

LESSONS FROM 1 TIMOTHY 2

All Scripture references are to the NIV-UK, unless stated otherwise.

1 I [Paul] urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – **2** for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. **3** This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, **4** who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

Vs. 1, 2: The Apostle Paul begins with a general expression of good will towards those in government, aware that the fortunes of the governed rise and fall according the actions of the ruling powers. He was not ignorant of the dangers inherent in perverse and malicious administrations – then, and throughout the ages – but this article is not a discussion on the waywardness of history, which would constitute an elaborate discussion of *theodicy* and why God permits evil at all. (We discuss this problem elsewhere on our website.) Paul ‘urges’ (*parakalēō*, implores, desires) the church to *pray for* those in political office, a practise which is common in many churches today, neglected in others. Such prayers are not intended to grease the wheels to obtain special favour, but rather to instill in each one of us the understanding that we are, collectively and severally, for the time being, subject to the uncertain conditions of an imperfect world.

V. 3: ‘This is good’ *because* it pleases God, and this is reason sufficient.

V. 4: God is ‘*our Saviour*’. Yes, because He alone devised the Plan of the Ages within which the Gospel message has been propagated. In short, Jehovah is the sole origin of the salvation that was given practical expression in the sacrifice of Jesus.

V. 5: God *wants* everyone to be saved to eternal life? (‘. . . desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth’ – *The Greek-English NT*, ESV, Cambridge). This word denotes that God is disposed towards, or is willing to implement, the saving of all. Indeed, to show God’s intention, Jesus died *for all*. However, in legal language, the fact that Jesus is denoted as the ‘mediator’ suggests a tension between *two distinct parties* in the salvation process: God on the one hand, humanity on the other, and *each side has to be reconciled to the other*. This verse, then, shows that although Jesus’ sacrifice was laid down for *all*, not all will avail themselves of the opportunity – though the vast majority will most likely do so, in the coming Millennial Age, a message that has already been preached or ‘witnessed’ to during the Gospel Age.

It goes without saying that Jesus, identified as the *one* mediator (the perfect man, the *Son of Man*) stands *between the one holy God* and sinful flesh-and-blood humanity, and is therefore *separate and distinct* from Jehovah God. Such a relationship would have been understood by Moses who, in a typical, figurative sense, functioned a mediator between Jehovah and the people of Israel.