

Toward a Definition of "All People"

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The question as to the meaning of "all people" is of critical importance as one analyzes 1 Tim 2:1-7 in context of the Calvinist-Arminian debate. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to confuse the various ranges of meaning for the term "all." Otherwise good scholars tend to talk past each other on both sides of the debate.

I have attempted to remedy this problem by setting up ranges of meaning according to usage. In this paper, definitions are listed in the first section, with one or two examples. In the second section, all 34 occurrences of "all men" in the New Testament (plural masculine form of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma + \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ in any case, or the plural masculine form of $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ in any case as a substantive) are categorized according to definition. In the third section, eight disputed passages are listed separately with minimal analysis. Finally, a summary statement is included.

Especially since this is a work in progress, any insights or oversights are welcome.

Section 1: Definitions (34 occurrences)

1. **All (literally); without exception; bar none**
 - a. **Without contextual limits** For example, all men die, all men have sinned, all flesh is like grass.
 - b. **With contextual limits**
 - i. **Explicit** For example, All men *in Jerusalem*. One occurrence.
 - ii. **Implicit** For example, God's Spirit works his giftings in all people (*of the church*).
2. **All (not literally)**
 - a. **Generally, as constrained by obvious practical considerations; all to the extent of possibilities.** For example, showing kindness to all people universally cannot be done since there are many people whom you'll never meet. This category fits well with the five examples cited by George Knight to otherwise mean "all kinds" (see here: <http://arminianbaptist.blogspot.com/2008/02/what-part-of-all-do-you-n...>). Basically, one can figure whether or not an "all" passage fits into this category by qualifying "all" with the notion of possibility. Examples: be nice to all people possible; and, you are our epistle read by all men who could possibly read it (i.e., by those who come into contact with the Corinthians).
 - b. **As hyperbole for a relatively large number or percentage.** For example, Paul wishes all men were single like himself.
3. **All kinds of (with Greek genitive plural noun)**
 - a. **All kinds of a given class, inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception: all kinds of men, including every single one of them.** Examples of this definition are not found in regard to "all *men*," but may be illustrated by such verses as Matt 4:23-24: And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing **all manner** of

disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them.

- b. **All kinds of a given class, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception.** For example, love of money is the root of all (kinds of) evil, but not all of them; thus, love of money is probably not at the root of most adulteries. Or, the widow is not to be put on the list of widows unless she is well known for doing all (kinds of) good deeds, such as such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble (1 Tim 5); thus, a widow was capable of doing all kinds of good deeds, but incapable of doing all good deeds without exception--she might not have been able to bring up children, for example.

Section 2: Categorization of New Testament Texts

1. All (literally); without exception; bar none.
 - a. Without contextual limits (cf. texts which provides additional emphasis, e.g., "all the men of the earth": Num 12:3; 3 Kgs 8:39 (= 1 Kgs 8:39); 1 Esd 3:18; Ezek 3:20)

John 2:24 αὐτὸς δὲ Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἐπίστευεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ αὐτὸν γινώσκειν **πάντας**,

24 But Jesus did not trust himself unto them, for that he knew **all men**,

Acts 17:25 οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενος τινος, αὐτὸς διδοὺς **πᾶσι** ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα:

25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to **all life**, and breath, and all things;

Acts 20:26 διότι μαρτύρομαι ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ ὅτι καθαρὸς εἰμι ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος **πάντων**,

26 Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of **all men**.

Acts 21:28 κράζοντες, Ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλῖται, βοηθεῖτε· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατὰ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τοῦ τόπου τούτου **πάντας** πανταχῆ διδάσκων, ἔτι τε καὶ Ἑλληνας εἰσήγαγεν εἰς τὸ ἱερόν καὶ κεκοίνωκεν τὸν ἅγιον τόπον τούτον.

28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth **all men** everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place.

Rom 5:12 Διὰ τοῦτο ὡσπερ δι' ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, καὶ οὕτως εἰς **πάντας ἀνθρώπους** ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον – Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto **all men**, for that all sinned:--

Rom 5:18 Ἄρα οὖν ὡς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς **πάντας ἀνθρώπους** εἰς κατάκριμα, οὕτως καὶ δι' ἑνὸς δικαιοῦματος εἰς **πάντας ἀνθρώπους** εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς· So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto **all men** to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto **all men** to justification of life.

Rom 11:32 συνέκλεισεν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς **τοὺς πάντας** εἰς ἀπειθειαν ἵνα **τοὺς πάντας** ἐλεήσῃ. 32 For God hath shut up **all** unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon **all**.

1 Cor 15:19 εἰ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ ταύτῃ ἐν Χριστῷ ἡλπιότες ἐσμὲν μόνον, ἐλεεινότεροι **πάντων ἀνθρώπων** ἐσμὲν. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.

Heb 12:23 καὶ ἐκκλησίᾳ πρωτοτόκων ἀπογεγραμμένων ἐν οὐρανοῖς, καὶ κριτῇ θεῷ **πάντων**, καὶ πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of **all**, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

b. With contextual limits

- i. Explicit qualification (e.g., "all the men who..."). Cf. Exod 9:19; Num 16:32; 3 Kgs 5:10 (=1 Kgs 4:30); Tob 13:16; Jer 49:17;

Luke 13:4 ἢ ἐκεῖνοι οἱ δέκα ὀκτὼ ἐφ' οὓς ἔπεσεν ὁ πύργος ἐν τῷ Σιλωὰμ καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν αὐτούς, δοκεῖτε ὅτι αὐτοὶ ὀφειλέται ἐγένοντο παρὰ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους τοὺς κατοικοῦντας Ἱερουσαλήμ; Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem?

- ii. Implicit

1 Cor 12:6 καὶ διαίρεσις ἐνεργημάτων εἰσὶν, ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεός, ὁ ἐνεργῶν τὰ πάντα ἐν **πᾶσιν**. 6 And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in **all**.

2. All (not literally)

- a. Generally, as constrained by obvious practical considerations; all to the extent of possibilities;

Matt 10:22 καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου· ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται.

22 And ye shall be hated of **all men** for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

Mark 13:13 καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου· ὁ δὲ ὑπομείνας εἰς τέλος οὗτος σωθήσεται.

And ye shall be hated of **all men** for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

Luke 6:26 οὐαὶ ὅταν ὑμᾶς καλῶς εἴπωσιν πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι, κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ γὰρ ἐποίουν τοῖς ψευδοπροφήταις οἱ πατέρες αὐτῶν.

Woe [unto you], when **all men** shall speak well of you! for in the same manner did their fathers to the false prophets.

Luke 21:17 καὶ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι ὑπὸ πάντων διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου.

17 And ye shall be hated of **all men** for my name's sake.

John 13:35 ἐν τούτῳ γνώσονται πάντες ὅτι ἐμοὶ μαθηταὶ ἐστε, ἐὰν ἀγάπην ἔχητε ἐν ἀλλήλοις.

35 By this shall **all men** know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Gal 6:10 ἄρα οὖν ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν, ἐργαζώμεθα τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρὸς πάντας, μάλιστα δὲ πρὸς τοὺς οἰκείους τῆς πίστεως.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward **all men**, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

Rom 12:18 εἰ δυνατόν, τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν μετὰ πάντων ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντες· If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men.

1 Cor 9:22 ἐγενόμην τοῖς ἀσθενέσιν ἀσθενής, ἵνα τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς κερδήσω· τοῖς πᾶσιν γέγονα πάντα, ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω.

22 To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to **all men**, that I may by all means save some.

2 Cor 3:2 ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἡμῶν ὑμεῖς ἐστε, ἐγγεγραμμένη ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν, γνωσκομένη καὶ ἀναγνωσκομένη ὑπὸ πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of **all men**;

Phil 4:5 τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω **πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις**. ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.

Let your forbearance be known unto **all men**. The Lord is at hand.

1The 2:15 τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτεινάντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφήτας, καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων, καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων, καὶ **πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις** ἐναντίων,

who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove out us, and pleased not God, and are contrary to **all men**;

Tit 3:2 μηδένα βλασφημεῖν, ἀμάχους εἶναι, ἐπιεικεῖς, πᾶσαν ἐνδεικνυμένους πραύτητα πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους.

to speak evil of no man, not to be contentious, to be gentle, showing all meekness toward **all men**.

Heb 12:14 Εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ **πάντων**, καὶ τὸν ἀγιασμόν, οὗ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν κύριον,

14 Follow after peace with **all men**, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord:

- b. As hyperbole for a relatively large number or percentage.

1 Cor 7:7 θέλω δὲ **πάντας ἀνθρώπους** εἶναι ὡς καὶ ἐμαυτὸν· ἀλλὰ ἕκαστος ἴδιον ἔχει χάρισμα ἐκ θεοῦ, ὁ μὲν οὕτως, ὁ δὲ οὕτως.

Yet I would that **all men** were even as I myself. Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that.

3. All kinds of (with Greek genitive plural noun)

- a. All kinds of a given class, inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception.

Examples of this definition were not found in regard to "all men," but may be illustrated by such verses as Matt 4:23-24: And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing **all manner of** disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them.

- b. All kinds of a given class, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception. (See the disputed verses.)

Section 3: Disputed verses:

John 12:32 *καὶ γὰρ ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ ἐκ τῆς γῆς, πάντα ἐλκύσω πρὸς ἑμαυτόν.*

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw **all men** unto myself.

Arminian: #1a, literally all men without any contextual restriction

Calvinist: #1b2, literally all men but with implied contextual restriction (all elect)

Calvinist: #3b, all kinds, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception

Acts 17:31 *καθότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ἧ ἔμμελλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὄρισεν, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν.*

31 inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto **all men**, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Acts 22:15 *ὅτι ἔση μάρτυς αὐτῷ πρὸς πάντα ἀνθρώπους ὧν ἐώρακας καὶ ἤκουσας.*
For thou shalt be a witness for him unto **all men** of what thou hast seen and heard.

Probably #2a, all, but not literally, as constrained by obvious considerations:
You will be a witness unto all men *you meet* of what you have seen....

Possibly #3b all kinds of men, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception.

1 Tim 2:1 *Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, εὐχαριστίας, ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων,*

I exhort therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men;

Arminian: #1a, literally all men without any contextual restriction

Calvinist: #1b2, literally all men but with implied contextual restriction (all elect)

Calvinist: #3b, all kinds but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception

1 Tim 2:4 *ὃς πάντα ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν.*
who would have **all men** to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

Arminian: #1a, literally all men without any contextual restriction

Calvinist: #1b2, literally all men but with implied contextual restriction (all elect)

Calvinist: #3b, all kinds but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception

1 Tim 2:6 *ὁ δὸς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων...*

who gave himself a ransom for **all**...

Arminian: #1a, literally all men without any contextual restriction

Calvinist: #1b2, literally all men but with implied contextual restriction (all elect)

Calvinist: #3b, all kinds, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception

1 Tim 4:10 εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ἀγωνιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἠλπίκαμεν ἐπὶ θεῷ ζῶντι, ὃς ἐστὶν σωτὴρ **πάντων ἀνθρώπων**, μάλιστα πιστῶν.

For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of **all men**, specially of them that believe.

Arminian: #1a, literally all men without any contextual restriction

Calvinist: #1b2, literally all men but with implied contextual restriction (all elect)

Calvinist: #3b, all kinds, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception

Tit 2:11 Ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ σωτήριος **πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις**,

For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to **all men**,

Arminian: #1a, literally all men without any contextual restriction

Calvinist: #1b2, literally all men but with implied contextual restriction (all elect)

Calvinist: #3b, all kinds, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception

Section 4: Summary

There are 34 occurrences of "all men" (plural masculine form of πᾶς + ἄνθρωπος in any case, or the plural masculine form of πᾶς in any case as a substantive) in the New Testament. There are eight occurrences which may be open to interpretation.

Excepting the eight occurrences, the remaining 26 occurrences may be categorized as follows:

1. All (literally); without exception; bar none.
 - a. Without contextual limits: 11 (with many more in LXX)
 - b. With contextual limits
 - i. Explicit qualification: 1 (with a few more in LXX)
 - ii. Implicit qualification: 1 (with none in LXX)
2. All (not literally)
 - a. Generally, as constrained by obvious practical considerations; all to the extent of possibilities: 14 (with many more in LXX)
 - b. As hyperbole for a relatively large number or percentage: 1 (with none in LXX)
3. All kinds of
 - a. All kinds of a given class, inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception: 0 (with none in LXX)

- b. All kinds of a given class, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member of the class without exception. 0 (with none in LXX)

Searches in the LXX were limited to $\pi\alpha\varsigma + \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ (plural masculine in any case) and did not include $\pi\alpha\tilde{\iota}\varsigma$ as a substantive

Regarding the Calvinists' concerns, there is a need to demonstrate that "all men" can elsewhere mean def. #1.b.ii. (all literally, but with implicit qualification), or def. # 3b (all kinds of a given class, but not necessarily inclusive of every individual member). However, these usages were rare. There is only one undisputed example in all the New Testament (and LXX) where "all men" had some implicit qualification to restrict its meaning to a particular group of people: Paul's insistence that the Spirit's gifts are distributed to all (i.e., to all the people of the Church). On the other hand, there are no undisputed examples in the New Testament or LXX where "all men" means "all kinds of men." To find examples of either of these meanings, one would have to extend the search beyond $\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$ to include words such as "all evil" or "all Jerusalem," etc.

Also, the survey demonstrates that if "all men" cannot be taken in an unrestricted literal sense (e.g., be kind to all men), the passage does not automatically resort to meaning "all kinds of men." This was George Knight's mistake in his New International Greek Text Commentary when he assigned the following five passages to mean "all kinds of men" on the basis that they could not have an unrestricted literal sense: Rom 12:17, 18; 2 Cor 3:2; Phil 4:5; 1 Thes 2:15 (115). Instead, these occurrences are not to be taken literally, but are constrained by the extent of possibilities: be kind to all people (whosoever you meet).

Regarding the Arminian's concerns, the survey demonstrates that there is at least one instance in which an implied context can restrict the meaning of "all people" to mean "all people of a given class" (cf. the example above of the Spirit's distribution of gifts to all people [of the Church]). Thus, in theory, a text can read "all men" without any other qualification, but whose context implies a limitation.

Ultimately, exegetes must not impose into a text meanings which are merely possible. Robert E. Picirilli writes in his *Grace, Faith and Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation*, "All of us who handle God's Word do well to remember that we do not honor him with our interpretive ingenuity but with submission to what He says. To say, even to show, that a given statement *can* be interpreted in a certain way does us no credit at all. The question is always not what the words *can* mean but what they *do* mean, here" (137)

With this statement in mind, one should prayerfully reconsider the disputed texts, especially 1 Tim 2:1-6

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for **everyone**— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants **all men** to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5For there is one

God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
6who gave himself as a ransom for **all men**—the testimony given in its
proper time.

The pertinent question to ask is, is there anything in the text which suggests that Paul wants his readers to pray for some people and not others, that God wants some men to be saved and not others, or that Jesus gave himself for some men ("the few") and not others ("the many;" cf. Mark 10:45)? If there are no such contextual clues for this sort of limitation of "all men," then one needs to identify the ulterior reasons for interpreting the text in such a limiting manner.