

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.*

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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The All

The word **all** is a very small word, but it is a mighty comprehensive word that sums up the purpose of God, for He has purposed that His Son, our Lord Jesus, shall be **all in all** so that He, that is, God the Father shall be **all in all**. How unfortunate it is that many preachers of the gospel place restrictions or exclusions on God's all. As it is so often preached, people must get themselves into God's all or else they will be excluded and, worse, end up in an eternal fire called *hell*. This is not the good news of Jesus *the Anointed One (the Christ)*, especially taught by Paul.

In the New Testament, the word *all* and the expression *all things* (appearing about 110 times), are most often translated from the Greek word *panta*, which is a neuter plural form that refers to "wholly, together, in all ways, in all things" (*Vine's Expository Dictionary*). In other words, *panta* is a very comprehensive word, just as the word *all* is in English, which refers to "the whole extent or quantity of or number of," "every one of," or "the greatest possible; as much as possible." For example, Paul declared: **God our Savior, Who will have all [panta] men to be saved** (1 Timothy 2.3-4 KJV). By the way, is anyone excluded from God's all? No! This is the greatest possible.

In the New Testament, the Greek expression *ta panta* appears about 34 times, depending on the particular Greek version. The word *ta* is most often translated as the definite article *the*. *Ta panta* is generally translated as *all things*, but it could be equally translated as **the all**. We could say that God's purpose is **the all**. It might sound like a strange expression, but really it is not because it intensifies the word *all* to include everything and exclude nothing, especially in relation to mankind.

Let us consider some of **the all** verses, beginning with creation and the source of all life.

The administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things [ta panta, the all].... (Ephesians 3.9)

I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things [ta panta, the all]. (1 Timothy 6.13)

For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things [ta panta, the all] is God. (Hebrews 3.4)

"Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things [ta panta, the all], and because of Your will they existed, and were created." (Revelation 4.11)

For in Him [Christ] all things [ta panta, the all] were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things [ta panta, the all] have been created through Him and for Him. (Colossians 1.16)

Adding to this, Paul tells us that **the all** is from, by, through, and for God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, meaning they are intimately joined to **the all**, not simply the Creators of **the all**.

Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things [ta panta, the all] and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things [ta panta, the all], and we exist through Him. (1 Corinthians 8.6)

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things [ta panta, the all]. (Romans 11.36)

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things [ta panta, the all], and through whom are all things [ta panta, the all], in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. (Hebrews 2.10)

Adding to this, God's purpose is and will be worked out in **the all**.

Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things [ta panta, the all] after the counsel of His will.... (Ephesians 1.11)

Turning specifically to Christ, Paul declares that He existed before all things came into being, and He is the source of creation. **The all** has been permanently placed in Him, and now, kept and held together by the word of His power. We could say that He places, keeps, sustains, and preserves **the all** by His very life.

He is before [precedes] all things [panton], and in Him all things [ta panta, the all] hold together [have been permanently placed]. (Colossians 1.17 NASB [Diaglott])

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things [ta panta, the all] by the word of His power. (Hebrews 1.3)

Clearly by revelation, Paul declares that Christ who created **the all** will also fill **the all** with His very life, and He will begin with (but not end with) the *ecclesia*, which is His spiritual, glorified body.

He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, so that He might fill all things [ta panta, the all]. (Ephesians 4.10)

And He put all things [kai panta] in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church [ecclesia], which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all [ta panta, the all] in all [pasin]. (Ephesians 1.22-23)

How will He do this? Through reconciliation; **the all** has been shut up under sin so that **the all** will be reconciled back to God through the One who fills **the all**. Oh, the glory of God's purpose and plan!

But the Scripture has shut up everyone [ta panta, the all] under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3.22)

Through Him to reconcile all things [ta panta, the all] to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. (Colossians 1.20)

How will Christ complete this great plan? He will sum up or gather up **the all** in Himself, subjecting **the all** to Himself and then subjecting Himself to God the Father. The *Mitchell Bible* translates the word *subjection* as "completely arranges, humbly aligns and then appends and puts under shelter all humanity." This is not a forced subjection but an act of grace and love. Don't miss this vital point: The Son of God's love will subject Himself to the Father.

An administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things [ta panta, the all] in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. (Ephesians 1.10)

He has put all things [panta] in subjection under His feet. But when He says, "All things [panta] are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things [ta panta, the all] in subjection to Him. When all things [ta panta, the all] are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will be subjected to the One who subjected all things [ta panta, the all] to Him, so that God may be all [ta panta, the all] in all. (1 Corinthians 15.27-28).

Paul defines **the all** for us – everything in the heavens and on the earth, meaning **the all** is God's entire creation as we know it and, most likely, as we don't know it, for it includes the unseen as well. There is nothing left out of **the all** of the Son's gathering up and subjecting **the all** to Himself in order to accomplish God's ultimate purpose of **all in all**. Nothing is outside of **the all**! Praise God!