

Restoration of "All" Things

by Gerry Beauchemin and N.T. Translator, Jonathan Mitchell

Jonathan Mitchell authors the "Jonathan Mitchell New Testament" and a number of New Testament Commentaries.

The purpose of this short presentation is to explain the meaning of "all things" in Acts 3:21 and elsewhere. It is based on our email correspondence in October, 2015.

Key Text:

"Heaven must receive [Christ] until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (Ac. 3:21)."

Simple Summary:

"The word "things" in this passage is not needed. It is up to the translator's discretion and reading of the context. The CLT reads, "restoration of all." The *pas* form is *pantōn*, which can be rendered "all things," "all people" or "all humans." "All things," of course, includes all humanity.

More Details:

The belief in infinite judgment compels its adherents to deny that "things" in this passage refers to persons. This is totally unjustified. The word "things" is *pas* (Strong's #3956). The KJV translates *pas* in numerous ways:

"all" — 748 times (x), "all things" — 170 x, "every" — 117 x, "all men" — 41 x, "whosoever" — 31 x, "everyone" — 28 x, "whole" — 12 x, "all manner of" — 11 x, "every man" — 11 x, "every thing" — 7 x, "any" — 7 x, "whatsoever" — 6 x [5]

The Concordant Literal reads, "restoration of all which God..."

The word "things" does not need to be added; that is up to the translator's discretion and reading of the context. The form of the word *pas* which we find in Ac. 3:21 is *pantōn*, an adjective, used as a pronoun, that is plural and that is either neuter, or masculine – depending upon the context. In this verse it can be rendered either way: if read as a neuter, it would be translated, "all things;" if read as a masculine, it would be rendered, "all people," or, "all humans." Of course, "all things" is more inclusive than "all people," so the reader can ponder where Peter was speaking of just all people being restored, or whether he had in view "all that exists," which would of course include all humanity, as well

The safest method to determine the meaning of a word or phrase is to compare Scripture with Scripture.

"Let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours (1Co. 3:20-22)."

Are Paul and Apollos "things"?

"All," here, is *panta* – either a masculine singular ("all humanity"), or a neuter plural ("all things"), or, to cover all categories in the verse, it can be rendered, "all," which includes people, modes of existence, circumstances, or events.

"He has put all things under His feet. However, when He says 'all things are put under Him,' it is

evident He who put all things under Him is excepted (1Co. 15:27)."

It would be pointless for Scripture to clarify God is exempted from the all "things" if He were not implied by it in the first place. The Greek form of "all" in both places is *panta*: all humanity, or, all things.

"...to reconcile all things to Himself...made peace through the blood.... And you...He has reconciled (Col. 1:19-21)."

"And you," shows that "things" includes "people."

"Now we do not yet see all things put under Him. 'But' we see Jesus... (He. 2:8-9)."

Is Jesus a thing? It is interesting that in the last clause of vs. 9 we find "every man," in the KJV. The Greek there is *pantos*, which of itself is either masculine or neuter, but the context of the verse demanded a masculine reading.

"When all things are made subject to Him...that God may be all in all (1Co. 15:28)."

Is God interested in being all in things?

Since "things," in these passages, clearly refers to persons, on what possible grounds can we exclude people from Acts 3:21? Especially since this is the most climatic event in human history! Of this all God's holy prophets spoke from the very beginning! To think such a glorious prophetic fulfillment could exclude the very part of creation created in the likeness of God Himself, and for which Christ died, is preposterous and inconceivable. A time or "times" will come when all people will be restored to God. Acts 3:21 is not an isolated text.

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. (2Co. 5:19)."

The word "world," *kosmos*, has in some translations been rendered, "the aggregate of mankind."

"...The fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ (Ep. 1:10)."

The word "all" in this verse has the definite article with the adjective: the all. In Greek, this refers to "the whole of created existence; the entire creation (which includes humanity)." This literally signifies "all that exists."

"He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (Ph. 3:21)."

Nothing exists which He is not able "to subdue."

"It pleased the Father...to reconcile all things to Himself...through the blood... (Col. 1:19-21)."

Yes! All are reconciled through the blood. The restoration of all in the fullness of times is His promise! It is clear that "things" include people. However, if some think "all" here only means "some," we refer you to "Hope Beyond Hell" Appendix V, #4.