to various forms of universalism do not struggle with this tension. For instance, Leonard Goppelt, commenting on Mark 14:24, Matt 26:28, and 1 Tim 2:6, says without qualification, 'Jesus stirbt wie der Gottesknecht stellvertretend zur Suhne fur die ganze Menschheit.... die Menschheit wird in ein neues Verhaltnis zu Gott gestellt" (*Theologie des Neuen Testaments* [Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976] 1. 243-44; *Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981] 1. 195-96). Cf. N. T. Wright, "Towards a Biblical View of Universalism," *Themelios* 4 (1979) 54-58.

[4] Compare, for example, the use of ὁ σωτήρ as a title in John 4:42; 1 Tim 2:3; 2 Tim 1:10; and 2 Pet 3:2 with anarthrous σωτήρ in Acts 5:31; 1 Tim 1:1; 1 John 4:14; etc. On this significance for some anarthrous nouns, see BDF §252; C. F D. Motile, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960) 114.

Furthermore, the qualification, "especially believers," implies a difference in God's action.

A Calvinist might take another tack in countering the Arminian interpretation of "Savior of all people." The adjective "all" here could be used with its common meaning, "a totality of kinds or sorts—every kind of, all sorts of"[5] or "a variety of" as is the clear meaning in 1 Tim 6:10—"all kinds of evil"—adopted by most translations.[6] This does not solve the problem, though, because we still must ask whether the "all kinds of people" to whom God is Savior are the elect or not. The answer is apparently not, since Paul refers to them as a different group than the believers for whom God is "especially" their Savior.

There is a way of preserving the meaning of "Savior" as "one who saves eternally" within the rubric of either Calvinism or Arminianism—since it is actually defended as the correct meaning of this verse in a recent defense of Arminianism by I. Howard .Marshall.[7] He accepts T C. Skeat's proposal that the Greek word μάλιστα does not mean "especially" here, but "namely." Skeat writes: "On my hypothesis this should be rendered 'God, who gives salvation to all men—that is to say, to all who believe in Him'. This in fact gives better sense, since although God is the potential Saviour of all, He can only be the Saviour of those who accept him."[8] Skeat attempts to verify the viability of this meaning for μάλιστα with examples from the NT and from papyrus sources. In the Calvinist framework, we could combine Skeat's suggestion with earlier points already mentioned to paraphrase Paul's statement in this way: "We have put our hope in a living God, who gives (eternal) salvation to all sorts of peoples (Jews, Greeks, Barbarians, Scythians, etc.)—i.e., believers from among these various groups."[9] But I think another interpretation fits the historical and linguistic context better.

II. *Savior as Benefactor or Patron*

1 Tim 4:10 does not relate directly to the issue of the extent of the atonement, nor even to God's eternal salvation, but rather to God's care for all of humanity during our time upon earth. This is called God's common grace among Reformed theologians. Other Scriptures clearly show that

---

[5] J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988) 589, sec. 58.28.

[6] Cf. Matt 4:23 and 1 Cor 6:18. See the discussion of 1 Tim 2:1-7 in the appendix below.

[7] I. H. Marshall, "Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles," in Pinnock, *The Grace of God*, 55.

[8] T. C. Skeat, " `Especially the Parchments': A Note on 2 Timothy 4:13," JTS 30 (1979) 174-75.

[9] We might still be uncomfortable with this understanding of μάλιστα, since Paul could have communicated the idea of equivalence much more clearly by putting "believers" in apposition to "all men," or by saying "that is" (τοῦτ᾽ ἔστιν, as in Rom 7:18).

God "sends his rain upon the just and the unjust" (Matt 5:45; cf. Acts 14:16-.17; Ps 145:9; et al.), and he is beneficent even to "vessels of wrath" (Rom 9:22).[10]

Other Reformed theologians have agreed with this interpretation of the Timothy passage. For example, Calvin interprets the teaching here as relating to the "commodities in this world," the "protection," and the care during afflictions which God provides especially to believers.[11] Along the same lines, Francis Turrettin renders σωτήρ as "Preserver."[12] More recently, Louis Berkhof thinks that the passage is so obviously speaking about common grace, that he merely cites it with other texts as support of the doctrine.[13] And R. B. Kuiper discusses 1 Tim 4:10 first as evidence of "Scriptural Universalism" in the context of common grace in his book defending limited atonement.[14]

That the Greek word σωτήρ had as its most common, extra-biblical meaning, "a generous benefactor, often a deliverer during an emergency," is amply documented in reference works and elsewhere.[15] There simply cannot be any doubt that this was the usual meaning of this word outside of the NT from the hundreds of times that it is used of kings, emperors, governors, and local patrons as either a title granted by vote of a community or as a personal epithet given to one individual from another. As such, it occurs alongside other titles suggesting benefaction, patronage, or protection: εὐεργέτης, "benefactor"; κτίστης, "creator"; κηδεμών, "protector."[16]

---

[10] For a convenient summary of Reformed thinking on common grace, see John Murray, "Common Grace," in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (4 vols.; Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1977) 2.93-119; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941) 432-46.

[11] J Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistles to Timothy & Titus* (London: 1579; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983) 398-99.

[12] Francis Turrettin, *Turrettin on the Atonement of Christ* (Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1859; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978) 130: "the word which is in that passage translated Saviour, in its most extensive sense denotes Preserver; and when it is said that he is the Saviour of men, the meaning is that he is the preserver of all men, that he upholds or preserves them in their present life."

[13] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 443-44.

[14] R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 81.

[15] LSJ; BAGD; MM; *TDNT* 7. 1003-21; A. D. Nock, "*Soter* and *Euergetes*," in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972) 2.720-35; and F W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982) 324-25. Foerster gives an interesting interpretation of 1 Tim 4:10 in the *TDNT* article: "God being the Benefactor and Preserver of all men in this life and of believers in the life to come" (7.1017). For most of the epigraphical records from Ephesus, see *Die Inschrzften von Ephesos* (ed. H. Wankel et al.; 8 vols.; Bonn: Rudolf Habelt, 1979-84), abbreviated in this paper as IEph.

[15] See, for instance, Nock's essay, "*Soter* and *Euergetes*." Note the passage from Cicero quoted by Nock (p. 723) where Cicero interprets σωτήρ as a title one degree above *patronus*.

In Paul's day, σωτήρ was a common title or description of men, emperors, and deities.[17]

That this is a possible meaning for σωτήρ or even its most common meaning, however, does not prove that it was the intended meaning in 1 Tim 4:10. It is often argued that the context warrants taking the word with reference to deliverance through bestowal of eternal life.[18] But the historical context may well indicate otherwise.

Accepting the traditional date and authorship of 1 Timothy,[19] we see Paul writing to Timothy who was laboring at Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3). The surviving Greek inscriptions from that city display the use of σωτήρ as a title or description of gods,[20] emperors,[21] provincial proconsuls,[22] and local patrons.[23]

[17] This meaning for σωτήρ yields an interesting interpretation of Phil 3:20: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we are also expecting our patron [σωτήρ], the Lord Jesus Christ." By combining the word σωτήρ —so often a title of the emperors—with "citizenship," Paul is showing that the true emperor/patron is Jesus Christ. Recall that when Paul was writing, only the Roman emperor could grant Roman citizenship as an act of patronage. This gave the emperor added political power, since the newly created citizens were thus bound by personal loyalty (*pietas*) to their patron as his clients; cf. A. N. Sherwin White, *Roman Citizenship* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1973). I owe this observation on Phil 3:20 to R. B. Strimple, whose advice during the writing of this paper is much appreciated; cf. R. P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians* (Tyndale NT Comm.; London: Inter-Varsity, 1959) 161-68.
[18] E.g., I. H. Marshall, "Universal Grace," 55. Cf. Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann (*The Pastoral Epistles* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972] 69; 100-103) who interpret σωτήρ in the Pastorals—including 1 Tim 4:10—in the sense of the mystery religions. " 'Savior' designates not only 'saving' deities in, general, like Asclepius and the Dioscuri, but in the mystery religions it designates the god who gives new life to the mystic by effecting his rebirth" (p. 101). The superficial similarities between the various mysteries and Christianity do not convince me that this is the meaning of "Savior" in the Pastorals, especially since the universality of the "all people" in 1 Tim 4:10 is antithetical to the exclusivity of the mystic groups. It is noteworthy that the two pleas for "salvation" in the pagan inscriptions from Ephesus are directed to the "nonmystery" deities, Artemis and Hestia, whose "mysteries and sacrifices" were public rites (IEph. 3059; possibly 26 and 702; for similar public "mysteries," see IEph. 1060, 1069, 1077, and 1597). For example, "To Hestia of the (City) Council and to Artemis Ephesia, save Plutarchus the Prytanis and Gymnasiarch and his children..." (IEph. 1069); "To Artemis, save Asiaticus" (IEph. 1204; this is a common name for slaves). The literature on this subject can be found in Richard Oster, *A Bibliography of Ancient Ephesus* (ATLA Bibliography Series 19; Metuchen, NJ, and London: Scarecrow, 1987).
[19] Cf. the computer analysis of Anthony Kenny, *A Stylometric Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986) chap. 14, esp. pp. 98-100; and Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1979) 584-622.
[20] IEph. 1265 refers to Artemis Soteira; IEph. 1243 mentions Zeus Soter.
[21] IEph. 274, 1501, 3271, 3410 (Hadrian); IEph. 1504 (Antoninus Pius).
[22] IEph. 3435 (Sextus Appuleius, proconsul in 23/22 ac; from Metropolis, a village near Ephesus); IEph. 713 (Q; Roscius Falco, proconsul in An 123/24); IEph. 3029 (M. Nonius Macrinus, proconsul in An 170/71); IEph. 1312 (Aelius Claudius Dulcritius, proconsul in AD 340/44).
[23] IEph. 1837 (Valerius Achilleus). The fragmentary IEph. 800 possibly honors the local patron of the guild of Italian (?) merchants as "their own sa(vior and benefac)tor."

Rarely in the Ephesian inscriptions is the term σωτήρ tied in to a specific action by the person honored. One example is IEph. 274 (A.D. 129) where the Emperor Hadrian was named as the "founder and savior" of Ephesus because, among other things, he had allowed the city to import grain from Egypt during a food shortage (usually Egyptian grain could only go to Italy and a few other places allowed by the emperor). Normally, the title σωτήρ designates the honoree as one who provides general protection, beneficence, or patronage and therefore is the functional equivalent of "patron" or "benefactor." In four instances, the word σωτήρ is coupled with εὐερ-γέτης, "benefactor," as a virtual synonym (IEph. 713, 800, 1312, 1501).

Hence Paul—who lived in Ephesus for a fair amount of time (Acts 19:10)—was aware of this meaning for σωτήρ upon the statues and build-ing inscriptions that Timothy would read every day at Ephesus.[24] But we still have only shown that it was possible for Paul to have meant σωτήρ as "protector," "benefactor," or "patron," not that he probably did. The fol-lowing inscription from Ephesus will help show that it was his meaning. It has been cited and referred to by others interested in this passage,[25] but never in the detail it deserves, so we will study it more closely.

αἱ πόλεις αἱ ἐν τῆι Ἀσίαι καὶ οἱ [δῆμοι]
καὶ τὰ ἔθνη Γάον Ἰούλιον Γαΐο[υ υἱ-]
ὸν Καίσαρα, τὸν ἀρχιερέα καὶ αὐτο-
κράτορα καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ὕπα-
τον, τὸν ἀπὸ Ἄρεως καὶ Ἀφροδε[ί-]
της θεὸν ἐπιφανῆ καὶ κοινὸν τοῦ
ἀνθρωπίνου βίου σωτῆρα

The cities of Asia, along with the [citizen-bodies] and the nations, (honor) C. Julius C. f. Caesar, the high priest, imperator, and twice consul, the manifest god (sprung) from Ares and Aphrodite, and universal savior of human life.[26]

This inscription is probably from a statue base set up by resolution in honor of Julius Caesar in 48 BC. He was the "universal savior of human life," because he had prevented monies deposited in the temple treasury of Artemis from being confiscated by Q. Caecilius Scipio during the Roman civil war.[27] Such a drain upon the local economy could have been ruinous,

---

[24] The meaning of "one who provides protection or benefactions" was such a common meaning for σωτήρ that it persisted as a description or title for humans well into the Christian period at a time when we would expect it to be reserved for the Lord (e.g., IEph. 11312); cf. Nock, "*Soter* and *Euergetes*," 734: "Soter was, therefore, still unexceptional and still neutral in sense and capable of being used without any suggestion of other-worldly blessings."
[25] E.g., MM; R. P. Martin refers to it in reference to Phil 3:20 (*Philippians*, 162).
[26] The English translation is the author's; the Greek text is from Wankel, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, 2.49, #251. The reference to Ares and Aphrodite (Mars and Venus) is to the mytho-logical origins of the Julii from a union of these deities (through Aeneas).
[27] Caesar, B.C. 3. 33, 105.

since not only individuals but also cities had used the Artemisium as their central bank.[28] Caesar had, in this way, rescued all of humanity (i.e., the province) from disastrous economic circumstances; hence he was their savior.

The reference to Caesar as a god is important to note. The deification of Roman rulers has been fully documented and discussed. For example, Lily Ross Taylor says:

When Roman power extended to the East, divine honors for the ruler had become a fundamental characteristic of the rule that prevailed in Greek lands. Divinity established the binding authority of the king's command and as such was more a matter of practical politics than of religion. Hence it was readily offered by Greek peoples to the representatives of Roman power.[29]

The divine characteristic of other emperors who are also designated as σωτῆρες can be illustrated by other inscriptions that refer to Hadrian as "the Olympian Zeus, savior, and creator" (IEph. 3271 and 3410).

We cannot state with certainty that the honorary statue to Caesar was standing when Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus, but it is quite possible. The statue base was reused for an aqueduct in Byzantine times, and the statue may have been standing until then. In any case, this inscription serves as a prime example of the sort of notion that Paul was alluding to in his statement of 1 Tim 4:10, not only in his reference to God as the Savior of all people, but also in his mention of God as a living God.

Imagine Timothy reading inscriptions like that honoring Caesar. The Greeks called upon the dead emperors as their gods and saviors, i.e., those who protect and care for people under their patronage during their earthly lives. But Paul says, we have placed our hope in a God who is alive, not a dead emperor. The phrase "living God" is not that common in Paul's writings (only in Rom 9:29; 2 Cor 3:3; 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 3:15; 4:10). And when he does employ it—as in 1 Thess 1:9—it is to contrast the living God with idols.

Paul's use of "living God" conforms to OT usage, where the contrast is sometimes with pagan adherents (e.g., 1 Sam 17:26, 36; Isa 37:4, 17). In Dan 6:25-27 there is a remarkably similar teaching to 1 Tim 4:10. Darius declares "to all the peoples" that Daniel's God is a "living God" who "delivers and rescues and performs signs and wonders in heaven and on earth," and furthermore he has especially rescued Daniel from the hand of the lions.

---

[28] "You are aware of course that the Ephesians have large amounts of money among them deposited in the temple of Artemis, some belonging to private persons, not to Ephesians only but to foreigners and men from everywhere, some belonging also to citizen bodies and kings" (Dio, Or. 31. 54f .); Aristides calls the Artemisium "the common treasury of Asia"(Or. 23.24).
[29] L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown, CT: American Philological Association, 1931; repr. Scholars Press, n.d.) 35. See more recently, S. R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) for a challenge to Taylor's view that deification was primarily an exercise in power politics rather than a religious expression of veneration.

My interpretation of 1 Tim 4:10 fits the semantic use of σωτήρ and is supported by its historical circumstances. Furthermore, it fits the flow of thought that the apostle is developing in the passage equally well. In 4:6-8, Paul had alluded directly to Timothy's historical circumstances when confronted with the keen interest in bodily exercise shown by the Ephesians, indeed, by all Greeks.[30] He points out the small return that an investment in bodily exercise yields in relation to the great profit godliness brings, "not only in the present life, but also in the life to come" (v. 8).

Hence, Paul shows in v. 10 that God is the provider of earthly beneficence, even for people absorbed by physical discipline which relates to "the present life" (v. 8). But God is especially beneficent to those who train themselves in godliness, because he not only cares for the earthly needs of believers, but also for their needs in "the life to come."

Taken in this light, 1 Tim 4:10 is revealed to be a polemical aside aimed at the false veneration of men who were no longer living, yet who were publicly honored as gods and saviors upon the Ephesian inscriptions.[31] As such, the phrase, "Savior of all people, especially of believers," should not be interpreted as teaching a universal atonement. It is an assertion of the deity of the true and living God in the face of pagan notions of deity; and it asserts that the saviors looked to by the peoples with whom Paul and Timothy associated daily could not be compared with the true Benefactor of all people, the Living God, whose common grace embraces the whole world.

Appendix on 1 Tim 2:1-7

The interpretation of 1 Tim 4:10 offered above should not be taken to imply that σωτήρ has this same meaning throughout the Pastorals (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 2 Tim 1:10; Titus 1:3-4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6) or elsewhere in the NT The various contexts must be examined to determine which possible meaning of an individual word or phrase is intended by the author.[32] Here, a brief explanation of 1 Tim 2:1-7 will serve as an example.

Paul begins the passage with an exhortation to pray on behalf of all peoples, and especially for rulers, in order that Christians might conduct their lives and worship without hindrance. Then he continues by saying that, "This is good and pleasing in the sight of our Savior God" (v. 3). The

---

[30] "The gymnasia, as is well known to all students of the Greek world, had been the foundation and support of Greek life and mentality in all Greek cities since very ancient times. They were carried to the East with emigrant Greeks and became as fundamental an institution where these settled as they had been in the mother country" (Mikhail Rostovtzeff, *Social & Economic History of the Hellenistic World* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1941] 2. 1058).

[31] Cf. C. Spicq (*Les epitres pastorales* [Paris: Lecofre, 1969]) for a similar interpretation of 1 Tim 2:6 and Mark 14:24 as a polemic "contre les souverains, sauveurs de tous les hommes, bienfaiteurs de l'oikoumene" (1. 368); also 1. 510.

[32] This basic procedure is fundamental to lexical analysis; cf. Moises Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) esp. chap. 6.

next verse clarifies that the salvation implied by God's title is eternal re-
demption: "Who desires that all sorts of peoples be saved and enter into the
knowledge of the truth."

That eternal salvation is in view in 1 Tim 2:4 is beyond question, because
the synonymous phrase, "to enter into the knowledge of the truth," else-
where follows upon God's gift of repentance (2 Tim 2:25), is not accessible
through false Christian learning (2 Tim 3:7), and is parallel with "the faith
of those whom God chooses" (Titus 1:1).

The question in this passage then, is not the nature of the salvation—it
is eternal redemption, not the earthly benefactions referred to in 1 Tim
4:10—but who are the recipients of this salvation. My translation above of
$\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ $\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\text{ους}$ in v. 4 as "all sorts of peoples"[33] is the sense here for
three reasons.[34]

First, Paul undergirds his assertion of God's desire for salvation for all by
pointing to the fact that there is one God and one mediator (v. 5; introduced
by $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$). Paul is proving by this profession—echoing Deut 6:4—that God's
salvation, which previously had been "of the Jews" (John 4:22), has now
reached out to Gentiles, i.e., "all kinds of peoples." This is the same line
of argument he uses in Rom 3:29-30.

Second, the phrase $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\text{οῖς}$ $\grave{\iota}\delta\acute{\iota}\text{οις}$, "in his own time," in v. 6 emphasizes
the eschatological character of Christ's redemption as a "testimony" that
God's saving activity has reached beyond the Jews to all the people groups
of the earth—not necessarily to every individual. See the similar eschato-
logical references to $\kappa\alpha\iota\rho\text{οῖς}$ $\grave{\iota}\delta\acute{\iota}\text{οις}$ in 1 Tim 6:15 and Titus 1:1-3. Then
read in Titus 2:11-14 how God's grace has appeared $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota\nu$ $\dot{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\text{οις}$,
"to all peoples"—obviously not to every individual—and especially how
Christ's sacrifice is limited to "us" (v. 14).

Finally, in Titus 1:1-3 again, Paul explains that his own apostolic com-
mission to the Gentiles is the confirmation of God's eschatological purpose

---

[33] Augustine, in his gloss on this text says, "omnes praedestinati, quia omne genus hominum
in eis est" (cited by C. Spicq, *Les epitres pastorales* 1.364-65). I. H. Marshall, defending uni-
versal atonement, insists that the rendering "all kinds of people" does not take $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$, here
and in v. 6 "literally" ("Universal Grace," 53). He suggests that "an unprejudiced exegesis
would take these texts at their face value" leading to his interpretation (p. 52). Not only does
he beg the question, but he is misrepresenting the nature of the meanings for this Greek
adjective. "All without exception" (p. 63) as the significance of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ is not the "literal" or
the "face value" meaning, in the same way that "all kinds of" is not its symbolic meaning.
Both are legitimate senses of the Greek word determined by their contexts. See my remark on
1 Tim 6:10 above and nn. 5-6.
[34] Other scholars, analyzing the parallel between 1 Tim 2:6 and Mark 10:45, believe that
advtc; is the equivalent of $\pi\text{ολλοί}$, "many." Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*
(New York: Scribner, 1971) 293-94. Cf. Eduard Lohse (*Grundriss der neutestamentlichen
Theologie* [Stuttgart, Berlin, Koln and Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1974]) who says, "Der Ton dieser
bekenntnisartigen Formulierung [1 Tim 2:6] liegt bei der Aussage von der universalen Gultigkeit
des Todes Christi. Fur alle Menschen die ausnahmslos nicht imstande waren, selbst die
Freiheit zu gewinnen, gab Christus das Losegeld, urn sie frei zu machen" (p. 54), even though
he sees the same parallel as Jeremias.

to include Gentiles in salvation through Christ. This alone explains Paul's vehemence in defending his apostolic commission to his friend Timothy in 1 Tim 2:7: "I am telling the truth, I am not lying!" Paul's own apostolic appointment is proof of God's desire to save all sorts of peoples (not just the Jews). Why else would Paul feel constrained to affirm so vigorously the truth of his appointment? Certainly he does not need to convince his companion Timothy that he is not a liar![35]

These contextual factors show that God's action as Savior in 1 Tim 2:1-7 is to be taken in a different sense than in 1 Tim 4:10.[36] It is not unusual for Paul to employ different meanings for a word in his epistles, as anyone who has wrestled with the meaning of νόμος in Romans can attest.

Westminster Theological Seminary in California
1725 Bear Valley Parkway
Escondido, California 92027

[35] For other aspects of the eschatological character of Paul's apostleship, see Peter R. Jones, "1 Corinthians 15:8: Paul the Last Apostle," *TynBul* 36 (1985) 3-34; id. "The Apostle Paul: Second Moses to the New Covenant Community," in *God's Inerrant Word* (ed. J. W. Montgomery; Minneapolis: Bethany, 1974) 219-41.

[36] Some people give the ago) word group one, homogenous meaning (e.g., Marshall, "Universal Grace," 55). But semantic variation within word groups and for individual words is common. For example, in a second century A.D. papyrus letter, a Roman navy recruit wrote to his father that the god Serapis "saved" him (ἔσωσε) from unspecified dangers at sea. A few sentences later, he inquired into his father's "welfare" (σωτηρία)—not his "salvation"! (Select Papyri I [LCL], #112.)