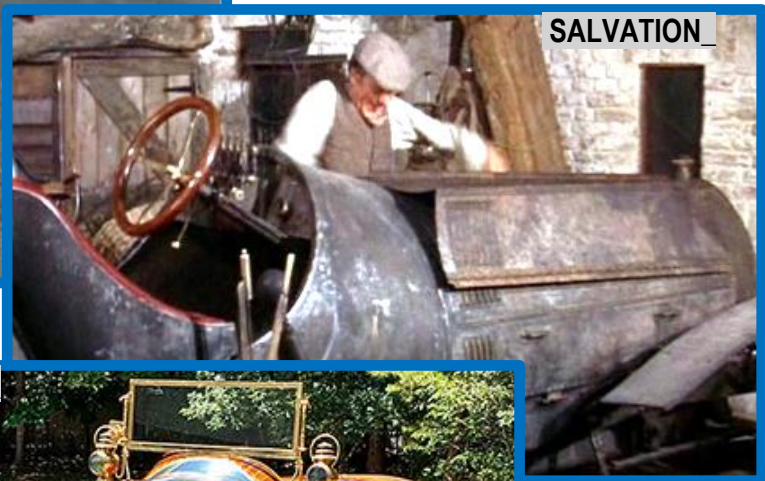


The Full Restoration of All Things by God, as Believed by Early Christians (before 500AD)



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edition of this booklet which includes corrections.



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About the front cover

When searching for a front cover for this booklet, I looked for images that reflected “restoration”. I came across houses, furniture, boats and airplanes. Then I saw old cars ... which got me thinking. The most dramatic restoration of a car that I could think of came out of the movie Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang.

So I grabbed an image of the beautiful, shiny car from the movie – a car that could also fly and float! I realized that this “restoration” was even greater than the car’s original condition as a race car. But then I realized that the car itself told a greater story than even the plot of the movie. It is the story of God’s redemption of the human race! The car was created as a fine race car (Creation), crashed and burned (The Fall of Humanity), was bought and hauled to a shop (Salvation), and then fashioned into something beyond its original condition (Restoration).

And this is the message and story of the early Christian writers who clearly and consistently communicated their conviction that the God of the universe, the God of love, mercy, and redemption would (and in fact must) eventually restore all things that he originally created, losing nothing as a result.

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Introduction

About five years ago, a good friend gave me a book to read called *Hell: Three Christian Views* by Steve Gregg. I tossed it aside, having a ton of other books to read and already knowing which view was the “correct view” as a result of my seminary training and forty years of self-study. But eventually I found time to take a look. When I did, I was rather surprised at what I found. The chapter on the “Eternal Punishment” (the view which I held) possessed nothing new and the chapter presenting “Annihilation” also was not new. But when I read the chapter on “Restoration”, I discovered a great deal of new information that I had not previously encountered. Not only was it new It was a “game changer” if it was true. But, of course, I knew it could not be true so I was not too worried.

This “new” information included the writings of the Early Christians – writings before about 500 AD, and before the gigantic influence of Augustine who wrote massively. I knew that these early Christians had lived, but I was always told (the few times they were even mentioned) that they were martyrs and had not really thought through their theology in the way later Christians (after 500 AD) have done. So I ignored them, like pretty much everyone else had done just as they had taught me to do.

But Gregg’s quotes from Early Christians kept rattling around in my head. I remember thinking, “If these guys really wrote these amazing things about how God would eventually fully restore all things, it would be absolutely revolutionary... and it would make God much greater, more powerful, more successful, loving, gracious, merciful and more infinite than I had ever imagined. But, of course, this could not be true ... I knew better.

So, I went back and re-read all of the Gregg quotes and pondered them. I assumed that Steve had quoted these early Christians out of context, misunderstood them, or had exaggerated them in some way. But Gregg’s book seemed to be a very good and fair presentation of the three main views of eternal destiny, so I began to think that perhaps there was something to it. As a result, I decided to look into it. I immediately ordered the thirty-nine volume set of the writings of Church Fathers in order to look up the quotes and read them for myself in their original full context. It turned out that Steve Gregg had presented these early Christians very fairly and accurately.

But how could this be? How could it be that massive amounts of early Christian writings (before 500 AD) predominately and clearly held the eventual restoration of all things by God? How could I, as one who had carefully read twelve different works on Systematic Theology over the past forty-years of my life, have missed such amazing things? Well, after thinking about this for a while, I realized that I had only believed what I had been told – over and over all my life -- at church, seminary, and even in my own study as I stayed within my own “camp”.

At this same point in time, I had another friend that was hammering me with “universalism”, “inclusion”, and “restoration”. He had a favorite new author named Baxter Kruger and was totally enamored with the pop Christian book called, *The Shack* (by Paul Young). “Poor guy”, I thought, “he needs to read just one of the twelve Systematic Theologies that I had read, so he could get straightened out”. I recommended the ones I felt were closest to his thinking like Lewis Sperry Chafer and Millard Erickson. Neither had any effect on him (though I doubt that he actually read them except to find places where he disagreed with them).

So I decided to give him Karl Barth to read. In fact, I bought him Barth’s fourteen-volume Church Dogmatics set to read. I knew Barth was Christ-centered and emphasized grace to the point that he out-did even Chafer on this subject! But I decided that I should read Barth myself, first, before I gave it to him. Boy, was that a mistake ... that is, if I did not want to change what I believed and have my eyes opened to a God who was far beyond what I had ever imagined in all areas of who God is! Barth had a huge impact on me, far beyond what I had expected. I read about one-fourth of the four-million words in his mammoth work, which took me all summer in 2013 reading about three to five hours per day. I could not put it down and I could not hardly believe what I was reading. Barth presented God as a being far beyond what I was ever taught or had imagined – except I remember as a small child thinking that it seemed like God would save everyone, if he was really God, and that I hoped my church (and therefore I) was wrong and all people would someday be saved. Thinking back, this was actually quite remarkable instinctive insight for a kid of just seven or eight that was raised in a typical evangelical church.

After going through Gregg’s book and looking up many quotes in the original writings of early church Christians, I somehow (and I really do not remember how) came across Ramelli. Dr Ramelli teaches at Catholic University, and is a first-rate scholar. Over my forty years of study, I have learned the very important difference between “pop Christian writers” and true scholars. They both have their place, but it is the scholar who does the hard and long work of research that provides what is

most useful in any serious study. Dr Ramelli spent fifteen years researching the Early Church writers and what they believed about restoration. They called this “apokatastasis”, which is a Greek word they got from Acts 3:21, and it means: “The restoration of all things”.

Her book is 900 pages, contains some 2000 footnotes, quotes 150 ancient writers and about 1200 modern authors. Needless to say ... she has “done her homework”. I cannot express my gratitude for the long, tedious and difficult work she has done. I know of no other book like it in quality and quantity on this important subject. I have gained a great deal of encouragement in my faith by reading so many wonderful quotes from these Early Christians who were so much closer in time, culture and language to Jesus and his Apostles than we will ever be! Because of this, I trust what they wrote (all of these amazing quotes) more than any other group of believers in the history of the church.

And so, this booklet is a collection of about 150 quotes from Dr. Ramelli’s book, from 17 (of about 60) early Christian writers that she quotes on the subject of eventual restoration by God of all things. And the quotes in this booklet are only a limited sampling of all the quotes she includes. But what is both important and striking about these quotes is that they are from the greatest and most highly respected writers and teachers in the church from this time period. All quotes are prior to 500 AD. Such early church giants as Clement of Alexandria and Origen (both founders of the great school of Alexandria) are included. Also included is Athanasius (the greatest voice at the Council of Nicaea), Eusebius (perhaps the early church’s best historian), along with Basil and both Gregorys (of Nyssa and of Nazianzus). Other church “greats” are included.

The purpose of this collection of quotes is not to prove that Restoration was the only view taught and held by early Christians, because there were some who held other views (namely, eternal punishment and annihilation). Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Augustine in his later life are the main proponents of these views. But such an impressive collection of quotes does demonstrate (as does Ramelli’s book in greater number) that the majority of early Christian teachers and writers clearly and consistently believed that God would eventually restore all things, and that any punishment by God in the age to come has a corrective purpose in line with God’s goal of restoration.

It is my sincere hope that you will discover this great truth about how passionately these early Christians believed in God’s goodness, His unrelenting love for all humanity, mercy, grace, and redemptive success. For me it drove my faith in God

through the roof, increased my love for all people, and changed my daily living into a hope that knows no limit or failure.

How to Read this Booklet

This booklet is simply a collection of quotes from the Early Christians. Each quote is taken directly from Ilaria Ramelli's book, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, (See a later section in this booklet titled "About Ilaria Ramelli" for more information about her book).

There are three parts in the layout of each quote: (1) a paraphrases of the quote, (2) the full quote itself, and (3) references for the quote. Here is an example from the quotes by Clement of Alexandria:

<i>Everything is ordered by the Lord of the universe for the purpose of universal salvation, leading everyone to something better.</i>	1. Paraphrase of Quote
everything, both in general and in the single cases, is ordered by the Lord of the universe for the purpose of <i>universal salvation</i> [...] God is good and from eternity and <i>eternally saves</i> through his Son [...] the task of <i>salvific justice</i> is to lead each being to what is better. (Strom. 7,2,12; see also 1,17,86,1-2)	2. Full Quote
Ramelli page 124	3. Reference

1. Paraphrase of Quote

Each full quote (from Dr. Ramelli's book) is introduced with a *paraphrase* of the full quote and summarizes it and makes it easier to understand. Translations of ancient writings are sometimes hard to understand, so the paraphrasing is an honest attempt to say what the ancient Christian Writer would say today in modern English to convey his/her thoughts. But paraphrasing is very subjective, and although I have tried to be as accurate and faithful to the original text as I can be, I am sure I have failed to some degree, nonetheless. I will let you be the judge.

2. Full Quote

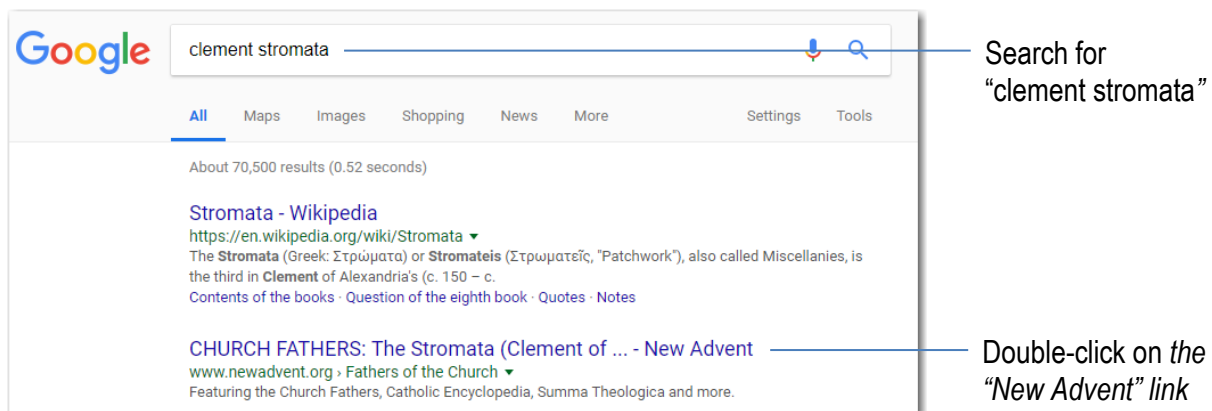
But more importantly, the full quote from Dr. Ramelli's book is provided. It is very important that you try to read the full quote and understand what it means, If you find my paraphrase to be unfair or misleading in any way, please feel free to replace it with one of your own, from your own thinking.

3. Reference

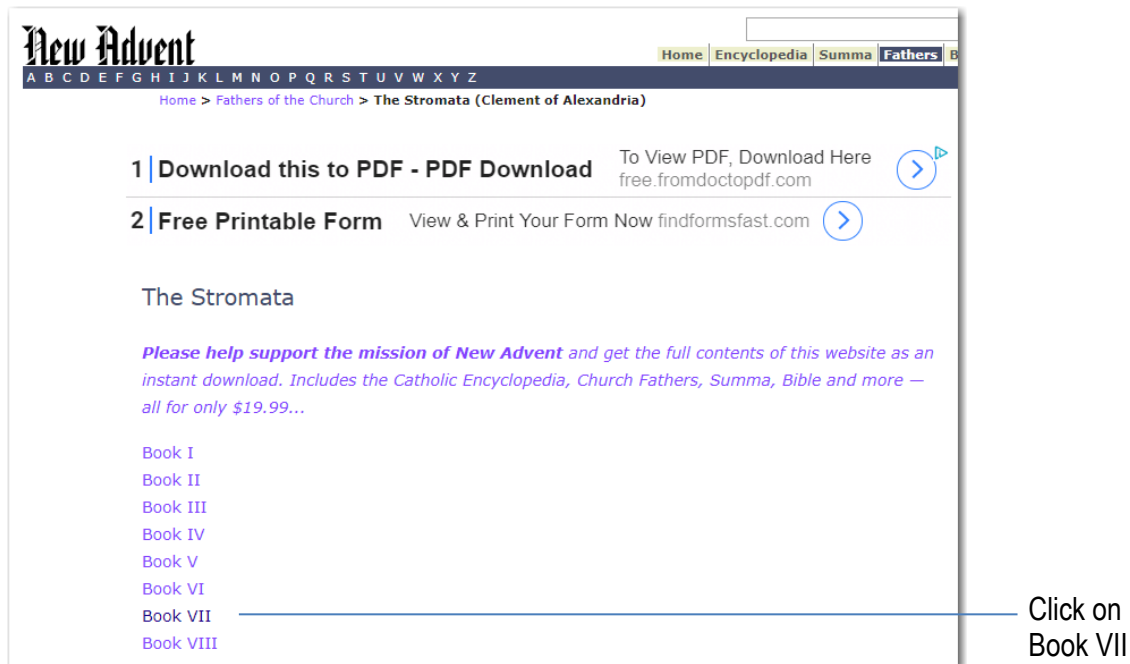
The reference is the page number in Dr. Ramelli's book where you can find a more complete explanation from her of the quote.

It is also very easy to look up and verify the existence and context of these quotes ... thanks to *Internet Search* capability. I have spent literally hundreds of hours, over the past five years, looking up and verifying quotes made by people in books I have read ... especially quotes of Early Christians.

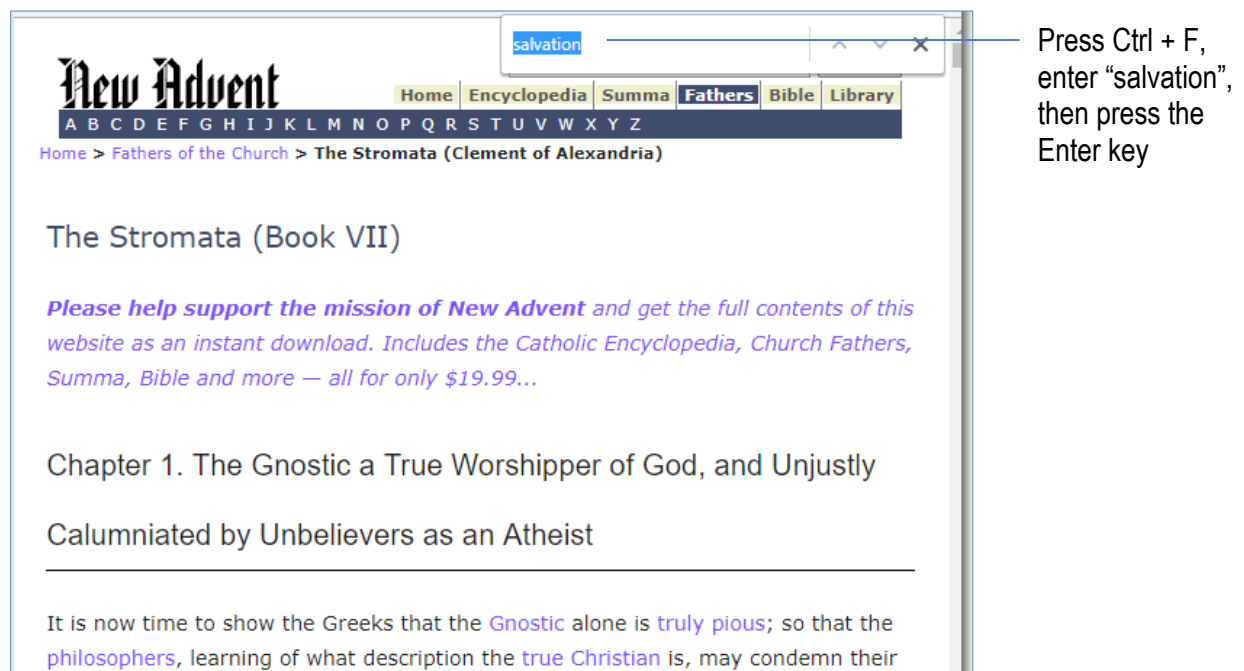
For example, in the sample quote shown above from Clement of Alexandria, the reference is to *Stromata*, section 7.2.12. (See the *Early Church Quotes* section below). If you search in Google for "Clement Stromata", you will get a list of possible Websites to examine. One option is to double-click on "New Advent" link:



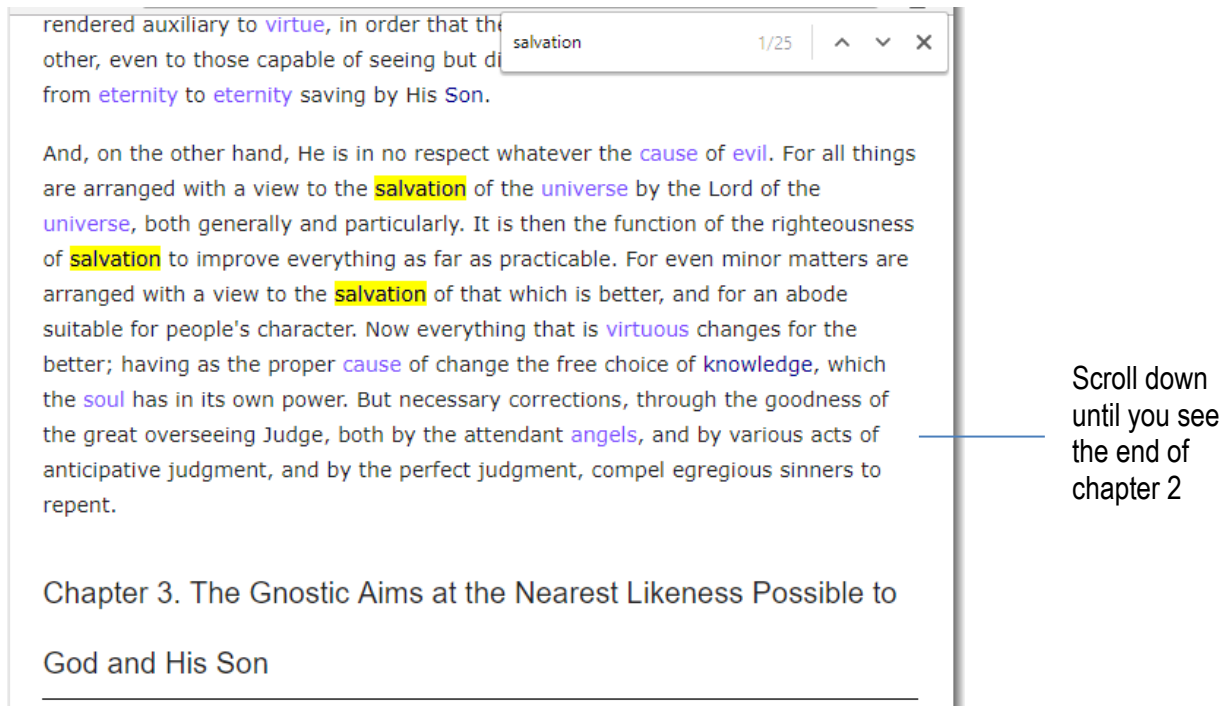
When the New Advent web page displays, click on “Book VII” (since you want to look at “section 7.2.12”, as shown in the reference):



When the text of Book VII is displayed, press “Ctrl” and the “F” keys together (on a Windows computer), to display a search box. Since the word “salvation” occurs in the original quote, enter “salvation” and press the “Enter” key:



When all occurrences of “salvation” are highlighted, scroll down until you get near the end of Chapter 2 (since the quote is in the latter part of chapter 2):



rendered auxiliary to virtue, in order that the other, even to those capable of seeing but di from eternity to eternity saving by His Son.

And, on the other hand, He is in no respect whatever the cause of evil. For all things are arranged with a view to the salvation of the universe by the Lord of the universe, both generally and particularly. It is then the function of the righteousness of salvation to improve everything as far as practicable. For even minor matters are arranged with a view to the salvation of that which is better, and for an abode suitable for people's character. Now everything that is virtuous changes for the better; having as the proper cause of change the free choice of knowledge, which the soul has in its own power. But necessary corrections, through the goodness of the great overseeing Judge, both by the attendant angels, and by various acts of anticipative judgment, and by the perfect judgment, compel egregious sinners to repent.

Chapter 3. The Gnostic Aims at the Nearest Likeness Possible to God and His Son

Scroll down until you see the end of chapter 2

Notice that, although worded differently (probably due to a different translation of the original text than was used by Dr. Ramelli in her research), the full original context of the quote can be verified. Here is the direct comparison:

Result of Google search:

And, on the other hand, He is in no respect whatever the cause of evil. For all things are arranged with a view to the salvation of the universe by the Lord of the universe, both generally and particularly. It is then the function of the righteousness of salvation to improve everything as far as practicable. For even minor matters are arranged with a view to the salvation of that which is better, and for an abode suitable for people's character. Now everything that is virtuous changes for the better; having as the proper cause of change the free choice of knowledge, which the soul has in its own power. But necessary corrections, through the goodness of

Dr. Ramelli's quote:

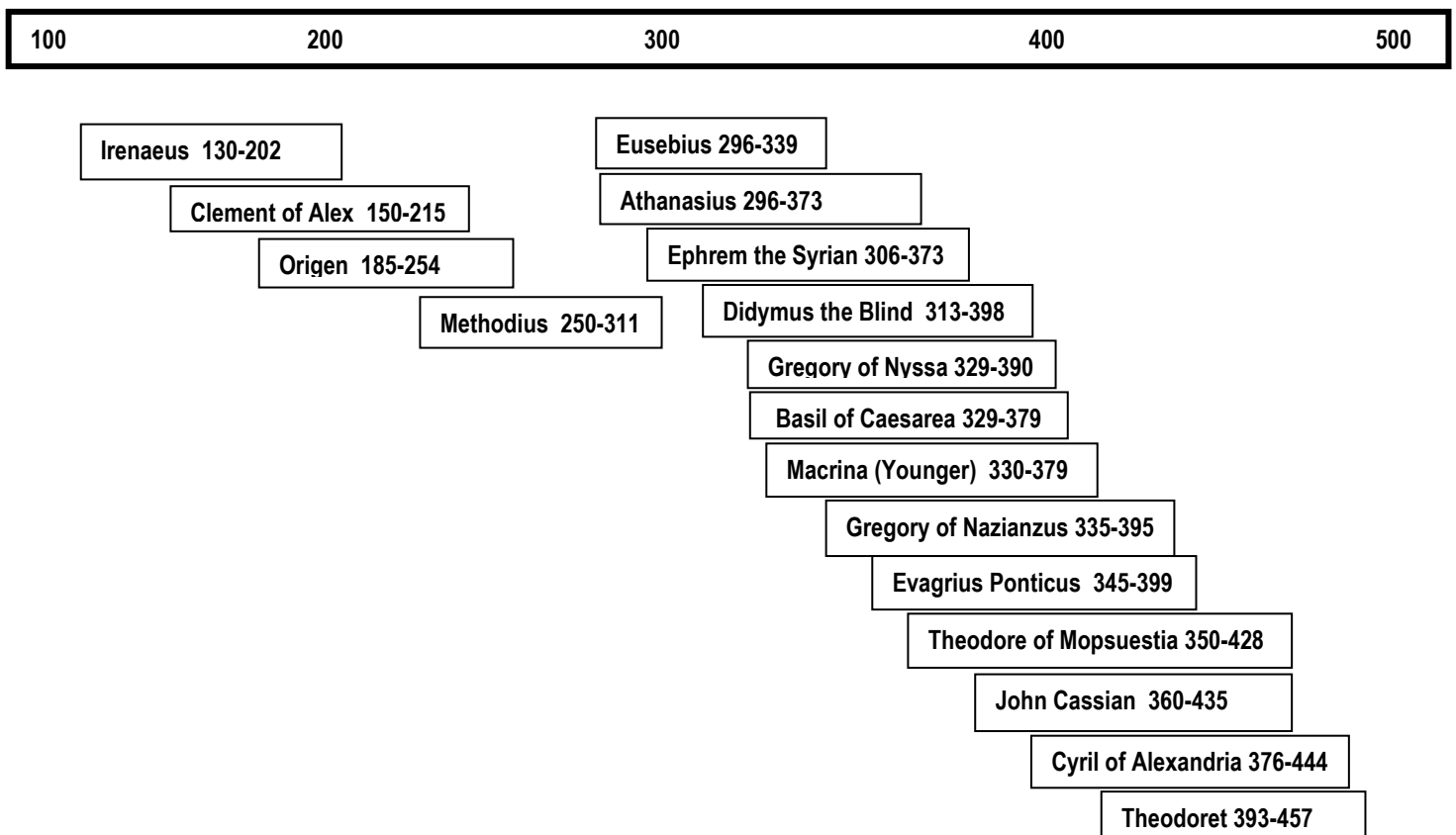
everything, both in general and in the single cases, is ordered by the Lord of the universe for the purpose of *universal salvation* [...] God is good and from eternity and *eternally saves* through his Son [...] the task of *salvific justice* is to lead each being to what is better. (Strom. 7,2,12; see also 1,17,86,1-2)

And so, though somewhat time-consuming (but actually quite easy, with a computer and the Internet), it is well worth the time ... if you want to verify what people *claim* when they quote other writings (ancient or modern). I take the time to do this because I have been “burned” so many times over the past forty years by both con-artist writers and even well-meaning (but ignorant) Christians who repeat what they see and hear without ever researching what they write!

Timeline of Early Christian Writers

The following timeline shows the life-span of each of the 17 early Christian Writers quoted in this booklet. Only four of these lived in the 2nd and 3rd centuries (100 to 300 AD). However, the respect and influence of Clement of Alexandria, and even more so of his student Origen, should not be underestimated. These two were central figures in the great School of Alexandria which was the dominant Christian institution of learning in those early days of the church.

But, in contrast, the 13 remaining writers quoted in this booklet lived in the 3rd and 4th century (300 to 500 AD). There was a lot going on in the Christian Church in this period of time, and is perhaps the most important and foundational period of all time periods up to our present day. It was this time period that the earliest councils were held and creeds were formulated. During this amazing time period, restoration prevailed and eternal punishment is never found in any creed prior to 500 AD! (See a later section of this booklet titled “The Creeds of the Christian Church” for a complete presentation of the development and contents of the early creeds).



Early Church Writer's Quotes

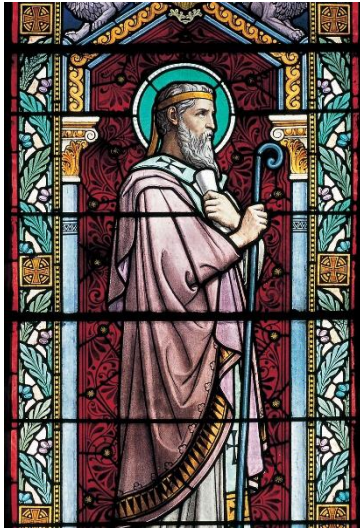
The quotes that follow are from 17 Early Christian Writers (some of them often called “Church Fathers”). As the above timeline showed, most of these quotes were from writers who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries. Each set of quotes (by an Early Church writer) is introduced by a brief description of that writer. Along with each description is an icon of some sort showing what the writer may have looked like, or at least how they have been depicted in Church History. Some of these are paintings, some mosaics, and others are sketches. But all of them are historical. In past civilizations, before the advent of the camera (which is probably about 95% of all civilized human history), other means were used to preserve the appearances of great people. It is hoped that you will find these artifacts of history both interesting and helpful.

A brief description is provided for each writer. Some of this information is taken directly from Wikipedia. Other information is taken directly from Dr. Ramelli's book. And some is taken from my general knowledge of church history. As you will see, these various Greek writers from different time periods in Church History, did not always agree. And even when they agreed, they held their beliefs in varying degrees – some fully, some partially. But they all had some main themes that they held in common that stand in stark contrast to the Latin Fathers (i.e. Tertullian and Augustine) and a few Greek Fathers (i.e. Justin and Chrysostom) who held to Eternal Punishment and Annihilation. These common beliefs among these Greek Fathers quoted in the booklet are:

- A constant reference to all of humanity as ultimate recipients of Gods grace and salvation.
- That God is good (and only good) and that his purpose is a good one for all creation.
- That Gods punishment has a good purpose of bringing correction and healing.
- That all evil will be eventually completely destroyed because God will eventually “fill all in all” (completely indwell every rational being).
- God's ultimate goal for humanity is to return it to its original, unfallen condition or even a better condition.

And, there are many other common themes among these Early Church writers, in spite of their differences, that bind them together in a view of God that is very high, pure, positive, victorious, loving, gracious, compassionate, restoring, reconciling ... without, in any way, violating his holiness and justice!

Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202)



Stained glass of Irenaeus, in
Church of St Irenaeus, Lyon

Irenaeus Lived early-on in the history of the Christian church. His birth was only about 30 years after the death of John, who was the last of the disciples of Jesus. So he was familiar with and influenced by the teachings passed down from Jesus and his followers. Based on what he wrote about eternal destiny (see quotes that follow) there is no doubt that he was a proponent of the belief that God would eventually restore all people and things in eternity. Irenaeus also clearly understood God's punishment as therapeutic rather than pure retribution (with no corrective purpose whatsoever), as is so prevalent in Western Christianity today (Roman Catholic and Protestant groups). He was one of the earliest Church Father to promote and develop this belief in full restoration of all things and he highly influenced others who came later, like Origen and Gregory of Nyssa (see their quotes later in this booklet).

From the beginning God did not permit humanity to be engulfed by sin, but instead had a plan to save them.

Thus, God was patient when the human being was stained by sin, since he foresaw that by means of the Logos it would attain victory. In the same way, he patiently forbore that Jonas was swallowed by the whale, not that he should be digested and perish, but that, once allowed to exit again, he might be more subject to God and glorify more to One who had given him such an unexpected liberation, and he might bring the inhabitants of Nineveh to an enduring repentance. In this way, impressed by that miracle, they would obey the Lord, who would *liberate them from death* [...] In the same way, from the beginning God did not permit that humanity might be engulfed by the big whale that was the agent of transgression [*sc.* the devil], not that humanity might die straight away, once engulfed in that way, but in anticipation and preparation of the *plan of salvation*, realised by the Logos [...] that humanity might rise from the dead and glorify God and repeat the discourse pronounced by Jonah in prophecy, "In my affliction I cried out toward the Lord my God, and he listened to me and *rescued me from the belly of hell*," and might continue to glorify God forever and to incessantly thank him for that salvation that it had received from God.

Humanity receives incorruptibility from God in order to love Him even more.

bearance is "that humanity, passing through everything and acquiring the knowledge of moral discipline, and then obtaining the resurrection from the dead, and learning by experience which the source of its liberation is, may live eternally in a state of gratitude toward the Lord, after receiving from him the gift of incorruptibility, that they might love God even more." The *telos* for

Ramelli page 92

Suffering and burning by fire happens for the sake of humanity which is saved!

5,28), in an eschatological frame, Irenaeus declares: "Even tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that, once, so to say, *refined* [λεπτυνθέντες] and lumped through the suffering for the Logos of God, and burnt by fire, they may be worthy of the banquet of the king." Sufferings aim at the spiritual maturation of humanity and its salvation (ibid.): "All this turns out to happen for the sake of humanity, which is saved, in order to have *its free will mature toward immortality*, to prepare it and make it more capable of submitting to God." Immature human free will; instead of being doomed

Ramelli page 94

Those who are lost are no different from those who are found because the Lord seeks every lost sheep.

all humanity. The same idea is further developed in fr. 12 of Book 5: "Just as the one who was born to be a living soul, by inclining toward evil, lost his life, so will that same human being find life again, after ascending toward the Good and receiving the life-giving Spirit. For what dies is not distinct from what receives life, in the same way as what was lost is not different from what has been found again, but the Lord went seek precisely the sheep that was lost. Now, what was that died? Clearly, the structure made of flesh which lost the vital breath and remained without breath, dead. Thus, it is this one that the Lord went to vivify, that, as in Adam we all die as psychic, so shall we live in Christ as spiritual, after getting rid, not of the body moulded by God, but of fleshly desires, and after receiving the Holy Spirit."³⁶⁵ Irenaeus, who shares with Paul, Origen, Didymus,

Ramelli page 96

God summed up and concluded in Himself all of humanity in order to do away with sin and give life to everyone.

had to destroy sin and to redeem the human being from the power of death [...] that sin might be destroyed by a human being and humanity might be free from death. For, just as because of the disobedience of one single human being moulded from the soil all were made sinners, and had to renounce life, so was it also necessary that, thanks to the obedience of one single human being, born from a virgin, *all be justified and receive salvation*²⁷⁸ [...] God recapitulated in himself the original wholeness/totality of humanity, in order to *kill sin*, to deprive death of its power, and *vivify humanity*.

Ramelli page 103

Jesus summed up in himself all human nature and provided a new creation through his death that freed humanity from death.

Indeed, by recapitulating in himself the whole of human nature, from beginning to end, Christ has also gathered in himself its death. From this it is clear that the Lord, obeying his Father, suffered death on the day in which Adam, disobeying God, died. Now, Adam died on the very same day on which he ate [sc. the forbidden fruit] [...] Therefore, the Lord, recapitulating this day in himself, suffered his Passion on the day before the Sabbath, that is to say, the sixth day of creation, that on which the human being was created, thereby offering to it a second creation through his Passion, the *new creation free from death*.

Ramelli page104

Through the resurrection of Jesus, death will be chased away and humanity will be restored.

σις and ἀποκατάστασις in fr. 10: "Life will seize humanity, will chase death away, and will *restore* [ἀποκαταστήσει] humanity." Likewise, at the end of

Ramelli page 105

God never uses violence to accomplish his purpose.

declares in AH 4 fr. 20: "God never uses violence, but is always benevolent."

Ramelli page 105

God became human in Jesus in order to join humanity to God.

recapitulation is also described in fr. 9 from *AH* 4: "God became one of the human beings in order to join the end to the beginning, that is, humanity to God." The same idea is further elaborated in fr. 15: "How could they be saved, if God had not operated their salvation on earth? Or how could humanity reach God, if God had not reached humanity?" Clearly, God has reached humanity and has operated its salvation through Christ.²⁸⁷ In *AI* 5,20,1, the

Ramelli page 106

God saves all human beings through his wisdom.

universally salvific action of Christ is extended to the Church, which

is handed the light of God, and therefore the Wisdom of God, through which it saves all human beings.

Ramelli page 106

Jesus accomplished salvation for all humanity.

3 he insists that Christ got incarnated in a human being and "accomplished the whole salvific economy for the sake of humanity." At the end of fr. 10

Ramelli page 106

Clement of Alexandria (150-215)



Clement was a Christian theologian who taught at the great School of Alexandria. Among his pupils were Origen and Alexander of Jerusalem. Clement consistently insisted on a “therapeutic” function in all of God’s punishment, and He saw God’s “saving judgment” as something applied to every person with the end goal of saving them. For him, punishment is always instructive and corrective, aimed at bringing sinners – even the very worst sinners – into genuine repentance for their own good.

Everything is ordered by the Lord of the universe for the purpose of universal salvation, leading everyone to something better.

everything, both in general and in the single cases, is ordered by the Lord of the universe for the purpose of *universal salvation* [...] God is good and from eternity and *eternally saves* through his Son [...] the task of *salvific justice* is to lead each being to what is better. (Strom. 7,2,12; see also 1,17,86,1–2)

Ramelli page 124

God, acts in goodness to compel those who are hardened to repent.

so to be saved: “The necessary corrections [παιδεύσεις], inflicted out of goodness by the great Judge who presides, both through the angels who surround him, and through several preliminary judgements, and again through the *definitive judgement*, *compel* ‘those who have hardened too much’ [Eph 4:19] *to repent* [ἐχβιάζονται μετανοεῖν].” Repentance can therefore occur even after

Ramelli page 125

Someday, in life after death, sinners will be purified.

or “otherworldly fire” as purifying and educative: “the fire sanctifies, not the flesh of sacrificial offerings, but the sinners’ souls, and I mean a fire that is not a fire which devours everything and tests, but the fire that is endowed with discernment, which spreads in the soul that passes through that fire” (Strom. 7,6,34,1–3). Divine providence works through either beneficial acts

Ramelli page 126

Jesus brought the “good news” even to those who were in hell.

*Rom. 10,31).*³³⁶ For Clement, “the Lord brought the Good News even to those who were in hell. Do not Scriptures declare that the Lord announced the Good News to those who had died in the Flood, or better had been caught in it, and to those who had been kept in prison?” The reference is to 1Pet

Ramelli page 126

God is good and can save with impartial justice people here and now or those on the other side of death.

The apostles, following the Lord, announced the Good News even to those who were in hell [...] that, after repenting of their sins, they might be among those who belong to the Almighty God, although they happened to *confess God in another place, and they might be saved*, each one according to his or her own degree of knowledge. Thus, the Saviour is active, because *his work is to save*. And this is what he has done, by *dragging to salvation those who wanted to believe in him*, through preaching, *wherever they may have been*. [...] All those who have believed will be saved, even if they come from paganism, because they have *professed their faith down there (in hell): God's*

punishments save and educate! They exhort people to repent and want the sinner's repentance rather than his death [Ez 18:23; 33:11] [...] Even those who were out of the Law but had lived in a righteous way, thanks to the particular quality of their soul, quickly converted and believed, *even if they happened to be imprisoned in hell*. [...] Thus, it is demonstrated for sure that God is good, and the Lord can save with impartial justice those who convert, here or on the other side; for God's active power arrives not only here on earth, but everywhere, and it *operates everywhere*. (Strom. 6,6,45–47)

Ramelli page 127

Paul teaches that the end of all things will be the restoration we hope for.

Paul teaches that the *end* is the *restoration* we hope for (or: we expect).

Ramelli page 134

It is typical of God to only do good, and to always produce (even from evil) a good and useful outcome.

even evil acts of will by people who have detached themselves from God “are directed by universal Providence toward a salvific/healthy end, although their cause would produce illness. But the main characteristic of divine Providence is not to allow that the evil produced by a voluntary detachment from the Good remains useless, without any fruit, nor to allow it to become harmful. For it is typical of God’s wisdom, virtue, and power not only to do the good—since this is, so to say, God’s nature, just as the nature of fire is to warm and that of light is to illuminate—, but also, and above all, to produce, from the evils excogitated by some, a good and useful end, and to handle those which seem evils in such a way as to be helpful.” So, Clement (*Strom.* 7,16,102,1–3) hopes that “the heretics” will be converted by God, even after death:

Ramelli page 127

God does not punish, because punishment is paying back evil with further evil.

May these heretics, too, after learning from these notes, return to wisdom and turn to the omnipotent God. But if, like deaf snakes, they should refuse to listen to the song that is sung now, all recently, but is extremely ancient, may they be educated at least by God, by bearing his paternal admonitions; may they be ashamed and repent, and may it not happen that, behaving with obstinate disobedience, they must undergo the final and general judgment. For partial educative processes take place as well, which are called “corrections,” which we, who belong to the people of the Lord, mostly encounter when we happen to be in a state of sin: we are corrected by divine Providence just as kids are by their teacher or father. God *does not punish* [τιμωρεῖται]—since punishment is the retribution of evil with further evil—, but *corrects* [κολλάζει] for the sake of those who are corrected, both in general and singularly.

Ramelli page 127

Jesus is the Lord of everyone and saves everyone as a result of his goodness.

Gregory Nyssen will emphasise. Indeed, Christ “has saved us while we were already close to ruin” (*Protr.* 1,7,4) and always “encourages, admonishes, and saves” (*Protr.* 1,6,2; see also 9,87,6). The Lord of all is also the Saviour of all (*Strom.* 6,6,46 ff.; 7,2,7,6), and “almost *compels* people to salvation, out of a superabundance of goodness” (*Strom.* 7,14,86,6). The final unity

Ramelli page 129

Jesus inflicts wounds on people to save them from eternal death.

acterises damnation as perfectly eternal (ἄϊδιος). Even in *Paed.* 1,8,74, after remarking that “the mode of the economy of the divine Logos-Pedagogue is various, with a view to salvation,” he adds that “it is appropriate even to inflict a wound, not in a deadly way, but in order to save [σωτηρίως], and thus, with a moderate pain, save a person from eternal death [ἄϊδιον κερδάναντα θάνατον].” Even here, therefore, eternal death is in fact denied.³⁵² Likewise,

Ramelli page 131

After humans become pure in their hearts through suffering, restoration awaits them in eternal contemplation.

Love [ἀγάπη] comes after knowledge [γνώσις], and inheritance (or: enjoyment) after love. And this is achieved when one depends on the Lord thanks to faith, knowledge, and love. [...] This completes what is not yet completed and what is already perfect, teaching in advance the future life that we shall have with the gods in God, once we have been *liberated from any chastisement and suffering that we (shall) have to endure because of our sins for the sake of a salvific education*: after the extinction of this penalty, rewards and honours are bestowed upon those who have been made perfect, after completing their purification [...]. After human beings have become pure of heart, in accord with what pertains to the Lord, *restoration* [ἀποκατάστασις] awaits them, in *eternal contemplation* [τῇ θεωρίᾳ τῇ αἰδίῳ]. And they will be “gods,” sharing their abodes with the other “gods,” those who have been arrayed first by the Saviour. Thus, knowledge leads forthwith to purification.

Ramelli page 132

Origen (185-254)



Origen was an early Christian theologian who spent the first half of his career in Alexandria. He was a prolific writer who wrote roughly 2,000 treatises in multiple branches of theology, including textual criticism, biblical exegesis and hermeneutics, philosophical theology, preaching, and spirituality. He was one of the most influential figures in early Christian theology and defense of the faith. He has been described as "the greatest genius the early church ever produced". Origen is considered a "Church Father" and is widely regarded as one of the most important Christian theologians of all time. His teachings were especially influential in the Eastern Church, with Athanasius of Alexandria and the three Cappadocian Fathers (Both Gregorys

and Basil). Sadly, Origen was condemned as a heretic in 543, some 300 years after he died, by the emperor Justinian (not by the church itself) who ordered all his writings to be burned. But Origen was one of the first great defender of full restoration by God of all things and people.

The power of Jesus dying on the cross is so great that it will save, not only all humans, but also all beings from all ages!

I do not deny in the least that the rational nature will always keep its free will, but I declare that the power and effectiveness of Christ's cross and of his death, which he took upon himself toward the end of the aeons, are so great as to be enough to set right and save, not only the present and the future aeon, but also all the past ones, and not only this order of us humans, but also the heavenly orders and powers.

Ramelli page 137

Evil and meanness are opposed to good. As a consequence, meanness and evil do not really exist.

It is the good God who says so [sc. "I am the One who Is"], and it is the same God whom the Saviour glorifies when he says: "No one is good but God the Father." The one who is *good*, therefore, coincides with the One who *is*. On the contrary, evil and meanness are opposed to the Good and non-being to Being. As a consequence, meanness and *evil are non-being* [οὐκ ὄν].

Ramelli page 141

When God is said to be "all in all", it means that God will completely reside in every single creature.

When God will be "all in all," we *cannot admit of evil, lest God be found in evil* [...] That God is said to be "all in all" means that God will be all even in the single creatures [...] in the following sense: whatever the rational intelligence, free from every dirtiness of sin and purified from every obfuscation of evilness, will be able to perceive, grasp, and think, all of this will be God [...], therefore, God will be "all" for this intelligence [...] because *evil will exist no more*: for this intelligence, everything is God, who is untouched by evil [...] Therefore, if at the end of the world, which will be similar to the beginning, there will be restored [ἀποκαθίστημι] that condition which the rational nature had when it had not yet felt the need to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil, once every sense of evil is removed, then for the creature, who has returned pure and unsullied, the One who is the only good God will become all. And not only in few or in many, but "*in all*" God will be all, when there exists no more death, nor death's sting [1 Cor 15:55–56], *nor evil any more*, absolutely: then God will truly be "all in all."³⁸¹ (Princ. 3,6,2–3)

Ramelli page 143

Eventually, evil will be entirely destroyed.

A righteous person keeps her hope in the shadow of the wings of God, until *evil will be entirely destroyed*. After the abolition of evil and its *annihilation into non-being*, this person will no longer place her hope in a shadow, but in the Godhead itself.

Ramelli page 144

The destruction of the "last enemy" is not the devil who God created, but the hostile will of the devil himself.

we must understand the destruction of the last enemy as the destruction, *not of the substance* that was created by God, but of the *inclination and the hostile will* that stemmed, not from God, but from the enemy himself. Therefore, he will be destroyed, *not in order for him to exist no more*, but in such a way as to be no longer "enemy" and "death."

Ramelli page 146

I do not think death is eternal in the same way that life and justice are, especially when considering that the “last enemy” to be destroyed is death itself.

However, even if one may remain in sin, even if one may endure under the kingly power of death, *I do not think that this reign of death is eternal as that of Life and Justice is*, especially in that I hear from the Apostle that *the last enemy, death, must be destroyed* [1 Cor 15:26]. For should one suppose that the eternity of death is the same as that of Life, death will no longer be the contradictory opposite of Life, but equal to it. For “eternal” is not the contradictory of “eternal,” but the same thing. Now, it is certain that death is the contradictory of Life; therefore, it is certain that, if Life is eternal, *death cannot possibly be eternal*. [...] For, when the death of the soul, which is the very last enemy, has been destroyed, also this common death (which, as I said, is a sort of shadow of the death of the soul) will necessarily be abolished, and *the kingdom of death, along with death itself, will be destroyed*.

Ramelli page 162

God will become “all” for his creatures who he restores to a state of soundness and purity.

What is this “all” that God will be “in all”? [...] It means that God will be “all” even in every individual creature. And God will be “all” in these creatures in the sense that whatever the rational intellect, freed from any dirtiness of sin and purified from any taint of evil, will be able to perceive, grasp and think, all this will be God [...], and so God will be all for this intellect [...], because evil will not exist any more: for such intellect, *God, untouched by evil, is all*. One who is always in the Good and for whom God is all, will no longer wish to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [...] After removing every sense of evil, only he who is the sole good God will become *all for the creature returned to a state of soundness and purity* [...] and not only in few or in many, but *in all God will be all*, when at last there will be no more death, nor death’s sting, nor evil, most definitely: then God will truly be “all in all.”

Ramelli page 168

God says "I shall kill and then give life"; he does not say "I shall give life and then kill".

This is why the Word of God necessarily presents, first, the eradication, complete destruction, and elimination, and only after this the edification and new planting. In Scripture we always find cited first the somber aspects, so to say, and then, cited afterwards, those which appear joyful. "I shall kill and then give life." God does not say, "I shall give life" and then "I shall kill," because it is impossible that what God has made live be eliminated by God himself or anyone else. Who is the one whom "I shall kill"? It is Paul the informer, Paul the persecutor, and then "I shall make him live," that he may become Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ [...] Thus, God necessarily begins with bitter words such as "I shall kill," and then, after killing, he says: "I shall give life"; "I shall strike and then heal." The Lord chastises to instruct those whom he loves [...] First he has a person suffer, *then he restores her again.*⁵⁰⁵

Ramelli page 189

It is not true that the supreme God, who dominates over all rational creatures, cannot also cure them.

It is not only possible, but also the case that *all rational creatures* will eventually submit to one Law [...] We profess that at a certain point the Logos will have obtained the hegemony over *all rational creatures* and will have *transformed every soul to the perfection* that is proper to it, when each one, exerting its own free will, will have *made its own choices* and reached the state that it had elected. But we hold that it will not happen as in the case of material bodies [...] it is not so in the case of illnesses derived from sin. For it is certainly *not the case that the supreme God, who dominates over all rational creatures, can not cure them.* Indeed, since the Logos is *more powerful than any evil that can exist in the soul* [πάντων γὰρ τῶν ἐν ψυχῇ κακῶν δυνατώτερος ὁ Λόγος], it applies the *necessary therapy* to every individual, according to God's will. And the ultimate end of all things will be *the elimination of evil* [τὸ τέλος τῶν πραγμάτων ἀναιρεθῆναι ἐστὶ τὴν κακίαν]. (CC 8,72)

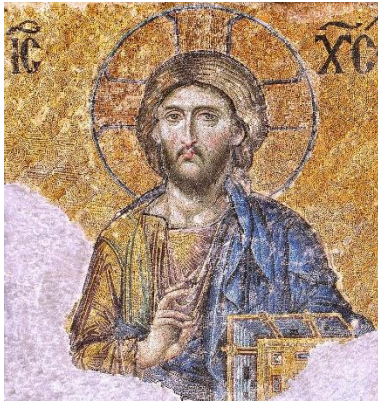
Ramelli page 193

God assists people, little by little, leading them by the hand, and restores them to their original condition placing them on high.

and in the future aeon and in all worlds, before and after. God only knows the reason why he allows some to follow their own will and fall [...] whereas he begins to assist others little by little, almost leading them by hand, and restores them to their original condition, placing them on high. Some, having misunderstood this, unable to grasp that the variety of this disposition has been established by God on the basis of previous causes due to the use of free will, *have believed that all that which happens in the world is determined by fortuitous events or fatalistic necessity* and nothing depends on our free will.

Ramelli page 212

Methodius of Olympus (250-311)



Mosaic of Christ Pantocrator,
Hagia Sophia

Methodius is not a major figure in church history, nor was he considered to be a “Church Father” Though he opposed Origen, he nonetheless believed that God would eventually restore all things. Eusebius does not mention him in his Church History, probably because he opposed various theories of Origen. We are indebted to Jerome for the earliest accounts of him, identifying him as Bishop of Olympus in Lycia and afterwards Bishop of Tyre. Jerome further states that Methodius suffered martyrdom at the end of the last persecution. Though Methodius was opposed to Origen (who taught him a great deal) on many things, but he agreed with Origen on the eventual restoration of all things by God.

God in his love for humanity has not left it in a state where it will be culpable forever or bear blame indefinitely.

because God, in his love for the human being, has not tolerated to leave it in such a condition, that it *might not be culpable forever*, and might not bear the blame indefinitely, but had it resolve again into its original elements, so that, when God models it again, all defects in it might vanish and disappear.

Ramelli page 267

Jesus assumed human nature in order to defeat the devil and to destroy the condemnation that arose with the fall of humanity.

The Logos assumed human nature to defeat the serpent and to *destroy the condemnation* that arose with the fall of humanity. It is right that the evil one should be defeated by no one else but the one whom he had deceived [...] because the *destruction of sin and of that condemnation* would have been impossible unless the same human being to whom it was said, “dust you are and dust you will be again,” had been *created anew* and *the condemnation had been eliminated* which, because of that human being, had extended to all. For, “As in Adam all die, so *will all be vivified in Christ*,” who assumed the nature and stance of Adam.

Ramelli page 271

God put a limit on sin through death so that humanity, living in sin, should not be subject to eternal condemnation.

Our tabernacles will be stably built when the body rises, with bones that are again joined and united to the flesh: then we shall really celebrate a feast for the Lord, when we receive eternal tabernacles, not doomed to perish and dissolve in the ashes of the grave. Now, our tabernacle at the beginning was well solid, but it was shaken by transgression and bent toward the earth, *because God put a limit to sin* by means of death, in order to avoid that the human being, immortal, *living in sin and with sin alive in it, should be liable to an eternal condemnation.* Therefore, he died; the soul was separated from flesh, so that *sin might die* thanks to (physical) death, given that it cannot survive in a dead person. Therefore, once *sin is dead and destroyed*, I shall rise *immortal*, and I praise God because, through (temporary physical) death, he *has liberated his children from (spiritual eternal) death.*

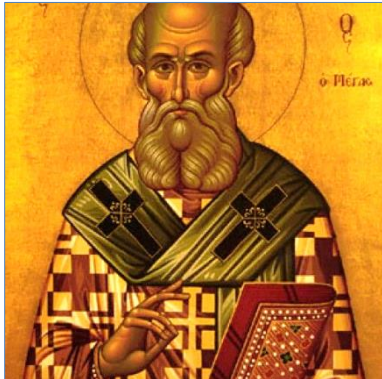
Ramelli page 270

Corruption has disappeared along with the pains of illness that make people shed tears; death has been eliminated and all stupidity has perished.

Corruption has disappeared, and likewise the pains of illnesses that make people shed tears; *death has been eliminated* [θάνατος ἡρέθη]; *all stupidity has perished* [ἔλωλε πᾶσα ἀφροσύνη]; there is no more affliction of the soul which devours, because God's joy [χαρά] has returned to shining over mortals. Paradise is no longer destitute of mortals. By order of God, it is inhabited again, *as it was in the beginning*, by that human being who had fallen from it because of the subtle arts of the serpent, and who is now again *incorruptible, fearless, and blessed* [ἄφθαρτος, ἄφοβος, μάκαρ].¹⁵⁸

Ramelli page 272

Athanasius (296-373)



Athanasius was a Christian theologian, a Church Father, and the chief defender of Trinitarianism against Arianism. Within a few years after his death, Gregory of Nazianzus called him the "Pillar of the Church". His writings were well regarded by all following Church Fathers in the West and the East, he had great pastoral concern and profound interest in monasticism. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, he is labeled as the "Father of Orthodoxy".

But also, like Origen, he clearly and unhesitatingly believed that God would save all humanity and would eventually restore all things to their original state of “goodness”, just as it was before the fall of humanity into sin and ruin. And he too, like so many other Early Christians, believed the incarnation of God as man in Jesus was key to God’s plan of salvation of all humanity. And so, based on this “incarnation” (Jesus becoming human), he saw humanity participating in God’s divine nature, not fully as God is, but in a limited but complete manner, causing in the “liberation” of all humans through their eventual “resurrection”, which results in their being “ransomed” from all sin.

Jesus became human to liberate all humans, resurrect all of them from the dead, and ransom all of them from sin.

He was born a human being to make us *divine* in himself. And he was born from a woman, a virgin, to transfer upon himself our birth affected by error, that we might become a holy nation, participating in the divine nature [...] Flesh was taken up by the Logos to *liberate all humans* [πάντας ἀνθρώπους] and *resurrect all of them* [πάντας] from the dead *and ransom all of them from sin* [...]. The Logos becomes flesh to become in it a *mediator* of the access to God for us, that we may inhabit the heavenly abodes.

Ramelli page 245

Jesus set free all beings, and pacified all of them in himself.

The Logos became a human being for the sake of *our salvation* [...] in order to *set free all beings* [τὰ πάντα] *in himself*, to lead the cosmos to the Father and to *pacify all beings* [τὰ πάντα] in himself, in heaven and on earth.

Ramelli page 245

Christ was born as a human being for our sake, and has liberated humanity from sin completely and entirely.

[Christ] was born as a human being for our own sake; in himself he has liberated humanity from sin, completely and entirely, and has vivified it from the state of death in which it was lying, and has it enter the Kingdom of Heavens.⁸⁹

The Lord became a human being in order to *transform us from mortal to immortal* and to have us *enter the Kingdom of Heavens* in the world to come, [because thanks to him we have been] *liberated from sin* [ἐλευθερωθέντες ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας].

Ramelli page 246

The Father's work for humanity is not in vain because Jesus died to make humans incorruptible, causing death to disappear.

Christ "underwent corruption together with us and yet did not suffer the power of death, that what had been called to existence *should not perish* and thus his Father's work for the human being should not be in vain [...]. We were all subject to corruption coming from death, and he delivered his own body to death *on behalf of all* [ἀντὶ πάντων] [...] *in order to bring again to incorruptibility the human beings* now doomed to corruption [...] *having death disappear from them* as chaff devoured by fire." The argument

Ramelli page 246

Corruption will disappear from all humanity, forever, thanks to the resurrection of Christ when he paid all that was owed for everyone by his death.

That corruption *may disappear from all* [ἀπὸ πάντων] forever, thanks to the resurrection [...] *He has paid for all* [ὑπὲρ πάντων], in death, all that was owed [...] This glorious deed truly *becomes God's goodness to the highest degree* [πρέπον δὲ καὶ μάλιστα τῇ ἀγαθότητι τοῦ Θεοῦ] [...] *He set right* [διωρθώσατο] *their neglectfulness* by means of his teaching, *having rectified* [κατορθώσας] *all human things* [πάντα τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων] *by means of his power.*

Ramelli page 247

God's love is by far greater than that of human beings. Though we are dead, he revives us and brings us to heaven.

He cures us like a good physician, and *there cannot be cure without suffering* [...] Even if a mother could ever forget her own children, I shall not forget [...] *God's love is by far greater than that of human beings* [...] While we are dead, he resuscitates us and brings us to heaven.

Ramelli page 250

Our Savior's death has liberated the world, and by his wounds all of us have been healed.

Our Saviour's death has *liberated the world*. By his wounds *all of us have been healed* [...] He has resurrected us from the dead, after abolishing death [...] Which joy will there be for *the total abolition of sin* and the *resurrection of the dead*? (6,9,21–10,23)

Ramelli page 251

Love redeems all human beings to salvation.

It does not force one's will beyond what is possible, and love does not address only the perfect, but it descends among those who are in a middle position, and even among those who come third, in sum in such a way as to *redeem all human beings to salvation* [...] *The enemy is chased outside*, and all of its army is thrown to the outer side. (10,4,8–9)

Ramelli page 251

Christ desired the repentance and conversion of humanity rather than its death. In this way all evil will be burned away from all human beings.

Christ, because he is good and loves humanity, came to bring fire onto earth [...] He wanted the repentance and conversion of the human being rather than its death. In this way, *evilness, all of it, will be burnt away from all human beings*.

Ramelli page 252

Help and salvation was God's plan before the creation of the world, and then it was executed by the Savior who dwelled here on Earth.

It would not have been good that our life be solidly grounded elsewhere than in the Lord, who is before the aeons [αἰῶνες] and by means of whom the aeons have come to existence, that we too might inherit life in the world to come [αἰῶνιος], since Life is in the Lord. For God is good, and, being good always, has excogitated this, well knowing the weakness of our nature, which *needs God's help and salvation* [...] This plan was thought out before the creation of the world and then realised when it was needed and the Saviour dwelt here on earth. The Lord himself, indeed, in heaven *will be all goods for us* [ἀντὶ πάντων ἡμῶν]; he will take us, too, with him, and will bring us to life in the world to come [αἰῶνιος]. (Adv. Ar. PG 26,309)

Ramelli page 254

Didymus the Blind (313-398)



Didymus was a Christian theologian in the Church of Alexandria, where he taught for about half a century. He was a student of Origen. Didymus's works were not copied and so many of his writings are lost, but some of his commentaries and essays survive. He was intelligent and a good teacher, but not especially original.

Didymus became blind at the age of four, before he had learned to read. He was a loyal follower of Origen, and opposed Arian and Macedonian teachings. Despite his blindness, Didymus excelled in scholarship because of his incredible memory. He found ways to help blind people to read, experimenting with carved wooden letters similar to Braille systems used by the blind today.

It must be noted that the Greek word "aionios" has several meanings.

It must be noted that αἰώνιος has several meanings: in the expression, "αἰώνιος God," it means "beginningless and endless"; for the divinity is called αἰώνιος by virtue of having neither a beginning nor an end of its existence. But αἰώνιος is something different when used in the expression, "things unseen are αἰώνια": for these things are not αἰώνια in the way God is, but rather because they do not perish but remain forever in the same condition. And αἰώνιος is meant differently again when it is measured against present time, as when it is said: "the sons of this αἰών are wiser in their generation"; for the time that extends over the life of a human being is also called an αἰών. Indeed, it is laid down concerning the Hebrew who did not wish to be freed in the seventh year, that "he will be your slave unto the αἰών": for no slave of a human being remains one forever, even after his death. It is in this sense that Paul too writes (1 Cor 8:13): "if flesh causes my brother to stumble, I shall not eat flesh through the αἰών," using this term in place of "throughout my life."

Ramelli page 290

Among all rational creatures there are also some who have become wicked, but they will be restored once they have fallen into the hands of Jesus.

This is said about rational creatures [τῶν λογικῶν]. Since, among all of them, there are also some who have become wicked, know how these *will have a restoration* [κατάστασιν] *once they have arrived in the hands of the Son*, obviously after *rejecting the evilness* [κακίαν] that they had, and *assuming virtue* [ἀρετήν]. For one should not pay attention to those who propound sophisms, claiming that only those rational beings who have sanctity [ἀγιότητα] are called.⁴⁴

Ramelli page 292

The fire of corrective punishment is not against people themselves, but against their evil habits and qualities.

It is impossible that wood, grass, and straw disappear *in such a way as not to exist any more*, but sinners will disappear *insofar as they are grass* and so on. Indeed, *this fire of the corrective punishment is not active against the substance, but against habits and qualities* [sc. bad habits and qualities]. For this fire consumes, *not creatures*, but certain conditions and certain habits.

Ramelli page 296

If evil has the power to push people in the wrong direction, then good (God) has the power to bring them back again,

He calls us *to salvation*. The verb “they will return / convert” indicates that *nobody is evil by essence, by nature*, but rather by free choice. If evil had the power to push the (human) free choice toward something else, something alien, *the Good will have the power to call it back to its original condition*.

Ramelli page 296

The Savior looks for the soul in order to lead it to salvation and to bring it back to its original condition.

The Saviour in fact has come to *look for what was lost and save it*. He looks for the soul, *in order to lead it to salvation, to bring it back to its original condition*. Now, just as the Saviour does this *by means of instruction* and perfecting into what is good, likewise the disciples of the Saviour, both angels and human beings, do so.

Ramelli page 296

The Father has given to Christ the power and dominion over all beings so that no being who has been given to him should perish.

The Father has given to Christ the power and dominion *over all beings* [κατὰ πάντων], that *no being* [μηδέν] that has been handed to him should *perish*: for this glory, too, passes through us, because it was necessary that *the totality* of those who will have submitted to him and have arrived in the hands of the *omnipotent* [πάντα ἰσχύοντος] Logos of God *be saved* [διασσωσμένον ἅπαξ] and remains among the goods that have no end [ἐν ἀτελευτήτοις μέναι ἀγαθοῖς], so that it needs no longer suffer the tyranny of death, *nor be liable to corruption and sins, nor have to undergo punishment for ancient evils* [τοῖς

Ramelli page 297

When Jesus returns, the end will be made like the beginning.

Since Christ's resurrection precedes that of all the others, it will be the first in honour; then immediately afterwards, in the following order, will come the believers, at the coming of Christ, on the basis of the analogy of their faith; then it will be the end [τὸ τέλος], *ordered and established as corresponding to the beginning* [πρὸς ἀρχὴν διαστελλόμενον].

Ramelli page 298

Every Soul which is subject to death and joined with evil, will eventually be joined to Christ.

Therefore, it is necessary that Christ reign over the beings, as they progressively add themselves, up to the totality [τῆς ὅλων προκοπῆς], until *all those who are enemies because of sin* [πάντες] *have submitted to him*, and Christ has *destroyed every tyrannical power* [καταλύοντος αὐτοῦ πᾶσαν τυραννικὴν ἐξουσίαν]. After this, the first evil itself, death, is destroyed, in that every [πᾶσα] soul, *now subject to death, which is joined with evil, will be joined to Christ* [ἐνουμένη αὐτῷ].

Ramelli page 298

When immortality is present, death disappears. Therefore, when what is mortal puts on immortality, death is defeated and annihilated.

Just as, when virtue is present, vice cannot subsist, likewise, when immortality is present, *death disappears* [ἀφανίζεται]; therefore, when what is mortal puts on immortality, *death is defeated and annihilated* [καταπίνεται].

Ramelli page 299

Eusebius of Caesarea (296-339)



Eusebius was a great and early historian of Christianity. He is regarded as an extremely learned Christian of his time. He wrote *Demonstrations of the Gospel*, *Preparations for the Gospel*, and *On Discrepancies between the Gospels*, studies of the Biblical text. During the Council of Antiochia (325) he was excommunicated for his faith in the heresy of Arius, and thus withdrawn during the First Council of Nicaea. He became councilor of Constantine the Great, and opposed Athanasius of Alexandria and other Church Fathers because of his prior excommunication. As a church historian, he never identified Origen or his followers as heretics (as the Roman Catholic church allowed several hundred years later), and in fact he collaborated with Pamphilus in creating a work in defense of Origen. He was also clearly a defender of the complete restoration of all things and people by God.

Original sin must be rectified with subsequent remedies. Therefore, it is necessary to return humanity to the condition that is proper.

It is necessary to strive after piety, first of all, to the highest degree; *the original sin must be rectified with subsequent remedies* [τὸ πρῶτως πλημμεληθὲν δευτέροις αἰσίοις ἐπιδιορθοῦσθαι], and it is necessary to rush to the return and *restoration to the condition that is proper and familiar* (to humanity) [ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν οἰκείων ἀναδρομὴν τε καὶ ἀποκατάστασιν]. For the *end* [τέλος] of *human nature* is not here on earth, and it is not a reduction to corruption and perdition, but it is up *there, from where the first* [sc. human being, or rational creature] *fell down* [ἐκεῖσε ὅθεν καὶ ὁ πρῶτος ἀπέσφηλε].

Ramelli page 315

What else does "until the times of universal restoration" mean, if not that beings in the world to come must receive their perfect restoration?

For, what else does "until the times of universal restoration" signify to us, if not the world to come [αἰῶνα μέλλοντα], in which *all beings must receive their perfect restoration* [δεῖ πάντα τῆς τελείας τυχεῖν ἀποκαταστάσεως]? [...] On the occasion of *universal restoration* [ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως ἀπάντων], Paul said that creation itself will be *transformed* [μεταβληθήσεται] from slavery into freedom. For he says: "Creation itself will be liberated from the slavery of corruption to the freedom of the children of God."

Ramelli page 317

The Savior who loves humanity, having liberated the souls of human beings from death, has also removed every tear from every face.

The Saviour of *all together* / of the universe [ὁ τῶν ὅλων σωτήρ], who loves humanity [φιλόανθρωπος], having *liberated the souls of the human beings from death* [ῥυσάμενος τοῦ θανάτου τὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχὰς] [...] removed *every tear from every face* [ἀφεῖλε πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ παντός προσώπου] [...] *impeding the perdition of so many souls* [τὴν τῶν τοσούτων ψυχῶν ἀπώλειαν] because of his love for humanity.

Ramelli page 320

Jesus will eventually destroy death in such a way that it will no longer exist.

He will *destroy* [καταποθῆναι ποιήσει] and make *vanish* [ἀφανὲς γενέσθαι] the face of the one who had power over all [τοῦ ἐξουσιάσαντος πάντων]: death. [...] The Lord will engulf it [καταποντιεῖ] in such a way that it will *no longer appear anywhere* [μηκέτι φαίνεσθαι που αὐτόν] [...] Now, since the last enemy, death, will be *annihilated* [καταργεῖται] [...], death, which once swallowed all [καταπίνων τοὺς πάντας], will *be swallowed* in turn [καταποθήσεται].

Ramelli page 320

When the reign of Christ shines forth in the world to come, all human beings will enjoy it.

While the reign of Christ will shine forth in the life of the world to come, all human beings, from absolutely all peoples, will enjoy it [ἀπολαύσουσιν οἱ ἐξ ἀπάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν], once *liberated from their ancient sins* [τῶν μὲν προτέρων ἡλευθερωμένοι κακῶν] and *made worthy of the promises of God* [τῶν δ' ἐπαγγελιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ καταξιωθησόμενοι].

Ramelli page 321

Once all evil has been eliminated and the last enemy (death) has been destroyed, God will be "all in all".

The facts that were pre-established [προωρισμένα] *before the foundation* of the world, and will be fulfilled *at the end of the aeons* [ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων] [...] once *all evilness has been eliminated and the last enemy, death, has been destroyed, God will be "all in all"* [πάσης κακίας ἐκποδῶν ἀρθείσης καὶ τοῦ ἐσχάτου ἐχθροῦ τοῦ θανάτου καταργηθέντος, ὁ μὲν Θεὸς ἔσται πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν].

Ramelli page 322

The chief aim of Christ's reign is that all will be submitted to his feet.

the end/aim [τέλος] of Christ's reign is [...] that all be submitted to his feet, and when all, in the end [ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ τέλους], are finally subjected to Christ [...], he will submit to him who has subjected all to him. (ibid.)

Ramelli page 323

Jesus, who is savior of absolutely all people, will reign and rectify those who are still imperfect and will heal those who still need healing.

In case they are unworthy [οὐκ ἄξιοι] of it [sc. of the Father's divinity], Christ, *qua common Saviour of absolutely all* [κοινὸς ἀπάντων Σωτήρ], will take on his reign, a *rectifying and therapeutic reign, which will rectify those who will be still imperfect and heal those who will still need healing* [διορθωτικὴν τῶν ἀτελῶν καὶ θεραπευτικὴν τῶν θεραπέϊαν δεομένων βασιλείαν], and will reign, leading under his feet the enemies of his kingdom [τοὺς τῆς βασιλείας ἐχθρούς].

Ramelli page 326

All beings will freely submit to Jesus and will see him as Savior and King of all people.

The apostle, saying that *all beings* [τὰ πάντα] will submit to the Son, indicated the obedience given *out of a free choice* [ἐξ αὐθεκουσίου προαιρέσεως], and the glory [...] that *all beings* [τὰ πάντα] will render to him qua *Saviour* and king of *all together* [τῶν ὅλων]. In the same way, also his own submission to the Father probably does not indicate anything else than [...] the *voluntary* [αὐθεκούσιον] obedience which he himself (*sc.* in his humanity) will render to God the Father, once he has *rendered all* [τοὺς πάντας] *worthy* of the divinity of the Father [ἀξίους τῆς πατρικῆς θεότητος].

Ramelli page 326

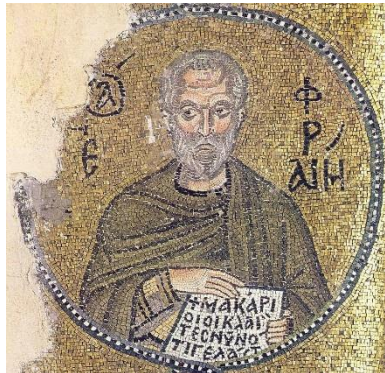
He will subject all beings to himself and this must be understood as a saving submission.

He will subject *all beings* to himself, and this must be understood as a *salvific submission*.

Ramelli page 327

Ecc1 theo 3.16

Ephrem the Syrian (306-373)



Mosaic in Nea Moni of Chios
(11th century)

Ephrem was a Syriac Christian deacon and a prolific Syriac-language hymnographer and theologian of the 4th century. He is especially beloved in the Syriac Orthodox Church. Ephrem wrote a wide variety of hymns, poems, and sermons in verse, as well as prose biblical exegesis. These were works of practical theology for the edification of the church in troubled times. So popular were his works, that, for centuries after his death, Christian authors wrote hundreds of works in his name. He has been called the most significant of all of the fathers of the Syriac-speaking church tradition. He was not a direct supporter of their restoration of all things, but did believe that God's goal for humanity was to heal them from their sin. He

held to a spiritual interpretation of hell, where fire symbolizes the torture of a sinner's conscience in being far from God, but with the purpose of this to be repentance and conversion, rather than pure retribution (no restoring purpose) on the part of God.

Those who have found mercy can obtain punishment ... and then forgiveness.

Blessed is the sinner who there [sc. in Gehenna] has received *mercy* and is deemed *worthy of having access to the area of Paradise!* Even if one was formerly out of the latter, one *can get to graze there by grace* [...] Between the fire of hell and Paradise, those who have found mercy can obtain *punishment and then forgiveness*. Glory to the Right One who reigns with his grace; He is the Good One who never puts limits to his goodness; in his compassion he bends toward the wicked; his divine cloud spreads *over all that belongs to Him*. He has *dew rain even onto the fire of punishment* ... (Hymn. de Par. 10,14–15)

Ramelli page 333

Thanks to divine mercy, hell will be emptied.

It is likely that, thanks to (divine) mercy, *Gehenna will be emptied*, and you will remain there alone, along with your servants.

Ramelli page 334

God, after giving people retribution in hell, will reward them in the Kingdom.

Our Lord has freely forgiven many persons for their sins [...] but of the most serious sin [cf. Matt 12:32] *retribution in Gehenna* will be demanded [...] *no sin will resist repentance*, apart from this. *But not even this sin will be able to prevent a person from being justified. God, after giving retribution in Gehenna, will reward this person in the Kingdom.*

Ramelli page 333

Sin and sheol were scared, death shook, the dead rebelled, and Satan also trembled because sinners revolted against him.

The Voice proclaimed, and they gathered. And the hosts of the Enemy came together with his servants [...] and they saw that *Jesus had triumphed*, to the dismay of all of them, who were *located to the left*. For there is *none of all the human beings who had not been tortured*. They began to report thoroughly, one by one, *all that which they had suffered*. Sin and sheol were scared, Death shook, and the dead rebelled, and Satan also trembled, because *sinner revolted against him*. Glory to you, because the evil one saw you and was tortured. Sin cried; he advised his sons, that is, demons and devils, and said to them: "Legion, the head of your hosts, is no more; the sea has swallowed him and his band. And the same will happen to you, my sons; if you despise this Jesus, here, he will destroy you" [...] The evil one said concerning our Saviour: "This one is greater than all the wicked [...] He has *robbed us*" [...] *The evil one stopped his activity* and Sin said: "It is necessary, therefore, to *stop and change from what I was*, because this son of Mary, here, who comes, *creates in humanity a new creation*." (Carm. Nis. 35,1-5)

Ramelli page 334

God is the healer of humanity and has eliminated death.

Glory to God, the *Healer of humanity*! [...] He has *plunged our evil into the depths* and has *suffocated the one who suffocated us* [sc. the devil].¹⁶⁴ Let us glorify with all our mouths the Lord of *all the ways of salvation* [*l-mr' d-kl pwr-syn*]!

Ramelli page 335

Jesus is the healer of all humanity, through his mercy, compassion, goodness, and love.

(*Hymn. c. haer.* 43,9); Christ is “the healer of *all* [kl].”¹⁸⁰ He can heal all through his “mercy” and “compassion,”¹⁸¹ his “goodness,”¹⁸² “piety” (*Eccl.* 31,1), “solicit care,”¹⁸³ and “love.”¹⁸⁴ For, “the Lord’s providence has *healed the human being entirely, in all* [l-brnš’ l-kl’ b-kl mdm]” (*Carm. Nis.* 46,8; 2,2; 4,7); Christ “descended in order to heal those who had immersed themselves in all kinds of evil” (*De Dom.* 42). The work of Christ as a Physician is “to fill every lack” (*De Dom.* 2,12); he “has brought to fulness what was lacking in the creature,” that is, in humanity (*Comm. in Diat.* 16,28). It is notable that the same idea

Ramelli page 340

Jesus is the physician who came to this earth to gently heal our wounds and have mercy on sinners.

human being, which is salvific per se: “Blessed is the Physician who has descended and amputated without generating pains, has *healed the wounds* with gentle medication! His birth was the medication that has mercy upon sinners” (*Hymn. de Nat.* 3,20). The whole of this Hymn proclaims the annihilation

Ramelli page 341

When Jesus went into the grave, he got rid of death and forgave all who sinned.

Now the descent to Sheol was not in vain, for it was the cause of manifold benefits to our race. He dismissed Death from his domination. He preached the resurrection to those who were lying in the dust, and He *forgave those who had sinned* against the Law. He laid waste Sheol, and *slew sin*. He *put Satan to shame*, and made the demons sad.¹⁸⁹

Ramelli page 344

When Jesus was crucified, all humanity (Adam) was redeemed and glorified.

[...] At the ninth hour Adam went down into the lowest depth of the earth from the height of Paradise, and at the ninth hour Christ went down to the lowest depths of the earth, to those who lay in the dust, from the height of the Cross.

[...] And when the Wood (i.e. the Cross) was fixed upon it, and Christ was smitten with the spear, and blood and water flowed down from His side, they ran down into the mouth of Adam and became a baptism to him, and *he was baptised*. [...] blood and water flowed down from His side [...], that through the blood life might be given unto Adam, and then, after life and resurrection, the water for his baptism. [...] The blood and the water ran down into the mouth of Adam, and *Adam was redeemed, and put on a garment of glory*.

Ramelli page 343

Basil of Caesarea (329-379)



Icon of St. Basil the Great from the St. Sophia Cathedral of Kiev

Basil of Caesarea, AKA “Basil the Great”, was the Greek bishop of Caesarea Mazaca in Cappadocia, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey). He was an influential theologian who supported the Nicene Creed and opposed the heresies of the early Christian church, fighting against both Arianism and the followers of Apollinaris of Laodicea. His ability to balance his theological convictions with his political connections made Basil a powerful advocate for the Nicene position. In addition to his work as a theologian, Basil was known for his care of the poor and underprivileged. Basil established guidelines for monastic life which focus on community life, liturgical prayer, and manual labor.

Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa are collectively referred to as the “Cappadocian Fathers”. The Eastern Orthodox Church and Eastern Catholic Churches have given him, together with Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, the title of “the Great Hierarch”. He was clearly a believer in the restoration of all things and people by God, and his writings reflect this.

God, in Jesus, came to be one with all people, unifying them in himself.

When, in the Acts of the Apostles, the disciples ask him, “When will you restore the Kingdom to Israel?,” Jesus replies: “It is not up to you to know the times and occasions that the Father has established in his own decisional power.” [...] Now, please, *do not interpret these “times and occasions” as sense perceptible, but, so to say, as intervals of knowledge* that come to existence thanks to the intellectual Sun [sc. God, the Good]. For *that famous prayer of Our Lord must be fulfilled*. It is Jesus, indeed, who prayed as follows: “Grant them that they, too, may be one in us, just as I and you are one, o Father.” For God, being one, coming to be in each one, unifies all, and thus the number perishes, thanks to the dwelling of the Monad [sc. God] in it.

Ramelli page 347

The peace given by the Lord extends to all eternity, since it knows neither limitations nor boundaries. For all humanity will submit to him and recognize his power.

The peace given by the Lord extends to all eternity, since it knows neither limitations nor boundaries [ἀπεριόριστος καὶ ἀτερμάτιστος]. For *all the beings will submit to him* [πάντα γὰρ ὑποταγῆσεται αὐτῷ], and all will recognise his power. And when God has come to be “*all in all*” [ὁ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσι], after those who created disorders with apostasies have been *pacified* [καθησυχασθέντων τῶν θορυβούντων ταῖς ἀποστασίαις], *all will hymn to God in a symphony of peace* [ἐν εἰρηνικῇ συμφωνίᾳ τὸν Θεὸν ὑμνήσουσι]. (Enarr. in Is. 9,227)

Ramelli page 362

God acts to help humans by dooming sin into disappearance, devouring it through a purifying fire.

Then he adds that his wrath does not yet go away, but his hand, raised, is still up there, because of those who in the people make others err and go astray themselves, that is, all the impious, the wicked, and those who say iniquitous things. *The threat, however, in some way manifests the benefit* [ἔχει δέ τινα ἢ ἀπειλὴ εὐεργεσίας ἔμφασιν]: *iniquity will burn like fire* [καυθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία ὡς πῦρ]. For by the good Master, *as a benefit toward human beings, it has been providentially arranged for the matter provided by iniquity to be doomed to disappearance* [τὴν γὰρ παρασκευασθεῖσαν ὕλην ἐκ τῆς ἀνομίας ἀφανισμῷ παραδοθῆναι ἐπ’εὐεργεσίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων παρὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ Δεσπότης ὠκονόμεται]. And—he says—it will be devoured by fire like dry darnel, and will be *burnt out* [...] if we put off sin by means of its acknowledgment, we shall transform it into dry darnel, worthy of being devoured by the *purifying fire* [ὑπὸ τοῦ καθαρτικοῦ πυρὸς καταβρωθῆναι].

Ramelli page 363

Restoration is the “absolute fullness” that is brought about in this life and the next by the Holy Spirit.

The restoration into Paradise comes about thanks to the Holy Spirit, the ascent to the Kingdom of Heavens [...], the participation in *absolutely eternal glory* and, in sum, the coming to be in the *absolute fullness of benediction*, both in this world and in the next.

Ramelli page 368

Though people of humanity are burned by fire, God does not threaten destruction but purification.

He shows that earthly things are handed to the *punishing fire for the advantage/benefit of the soul* [τὰ γῆϊνα τῷ πυρὶ τῷ κολαστικῷ παραδίδωται ἐπὶ εὐεργεσίᾳ τῆς ψυχῆς], in the same way as is also suggested by the Lord when he says: “I have come to cast fire onto the earth, and I would like to see it already kindled.” And *the people, seen as burnt by fire, will represent the human being. He does not threaten destruction, but he indicates purification* [οὐκ ἀφανισμόν ἀπειλεῖ, ἀλλὰ τὴν κάθαρσιν ὑποφαίνει], in accord with what the Apostle says: “If the work of anyone is burnt, this person will suffer a loss; however, he himself *will be saved*, but only in this way, as through fire.”

Ramelli page 364

Those who are made worthy of being restored to their original condition, are saved by means of judgment and mercy.

Her captivity *will be saved with Judgement and with mercy*. Nothing of the above has been said by the prophet in reference to sense-perceptible enemies or captives; when he calls her liberation “*the restoration of her captivity*,” he has us understand that each of us being under the power of sin, when we are dominated by the enemy, we become, so to say, prisoners of sin. Now, by means of the Judgement one is handed to captivity, but by means of mercy one is *called back*. [...] Those who are made worthy of *restoration to the original condition are saved* by means of Judgement and mercy.

Ramelli page 370

Because of evil, painful treatment is required. But after evil is destroyed, healing will be administered to bring restoration.

In case *I cut*, and in case *I cauterise*, *I shall not leave neglected* either the amputation or the wounds of the cauterisation. For, after the *destruction of evil*, because of which such painful treatments are applied, then *I shall administer the rest of the healing and shall restore this person to health*.

Ramelli page 371

Whoever looks for the truth will finally see it face-to-face and will attain the perfection of knowledge when the time of universal restoration comes.

This ignorance will keep prisoner the race of human beings. But whoever now looks for the truth to emerge from ignorance, and struggles with pains to find it, will finally see it face to face, and will attain *the perfection of knowledge*, when there will come *the time of universal apokatastasis*.

Ramelli page 371

God's work is to do away with all evil and liberate His creatures from every illness.

The work that is *proper to God, qua Good*, is to have evil disappear, in order to restore his own creature, once this is purged of every evilness, and to bring it back to its natural condition, once it has been liberated from every illness.

Ramelli page 372

Macrina the Younger (330-379)



Macrina the Younger was a nun in the Early Christian Church and a prominent saint in the Roman Catholic, Eastern Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Churches. Macrina was born at Caesarea, Cappadocia. Her parents were Basil the Elder and Emmelia, and her grandmother was Macrina the Elder. Among her nine siblings were two of the three Cappadocian Fathers, her younger brothers Basil the Great and Saint Gregory of Nyssa, as well as Peter of Sebaste and the famous Christian jurist Naucratus.

Macrina had a profound influence upon her brothers and her mother with her adherence to an ascetic ideal. Her brother Gregory of Nyssa wrote a work entitled *Life of Macrina* in which he describes her sanctity throughout her life. Macrina lived a chaste and humble life, devoting her time to prayer and the spiritual education of her younger brother, Peter. Gregory presents her as one who consciously rejected all Classical education, choosing instead devoted study of Scripture and other sacred writings. She was clearly an advocate for the restoration of all things and people by God. She is the only woman writer in the booklet, though I am sure there were many others. But the culture of that day, sadly, did not encourage (and sometimes not even allow) women to learn or express their beliefs openly. Macrina, most likely, was afforded unusual opportunity due to her family relationships with men who experienced such public privilege. (All of her quotes are taken from the writings of Gregory of Nyssa.)

Finally, after long cycles of ages, evil will disappear and only good will remain.

I believe that the divine Apostle [...] meant that *universal harmony of all rational nature* that one day will obtain in the Good [...] when finally, after long cycles of aeons, *evilness has disappeared*, only the Good will remain, and even those creatures [sc. the demons] will *concordantly and unanimously* admit the sovereignty of Christ.²⁶²

Ramelli page 378

God's main purpose in judgement is not to bring about punishment of those who have sinned, but to separate them from evil.

Therefore, as it seems, it is not the case that God's judgement has as its main purpose that of bringing about punishment to those who have sinned. On the contrary, as the argument has demonstrated, the divinity on its part does exclusively what is good, separating it from evil, and attracting [sc. the soul] to itself, with a view to its participation in beatitude, but the violent separation of what was united and attached to the soul [sc. evil] is painful for the soul that is attracted and pulled [by the divinity to itself]. (100C)

Ramelli page 379

Scripture teaches the complete disappearance of evil. For if God will be resident in all beings, then there will be no evil.

Evil must necessarily be eliminated, absolutely and in every respect, once and for all, from all that is, and, since in fact it is not [...], neither will it have to exist, at all. For, as evil does not exist in its nature outside will, once each will has come to be in God, evil will be reduced to complete disappearance, because no receptacle will be left for it [...] God's right judgement is applied to all, and extends the time of the restitution of the debt according to its amount [...] the complete eradication of debts does not take place through any money payment, but the debtor is handed to the torturers, until he has paid his whole debt [...] Everything that is free will turn out to be in virtue, since what is free has no master. Now, God's nature is the source of all virtue; so, in it there will be those who have attained freedom from evil, that, as the Apostle says, "God may be all in all." God will be both all and in all. God's nature will become all to us and will take the place of all, distributing itself in a way that will be suitable to the needs of that life. And from divine revelation it is clear that God, for those who deserve it, is place, house, garment, food, drink, light, richness, kingdom, and whatever it is possible to think and express among those things that contribute to a good life for us. Well, he who is "all" also is "in all." And in this it seems to me that Scripture teaches the complete disappearance of evil. For, if in all beings there will be God, clearly in them there will be no evil.

Ramelli page 380

Those who are now excluded due to sin, will eventually be able to enter the recesses of divine favor.

The human race, because of vice implanted in it, was banished from God's enclosure, but, once purified by the lustral bath, *can enter it again*. And since these enclosures that interpose themselves, through which vice separated us from the internal part situated beyond the veil, are *destined to be demolished* once and for all, when, thanks to resurrection, our nature will be reconstituted as a tent that is planted, and all corruption ingenerated because of vice will disappear from beings, then *God's feast will be prepared* by all, who will have been consolidated again and restructured by means of resurrection, so that *all will take part in one and the same joy*, and there will be no more difference to divide the rational nature in its participation in goods that are the *same for all*, but *those who now are excluded due to vice will be finally able to enter the recesses of divine beatitude.* (133D)

Ramelli page 383

Sinners will finally recover (after long time periods of purification) in thanks to God's much needed care using the therapy of fire.

(sinners too will) finally recover, after long periods of time, the common form that was conferred by God to us from the beginning [...] after the purification and vanishing of these passions thanks to (God's) solicit and much needed care, with the therapy of fire, instead of those defects there will appear their positive counterparts: incorruptibility, life, force, grace, glory, and every other similar prerogative that we conjecture can be contemplated in the Godhead itself and in its image, human nature. (157C–160C)

Ramelli page 385

Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)



Icon of St. Gregory of Nyssa
(14th century fresco, Chora
Church, Istanbul)

Gregory of Nyssa (or Nyssen), was bishop of Nyssa from 372 until his death. He is highly respected by all Christian churches: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, and Anglicanism. Gregory, his elder brother Basil of Caesarea, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus are collectively known as the “Cappadocian Fathers”.

Gregory lacked the administrative ability of his brother Basil or the contemporary influence of Gregory of Nazianzus, but he was a top-notch theologian who made significant contributions to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Nicene Creed. Gregory's philosophical writings were influenced by Origen. Since the mid-twentieth century, there has been a significant increase in

interest in Gregory's works from the academic community, particularly involving universal salvation, which has resulted in challenges to many traditional interpretations of his theology.

God will be "in all" only when it will be impossible to detect any trace of evil in humanity.

“God will be all in all.” In the last sentence Paul with his discourse clearly demonstrates the *ontological non-subsistence of evil* [τὸ τῆς κακίας ἀνύπαρ-κτον], by saying that God will be *in all*, and that for each one God will be *all*. For it is clear that it will be the case that God is “in all” only when *in the beings it will be impossible to detect any trace of evil*. For it is utterly *unlikely that God may ever be found in evil*. Therefore, either God will not be in all, in case any trace of evil should remain in beings, or else, if it is really necessary to believe that God will be *in all*, along with this conviction the *non-existence of evil* is also demonstrated. *For it is impossible for God to be found in evil.*

Ramelli page 377

God's good purpose, (which is inspired by his love for humanity), and his judgment (which is in accordance with justice) fit together in perfect balance.

It is proper to the just to distribute things to each one in accord with his or her merits, and it is proper to the wise neither to subvert justice nor to separate the good purpose inspired by love for humanity from the judgement according to justice, but to join both these elements together in a fitting way, rendering to justice what it deserves, without parting from the goodness of the purpose inspired by love for humanity.

Ramelli page 385

God's assistance in time of trouble does not allow us to continue to be inhabitants of hell because we have received therapy from the great physician

The Lord's succour has not allowed us to continue to be inhabitants of hell, also because, in proportion to the amount of suffering deriving from sin, we have received the *therapy from the Physician*. And here he expounds an even greater philosophical truth, by asserting as a dogma that *evil is not ab aeterno* [ἐξ αἰδίου] [...] Therefore, it has been demonstrated that *evil is not ab aeterno* [ἐξ αἰδίου] and will not subsist forever [εἰς αἰεί]. For what does not exist always [αἰεί] will not exist forever [εἰς αἰεί] either.

Ramelli page 391

Evil will eventually pass away and disappear when everything is restored to its original and good condition.

The nature of evil is unstable and passes away [ἄστατος τε καὶ παροδική]. It did not come into existence in the beginning with the creation [...] and it will not continue to exist eternally along with the beings that have ontological consistence. For the beings that derive their existence from the One who is the Being continue to be eternally [τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ ὄντος ὄντα καὶ ἐν τῷ εἶναι διὰ παντός διαμένει]; but if anything is out of the One who is, its essence is not in Being. This thing, therefore, will pass away and disappear in due course, in the universal restoration of all into the Good [ἐν τῇ τοῦ παντός πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀποκαταστάσει]. As a consequence, in that life which lies before us in hope there will remain no trace of evil, which now prevails over us.

Ramelli page 393

Even if we cross the boundary of evil and reach the culmination of the shadow of sin, we shall return to live again in the light.

As a consequence, *after the extreme limit of evil* [τὸ πέρας τῆς κακίας], *there comes again the Good* [ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ διαδοχή] [...] I believe that in reference to us, too, it must be considered that, even if we should have crossed the boundary of evilness [διεξελθόντες τὸν τῆς κακίας ὅρον] and reached the culmination of the shadow of sin [ἐν τῷ ἄκρῳ γενώμεθα τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἀμαρτίαν σκιᾶς], *we shall return to live again in the Light.*

Ramelli page 394

When human nature will be elevated again to its original condition, the union of chords and symbols will release that sweet sound of thanksgiving to God for his love of humanity.

After all this, when humanity will have left behind all that which is earthly, mute, and silent, it will join the sound of its own chords to the cymbals of the heavenly choirs [...] When human nature will be *elevated again to its original condition*, the aforementioned union [of chords and cymbals] will release that sweet sound of thanksgiving to God for his love for humanity thanks to their reciprocal harmony. And through one another, and with one another, they will sing a song of thanksgiving to God for his love for humanity, which will be heard throughout the universe [...] and once the enemy [sc. death] has been entirely destroyed, a praise will be incessantly offered to God, with equal honour, *by every living creature, forever.* (GNO V 66,7–9; 16–22; 67,3–6)

Ramelli page 396

Someday human nature will be restored to its original condition and the love of God will bring humans and angels together in sweet thanksgiving.

The cymbal's sound invites all to participate in the divine dance. And it seems to me that the passage in which it is said, "Praise the Lord with the cymbals that have a beautiful sound," illustrates *the union of our nature with the angels*. Indeed, that *union of angelic and human*, when *human nature will be restored to its original condition*, will produce, with their reciprocal encounter, that sweet sound of thanksgiving. [...] For this is the meaning of the union of the one cymbal with the other: one is the ultramundane nature of angels, the other is the rational nature of humans. Sin separated them from one another, but when *the love of God will have joined them again*, they will utter again that hymn of praise. (In inscr. Ps. 1,9)

Ramelli page 396

The restoration of all things that will come to pass in the Kingdom of Heaven is the restoration of those who have been condemned to hell.

Perhaps someone, basing himself on the fact that after three days of suffering in darkness even the Egyptians participated in the light, could be induced to understand in this passage the announcement of *the apokatastasis* [τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν] *that we expect will come to pass in the end, in the Kingdom of Heavens: the restoration of those who had been condemned to Gehenna* [τῶν ἐν Γεέννῃ καταδικασμένων]. Indeed, the "darkness that could be perceived," as the story goes, is very similar, in both name and meaning, to the "outer darkness." Now, *both this and the outer darkness are dispelled* when Moses outstretched his arms *for the salvation of those who lay in darkness*.

Ramelli page 398

The work of God will not be hindered by annihilation because there will be no destruction of humans.

There will be *no destruction of humans*, that the work of God may not be emptied by annihilation. Instead of human creatures, *what will be destroyed and reduced to non-being will be sin*. [...] When all that is evil has disappeared, “they will know—says Scripture—that God is the Lord of Jacob and of the ends of the earth.” Indeed, since there will be *no evilness left anywhere*, the Lord will be the absolute sovereign of all the earth, after evil, which now reigns over most people, *will have been wiped out*.

Ramelli page 399

All souls will become the same, and no evil will any longer remain in anyone. Then, God will really be “all in all.”

The run for this beatitude is *common to all the souls of every order* [...] it is a natural impulse *common to all* that of tending to what is blessed and praised [...] until *all* look at the same object of their desire and *become one and the same thing* and *no evilness* [κακία] *will any longer remain in anyone*. Then God will really be ‘all in all.’ For all, thanks to the *union* with one another, will be joined in *communion* with the Good, in Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Ramelli page 400

God's purest goodness will embrace every rational creature, and none of them will fall out of the kingdom of God.

The nature of evil, at last, will be reduced to non-being, completely *disappearing* from being, and God's purest goodness will embrace in itself *every* rational creature, and *none* of the beings that have come to existence thanks to God will fall out of the Kingdom of God, when every evilness that has mixed with beings, as a kind of spurious matter, will have been *consumed by the fusion of the purifying fire*, and thus every being that has come to existence thanks to God will *return to being such as it was at the beginning*, when it had *not yet received evil*.
(*In illud*, 13–14 Downing)

Ramelli page 412

God created and foreknew all humanity as one with himself.

The human being was then created in the image of God: what must be understood is that it is the universal nature [ἡ καθόλου φύσις] that is what is similar to God. Not *a part of the whole* [μέρος τοῦ ὅλου], but *the whole totality of human nature all together* [ἅπας ἄνθρωπος τὸ τῆς φύσεως πλήρωμα] was created in this way by the omnipotent Wisdom [...] When the text of Scripture says that God created “the human being,” with the indeterminate character of this designation it indicates *the whole of humanity*. Indeed, in this passage the creature is not yet called “Adam” [...] The name of the created human being [ἄνθρωπος] *is not particular, but universal*. Therefore, from the universal denomination of the nature we are led to think that *the whole of humanity was included* by God’s foreknowledge and power *in the first creation* [...] The *whole totality* [πλήρωμα] *of humanity was included, as it were, in a single body* by the foreknowing power of the God of the universe: this is what Scripture teaches when it says that God created the human being and created it in the image of God.

Ramelli page 417

Just as death comes from Adam to all humanity, so also life comes from Jesus through the resurrection to all humanity.

Just as the principle of death, becoming operative in the case of one human being, from it passed on to the whole human nature, likewise the principle of the resurrection, from one human being, and through it, extends to the whole of humanity.

Ramelli page 420

Just as Adam brought condemnation of all humans, so also Jesus brought life for all humans and made them just.

15:22 in the light of Rom 5:18–10: “Just as, because of one transgression, there came the condemnation of all humans, so also, thanks to one act of justice, *for all humans will the justification come that brings about life*. For, just as due to the disobedience of one human being the whole mass became sinner, so also, thanks to the obedience of one human, have all been made just.”

Ramelli page 421

Once God has brought human nature to its original condition through the resurrection, there is no obstacle that can prevent God from attaining his goal of having everyone share in the benefits of his divinity.

When our nature, on the basis of a given order and consequentiality, has completely accomplished its path through the periodical movement of time, at last there will stop this flux that perpetuates itself thanks to the succession of creatures that continually appear, and, since the fullness of totality, once completed, will no longer admit of any increment, the whole sum of the souls, complete and perfect, from the condition of invisibility and dispersion in which it is now found, will return again to a state of unitary integrity and manifestation [...] But once God has brought again human nature to the original condition of the human being through the resurrection, it would be otiose to think that *God's power is prevented by such obstacles from the attainment of its goal* [σκοπός]. And *its goal is one and only one*: after the realisation, through each single human being, of the full totality—when some will be found to have been already purified from evil during the present life, while others will have been *healed by means of fire* for the given periods, and yet others will have not even tasted, in this life, either good or evil to the same extent—, to *bestow on all the participation in the goods that are in the Godhead*, of which Scripture says that no eye has ever seen and no ear has heard them, nor are they graspable through reasoning. Now, this, I think, is nothing but *coming to be in the Godhead* itself.

Ramelli page 419

All that belong to the same species and is of the same family, even those who were disinherited, are spared from punishment and adopted to participation in God's divinity.

by assuming in body and soul the first fruits of the common nature, [the Son] has sanctified it, preserving it in himself pure from every evil and uncontaminated, to consecrate it in incorruptibility to the Father of incorruptibility, and to attract to himself, through it, *all that belongs to the same species by nature* [πάν τὸ συγγενές κατὰ τὴν φύσιν] and is of the same family [ὁμόφυλον], to readmit those disinherited to the *inheritance of filial adoption*, God's enemies to *the participation in his divinity*.

Ramelli page 421

Jesus achieves a common salvation of humanity by resurrecting human beings who are united with him and reconciled to him.

But the only-begotten Son of God himself resurrects the human being that is united to himself, by separating the soul from the body and then uniting them again. In this way, the *common* [κοινή] *salvation of human nature* is achieved. This is why he is also called the Initiator of Life [ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς]. Indeed, the Only-Begotten God, by dying for us and rising again, has reconciled the universe to himself, ransoming by means of his flesh and blood, as war prisoners, all of us who participate in him through a bond of blood [διὰ τοῦ συγγενοῦς ἡμῶν αἵματος].
(Contr. c. Apoll. GNO III/1, 154)

Ramelli page 422

In God's wisdom he allows humans to do whatever they want, to taste all the evils they wish, and then come back with desire to their original state of bliss voluntarily.

Therefore, that *free mastery over ourselves* [ἐξουσία] *could remain* in our nature, but *evil might be removed* from it, divine Wisdom excogitated the following plan: allow the human being to do whatever it wanted and taste all the evils it wished, and thus *learn* from experience what it has preferred to the Good, and *then come back*, with its desire, to its original beatitude, *voluntarily* [ἐκουσίως], banishing from its own nature all that which is subject to passions and irrational, by purifying itself in the present life by means of meditation and philosophy, or by plunging, after death, into the purifying fire.

Ramelli page 427

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390)



Icon of St. Gregory the
Theologian Fresco from Kariye
Camii, Istanbul

Gregory of Nazianzus (Nazianzen) was a 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople and theologian. He is widely considered the most accomplished rhetorical stylist of the patristic age. As a classically trained orator and philosopher he infused Hellenism (Greek influence) into the early church. Gregory made a significant impact on the shape of Trinitarian theology among both Greek and Latin-speaking theologians, and he is remembered as the "Trinitarian Theologian". Much of his theological work continues to influence modern theologians, especially in regard to the relationship among the three Persons of the Trinity. Along with the brothers Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, he is known as one of the Cappadocian Fathers.

He often uses imagery of God as a physician and one who heals – as did Basil, Origen, and Clement that came before him. They all saw God as one who will do whatever it takes, even very extreme measures, to save sinners which is God's

only goal for them. He also saw God (as did the other three mentioned above) as an "educator" who threatens and uses fear to correct humanity that he so loves, simply because initially they are not able to respond in love back to him.

The measure of my love for humanity is greater than the measure of my instruction for them, which is for their purification.

I have afflicted you with just little anger, and I shall glorify you with mercy for the world to come [ἐλέω αἰωνίῳ]: *the measure of my love for humankind is greater, beyond the measure of my instruction of them [...]; the latter is for their purification, the former for my glory.*

Ramelli page 441

What I see as God's torment is really medicine for my salvation.

God is my accuser without a written accusation [...] For *tormenting* me is a *medicine for salvation*.

Ramelli page 443

When John speaks of "God's axe" against the tree root, he speaks of amputation of what is incurable in the soul.

What is fire? The consummation of what is light and unworthy and the fervour of the Spirit. What is the ax? The amputation of what is incurable in the soul [...] What is the sword? The Logos's cutting, which separates the Good from evil.

Ramelli page 448

If some do not follow the path of Christ, perhaps in the next life they will be baptized by the means of fire which consumes every kind of evil.

Therefore, if they wish, let them follow our path, which is also that of Christ; otherwise, let them follow their own. Perhaps, on the other side, they will be baptised by means of fire [τῷ πυρὶ βαπτισθήσονται], in the extreme baptism [τῷ τελευταίῳ βαπτίσματι], that which is more painful and moreover longer [τῷ ἐπιπονωτέρῳ τε καὶ μακροτέρῳ], that which devours matter like straw and completely consumes the lightness/unworthiness of every kind of evilness [ἐσθίει ὡς χόρτον τὴν ὕλην καὶ δαπανᾷ πάσης κακίας κουφότητα]. (PG 36,356BC)

Ramelli page 448

Someday God will be everything in everyone when the restoration of all things is complete.

God will be "all in all" in the time of apokatastasis [ἔσται δὲ ὁ Θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἀποκαταστάσεως], when we are no more many [μηκέτι πολλὰ ὦμεν], as we are now, in movements (of will) and passions [τοῖς κινήμασι καὶ τοῖς πάθεσιν], and we shall not bring in us little or nothing of God, but we shall all be entirely in the form of God [ὅλοι θεοειδεῖς], able to receive God entirely, and only God [ὅλου Θεοῦ χωρητικοὶ καὶ μόνου]. This is the perfection [τελείωσις] to which we aspire, and it is above all Paul himself who guarantees us this [...] he who elsewhere says that Christ will be "all and in all" [τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι].³⁹²

Ramelli page 453

The purifying fire, which is Jesus himself, consumes the evil and brings the good in us, being a fire applied in love for all humanity.

Let us escape, I beg you, only from one kind of light: that which comes from the bitter fire [τοῦ πικροῦ πυρός]: let us not proceed in the light of our fire, in the flame by which we have been burnt. For I know of a purifying fire [καθατήριον], which Christ came to kindle on earth, Christ who is called "fire" himself with metaphorical and mystical words. This fire consumes matter and the evil disposition [ἀναλωτικὸν τοῦτο τῆς ὕλης καὶ τῆς πονηρᾶς ἐστὶν ἕξεως], and he wants that it is kindled as soon as possible. For he ardently wants the Good to be made immediately, since even inflamed coals he gives us in order to help us [καὶ πυρὸς ἄνθρακας δίδωσιν ἡμῖν εἰς βοήθειαν]. I also know a fire that is not only purifying, but punishing too [καὶ κολαστήριον]: it is the fire of Sodom, which pours down like rain on all sinners, mingled with divine storm and sulphur; it is that which is prepared for the devil and his angels; it is that which goes forward before the face of the Lord and burns his enemies all around, and the one which is even more fearful than these are: the one that is mentioned along with the worm that does not die [τῷ ἀκοιμήτῳ σκώληκι], a fire that, for sinners, cannot be quenched, but endures during the future aeon [μὴ σβεννύμενον ἀλλὰ διαιωνίζων]. For all these aspects pertain to the destructive power [ἀφανιστικῆς], unless it is not dear to someone to think, even in this case, that this fire is applied out of love for human beings, and in a way that is worthy of the One who punishes [εἰ μὴ τῷ φίλον κἀνταῦθα νοεῖν τοῦτο φιλανθρωπότερον, καὶ τοῦ Κολάζοντος ἐπαξίως].

Ramelli page 451

All who descended from Adam were deceived by the devil and destroyed by sin. But they have also been saved by the "heavenly Adam" who is Jesus.

Christ's suffering, thanks to which all of us—and not one but not another—have been restored [...] All of us, who participate in the same Adam, were deceived by the serpent and killed by sin; all of us have been saved by the heavenly Adam.

(Or. 33,9, PG 36,225B)

Ramelli page 454

God uses his wrath to open up a way to bring an overflow of goodness, beginning with light remedy and moving on to more severe remedies as needed.

He opposes the extreme desolation to beauty, where he speaks of God's wrath, which breaks the earth: "ahead, the garden of delight; behind, the valley of destruction." These are dreadful things, the culmination of dreadful things, as far as the affliction extends only to present realities, and perception does not yet torment us with a harsher suffering. For, as it is the case with illnesses, the suffering that afflicts a person is worse than that which is not present. And the vessels of God's wrath contain things that are even more tremendous than these; may it not happen that you ever have to experience them. And do not let yourselves be surprised to take refuge into God's mercy, trying to persuade with tears the One who is always inclined to pity, and thus avoid the consequences of wrath by means of repentance. This is still lenience and mild pedagogy, the beginning of a beating that forms those who are still little. It is the smoke of wrath, the proem of the tests; it is not yet the fire that burns up, the culmination of movement; these are not the pieces of coal full of flames, the extremity of the scourge. For a part of the scourge is made up by *threats*, another is extended; a part is held with violence, and another *persuades*. Likewise, *teaching* people by means of both beating and threats [πληγῇ παιδεύων καὶ τῇ ἀπειλῇ] and using his wrath *in order to open up a way*, for an *overflow of goodness*, God begins with *lighter remedies*, lest he need *more radical remedies*, but, if he is compelled, he resorts even to the more radical remedies *in his pedagogic work* [παιδεύων δὲ καὶ τοῖς μείζουσιν, εἰ πρὸς ταῦτα ἐκβιασθεῖη].

Ramelli page 452

Jesus came in human form to restore humanity, to collect them all into one group, and then to place them into the arms of God.

He came in human form to *restore humanity*, extended his holy corporeal form up to the extremities of the earth, collected all mortals and *formed them into unity*, and placed them into the arms of the great Deity after *washing away every stain* by means of the blood of the Lamb, and, qua head of mortal humanity, he *lifted it up onto the path to heaven*.

Ramelli page 455

Jesus offered his blood to God and purified the whole world.

He offered his own blood to God and *purified the whole world* [κόσμον δ' ἐκάθαρ-
ρεν ἅπαντα]; he took up the cross and *clove sins to it* [πάγῃ δ' ἡλοισιν ἁμαρτάς].

Ramelli page 456

God's punishment is an act of love for Humanity.

[God's plan for humanity was that] the *good* belonging to the one who had chosen it would be no less than that of the One who provided its seeds, cultivator of immortal plants [φυτῶν ἀθανάτων γεωργόν] and of divine thoughts as well, both the simpler and the more perfect, naked on account of simplicity and a life without artifice, with *no covering or obstacle of any sort*. For this is how *it was appropriate* [ἔπρεπεν] *for the human being to be at the beginning* [τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς]. And God gave the human being a law, matter for free will [ὑ-
λην τῷ αὐτεξουσίῳ], and the law was a commandment regarding the plants the human being was allowed to take and the one he could not touch. The latter was the tree of knowledge, which was *neither planted with an evil intention at the beginning, nor forbidden out of hostility* [...], but it is good if participated in aptly [...], while it is not yet good for those who are still behind. [...] Because of the *devil's deception* [...], Adam forgot the commandment given to him [...], and at the same time, *due to evilness, was chased away from the tree of life, from Paradise, and from God, and was covered with skin tunics* [δερματίνους ἀμφιέν-
νυται χιτῶνας], which probably are *the heavier and mortal flesh, which puts up resistance* [τὴν παχυτέραν σάρκα καὶ θνητὴν καὶ ἀντίτυπον]. And then for the first time he became aware of his own shame, and hid from God. And the human being *profited something even here: death, and the fact that sin would be interrupted, so that evil* (or: the damage) *should not be immortal* [κερδαίνει μὲν τι κἀνταῦθα, τὸν θάνατον, καὶ τὸ διακοπῆναι τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἀθάνατον ᾖ τὸ κακόν]. And so *punishment became an act of love for humanity*; for I am persuaded that *this is the way in which God punishes* [καὶ γίνεται φιλανθρωπία ἢ τιμωρία. οὕτω γὰρ πείθομαι κολάζειν Θεόν].

Ramelli page 457

Evagrius Ponticus (345-399)



Evagrius Ponticus (left), John of Sinai, and an unknown saint.
17th-century icon.

Evagrius Ponticus, was a Christian monk and ascetic. One of the most influential theologians in the late fourth-century church, he was well known as a thinker, polished speaker, and gifted writer. He was a disciple of several influential contemporary church leaders, including Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Macarius of Egypt. He was a teacher of others, including John Cassian. Since he was greatly influenced by Basil and Gregory (and was an “assistant” to the latter), he was most likely well acquainted with the massive writings of Origen. He was one who clearly believed in the full and complete restoration of all humanity.

God resides even in the very worst of all humans so that he can someday raise up all humanity to be all that He is.

60, Evagrius defines Christ “the leaven of the divinity who, in its goodness, has hidden himself in the unleavened lump of humanity,” in order to “raise the whole lump to all that God is.” This description of Christ, which echoes Matt 13:33 and Luke 13:21, reminds me strongly of what is found in Ephrem’s quotation of Bardaisan in *Prose Refutations*, II p. 158,20 ff.: “The Logos is the unknown leaven that is hidden in the soul, which is deprived of knowledge and extraneous with respect to both the body and the Logos. If this is the case, the body cannot adhere to the soul, because it is earthly, nor can the soul adhere to the Logos, which is divine.” Ephrem attests that Bardaisan,

Ramelli page 479

In the age to come, virtue and good will consume and eliminate evil.

Virtue, the Good, will *consume evil*, and this will come to pass in the future aeon, until *evilness will be eliminated* [τοῦτο δὲ γενήσεται ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ μέλλοντι, ἕως ἂν ἐκλείπη ἡ κακία].
(*In Prov.* p. 108,9)

Ramelli page 489

There was a time when evil did not exist, and there will come a time when it will be no more.

There was a time when evil(ness) did not exist, and there will come a time when *it will no more exist* [ἦν γὰρ ὅτε οὐκ ἦν κακία καὶ ἔσται ὅτε οὐκ ἔσται]. But there was no time when the Good/virtue did not exist, and there will be *no time when it will no more exist*. For the seed of the good energies is inextinguishable. (KG 1,40 = Περὶ λογισμῶν 31)

Ramelli page 482

When evil has been eliminated, ignorance will no longer exist among rational creatures.

If the earth were destroyed, night would no more exist on the face of the firmament. Likewise, *when evil has been eliminated, ignorance will no more exist* among rational creatures, because *ignorance is the shadow of evil*.

Ramelli page 485

All rational creatures will someday submit to the name of the Lord.

If all the nations will come to bow before the Lord, clearly also those who want war will come; and if this is the case, *the whole nature of the rational creatures will submit to the name of the Lord*, who makes known the Father who is in him. Indeed, he is the Name that is superior to all other names.

Ramelli page 486

Christ will lead all rational creatures throughout the ages into union with God.

Who will be able to express God's grace? Who will investigate the *logoi* of Providence, and how *Christ leads* the rational nature throughout the aeons up to the *union of the Holy Unity*? (KG 4,89)

Ramelli page 494

Eventually ignorance will be overcome, and sinners will be purified.

In the aeon to come the bodies of ignorance will be overcome, whereas in that which will be after it the transformation will receive an increment of fire and air, and those who are below will apply themselves to science, if it is true that *'the houses of the impious will receive purification'* and that Christ *'works miracles today and tomorrow, and on the third day is done.'* (KG 3,9)

Ramelli page 494

It is God, in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who restores all of the living and the dead.

The morning star is the symbol of the saints, whereas the evening star is the symbol of those who are in Sheol. But the *restoration of the orbit of all is the holy Trinity.* (KG 3,60)

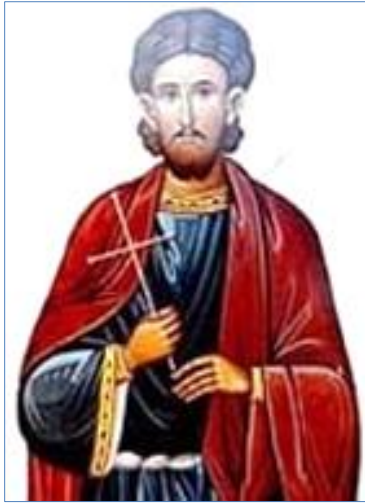
Ramelli page 494

God's providence pushes people from evil and ignorance into virtue and knowledge.

God's Providence is double: on the one hand, it is said to *preserve* the existence of bodies and incorporeal realities; on the other hand, to push rational creatures *from evilness and ignorance to virtue and knowledge*. The first knowledge to be found in rational creatures is that of the Holy Trinity; then, there occurred the movement of free will, *Providence, which rescues and never abandons anyone*, and then the Judgement, and again the movement of free will, Providence, the Judgement, and so on with all this *up to the Holy Trinity*. Thus, *every Judgement comes between the movement of free will and divine Providence.* (KG 6,59-75)

Ramelli page 505

Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428)



Theodore was bishop of Mopsuestia from 392 to 428 AD. He is the best known representative of the middle School of Antioch of hermeneutics (Bible interpretation). Theodore first appears as the early companion and friend of Chrysostom, his fellow-townsmen, his equal in rank but two or three years his senior in age. Chrysostom credits his friend with diligent study, but his luxurious life seems to have received an equal share of his thoughts. When Chrysostom himself had been converted to the monastic life of Basil of Caesarea, he likewise converted Maximus and Theodore. Theodore clearly (based on his writings) was a proponent of the full restoration of all things by God in eternity, and that God's purpose in punishment is correction and healing.

After undergoing punishment, sinners will finally cease to be punished.

The wicked [...], after *converting* by means of the fear of punishments or of the violence of punishments themselves [...], will finally deserve to *enjoy God's generosity*. For Jesus would never have said, "until you give back the very last coin," unless it were possible that, after undergoing punishment for our sins, we *shall be liberated* from them. Nor would Jesus have said [...], "he will be beaten many times" and "he will be beaten few times," unless *punishment were commensurate with sins* and, after undergoing it, sinners *finally ceased to be punished*.

Ramelli page 541

God will make sinners new after they have fallen, and will restore them again to their original condition.

not to have them fall into perdition (ἀπολέσαι), but to fashion them anew (ἀναπλάσαι) [...] to fashion them anew after they had fallen *and restore them again into their original condition* (διαπεσόντας ἀναπλάσαι καὶ πάλιν εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἀποκαταστήσαι).

Ramelli page 543

All humans will eventually submit to Jesus, even all sinners, which results in joyous salvation and not suffering.

every being to Christ, quoting Hebr 2:8 and 1 Cor 15; he observes that “all human beings will submit to the Son,” including the impious (Psalm 9:21). And above all he claims, in his comment on Psalm 3:11, that the submission to Christ will be tantamount to salvation: “the submission of a soul that is not sad, but joyous, is a *submission* [*subiectio*] that produces, *not suffering, but salvation* [*salvatio*].”

Ramelli page 544

With the suffering of his own body Jesus has provided the universal removal of sin and elimination of evil.

In his own body Christ has realised the salvific economy for us. With the suffering of his own body he has provided the *universal remission of sin and elimination of evils* [κοινήν παρέσχετο τῆς ἁμαρτίας τὴν ἄφεσιν καὶ τῶν κακῶν τὴν ἀπαλλαγὴν].

Ramelli page 546

The Father wants, what the Son brings about, and what the Spirit assists him in ... the salvation of all humanity!

that, he has entered heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, in his heavenly liturgy (ibid. 15,16). Salvation has been wanted by the Father; and the Spirit assists humans with its grace (ibid. 2,10–19; 10,7–14). The Son, for his part, continually operates with the Father and the Spirit for the salvation of all humans (ibid. 8,17).

Ramelli page 547

God has summed up all Humanity in Christ, and has restored the whole creation through him.

has recapitulated all beings in Christ [...] as though he made a renewal that epitomises all, *a restoration of the whole creation*, through Him. [...] This will come to pass in a future aeon, when *all humanity and all powers endowed with logos will adhere to Him*, as is right, and will obtain mutual concord and *stable peace*.

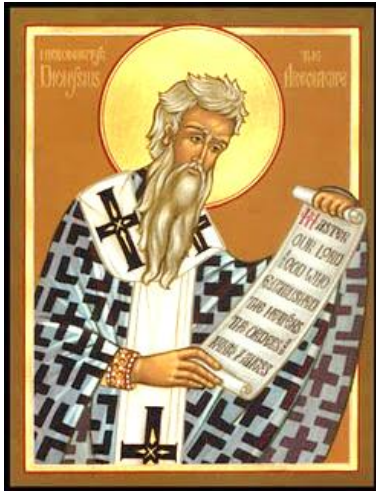
Ramelli page 547

Just as in Adam all humans died, so in Jesus all humans will be made alive.

15:21–22: “Since death came through a human being, the resurrection from the dead likewise came through a human being; and just as in Adam all die, so also will all be vivified in Christ”⁶⁰¹—Christ as a new Adam, Christ in that

Ramelli page 548

Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457)



Theodoret was an influential theologian of the School of Antioch, biblical commentator, and Christian bishop of Cyrrhus (423–457). He was the successor to Theodore and played a pivotal role in several 5th-century Byzantine Church controversies that led to various ecumenical acts and schisms. He wrote against Cyril of Alexandria's "Twelve Anathemas" which were sent to Nestorius and did not personally condemn Nestorius until the Council of Chalcedon. His writings against Cyril were included in the "Three Chapters" Controversy and were condemned at the Second Council of Constantinople. However, he is canonized as "Blessed" in the Eastern Orthodox Church. His position on the restoration of all things

by God is less clear than most of the other Greek Church Fathers in the early church. But he clearly viewed God's punishment as therapeutic and that it has only a "good purpose" for the sinner. All of this is clear in his writings.

Jesus seeks every single lost sheep in humanity so that eventually he will restore all of humanity.

on the parable of the lost (and recovered) sheep, in *Hom.* 168: "the one lost sheep represents the whole human race lost in Adam, and so the Good Shepherd follows the one, seeks the one, in order that in the one He may find all, in the one He may *restore all*."

Ramelli page 572

God will bring an end to His judgment and will not stay angry forever.

ment decided by him: "After his anger, God will bring to an end his Judgment; for he will neither be angry unto the end, nor keep his wrath to eternity" (*In Is.* 13). Theodoret's notion of the resurrection, like that of Origen

Ramelli page 572

God torments and punishes humanity because He loves everyone and wants them cured

tion: "He discloses here the *reason for punishment*; for the Lord, who loves humanity, *torments us only to cure us*" (*Hom in Ezech. 6:6*). This is also why

Ramelli page 572

God will finally be "all in all", because all will be liberated from sin, turn to God, and never again do any evil.

"That God may be all in all." Now God is everywhere from the ontological point of view, since God's substance is impossible to circumscribe, and "in Him we live, move, and exist," according to the divine apostle. But *from the point of view of good will and delight*, now God is not in all. For God *delights in those who fear him*, and in those who hope for his mercy. And even in these, God is not all now. For nobody is pure from contamination [...] thus, God rejoices in their good deeds, but not in their evil deeds. But in the future life, when *corruption will cease*, and immortality will be provided, *passions will have no room*. And when these have been *utterly chased away*, *no kind of sin will be committed any longer*. In this way God will finally be "all in all," for *all* will have been *liberated from sin*, and will have *turned toward God*, and will *no more admit of any fall into evil*.

Ramelli page 573

In the future life when death will be no more, life will never end and sin will no longer exist, and then God will be "all in all".

This will happen more precisely in the future life. For Paul taught as follows also in his letter to the Corinthians. Indeed, after saying, "the last enemy will be destroyed: death," and "he has subjected everything to his feet," he has finally stated: "That God may be *all in all*." I have already interpreted this passage more extensively, yet I shall say something briefly here too. In the present life, to be sure, God is in all, insofar as his substance is impossible to circumscribe, but God is not "all in all," because some are impious, and some are transgressors, whereas God dwells in those who fear him, and in those who hope for his mercy. But in the future life, when mortality will pass away, and immortality will be provided, and *sin will have no more room*, *God will be "all in all"*.

Ramelli page 574

Cyril of Alexandria (376-444)



Cyril of Alexandria, was the Patriarch of Alexandria from 412 to 444. He was enthroned when the city was at the height of its influence and power within the Roman Empire. Cyril wrote extensively and was a leading protagonist in the Christological controversies of the late-4th and 5th centuries. He was a central figure in the Council of Ephesus in 431, which led to the deposition of Nestorius as Patriarch of Constantinople.

His reputation within the Christian world has resulted in his titles "Pillar of Faith" and "Seal of all the Fathers", but Theodosius II (the Roman Emperor), condemned him for behaving like a "proud pharaoh", and the Nestorian bishops at the Council of Ephesus declared him a heretic, labeling him as a "monster, born to destroy the church." He was influenced by Athanasius and the three "Cappadocian Fathers" (Basil and the two Gregories). Based on his writings, he is clearly a proponent of complete restoration by God of all people and things.

Jesus will bring all salvation to completion by exerting his power over all humanity, restoring them, and then having them return to himself.

he submits from the point of view of the salvific economy, for our sake. Since the human being, having sinned, ended up with being submitted to corruption, and, because of the devil and the demons, detached itself from God [...] then the Only-Begotten became a human being for our sake, and *has annihilated* [κατήργηκε] *the power of death* and also *eliminated* [ἐξῆρπε] *the root of death, which is sin*; he *threw out* [ἐξέβαλε] *the ruler of this world*. After doing all this and *bringing the whole salvific economy to completion*, he will hand to the Father the Kingdom⁶⁹² *that once upon a time had been stolen from him and had passed under the power of others,*⁶⁹³ *so to exert his power over all beings on earth, after restoring them* [ἀποκαταστήσας], *having them return to himself*, once he has *annihilated* [κατηργημένου] *death and satan*, who had tyrannised them, the Son will have again, and for the world to come, the excellence of the *power over all* [πάντων].

Ramelli page 599

In Jesus we are all objects of mercy, relieved of death, and have hope of never-ending life.

thanks to which *all of us* [πάντες ἡμεῖς] have become the object of mercy and *the power of death has fallen* [πέπτωκε] and the hope for *life without end has shone forth* in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ramelli page 601

Jesus became human with us to bear our sins, cancel condemnation, and to conform us to perfection.

Christ “has appeared on earth really as a human being, to bear on his body *the sins of all of us*, on the wood (of the cross), and to *cancel the condemnation that was written against us*, so to make his own our flesh's weakness and kill pleasure that tyrannises our limbs, and *transform all that which is in us into a better and more stable order*, to *conform again our whole nature to virtue*, as well as the archetypal image after which it has been created.” All of this passes through Christ's “inhumanation”: “the flesh in which he dwelt was stronger than death: he suffered and won, and showed that the death of his own flesh is cause and matter of our salvation.” For, as Cyril has just said, the death of Christ has been the death of sin for the restoration or apokatasasis of the image of God that is human nature. Christ has “emptied hell completely,” living there only the devil.

Ramelli page 601

Pg 78.551-53

God's plan, in the fullness of time, is to sum up in himself all humanity in heaven and on earth, and to unify them in himself.

As a plan for the fullness of times, to *recapitulate in himself all beings*, in heaven and on earth, and to *unify them in himself, just as they were in the beginning*.

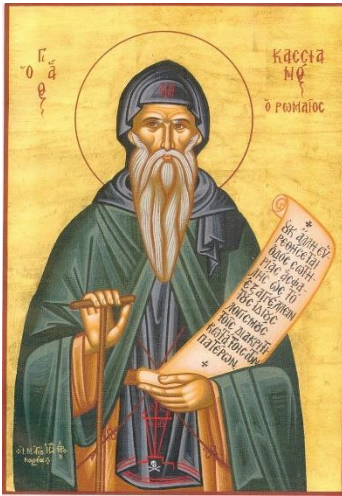
Ramelli page 602

The eventual “restoration of all things” is the return of humanity to its original state (before the fall of humanity into sin), or to a state that is even better!

Cyril grounds his discourse in Rom 8:3–4 and Hebr 2:14–15, when he remarks that Christ condemned sin in the flesh and annihilated death, which is to be understood primarily as spiritual death. Humanity had lost “the good given by God,” but the immutable divine Logos became a human being, so that the Good could be immutably preserved in human nature (*Comm. in Io.* 1,693–694). Cyril describes again the eventual apokatastasis as the return of humanity to its original state, or one which is even better: that of incorruptibility, of course to be understood not only as physical, but also as spiritual (*ibid.* 3,80).

Ramelli page 602

John Cassian (360-435)



John Cassian was a Christian monk and theologian celebrated in both the Western and Eastern Churches for his mystical writings. Cassian is noted for his role in bringing the ideas and practices of Christian monasticism to the early medieval West. Son of wealthy parents, he received a good education: his writings show the influence of Cicero, and he was bilingual in Latin and Greek.

Cassian had a strong spiritual orientation, to the point that he was somewhat “mystical” in his thinking, but he was also a very good theologian – a combination not always found in Early Church writers. He was a contemporary with Augustine but seemed to align himself more with Origen and the majority of other Greek Fathers who held to the eventual restoration of all things by God.

The idea that God does not want all humans to be saved, but instead only some, is a grave blasphemy.

If God does not want any of these little ones to perish, how could we even imagine without *grave blasphemy* that God *does not want all humans to be saved, but only some instead of all*? Should some perish, these would perish *against God's will*.

Ramelli page 682

God is like a kind physician, acting even against our will, to rescue us from evil and hell.

Like an extremely benevolent physician, for our own sake he will bring us what is opposite to our will, and sometimes delays and prevents our *evil intentions and deadly attempts*, that they *may not have their horrible effect*, and while we rush toward death, he *pulls us back toward salvation*, and, while we are unaware of this, he *saves us from hell's jaws*.

Ramelli page 682

God does not want anyone lost, but instead calls them back to himself, demonstrating that even one who has strayed far from him will not perish.

The intention that God had when he created the human being, not that this should die, but that it might *live forever*, remains unchanged. And when *God's goodness* sees even the most tiny sparkle of good will shine in us, a sparkle that *it was God to draw from our hearts*, the Godhead cherishes and encourages it, and endeavours to make it grow, and nourishes it with its bread. For God *wants all human beings to be saved and to reach the knowledge of truth*. Indeed, he says: Your Father, who is in heaven, does not want any of these little ones to be lost, and again: *God does not want to have any soul lost, and rather calls it back*. In this way he demonstrates that *even the one who has gone far* (from God) *will not perish altogether* [...] Because I live, the Lord says, *I do not want the death of the sinner, but I want him to convert and live*.

Ramelli page 682

God drags humans into salvation against their own will, and in his goodness he prevents them from falling into evil.

Human reason cannot easily determine in what sense the Lord "gives to those who ask for," "is easily found by those who look for him," and "opens to those who knock," whereas on the other hand God *is found by those who were not looking for him, openly appears among those who had not requested this, and always stretches his arms toward those who do not believe and reject him, calls those who resist him* and are very far from him, *drags humans to salvation against their own will* [...] *in his goodness he prevents those who are falling headlong toward evilness*.

Ramelli page 684

God's grace always works with our will for our own sake, and assists, protects, and defends us in everything.

there are *seeds of Good* planted by the Creator's kindness, *but if they are not assisted by God, they cannot grow toward perfection* [...] *God's grace always collaborates with our will* for the latter's sake, and assists, protects, and defends it in everything [...] *God's grace continues to be gratuitous*, in that, in exchange for small efforts, with inestimable generosity it gives us *such a glory of immortality, and such gifts of eternal beatitude*.

Ramelli page 684

God, the Father of all, works indifferently "all in all", like an extremely good father and an extremely benevolent physician.

God, the Father of all, works indifferently *all in all*, as the apostle says, like an *extremely good father and an extremely benevolent physician*. Now he places in us the germs of salvation and offers zeal to each one in his free will, now he guarantees the success of our work and the perfection of goodness; now he saves people, even against their will and without their own notice, from an imminent ruin and a headlong fall [...] now he offers them the opportunity to be saved and drives them away from intentions that would bring them to death. He assists those who want and are already running, and *drags along those who do not want and withstand, and compels them to want the Good* [...] That our salvation is not to be ascribed to the merits of our works, but to the heavenly grace, is taught by the words of the Lord himself: You will know that I am the Lord *when I shall have done good to you* for the sake of my Name, not according to your bad behaviours, not according to your evil deeds [...] It must be thought that *the God of all operates in all* so to exhort, protect, fortify, even *without taking away from us the freedom of will that he himself gave us*.

Ramelli page 686

God brings salvation to humanity in various and infinite ways, forcing people who resist him even against their will.

God brings salvation to humanity in various and infinite ways [...] also forcing people who resist him, even against their will. Sometimes God provides assistance for the accomplishment of what he sees that we wish for our good, *some other times he puts in us the very principle of the good wish, granting us both the beginning of good works and perseverance in them* [...] *It is God who first calls us to himself, and, while we are still ignorant and unwilling, leads us to salvation.*

Ramelli page 685

Paraphrases of Quotes

All of the paraphrases for each writer have been collected and put into an easy to read, paragraph format. However, some of the ideas in each paragraph may be somewhat disconnected since these paragraphs have been artificially created. So please allow some tolerance and flexibility when reading them. But the purpose is to try to collect all the ideas of each writer, allowing the reader to get a summary picture of what they each believed. It is strongly recommended that you go back and read the original quotes and form your own opinion about each writer based on their actual writings in full context.

Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202)

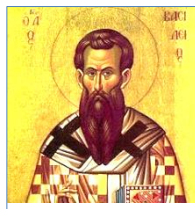


From the beginning God did not permit humanity to be engulfed by sin, but instead had a plan to save them. Humanity receives incorruptibility from God in order to love Him even more. Suffering and burning by fire happens for the sake of humanity which is saved!

Those who are lost are no different from those who are found because the Lord seeks every lost sheep. God summed up and concluded in Himself all of humanity in order to do away with sin and give life to everyone. Jesus summed up in himself all human nature and provided a new creation through his death that freed humanity from death.

Through the resurrection of Jesus, death will be chased away and humanity will be restored. God never uses violence to accomplish his purpose. God became human in Jesus in order to join humanity to God. God saves all human beings through his wisdom. Jesus accomplished salvation for all humanity.

Clement of Alexandria (150-215)

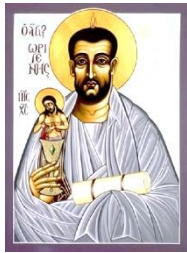


Everything is ordered by the Lord of the universe for the purpose of universal salvation, leading everyone to something better. God, acts in goodness to compel those who are hardened to repent. Someday, in life after death, sinners will be purified.

Jesus brought the “good news” even to those who were in hell. God is good and can save with impartial justice people here and now or those on the other side of death. Paul teaches that the end of all things will be the restoration we hope for. It is typical of God to only do good, and to always produce (even from evil) a good and useful outcome.

God does not punish, because punishment is paying back evil with further evil. Jesus is the Lord of everyone and saves everyone as a result of his goodness. Jesus inflicts wounds on people to save them from eternal death. After humans become pure in their hearts through suffering, restoration awaits them in eternal contemplation.

Origen (185-254)



The power of Jesus dying on the cross is so great that it will save, not only all humans, but also all beings from all ages! Evil and meanness are opposed to good. As a consequence, meanness and evil do not really exist. When God is said to be "all in all", it means that God will completely reside in every single creature.

Eventually, evil will be entirely destroyed. The destruction of the “last enemy” is not the devil who God created, but the hostile will of the devil himself. I do not think death is eternal in the same way that life and justice are, especially when considering that the “last enemy” to be destroyed is death itself. God will become "all" for his creatures who he restores to a state of soundness and purity.

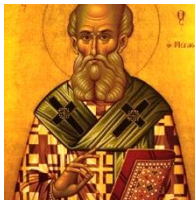
God says "I shall kill and then give life"; he does not say "I shall give life and then kill". It is not true that the supreme God, who dominates over all rational creatures, cannot also cure them. God assists people, little by little, leading them by the hand, and restores them to their original condition placing them on high.

Methodius of Olympus (250-311)



God in his love for humanity has not left it in a state where it will be culpable forever or bear blame indefinitely. Jesus assumed human nature in order to defeat the devil and to destroy the condemnation that arose with the fall of humanity. God put a limit on sin through death so that humanity, living in sin, should not be subject to eternal condemnation. Corruption has disappeared along with the pains of illness that make people shed tears; death has been eliminated and all stupidity has perished.

Athanasius (296-373)

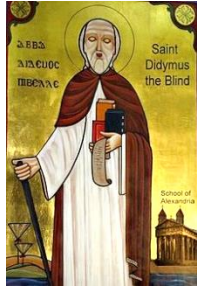


Jesus became human to liberate all humans, resurrect all of them from the dead, and ransom all of them from sin. Jesus set free all beings, and pacified all of them in himself. Christ was born as a human being for our sake, and has liberated humanity from sin completely and entirely.

The Father's work for humanity is not in vain because Jesus died to make humans incorruptible, causing death to disappear. Corruption will disappear from all humanity, forever, thanks to the resurrection of Christ when he paid all that was owed for everyone by his death. God's love is by far greater than that of human beings. Though we are dead, he revives us and brings us to heaven.

Our Savior's death has liberated the world, and by his wounds all of us have been healed. Love redeems all human beings to salvation. Christ desired the repentance and conversion of humanity rather than its death. In this way all evil will be burned away from all human beings. Help and salvation was God's plan before the creation of the world, and then it was executed by the Savior who dwelled here on Earth.

Didymus the Blind (313-398)

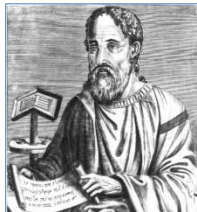


It must be noted that the Greek word "aionios" has several meanings. Among all rational creatures there are also some who have become wicked, but they will be restored once they have fallen into the hands of Jesus. The fire of corrective punishment is not against people themselves, but against their evil habits and qualities.

If evil has the power to push people in the wrong direction, then good (God) has the power to bring them back again. The Savior looks for the soul in order to lead it to salvation and to bring it back to its original condition. The Father has given to Christ the power and dominion over all beings so that no being who has been given to him should perish.

When Jesus returns, the end will be made like the beginning. Every Soul which is subject to death and joined with evil, will eventually be joined to Christ. When immortality is present, death disappears. Therefore, when what is mortal puts on immortality, death is defeated and annihilated.

Eusebius of Caesarea (296-339)



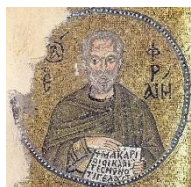
Original sin must be rectified with subsequent remedies. Therefore, it is necessary to return humanity to the condition that is proper. What else does "until the times of universal restoration" mean, if not that beings in the world to come must receive their perfect restoration?

The Savior who loves humanity, having liberated the souls of human beings from death, has also removed every tear from every face. Jesus will eventually destroy death in such a way that it will no longer exist. When the reign of Christ shines forth in the world to come, all human beings will enjoy it. Once all evil has been eliminated and the last enemy (death) has been destroyed, God will be "all in all".

The chief aim of Christ's reign is that all will be submitted to his feet. Jesus, who is savior of absolutely all people, will reign and rectify those who are still imperfect and will heal those who still need healing. All

beings will freely submit to Jesus and will see him as Savior and King of all people. He will subject all beings to himself and this must be understood as a saving submission.

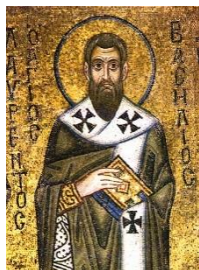
Ephrem the Syrian (306-373)



Those who have found mercy can obtain punishment ... and then forgiveness. Thanks to divine mercy, hell will be emptied. God, after giving people retribution in hell, will reward them in the Kingdom. Sin and sheol were scared, death shook, the dead rebelled, and Satan also trembled because sinners revolted against him. God is the healer of humanity and has eliminated death.

Jesus is the healer of all humanity, through his mercy, compassion, goodness, and love. Jesus is the physician who came to this earth to gently heal our wounds and have mercy on sinners. When Jesus went into the grave, he got rid of death and forgave all who sinned. When Jesus was crucified, all humanity (Adam) was redeemed and glorified.

Basil of Caesarea (329-379)



God, in Jesus, came to be one with all people, unifying them in himself. The peace given by the Lord extends to all eternity, since it knows neither limitations nor boundaries. For all humanity will submit to him and recognize his power.

God acts to help humans by dooming sin into disappearance, devouring it through a purifying fire. Restoration is the "absolute fullness" that is brought about in this life and the next by the Holy Spirit. Though people of humanity are burned by fire, God does not threaten destruction but purification. Those who are made worthy of being restored to their original condition, are saved by means of judgement and mercy.

Because of evil, painful treatment is required. But after evil is destroyed, healing will be administered to bring restoration. Whoever looks for the truth will finally see it face-to-face and will attain the perfection of

knowledge when the time of universal restoration comes. God's work is to do away with all evil and liberate His creatures from every illness.

Macrina the Younger (330-379)



Finally, after long cycles of ages, evil will disappear and only good will remain. God's main purpose in judgement is not to bring about punishment of those who have sinned, but to separate them from evil.

Scripture teaches the complete disappearance of evil. For if God will be resident in all beings, then there will be no evil. Those who are now excluded due to sin, will eventually be able to enter the recesses of divine favor. Sinners will finally recover (after long time periods of purification) in thanks to God's much needed care using the therapy of fire.

Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)



God will be "in all" only when it will be impossible to detect any trace of evil in humanity. God's good purpose, (which is inspired by his love for humanity), and his judgment (which is in accordance with justice) fit together in perfect balance.

God's assistance in time of trouble does not allow us to continue to be inhabitants of hell because we have received therapy from the great physician. Evil will eventually pass away and disappear when everything is restored to its original and good condition. Even if we cross the boundary of evil and reach the culmination of the shadow of sin, we shall return to live again in the light.

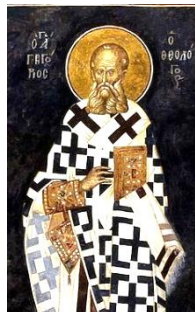
When human nature will be elevated again to its original condition, the union of cords and symbols will release that sweet sound of thanksgiving to God for his love of humanity. Someday human nature will be restored to its original condition and the love of God will bring humans and angels together in sweet thanksgiving. The restoration of all things that will come to pass in the Kingdom of Heaven is the restoration of those who have been condemned to hell.

The work of God will not be hindered by annihilation because there will be no destruction of humans. All souls will become the same, and no evil will any longer remain in anyone. Then, God will really be "all in all. God's purest goodness will embrace every rational creature, and none of them will fall out of the kingdom of God. God created and foreknew all humanity as one with himself.

Just as death comes from Adam to all humanity, so also life comes from Jesus through the resurrection to all humanity. Just as Adam brought condemnation of all humans, so also Jesus brought life for all humans and made them just. Once God has brought human nature to its original condition through the resurrection, there is no obstacle that can prevent God from attaining his goal of having everyone share in the benefits of his divinity.

All that belong to the same species and is of the same family, even those who were disinherited, are spared from punishment and adopted to participation in God's divinity. Jesus achieves a common salvation of humanity by resurrecting human beings who are united with him and reconciled to him. In God's wisdom he allows humans to do whatever they want, to taste all the evils they wish, and then come back with desire to their original state of bliss voluntarily.

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390)



The measure of my love for humanity is greater than the measure of my instruction for them, which is for their purification. What I see as God's torment is really medicine for my salvation. When John speaks of "God's axe" against the tree root, he speaks of amputation of what is incurable in the soul.

If some do not follow the path of Christ, perhaps in the next life they will be baptized by the means of fire which consumes every kind of evil. Someday God will be everything in everyone when the restoration of all things is complete. The purifying fire, which is Jesus himself, consumes the evil and brings the good in us, being a fire applied in love for all humanity. All who descended from Adam were deceived by the devil

and destroyed by sin. But they have also been saved by the “heavenly Adam” who is Jesus.

God uses his wrath to open up a way to bring an overflow of goodness, beginning with light remedy and moving on to more severe remedies as needed. Jesus came in human form to restore humanity, to collect them all into one group, and then to place them into the arms of God. Jesus offered his blood to God and purified the whole world. God's punishment is an act of love for Humanity.

Evagrius Ponticus (345-399)



God resides even in the very worst of all humans so that he can someday raise up all humanity to be all that He is. In the age to come, virtue and good will consume and eliminate evil. There was a time when evil did not exist, and there will come a time when it will be no more.

When evil has been eliminated, ignorance will no longer exist among rational creatures. All rational creatures will someday submit to the name of the Lord. Christ will lead all rational creatures throughout the ages into union with God. Eventually ignorance will be overcome, and sinners will be purified. It is God, in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who restores all of the living and the dead. God's providence pushes people from evil and ignorance into virtue and knowledge.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428)

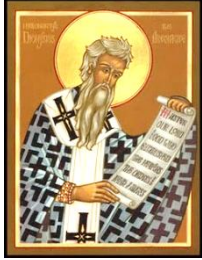


After undergoing punishment, sinners will finally cease to be punished. God will make sinners new after they have fallen, and will restore them again to their original condition. All humans will eventually submit to Jesus, even all sinners, which results in joyous salvation and not suffering.

With the suffering of his own body Jesus has provided the universal removal of sin and elimination of evil. The Father wants, what the Son brings about, and what the Spirit assists him in ... the salvation of all humanity! God has summed up all Humanity in Christ, and has restored

the whole creation through him. Just as in Adam all humans died, so in Jesus all humans will be made alive.

Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457)



Jesus seeks every single lost sheep in humanity so that eventually he will restore all of humanity. God will bring an end to His judgment and will not stay angry forever. God torments and punishes humanity because He loves everyone and wants them cured

God will finally be "all in all", because all will be liberated from sin, turn to God, and never again do any evil. In the future life when death will be no more, life will never end and sin will no longer exist, and then God will be "all in all".

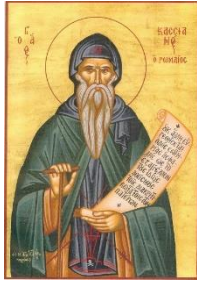
Cyril of Alexandria (376-444)



Jesus will bring all salvation to completion by exerting his power over all humanity, restoring them, and then having them return to himself. In Jesus we are all objects of mercy, relieved of death, and have hope of never-ending life. Jesus became human with us to bear our sins, cancel condemnation, and to conform us to perfection.

God's plan, in the fullness of time, is to sum up in himself all humanity in heaven and on earth, and to unify them in himself. The eventual "restoration of all things" is the return of humanity to its original state (before the fall of humanity into sin), or to a state that is even better!

John Cassian (360-435)



The idea that God does not want all humans to be saved, but instead only some, is a grave blasphemy. God is like a kind physician, acting even against our will, to rescue us from evil and hell. God does not want anyone lost, but instead calls them back to himself, demonstrating that even one who has strayed far from him will not perish.

God drags humans into salvation against their own will, and in his goodness he prevents them from falling into evil. God's grace always works with our will for our own sake, and assists, protects, and defends us in everything. God, the Father of all, works indifferently "all in all", like an extremely good father and an extremely benevolent physician. God brings salvation to humanity in various and infinite ways, forcing people who resist him even against their will.

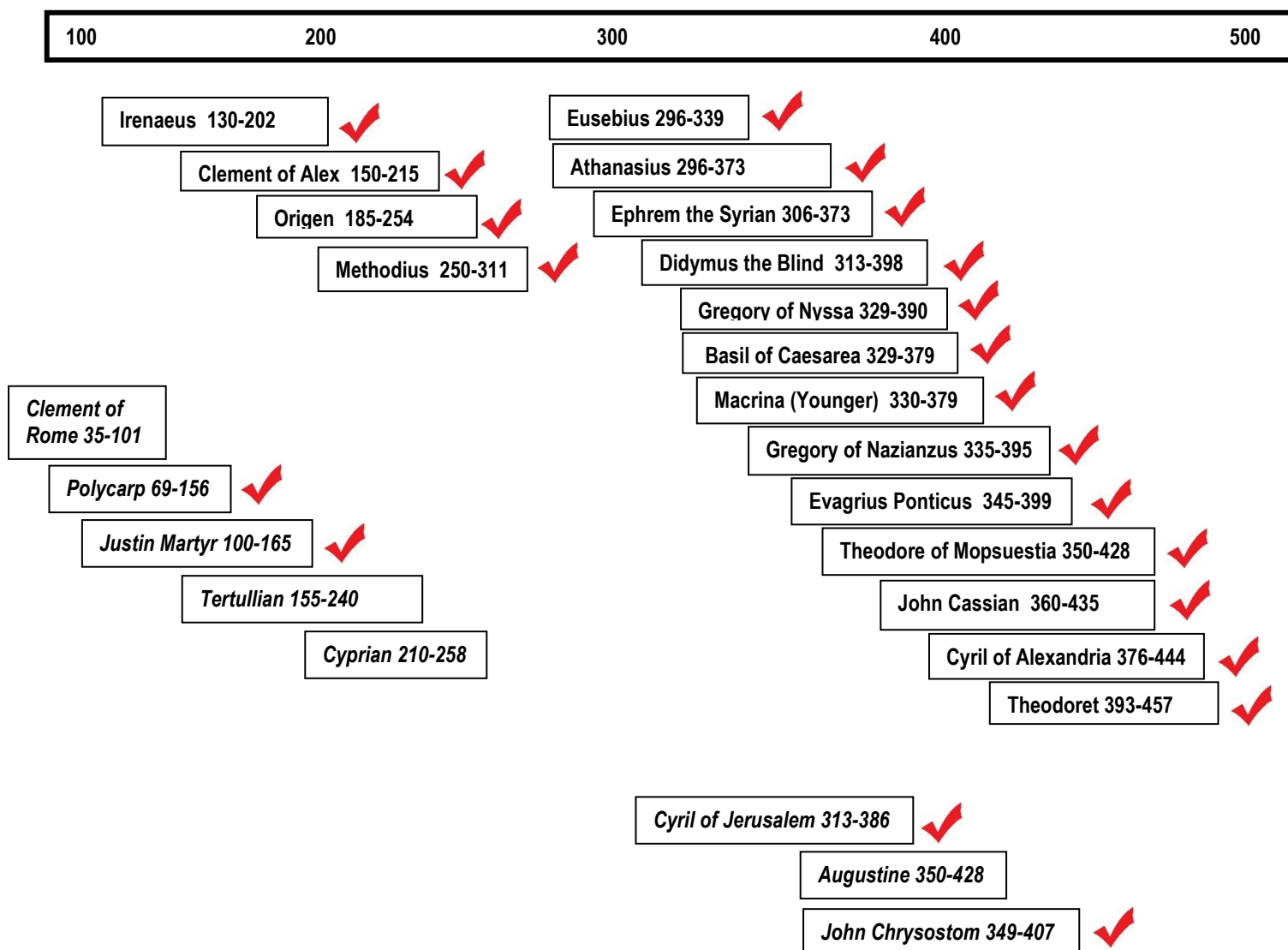
Opposing Views

Though this book has the purpose of presenting the mass of quotes from the majority of Early Church Writers concerning Gods plan to completely restore all creation to its original condition before the fall of mankind into sin and destruction, it also seems fair to include other major Church Writers who held opposing views ... and there were some. They were fewer in number and were generally (though not exclusively) Latin in their thinking and language, rather than Greek.

The two greatest and most influential Early Christian Writers who believed in endless punishment by God were Tertullian (200 AD) and Augustine (400 AD). Both were “Latin Church Fathers” as opposed to Greek. Looking back from today, it could be easily said that Augustine is the “father of the doctrine of eternal punishment” in the Christian Church -- a fair claim since it was just after Augustine that the Christian Church (under the growing domination of the Roman-Latin wing) began to officially adopt eternal punishment as a teaching. Up until that time, however, the Christian church, East and West (Greek and Latin) did not hold eternal punishment in any official way. In fact, Augustine once complained that there were so few in the church who agreed with him on this, and it was not until after his death that this teaching that he so championed was adopted (after 500 AD).

Tertullian also clearly held to eternal punishment. If Augustine was indeed the “father” of the doctrine of eternal punishment, perhaps Tertullian who lived 200 years before him could be considered the “Grandfather” of this doctrine. Like Augustine, Tertullian was a Latin Father and was not a product of Greek language, culture, and thinking as were most of the other Early Church Fathers. Justin Martyr (a contemporary of Tertullian) was also an advocate of eternal punishment by God. He had much to say on this subject. But Justin, unlike Augustine and Tertullian, was a Greek Church Father, which made him unusual as one who held so strongly to eternal punishment unlike most Greek Church Fathers.

Just to keep all of the Early Church Writers in perspective, the timeline previously presented in “Timeline of Early Christian Writers” is shown below with those who hold opposing views added in *italics* text. Additionally, all the Greek associated writers are indicated with a check mark. This demonstrates how many Early Church Writers were Greek and held to Restoration and not Eternal Punishment.



Below is the list of quotes by those who held to eternal punishment by God. There are two kinds of quotes. First, there are quotes that truly reflect a genuine belief in eternal punishment by the writer. Secondly, there are quotes that are taken out of context or fail to understand the meanings of words in Greek (the language in which most of these quotes were originally written), and therefore are suspect. Comments are provided to help explain the legitimacy of each quote. Some overall conclusions will be drawn at the end of the quotes.

Clement of Rome (AD 96)

If we do the will of Christ, we shall obtain rest; but if not, if we neglect his commandments, nothing will rescue us from eternal punishment (Second Clement 5:5).

So, then, if they were sure of this, that the punishment of eternal fire awaits those who do not worship God, when would they cease warning and exhorting? book 7 ch 35

"For if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest; otherwise, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, if we disobey His commandments" (2 Clement 6:7).

"But the righteous who have done well and endured torments and hated the enjoyments of the soul, when they shall behold those that have gone astray and denied Jesus through their words or through their works, how that they are punished with grievous torments in unquenchable fire, shall be giving glory to God" (2 Clement 17:7).

"But when they see how those who have sinned and who have denied Jesus by their words or by their deeds are punished with terrible torture in unquenchable fire, the righteous, who have done good, and who have endured tortures and have hated the luxuries of life, will give glory to their God saying, 'There shall be hope for him that has served God with all his heart!'" (Second Clement , 17:7)

Clement, lived very early on in the history of the Church, overlapped with the Apostle John, and is even mentioned in the New Testament. And so, because of his close proximity in time to Jesus and his apostles (actually part of that generation) what he has to say should be seriously considered. He did not learn in a vacuum, nor did he just fall into speculation as one far removed from the setting, language, and culture of the New Testament era (as is true of generations that came later on in Church History). But this can also be said of all early church fathers (writers) who lived in those few generations after the era of Jesus and his apostles. Writers like Clement of Alexandria and Origen lived in these important early years also. They too did not learn in a vacuum and were influenced by those who came before them ... their parents and grandparents who remembered the teachings of the Apostles and were passing what they learned down to these many young people who would grow up and become giant leaders in the Early Church.

Clement, (along with pretty much all other writers in church history) used the word "age" rather than "eternal" when describing punishment. And age can mean eternal (or never-ending) when used with things like "God" that are

known to have no limit in aspect of time-period. But words like “punishment” and “fire” are not words normally associated with “never-ending” aspects. So we must be careful about what we assume. However, Clement did also use terms like “unquenchable fire” which may be a clue that he thought of punishment as never-ending.

Polycarp (AD 135)

Fixing their minds on the grace of Christ, [the martyrs] despised worldly tortures and purchased eternal life with but a single hour. To them, the fire of their cruel torturers was cold. They kept before their eyes their escape from the eternal and unquenchable fire (Martyrdom of Polycarp 2:3).

You threaten me with fire which burns for an hour, and after a while is extinguished. But you are ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. (Martyrdom of Polycarp 11:2).

Polycarp is yet another very early Christian writer. He, like Clement, is also mentioned in the New Testament writings. But the quotes above are not actually by Polycarp. Instead they are about him, his martyrdom, and his death. The actual writer is unknown but assumed to be a writer from that era in which Polycarp lived.

The first quote is about Polycarp and other martyrs of his day. Like other early writers (as seen above) an “eternal and unquenchable fire” is portrayed. It is reasonable to conclude (as many do) that never-ending punishment by God is in mind by these writers. But, at the same time, such conclusions are also not without reasonable questions. The translation of “age” as “eternal” haunts all such use of this word (aionios) in these ancient writings, simply because a better and well-known word for “eternal” (aidios) was available and yet seldom used. Also, it should be kept in mind that “unquenchable” does not necessarily mean “never-ending”. It has more to do with the unstoppable nature of such a punishing fire rather than the duration of it. We need not make things say more than they do, just because it fits our pre-conceived narrative!

The second quote seems to be that of Polycarp himself by the author of this document. All the previous pros and cons about “never-ending” (as the meaning of this author) applies to this quote also.

Justin Martyr (AD 150)

and we say that the same thing will be done, but at the hand of Christ, and upon the wicked in the same bodies united again to their spirits which are now to undergo everlasting punishment; and not only, as Plato said, for a period of a thousand years. (The First Apology of Justin, Chap. 8)

"We have been taught that only they may aim at immortality who have lived a holy and virtuous life near to God. We believe that they who live wickedly and do not repent will be punished in everlasting fire" (First Apology, 21).

For among us the prince of the wicked spirits is called the serpent, and Satan, and the devil, as you can learn by looking into our writings. And that he would be sent into the fire with his host, and the men who follow him, and would be punished for an endless duration, Christ foretold. (The First Apology of Justin, Chap. 28)

And they, having been shut up in eternal fire, shall suffer their just punishment and penalty. For if they are even now overthrown by men through the name of Jesus Christ, an intimation of the punishment in eternal fire which is to be inflicted on themselves and those who serve them. For thus did both all the prophets foretell, and our own teacher Jesus teach. (The Second Apology of Justin for the Christians Addressed to the Roman Senate, Chap. VIII)

when some are sent to be punished unceasingly into judgment and condemnation of fire; but others shall exist in freedom from suffering, from corruption, and from grief, and in immortality." (Dialogue of Justin, Philosopher and Martyr with Trypho, A Jew, Chap. XLV)

Listed above are only five of many more quotes that can be found in Justin's writings. But the five quotes chosen reflect the many ways Justin expressed his ideas about eternal destiny. Justin Martyr is rightly quoted as one who clearly believed that God would eternally punish evil-doers and unbelievers, as an act of pure retribution ("re-tributing" sin over and over, endlessly) with no restoring or corrective purpose whatsoever. This is why Justin is so often and fully quoted as an example of an early church father that held to eternal punishment. For example, Robert Morey in the appendix of his book "Death and the Afterlife" (a classic work defending the position of eternal punishment), quotes Justin repeatedly.

Though Justin uses the word "age" (aionios), it seems that he means it as never-ending based on other ways he describes eternal destiny of unbelievers. As a "Greek Church Father", he is quite opposed to most other early Christian writers

who clearly understood "aionios" as an "indefinite period of time", which CAN mean eternal, but usually does not when not used in the context of God. Most Early Church Greek Writers seemed to use "aionios" as a way to express the time period of the "age to come", after death, in which God would do his very severe (but also corrective and restoring) work.

However, a careful reading of Justin without reading more into what he is saying, leaves a reasonable doubt as to whether he believed punishment to be never-ending, as pure retribution, with no restoring purpose whatsoever ... or whether he saw it as very severe punishment that contained a good purpose by God as the One who loves his world and came to save it, and will do whatever it takes (severe fire and punishment) in order to accomplish his mission and desire to save humanity.

<add Justin quote from Ramelli page 64 here>

According to John in 3:17, Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it, but to save it. And Paul said that Jesus came into the world for the purpose of saving it. This was clearly his mission. Did Justin believe Jesus accomplished this mission? And the NT writers made it clear that God "desires all people to be saved", and is "not willing that any perish". Does God get what he wants? If not, then does anyone in this universe (and beyond) accomplish their will and fulfill desires? If not God ... then who? What did Justin believe when his quotes are taken in the full context of all that he wrote? A worthwhile study!

Tertullian (AD 200)

By the sentence of judgement, we say that the wicked will have to spend an eternity in endless fire. The godly and innocent will spend it in a region of bliss. Who hath appointed rewards for those that keep them, in order that, when the allotted time of this world has come to an end, He may adjudge to His own worshippers the recompense of eternal life, and sentence the profane to fire equally perpetual and lasting. (Apology 18.3).

"Then will the entire race of men be restored to receive its just deserts according to what it has merited in this period of good and evil, and thereafter to have these paid out in an immeasurable and unending eternity. Then there will be neither death again nor resurrection again, but we shall be always the same as we are now, without changing. The worshippers of God shall always be with God, clothed in the proper substance of eternity. But the godless and those who have not turned wholly to God will be punished in fire equally

unending, and they shall have from the very nature of this fire, divine as it were, a supply of incorruptibility" (Apology 44:12-13).

Therefore after this there is neither death nor repeated resurrections, but we shall be the same that we are now, and still unchanged—the servants of God, ever with God, clothed upon with the proper substance of eternity; but the profane, and all who are not true worshippers of God, in like manner shall be consigned to the punishment of everlasting fire—that fire which, from its very nature indeed, directly ministers to their incorruptibility. (Apology 48:12)

Tertullian is perhaps the most graphic and adamant proponent of eternal punishment, as was Augustine who came some 200 years after him. Both were "Latin Church Fathers", as opposed to Greek Fathers. This is important because Latin thinking and culture was very different from Greek. The Greek Fathers (and most early church Fathers were Greek) primarily held to an eventual restoration and correction of all people by God. Justin Martyr, who was also a Greek Father, seemed to be an exception. The Latin Fathers (fewer in the Early church) were more inclined to view God as One who will bring never-ending punishment, with no restoring or corrective purpose whatsoever.

Tertullian uses language (beyond just using *aionios*, which means "age") to express his sincere conviction that God will indeed eternally punish some people. He, along with Augustine, are perhaps the "father" and "Grandfather" of this most extreme of all doctrines in the Christian church. It is these two teachers that most championed this doctrine and provided the basis for it becoming the official view in the church after 500 AD up into this present day. This is true, at least of all who are modern-day descendants of Roman Catholicism, which includes the Reformation that emerged from it and of Augustinian teaching that so thoroughly influenced Western Christianity.

Cyprian (AD 250)

An ever-burning Gehenna and the punishment of being devoured by living flames will consume the condemned; nor will there be any way in which the tormented can ever have respite or be at an end. Souls along with their bodies will be preserved for suffering in unlimited agonies. . . . The grief at punishment will then be without the fruit of repentance; weeping will be useless, and prayer ineffectual. Too late will they believe in eternal punishment, who would not believe in eternal life (To Demetrian 24).

What more he may wish he must seek thence, from such gain as takes men away from the banquet of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and leads them down, sadly and perniciously fattened in this world, to the eternal torments of hunger and thirst (epistle 60 par 2)

Oh, how great will that day be at its coming, beloved brethren, when the Lord shall begin to count up His people, and to recognize the deserving of each one by the inspection of His divine knowledge, to send the guilty to Gehenna, and to set on fire our persecutors with the perpetual burning of a penal fire, but to pay to us the reward of our faith and devotion! ("To Thibaris" 55:10)

Quotes from Cyprian are very clear and express the belief that God will bring never-ending punishment without ambiguity. But like Tertullian and Augustine, Cyprian was a Latin Church Father and not Greek. So his position should not be of any real surprise.

Cyril of Jerusalem (AD 350)

We shall be raised therefore, all with our bodies eternal, but not all with bodies alike; For if a man is righteous, he will receive a heavenly body, that he may be able worthily to hold converse with angels; but if a man is a sinner, he shall receive an eternal body, fitted to endure the penalties of sins, that he may burn eternally in fire, nor ever be consumed. (Catechetical Lectures 18:19 [A.D. 350]).

And of the many righteous shall they shine as the stars forever and ever. And Paul says, And so shall we be ever with the Lord: for the being forever with the lord implies the life eternal. But most plainly of all the Savior Himself says in the Gospel, And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. ("Catechetical Lectures" 18:28)

Augustine (AD 400)

It is hard to deny that Augustine is the great champion of eternal punishment in the history of the Christian church. Up until his day, even during his own times, the Christian church predominately held to the belief that God would eventually restore and reconcile all things and people to himself, even if he has to do so through very severe means of corrective punishment through a process described as "fire". But after Augustine, the church in Rome (which became the dominate force in Western Christianity from about 500 AD onward) eventually adopted eternal punish as the official position of the church.

However, in Augustine's own day (and even before), the Christian church never held eternal punishment as an official position (even though there were some Christians who held this view as their personal belief). Augustine even lamented about how few people believed as he did and semi- mocked them for being too "tender-hearted"! But is this not clearly and predominately the God we know from the Bible as a whole?. Over time, the church at Rome (which became the Roman Catholic Church), adopted eternal punishment as its official view of eternal destiny of unrepentant sinners in around 1200 AD (4th Lateran Council, and the 1st and 2nd councils of Lyons). Eternal Punishment is one of many beliefs held by Augustine and adopted by the Western Church that has rendered him the "most influential thinker" in Church History - whether for better or for worse!

Augustine literally wrote a book on eternal punishment in Book 21 of his monumental work titled "The City of God" (here is a link to it: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120121.htm>). This reveals clearly where Augustine stood on God's purpose in punishment. And his view is clearly different from the view of most early church Fathers who came before him (as this booklet demonstrates) who believed that God's purpose in punishment is corrective, restorative, and healing in nature. Big difference! It is worth quoting the entire twenty-third chapter from Augustine's Book 21, to demonstrate his clear commitment to eternal punishment by God:

Chapter 23.— Against Those Who are of Opinion that the Punishment Neither of the Devil Nor of Wicked Men Shall Be Eternal.

First of all, it behooves us to inquire and to recognize why the Church has not been able to tolerate the idea that promises cleansing or indulgence to the devil even after the most severe and protracted punishment. For so many holy men, imbued with the spirit of the Old and New Testament, did not grudge to angels of any rank or character that they should enjoy the blessedness of the heavenly kingdom after being cleansed by suffering, but rather they perceived that they could not invalidate nor evacuate the divine sentence which the Lord predicted that He would pronounce in the judgment, saying, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41 For here it is evident that the devil and his angels shall burn in everlasting fire. And there is also that declaration in the Apocalypse, The devil their deceiver was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also are the beast and the false prophet. And they shall be tormented day and night forever. Revelation 20:10 In the former passage everlasting is used, in the latter for ever; and by these words Scripture is wont to mean nothing else than endless duration.

And therefore no other reason, no reason more obvious and just, can be found for holding it as the fixed and immovable belief of the truest piety, that the devil and his angels shall never return to the justice and life of the saints, than that Scripture, which deceives no man, says that God spared them not, and that they were condemned beforehand by Him, and cast into prisons of darkness in hell, 2 Peter 2:4 being reserved to the judgment of the last day, when eternal fire shall receive them, in which they shall be tormented world without end. And if this be so, how can it be believed that all men, or even some, shall be withdrawn from the endurance of punishment after some time has been spent in it? How can this be believed without enervating our faith in the eternal punishment of the devils? For if all or some of those to whom it shall be said, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, Matthew 25:41 are not to be always in that fire, then what reason is there for believing that the devil and his angels shall always be there? Or is perhaps the sentence of God, which is to be pronounced on wicked men and angels alike, to be true in the case of the angels, false in that of men? Plainly it will be so if the conjectures of men are to weigh more than the word of God. But because this is absurd, they who desire to be rid of eternal punishment ought to abstain from arguing against God, and rather, while yet there is opportunity, obey the divine commands. Then what a fond fancy is it to suppose that eternal punishment means long continued punishment, while eternal life means life without end, since Christ in the very same passage spoke of both in similar terms in one and the same sentence, These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal! Matthew 25:46 If both destinies are eternal, then we must either understand both as long-continued but at last terminating, or both as endless. For they are correlative — on the one hand, punishment eternal, on the other hand, life eternal. And to say in one and the same sense, life eternal shall be endless, punishment eternal shall come to an end, is the height of absurdity. Wherefore, as the eternal life of the saints shall be endless, so too the eternal punishment of those who are doomed to it shall have no end.

John Chrysostom (AD 400)

It is no small subject of inquiry whether hell fire has any end. For that it has no end Christ indeed declared when he said, "Their fire shall not be quenched, and their worm shall not die. (Homily 9 on 1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

For though we have all faith and all knowledge of the Scriptures, yet if we be naked and destitute of the protection derived from (holy) living, there is nothing to hinder us from being hurried into the fire of hell, and burning forever in the unquenchable flame. For as they who have done good shall rise to life everlasting, so they who have dared the contrary shall rise to everlasting punishment, which never has an end. (Homily 6 on John's gospel).

For the things present, whatever they are, are endurable, and have an end; but the torments there are immortal, and interminable! (Homily 17 on Statues par 15).

John Chrysostom was a Greek Father in the Christian Church, yet unlike most Greek writers he seemed to believe, fairly clearly, that God will eternally punish sinners and unbelievers.

Some Conclusions About the Opposing Views

1. All three views (Eternal Punishment, Annihilation, and Full Restoration) are clearly held by various people in church history.
2. The Greek Fathers tended to hold Restoration; Latin Fathers Damnation (but not without exception).
3. There were indeed others who held Eternal Punishment, but they were not major figures in church history who were widely respected like Tertullian, Justin, and Augustine who were!
4. The church as a whole, East and West never declared any view as official in creeds or councils for 1000 years. However the pseudo-Athanasian creed, (which did not come out of any of the first seven great councils), held damnation. It was the first I can find, and no other creed or council until about 1000 AD!
5. Early Church Writers who used “aionios”, do not always mean “eternal: (never-ending) by it. This can be demonstrated by examining the full context of the Ramelli quotes that I offer in this booklet.
6. I have no problem with people choosing to believe God will eternally punish. It is clearly a view held today, and in history, by true believers, and held historically some respected Christian thinkers like Tertullian and Augustine (but both were Latin Fathers!).
7. My goal is not to promote a position, but to inform people of *all* the facts in the bible and church history so each person can decide for themselves. Thus, both sides clearly and honestly presented in this booklet.

The Creeds of the Christian Church

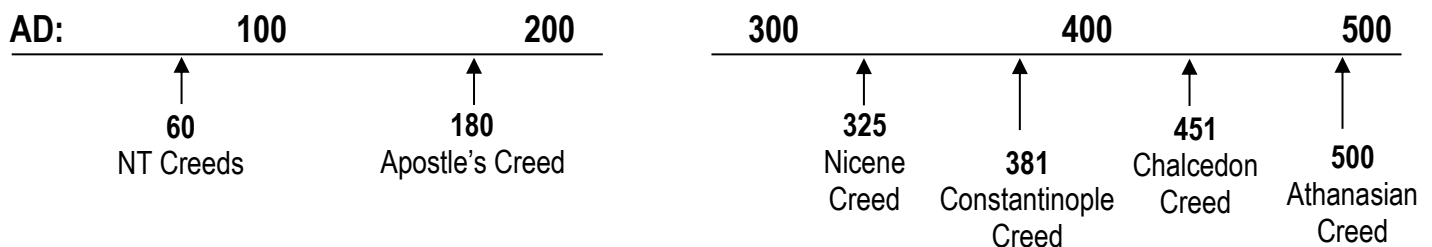
(Demonstrating that “Eternal Punishment” was not an officially held belief until 500 AD)

Creeds are statements of faith describing what is officially held by a religion. Christianity has always had creeds in some form since its beginning in the New Testament (the writings by the followers of Jesus after his death and resurrection). The earliest and simplest NT creeds are found in the writings of the apostle Paul.

The early church that emerged after the era of the apostles of Jesus, also had creeds. The now famous *Apostle’s Creed* (The Old Roman Creed) is the earliest and best known. But it was not until after the *Edict of Milan* by Constantine (declaring Christianity to no longer be illegal) that the Christian Church (the Eastern and Western expressions, together) began to hold official Councils. In these councils, official creeds for the whole church were developed. There were seven great Councils held during the first minimum, but only the first four are presented here for the purpose of establishing at what point *Eternal Punishment*, was included in a creed.

The first four councils produced 3 creeds: Nicene, Constantinople, and Chalcedon (the Council at Ephesus did not produce a creed). None of these creeds included eternal punishment as a belief. It was not until 500 AD, in the Athanasian Creed that *Eternal Punishment* was introduced. This creed, however, was not a result of any of the seven great Councils, it was written some 100 years after Athanasius, and therefore not authored by him. It is often referred to as the “pseudo-Athanasian Creed”. So, to what degree it was considered “official’ by the church is in question. However, it has been adopted by many Christian organizations throughout church history.

The time chart below shows the creeds from these four earliest Councils, plus the Athanasian Creed, and the dates they were produced.



All of these Christian Church creeds are provided below in their fullness. In order to make it easy to confirm the introduction of eternal punishment into the creeds, all items dealing with salvation or eschatology (beliefs about the eternal state) are displayed in underlining below.

New Testament Creeds (55 AD)

1 Cor. 8:6: For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

1 Cor. 15:3-7: I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

1 Tim. 3:16: Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Apostle's Creed (180 AD)

I believe in God the Father who is almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate. He was crucified, dead and buried, descended into hell and on the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and in life everlasting.

Nicene Creed (325 AD)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten, that is of the essence of the Father. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Who for us humanity and for our salvation came down from heaven,

was incarnate, was made human, was born perfectly of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. By whom He took body, soul, and mind, and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance. He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven with the same body, [and] sat at the right hand of the Father. He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreated and the perfect; Who spoke through the Law, prophets, and Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles, and lived in the saints. We believe also in only one, universal, apostolic, and holy church; in one baptism in repentance, for the remission and forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead, in the everlasting judgement of souls and bodies, and the Kingdom of Heaven and in the everlasting* life.*

* The Greek word translated as “everlasting” is the word AIONIOS, which was also commonly used in the New Testament and means “age-long” or “indefinite time period”, and most likely “judgement in the age to come” was the intended meaning.

Constantinople Creed (381 AD)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us, humans, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became fully human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. He rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. And in one holy universal and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Chalcedon Creed (451 AD)

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without

sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

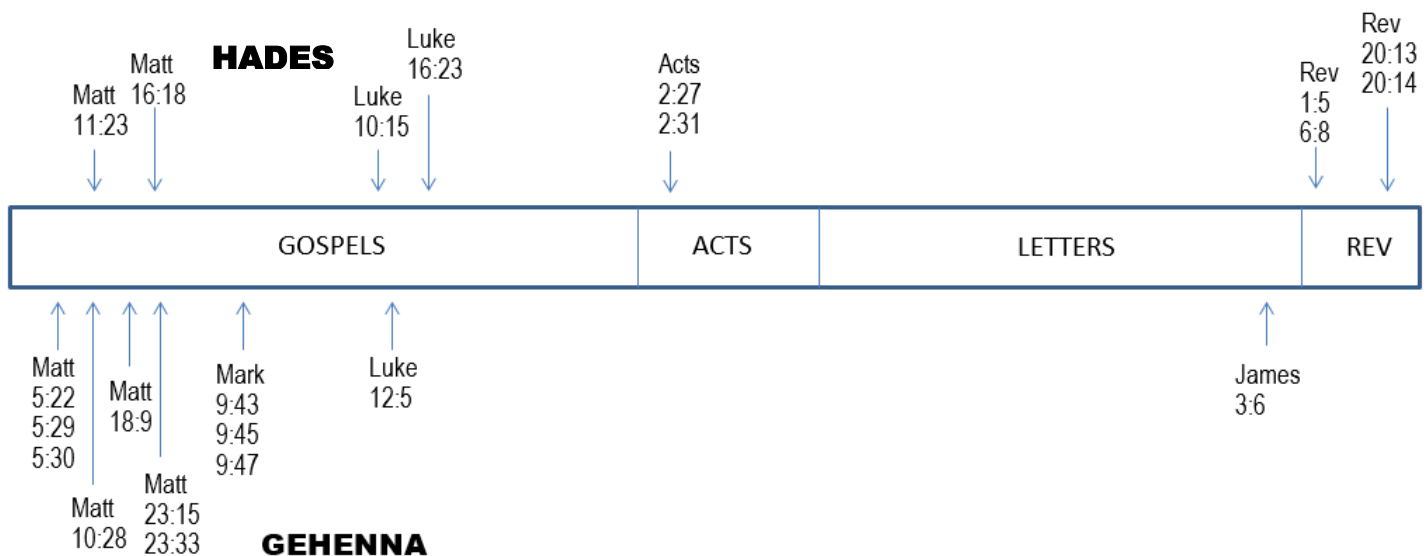
Athanasian Creed (AD 500)

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinities, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the catholic religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right

Faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance [Essence] of the Father; begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Substance [Essence] of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance [Essence]; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.

Several observations are in order. First, the creeds of the Christian church became larger and more speculative in nature over the course of time in church history. The Apostle's Creed seems to be taken from creed-like statements in the New Testament writings of the Apostles of Jesus. The Nicene Creed is an expansion of the Apostle's Creed, with new items of belief and more detailed explanations (speculations) of existing beliefs. The Athanasian Creed was a much greater expansion with new speculations added, including eternal punishment. This was over 400 years after time of Jesus and his Apostles, and was a time in which the Roman Catholic (Western) Church was emerging into its period of monstrous brutality over people under Papal Authority. During these middle ages, eternal punishment was used as a weapon to control people through fear. Eternal Punishment is never found in the Old Testament, New Testament, or in the Early Christian Church which predominately believed God would eventually reconcile all things in heaven and earth to himself, in a re-creation whereby he "fills all in all" (completely fills all beings) and "brings everything in subjection to himself".

Occurrences of Hades and Gehenna in the New Testament



Observations:

1. Hades is never used in any of the NT letters where most Christian doctrine is found.
2. Hades is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Sheol, found in the Old Testament some 75 times, and means “the grave”.
3. Hades is never presented as a place of eternal punishment.
4. Gehenna is only used by Jesus, (except once by James).
5. Jesus only mentions Gehenna five unique times on just four occasions (when considering duplicate occurrences in the three synoptic gospels).
6. Jesus never identifies Gehenna as a place of eternal punishment.
7. Over half of the occurrences of Gehenna are in Matthew, a gospel written for Jewish people.
8. Gehenna is never used by John, Paul, Peter, Jude, or the Author of Hebrews, nor is it used in Acts or the book of Revelation.

About Ilaria Ramelli

From Google Search:



Ilaria Ramelli

Italian historian

Prof. Dr. Ilaria L.E. Ramelli FRHistS, Dr.h.c., Dr.habil.bis, is an Italian-born historian, scholarly author, and university professor, a specialist in ancient, late antique, and early mediaeval ... [Wikipedia](#)


Born: 1973, [Piacenza, Italy](#)

Books

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2013



Terms for Eternity: Aionios and Aion in Classical and Christian Texts
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2009

From Her Seminary Website:



<https://www.shms.edu/content/prof-dr-ilaria-le-ramelli-frhists>

Prof. Dr. Iliaria L.E. Ramelli FRHistS

EDUCATION:

- M.A. (Classics) Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy, 1996;
- M.A. (Philosophy) Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy, 1997;
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Professor of Theology and Bishop Kevin Britt Chair in Dogmatics – Christology

Professor Ramelli earned two MAs (Classics with Specialization in Early Christianity and Philosophy with Specialization in History), a PhD (Classics and Early Christianity), and a post doctorate (Late Antiquity and Religion), as well as two Habilitation/Abilitazione to Full Professor (in History of Philosophy and in Ancient Greek) and in the last 17 years has been Young Researcher in Late Antiquity, Assistant in Roman History, in Ancient Historiography, Professor of History of the Roman Near East, and Assistant in Ancient Philosophy, with focus on classical and Patristic philosophy and early Christianity (Catholic University, Milan, since 2003), as well as Senior Research Fellow in Ancient and Patristic Philosophy (Durham University).

She is Full Professor of Theology and Bishop Kevin Britt endowed Chair in Dogmatics - Christology at the Graduate School of Theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary of the Thomas Aquinas University (Angelicum), the director of international research projects, Onassis Senior Visiting Professor of Greek Thought (Harvard; Boston University) as well as of Church History, and Senior Research Fellow in Religion (Erfurt University) as well as Visiting Research Fellow (Oxford University, UK, Corpus Christi). She has received numerous academic prizes and scholarly awards.

She is a member of many directive and scientific boards of scholarly series and journals and of numerous international scholarly associations, and serves as a peer reviewer for prestigious scientific series and journals and as a scientific consultant in tenure procedures for outstanding Universities, as well as in advanced research funding for international scholarly Foundations. She has taught courses and seminars and delivered invited lectures

and conferences in numerous (including topmost) universities in Europe, North America, and Israel, and has never interrupted an intense scholarly activity over the last two decades.

She has authored numerous books, articles, and reviews in eminent scholarly journals and series, on ancient philosophy, especially Platonism and Stoicism, Theology, both dogmatic and historical, Christology, early Christianity, the New Testament, Patristics, the reception and exegesis of Scripture, ancient religions, classics, and the relationship between Christianity and classical culture.

The Christian Doctrine of *Apokatastasis*

A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena
Ilaria L. E. Ramelli

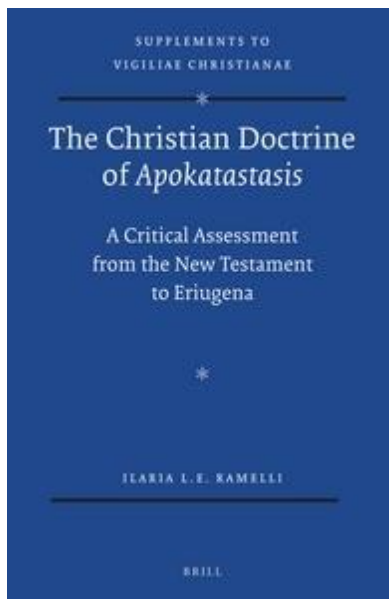


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1. The Roots of the Doctrine of Apokatastasis
2. Origen's First Followers in Alexandria and the East, and his First "Detractors"
3. Origen's Apologists and Followers, the Cappadocians, Evagrius, the Antiochenes, and Fourth-Century Latin Origenians
4. From Augustine to Eriugena. Latin, Greek and Syriac Receptions of Origen's Apokatastasis



The theory of *apokatastasis* (restoration), most famously defended by the Alexandrian exegete, philosopher and theologian Origen, has its roots in both Greek philosophy and Jewish-Christian Scriptures and literature, and became a major theologico-soteriological doctrine in patristics. This monograph—the first comprehensive, systematic scholarly study of the history of the Christian *apokatastasis* doctrine—argues its presence and Christological and Biblical foundation in numerous Christian thinkers, including Syriac, and analyses its origins, meaning, and development over eight centuries, from the New Testament to Eriugena, the last patristic philosopher. Surprises await readers of this book, which results from fifteen years of research. For instance, they will discover that even Augustine, in his anti-Manichaean phase, supported the theory of universal restoration.

Reviews

'This deeply impressive study is the fruit of sixteen years of research into the history of early Christian belief in universal salvation. In almost 900 pages of carefully argued analysis, Ramelli leaves no stone unturned in her attempt to recover a story that has never before been told with anything like this much attention to the range and depth of evidence. ... One of the highlights of the book for me was the careful tracing of the roots of the idea... This work will unquestionably be the go-to book on the doctrine of apokatastasis for many years to come.'

Robin A. Parry, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 18.3 (2016) 335-338.

'A remarkable book ... Let me conclude by stressing the scholarly quality of a book that rests on many years of laborious research. It is clearly written, abundantly documented, engagingly argued, and meticulously proof-read... not just an exemplary treatment of the doctrine of apokatastasis but also a mine of information about a range of issues in early and medieval Christian theology... It will be the standard work on the subject for a long time and a book of reference for advanced students of early and medieval Christianity.'

George Karamanolis, *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 10.1 (2016), p 142-6

"The most definitive account of the oft-controversial Christian version of the doctrine of the apokatastasis, or restoration/reintegration/reconstitution' – and will probably remain such for a considerable time ... a jewel in the crown of books on Patristics, Early Christian Studies, and Christian Philosophy.... a book that cuts to the very core of theological thought, dialogue, and controversy in early Christianity. Highly recommended!"

Chris L. De Wet, *Journal of Early Christian History* 5.2 (2015) 1–3

A rich and provocative study ... surely by far the most erudite attempt to prove the orthodoxy of apokatastasis ... We shall need no further evidence that Christian belief can be sustained without the prospect of an everlasting hell.

Mark J. Edwards, *Journal of Theological Studies* 65.2, 2014

In the course of this stunning work, Ilaria Ramelli explores with wonderful learning and precision the doctrine of universal salvation ... the impressive feature of this volume is the amount of scholarship brought to bear on the central issue ... an amazing combination of breadth and accuracy ... amazing learning and complexity.

Anthony Meredith SJ, *International Journal of the Platonic Tradition* 8.2 (2014) 255-257

Ilaria Ramelli's tome ... is a labor of manifest erudition and capability. ... The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis is a treasury of philosophical, theological, exegetical, historical, and philological insights of great value to the philosophical theologian.

Steven Nemes, Fuller Theological Seminary. *Journal of Analytic Theology*, Vol. 3, May 2015

'What Ramelli has done, is to marshal all the possible textual evidence with which scholars will have to contend in future years and in doing so she has done us a fine service.'

Morwenna Ludlow, University of Exeter, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Volume 66 (July 2015)

GILF Website Resources

The God Is Love Fellowship website provides a number of additional and related resources. This website is located at: www.godislovefellowship.com.



But it is the *Resources* page that contains all the helpful resources. This is located at: <http://godislovefellowship.com/resources.html>.



On this web page you will find the following resources:

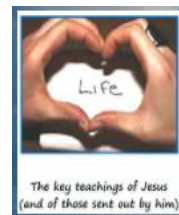
Salvation by Grace Resources

This is a long list of books that I have found to be very helpful in exploring this important topic of Eternal Destiny. Each book has a description telling what I found helpful in it. The list is a mix of very scholarly books as well as many less formal and easy-to-read books.



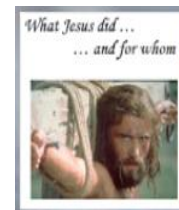
Booklet: *The Key Teachings of Jesus*

This is a collection of hundreds of the most well-known and important passages in the New Testament. These passages are placed into twelve categories: Salvation, Assurance, Jesus, Humanity, Spiritual Life, Personal Growth, Relationships, God, Revelation, Community, Purpose, Future.



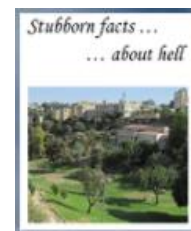
Booklet: *What Jesus Did ... And for Whom*

This booklet presents about 80 passages from the New Testament writings concerning Jesus and his death on the cross. Pretty much every passage on this subject is listed. These passages are listed in two groups: (1) What Jesus did, and (2) who he did it for.



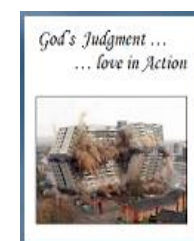
Booklet: *Stubborn Facts ... About Hell*

This booklet is a study in how (and how many times) the word “Gehenna” is used in the New Testament. It is a surprise to most people how seldom this word is used and the historical nature of its meaning. This booklet was a result of my research into Gehenna after reading Steve Gregg’s book *All You Want to Know About Hell: Three Christian Views*.



Booklet: *God’s Judgment ... Love in Action*

This booklet presents all (or at least most) passages in the New Testament on judgment and related subjects. It lists them by topic and by writer. Some comments are made to support the idea that God’s judgment is an act of his love and has an ultimately good purpose.



Audio: Full Restoration of All Humanity as a Free Gift of God’s Grace

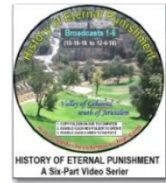
An audio presenting five views of eternal destiny of humanity, with Restoration view offered as reasonable, biblical and historical.



Video: *The History of Eternal Punishment*

Four video broadcasts of GILF that present the History of Eternal Punishment in four parts:

1. In the Old Testament
2. Between the Testaments
3. In the New Testament.
4. In the Early Church



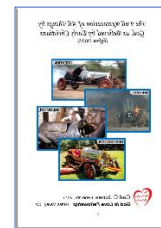
Booklet: *Full Restoration of All Humanity as a Free Gift of God's Grace*

Five views of eternal destiny presented fairly and honestly, with opinion given as to why Restoration is the most reasonable, Biblical, and historically sound view.



Booklet: *Full Restoration of All Things by God, as Believed by Early Christians*

This is this booklet you are now reading.

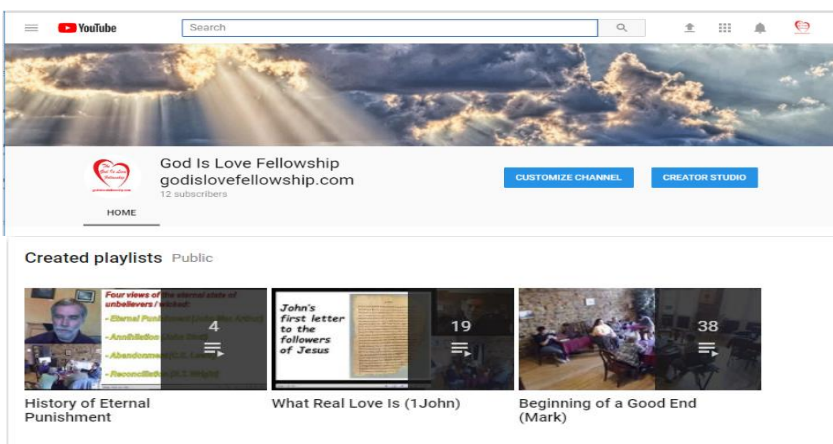


YouTube Video Broadcasts

GILF has produced over 80 live broadcasts in the past five years. These are posted on YouTube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCo7c1iS4pZHPBxl2EbrOJ7A>.

You can also find the videos by searching on YouTube for “God is love fellowship” and then selecting the big red heart that displays in the search list. Or, you can click on the “Broadcasts” icon on the GILF Resources Web page. There are 19 broadcasts on “What Real Love Is” (1John), 38 broadcasts on “Beginning of a Good End” (Gospel of Mark), and 4 broadcasts on “The History of Eternal Punishment”. This last set of videos provides more detailed information on the subject of Eternal Destiny. You may have to search on the GILF channel on YouTube to find the Play Lists as shown below:



About the Author/Speaker

Carl Jones is currently employed as a Sr. Technical Writer at a high-tech company in Nevada City, California. Prior to this he was a Hardware/Software Engineer for thirty years, working in Grass Valley, Sacramento, Reno, and the SF Bay Area. He has been married 43 years to the godliest lady any man could know. He has two adult children and one beautiful grand-daughter, all of whom he loves more than life itself.

Carl earned a *Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering* (1979) at California State University in Sacramento, California. He received a *California Community College Life Teaching Credential* in 1984 and has taught technology classes at two California colleges. He also graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary with a *Certificate of Graduate Studies* in 2010. Carl is currently enrolled in a *Masters of History* program at American Public University in W.Virginia.

Carl established the *God Is Love Fellowship* in Grass Valley in 2012 to provide a place for “unchurched” people to come and receive encouragement in life and grounding in the teachings of Jesus (as found in the New Testament writings). GILF has produced over 80 live internet broadcasts, all of which are currently posted on YouTube. (See *GILF Website Resources* below for more information).