

5:13-14a

For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. Exactly how crazy does one get when they have a heart-throbbing desire to keep their daughter pure? (2 Corinthians 11:2) **14 For the love of Christ** The original allows for Paul's love for Christ or Christ's love for Him to be the motive here. In any case, it is the second motivation¹ found for Paul to carry on in his ministry—the ministry he was given in 3:7 and the ministry for which he will not quick; and the ministry that is that of “reconciliation.” **compels us,** Or, perhaps in view of 2:14, we are dealing with Christ pulling us along—as we are told that this could be a pushing or pulling—as context may dictate.² Of course, we see how his “craziness” was driven by **the Love of Christ**. You do some amazingly weird things when you love somebody.

5:14b-15a

because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, So, he says it a second time: This *hyper* carries the “on behalf of” idea. That is to say, if He did not die, we would have to die. He carried the death of those to whom the death actually belonged. **then all died** If you take this along with the entirety of verse 15, you see that **then all died** refers to a time when each and every person **died**.

So when did **all die**?³ We must have died when Jesus died. I see the epistles of Paul as a grand harmony much like the Gospels...only they are narrative and these are instruction. Just like the Gospels have similar messages and should only be consulted to give greater light to each other so these epistles quoted below help us pick the interpretation of what it means **then all died**. All died in Christ.

Romans 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Galatians 2:19 For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. 20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.

Colossians 3:3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

¹The “terror of the Lord” (2:11) being the first.

²David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 277.

³We have a choice, of course: 1. **All died** in the Garden of Eden. 2. **All died** when Christ died; 3. **All died** individually as they reached the age of accountability. Why do we pick a team? Verses like Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:19-20; Colossians 3:3.

If you think about it, this has an amazing rebuttal for those who limit the atonement of Christ to a few. You see, if He did not **die for all**, then **all** did not **die**.

One was in the place of all, therefore all must be looked upon as dead; one has made expiation, for the offence of all, therefore all are to be looked upon as having suffered punishment.⁴

5:15b-17

that those who live So, after saying that “all died”, we find that only a few live. Remember, the context is saying that all died at Calvary, but only some **live**.

should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. “What do you want from me?” I want evidence that you’ve been touched by saving grace. “Men must be brought into a state of grace, before we can expect from them the works of grace.”⁵

16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, The tragedy is that with all this talk about an entire world being “dead” (5:14), and an entire world being turned towards God (5:19), there is only a few, comparatively, that are in the “new creation” understanding. **he is a new creation;** Here then, is the fourth reference to the book of Genesis, and this should really seal it for those who have not bought the theme thus far.⁶

Why do we not think the way we used to think? More specifically, why do we not see things the way we used to see them? Because we are new creations. We have a new way of living (5:15b) that is driven—or at least should be—by the new way of thinking (5:16)—wrought by the new way of “being.” **old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.** So this **if anyone is in Christ** is the second way in which he finds a group within the “all who died.”⁷

Notice the connection between the status and the state of those who say they are newly created through faith in the Gospel. Paul, by God's help, is continually saying "if you are living...then stop living selfishly". See again that there is no preoccupation with the affairs of this life. Consider, as a matter of fact, his attitude in 2 Timothy 2:4.

Paul and Peter and James and John and Jude or even Jesus...were they pro-sex trafficking? of course not. Pro-slavery? No way. Pro-tax evasion? No. Pro-gay marriage? No. What you will see, though, is that instead of working through government or enlisting in the Roman army or starting revolutions or running from their world to the outerbanks of the empire to get away from the constraints...they are rather cleaning up the man in the church who won't teach the younger; the woman in the church who won't allow her husband to lead; the pastor who won't lead his people gently into their next phase; the child who doesn't see the hypocrisy of loving youth group but hating their home. I want a biblical perspective on how to proportionally handle how people conduct themselves as citizens of the kingdom of God more than how they endure, for a short season, citizenship of these godless United States.

5:18

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, This is that ministry that is better than the ministry of Moses as is glory is found in Christ's face (3:12-4:6); this ministry is better than the ministry of Moses as it is stipulated in hearts by the Spirit instead of on tables of stone to be carried externally (3:2-3). So, this Christ-centered, Holy-Spirit driven,

⁴ John Peter Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 2 Corinthians* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 96.

⁵ Richard Baxter and William Orme, *The Practical Works of the Rev. Richard Baxter*, vol. 14 (London: James Duncan, 1830), 121.

⁶ Counting 2 Corinthians 4:4, 4:6, 5:3.

⁷ Counting the reference to “they who live” (5:15).

God the Father-concocted ministry is for the entirety of turning the world toward Him...and it was done already (see next verse).

5:19-20

that is, that God was in Christ Here is the second reference to somebody being “in Christ.” Here it is the Father. Earlier, it was those who are a “new creation” (5:17) **reconciling the world to Himself**, Salvation is God’s idea. We’re not told the motive exactly, in this passage, and so we will not get caught up on the peripheral questions. **not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.** If this is not the prayer of Luke 23:34, what is? Now what if this verse means exactly what it says? **20 Now then, we Paul and his ambassadors are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf,** For the 2nd time, somebody is acting on somebody’s behalf: God in Christ, and now Christ in us. **be reconciled to God.** Notice how absent this is of human effort—to include the sinner’s prayer or any such mechanism. See, the believer and unbeliever alike are treated as the same in this passage: both were reconciled to God (verse 19) and yet are sought to be reconciled to God (verse 20). A second reference to reconciliation as it applies to the sinner who is saved.

5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, So, a second reference to Christ being a substitute. This time, instead of Jesus dying “on behalf of all,” He is now being “made sin on behalf of all.” We, then, were seen as objects of sin, and therefore objects of wrath. **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.** There is a second substitution. He became our sin and we, His righteousness. This seems rather extreme, doesn’t it? Is there any space for a person who thinks they are being victimized? Isn’t it true that this most extreme measure of sacrificing one’s son—making Him the object of your very thoughts of wrath—would far outweigh whatever we are seeing as wrath poured out towards us in this life?