

A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION

OF

II PETER 3:9

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ROBERT P. COMBS

What is the meaning of
the phrase "not willing
that any should perish"?

What is the meaning of
the phrase "all should
come to repentance"?

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PREFACE

This verse is often quoted as a proof text against the doctrine of election and predestination. It was because of this kind of misuse that the author first became interested in the problem of the text upon which he has written. Final selection of this passage came as a result of a conference with Professor Paul Fink when the writer was encouraged to probe into the problems of this passage.

The author wishes to express his appreciation to all the members of his family for helpful suggestions on this paper, and the valuable instruction received during three years of study. I am especially grateful to my wife who has encouraged me in my studies over the past three years and to Miss Mary Hubacher who labored many hours in typing this manuscript.

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INTRODUCTION

1. Need for correct understanding of this verse.

Throughout the years of his life the writer has been deeply interested in God's eternal plan for the ages and how this eternal plan relates to human responsibility. Many passages of scripture such as the one under consideration have been used and are being used to supposedly disprove the marvelous sovereignty of God.

Approximately two years ago the author heard a radio message in which **INTRODUCTION**er, after reading II Peter 3:9, made the following statement: "The doctrine of predestination is a lie of Satan and should be driven back to the pits of hell where it came from." This kind of attitude is often seen among those of the Arminian persuasion. These leanings are dangerous and often prove to be the first step toward modernism. Therefore it is the responsibility of the student of the word of God to correctly interpret such passages as II Peter 3:9. The writer realizing this responsibility has attempted by diligent study to arrive at the correct interpretation of this passage.

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2. Statement of procedures in this paper.

a. Essential background material

b. Statements of problems

1. Major problems

2. Minor problems

c. Various interpretations

d. Writer's interpretation

GREEK TEXT

Nestle's Greek Testament, twenty-fourth edition 1960, edited by Dr. Eberhard Nestle.

οὐ βραβεύει σήμερον τῆς εὐαγγελίας, ὡς
τὴν βραβεύεται ἡγουμένη, ἀλλὰ μαρτυρεῖ
εἰς τὴν αἰῶνα, ὅτι βουλομένης τῆς ἀποστολῆς αὐτῆς
πάρτατος εἰς ἀποστολὴν Χριστοῦ.

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τινες βραδύτητα ἡγοῦνται, ἀλλὰ μακροθυμεῖ
εἰς ὑμᾶς, μὴ βουλόμενός τις ἀπολέσθαι ἀλλὰ
πᾶντας εἰς μετάνοιαν ἁρῶναι.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

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It is not the purpose of this book to take all the work out of the hands of the people.

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Revised Standard Version 1946

Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

ENGLISH VERSIONS

World's New Testament 1938

Moffatt's Translation 1922

He does not wish any to perish but all to betake them to repentance.

Phillips Translation 1958

Berkeley Version 1945

Desiring as he does that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Willoughby Translation 1930

Norlie's Simplified New Testament 1961

He does not want anyone to perish, but rather that everyone should be prevailed on to repent.

New Testament in Basic English 1941

Centenary Translation of the New Testament 1924

Not purposing that any should perish, but that all should pass on to repentance.

New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures
1950

He does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance.

Wuest's Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament
1959

Not having it as His considered will that certain should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The New English Bible 1961

It is not his will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance.

Revised Standard Version 1946

Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Amplified New Testament 1958

Not desiring that any should perish but that all should turn to repentance.

Phillips Translation 1958

He has no wish that any man should be destroyed: he wishes that all men should come to repent.

Williams Translation 1950

He is not willing for any to perish but for all to have opportunity to repent.

New Testament in Basic English 1941

Not desiring the destruction of any, but that all may be turned from their evil ways.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

Background of the Epistle

The identity of II Peter has come into question many times over the years since the time it was first put into writing. Because of differences in style and vocabulary the critics say it is a forgery of the second century. There are, however, several things that make it look as though the apostle Peter himself wrote this epistle.

- a. The writer uses the name Simon Peter in the salutation.

ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND

- b. There are certain personal allusions which occur in Chapter 1, verses 11-13.
- c. There are certain distinctive items of the apostle's vocabulary which are recorded in some of Peter's speeches in the book of Acts.
- d. There are points of similarity which may be seen between the I and II epistles of Peter in diction and thought.

According to those critics who accept the Petrine authorship of this epistle, it was written sometime between 65 and 70 A.D. near the end of the Apostle's

*Frederick F. Garrison, Introduction to the New Testament, 1st ed., Western Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 1941 p. 294 and 295.

life. Throughout the book the writer tries to strengthen these Christians in faith and practice so that they will be able to withstand the onslaught of the threatening false teachers.²

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¹ Everett F. Harrison, Introduction to the New Testament (Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 1964) p. 398 and 399.

² Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Inter-Varsity Press, Chicago, 1952) p. 173

life. Throughout the book the writer tries to strengthen these Christians in faith and practice so that they will be able to withstand the ungodliness of the threatening false teachers.² It is difficult to determine definitely who the readers are that are being addressed by Peter. From the phrase "like precious faith" in verse one we conclude that they are Christians, however, whether they are Gentile or Jewish Christians is impossible to determine. This matter would not change the interpretation of the epistle one way or the other.

Charles Erdman, in his commentary on the General Epistles gives the following outline of II Peter.

I The Knowledge of Christ. II Peter chapter 1

a. The Salutation: The Gift of Knowledge Chapter 1:1-4

b. The Exhortation: The Growth of Knowledge Chapter 1:5-11

c. The Promise: The Grounds of Knowledge Chapter 1:12-21

II The Teachers of Error. II Peter chapter 2

a. Their Punishment. Chapter 2:1-9

b. Their Character and Conduct. Chapter 2:10-16

c. Their Evil Influence. Chapter 2:17-22

III. The Coming of Christ. II Peter chapter 3

a. The Certainty. Chapter 3:1-7

b. The Time and Circumstances. Chapter 3:8-13

² Donald Guthrie, New Testament Introduction (Inter-Varsity Press, Chicago, 1962) p. 173.
 1919] pages 88 and 89.

is verse nine. c. The Consequent Exhortations.
Chapter 3:14-18³ remainder of the
chapter declares the fact that the Lord will come at a

time when he is not expected, and that his coming will
Background of the Context

Our problem verse II Peter 3:9 "The Lord is
bring with it great destruction. Peter closes his
not slack concerning his promise, as some men count
epistle with exhortations to believers to "give
slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing
obedience to their manner of life that they may "grow
that any should perish, but that all should come to re-
in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
pentance."

This verse falls in the middle of the chapter
dealing with the coming of Christ. Peter in the previous
verses warns the readers that mockers shall come.

"Knowing this first, that in the last
days mockers shall come with mockery,
walking after their own lusts, and
saying, Where is the promise of His
coming? For, from the day that the
fathers fell asleep all things continue
as they were from the beginning of
creation" (II Peter 3:3-4)

The apostle is concerned that the words of
these might cause some of the believers to doubt the
second coming of Christ. Peter's argument is that the
Lord is not slack concerning the promise of the second
coming as these mockers count slackness. He goes on to
say that the very purpose for the seeming delay in the
second coming, is because of His longsuffering. The
problem we are dealing with in this paper is concerned
mainly with the longsuffering of the Lord as defined

³Charles R. Erdman, An Exposition of the
General Epistles. (Westminster Press, Philadelphia,
1919) pages 88 and 89.

in verse nine. The apostle in the remainder of the chapter declares the fact that the Lord will come at a time when he is not expected, and that his coming will bring with it great destruction. Peter closes his epistle with exhortations to believers to "give diligence" to their manner of life that they may "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

conversion to Buddhism.

Major Problem: What is meant by the phrase "not willing (to be a slave) that any should perish?"

Minor Problem: What is the meaning of the phrase "Now that all should come (to repentance)"

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

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Major Problem: What is meant by the phrase "not willing (*Boulómenós*) that any should perish"

Minor Problem: What is the meaning of the phrase "but that all should come (*ἵνα πάντες ἔλθωσι*) to repentance"

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS

John R. Riddle: What is the meaning of the phrase "not willing (for them) that any should perish"?

A great amount of material has been written on the problem under consideration. Many have attempted to solve this problem to their own satisfaction, and as a result there are several interpretations given to this verse. There are four major views under which the bulk of the material consulted can be placed.

The four views will be discussed in the following order: (1) The Universal Salvation View, (2) The Elect Only View, (3) The Desired Will View and (4) The Purposed Will View.

Universal Salvation View

This view asserts that since God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, none will perish. God in His own time, and way, will deal with mankind until every individual in the entire universe has come to repentance and accepted Him as Lord.

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William Barclay expresses this view in his commentary on II Peter, as follows:

"Ever and again there shines in Scripture the glint of light of the larger hope. We are not forbidden to believe that somehow and sometime the God who loved the world will bring the whole world to himself."¹

This is a dangerous view, and it typical of the modern theologians of our day who emphasize the love of God to the point that they forget God is also a God of justice. To hold this view one must either reject, or twist the meaning of Scripture throughout both the Old and New Testaments.

Elect Only View

Those holding this view maintain that only those who have been elected by God are under consideration when Peter says, "God is not willing that any should perish." The writer must confess that after reading some of the arguments for this view he was nearly convinced that this was the correct interpretation.

Many outstanding theologians of years gone by have advocated this view. Just to mention a few, Calvin²,

¹William Barclay, The Letters of James and Peter (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Penna., 1960) p. 406

²John Calvin, Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles (Wm B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1948) p. 419

John Owen³, Beza⁴, Clement⁵ of Rome and others. Calvin argues that so wonderful and deep is God's love toward man that he would have them all to come to the Salvation which He has provided. In answer to the question, if God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many perish. Calvin says,

"No mention is made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own ruin, but only of His will as made known to us in the gospel. For in the gospel God stretches forth His hand to all but lays hold only of those, to lead them to Himself whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world."

Calvin translates this phrase which we are dealing with as follows:

"God would have all, who had been before wandering and scattered, to be gathered or come together to repentance"

He justifies this translation on the basis that the Greeks often take the word *ὑποτάσσονται* passively.

According to Clement, Peter is only addressing the Beloved of God and therefore the all is limited to the Elect.⁸

³John Demarest, A Commentary on the Second Epistle of Peter (Sheldon and Co., New York, 1962) p. 202

⁴Ibid., p. 202

⁵Ibid., p. 202

⁶Calvin, op. cit., p. 419

⁷Ibid.

⁸Demarest, op. cit., p. 202

John Gill in his work, An Exposition of the New Testament, gives some very strong points for this particular view.

Peter in "God is longsuffering but not to all human nature but rather to usward. In the text it seems that some men are distinguished from the ones He wills to come to repentance by the expression "to usward". "To usward" seems to refer to the beloved that are expressly stated in verses 1, 8, 14 and 17 and God's longsuffering toward them is their Salvation as is clearly stated in verse 15. And besides this it is impossible that God could have determined that all men should not perish since He has planned a judgment and final destruction. Then too, a society of men are described here to which the apostle himself belongs and is a part. Peter in his epistles refers often to the elect of God called out of darkness into the marvelous light and having obtained like precious faith with the Apostles. These must be understood as God's elect among the Jews, for which He is delaying until they will come to the place of acknowledging him.⁹

This view must be rejected since it doesn't adequately explain the "any should perish" and "all coming to repentance". In other passages such as John 3:17 we see that God's purpose in sending His Son wasn't to condemn the world but that the world might be saved. If we interpret this verse as applying only to God's elect how can we reconcile this with passages such as I Tim. 2:4 and John 3 where we see Christ coming to save the world.

⁹John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament Vol II (William Hill Collingridge, London, 1853) p. 871

Daniel Whitby rejects this view on the grounds that the words of the verse are too general to be limited to the elect alone. He then goes on to explain that Peter in this passage is speaking concerning the day of judgment and final destruction. Peter gives the reason for God's delay in judgment and destruction, because of God's longsuffering. Peter must be speaking then of mankind in general.¹⁰

Desired Will View

Those holding this view contend that *Bouloímero's* refers to the desired will of God. This is the most widely accepted of all the views on this problem.

Dr. A. T. Robertson in his book Word Pictures in the New Testament supports this view. He translates the phrase "not wishing that any should perish". He says that some will perish as can be seen in verse 7, nevertheless this isn't God's desire. He uses Acts 17:30; Romans 11:32; I Timothy 2:4; and Hebrews 2:9 to support his translation and interpretation. He declares that this verse teaches God's provision of grace for all who will repent.¹¹

¹⁰ Daniel Whitby, A Critical Commentary and Paraphrase on the Old and New Testament Vol IV (Fredrick Scofield & Co., Philadelphia, 1877) p. 983

¹¹ Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1933) p. 176

Albert Barnes also supports this view as can be seen in the following quote.

"Not willing that is He does not desire or wish, that any should perish. God is a God of love and therefore he desires eternal happiness for all of His creatures and His patience and longsuffering proves that His desire is for all to be saved. If God were not willing for all to be saved it would be easy for Him to cut the sinner off at once and exclude him from all hope of eternal life".¹²

John Demarest explains the desired will view. God is unchangeable in His purpose to judge and to punish the unrighteous, who persists in rejecting Salvation and continuing in sin. He has made this known by His prophets and apostles throughout scripture but he does not take pleasure in their destruction. God is not a sadist. He would be pleased to see the sinner humble himself in repentance before Him. Satan and his hosts would glory in seeing lost mankind hurled into the pits of hell but it is inconceivable to think of our God joyous because one of His creatures was condemned to hell. God in flesh wept over Jerusalem as He saw men turn their backs upon Him. It would not be consistent for this same God now to be willing for souls to perish. Even though man deserves punishment, God still desires that he repent.¹³

¹²Albert Barnes, Notes Explanatory and Practical on the General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude.

¹³John T. Demarest, op. cit., p. 203

"God would not so much as desire that one man experience His indignation", so says Charles Simeon.¹⁴ He then goes on to elaborate on this thought. We recall from Ezekiel 23:11 that God said He had no pleasure in the death of a sinner but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. It is amazing how that some, even after God has presented such clear statements, will hold to the fact that God has rejected some for eternal punishment. Jude does say that "of old they were ordained to condemnation" and Peter declares in I Peter 2:8, "that they stumbled at the word being disobedient whereunto they were also appointed". However, it is not individuals but characters that the Apostles speak of in these instances. But we know that God has ordained that those who refuse the grace that He has offered is condemned "because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God". This appointment is wise and just. But it is certainly a far cry from creating any with a fixed determination to consign them over to eternal punishment, strictly of His own arbitrary will, without any fault of theirs. Such an idea is directly contradicted by this text and many others throughout scripture.¹⁵

¹⁴Charles Simeon, Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible Vol 20 (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1955) p. 346

¹⁵Charles Simeon, op. cit., p. 346

the problem. Thomas Adams gives an illustration that helps us to understand the desired will view. He likens the will of God as is expressed here in I Peter to the will of a judge, whose desire it is that every man would keep the law; never-the-less as those who break the law stand before him, justice demands that he punish them for their lawlessness.¹⁶

Some might question as to why this view would be rejected. To the author this view fails to solve the problem of this verse. If God is not willing that any should perish then why do they perish? The illustration of God's being like a judge doesn't make much sense, for God is God and He can do, and will do according to the counsel of His own will. If we say then that He truly wishes, even as we would desire or wish for something, that all should be saved, why then aren't they saved? The answer is, this writer doesn't know, therefore he has rejected this view since it fails to solve his problem.

Planned Will View

Those who have accepted this view translate the word *Boulómenós* to mean planning. They would say that God has not planned that any should perish.

This particular view is not very widely held but it has much to commend it. For one thing you escape

¹⁶Thomas Adams, An Exposition Upon the Second General Epistle of St. Peter (James Nichol and Company, 1863) p. 395

the problem of God's desiring none to perish and yet they perish. For another thing you don't have to worry about the universality of the language.

Throughout scripture we find that God chooses men and women for eternal life; but not once do you find that He deliverately purposes an individual for eternal punishment.

Rawson Lumby in his book The Epistles of Peter makes the following explanation of the word

"The word "wishing" (*Boulánevós*) implies deliberate consent. God does not direct the death of any sinner. If the sinner perishes, it is not because God so designed or desired. But the question always comes to our minds why then should any perish? God could direct all to repentance. The apostle Peter answers that question for us right here. Sinners perish because they continue in sin and repent not. God so made us that we are free agents and he asks from us willing service. The sinner is asked to come to repentance not to be driven there".¹⁷

Minor Problem: What is the meaning of the phrase "but that all should come to repentance".

This problem is much the same as the major problem, however we are dealing with an entirely different word. The translation and interpretation of these two phrases greatly affect one another.

There are two main views on this problem, the should come view, and the make room view.

¹⁷Rawson J. Lumby, The Epistles of St. Peter (Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1900) p. 350

Liddell and Scott Should Come View ²¹

John Deane ²² This view which, in our English version, translates *χρῆται* "should come", gives the impression that William Barclay might be right when he talks about universal salvation. However, this is the only time, in the ten times that the word appears in scripture, that it is translated come.¹⁸

Dr. Harvey in his book An American Commentary on the Epistles of Timothy to Peter contends that the best translation would be "should enter".¹⁹ This translation would contain virtually the same problems as the "should come" translation. This view leaves the door open for the Universalists, therefore we reject it in hopes of a better one.

Make Room View

This view is held by many outstanding scholars, and by accepting it, we not only will understand this phrase better but it also aides in our understanding of the major problem. Such men as A. T. Robertson,²⁰

¹⁸Jacob Brubaker Smith, Greek English Concordance of New Testament (Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1955) p. 346

¹⁹H. Harvey, An American Commentary on the Epistles of Timothy to Peter (American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1890) p. 108

²⁰Robertson, op. cit., p. 176

Liddell and Scott in their Greek English Lexion²¹, John Demarest²², F. C. Cook²³, Dr. Herman Hoyt²⁴ and many others, hold this view, the following statements.

Dr. Hoyt ably explains the primary meaning of the word *χωρῆσαι*. He points out that our present translation does sound like universal salvation is being taught, but the original language leaves an entirely different picture. *χωρῆσαι* means that man should have plenty of room to make that decision or plenty of time. We must never forget that He is longsuffering to usward. Dr. Hoyt goes on to explain that on the divine side God has made provision for all men but on the human side God provided plenty of time, that man might come to repentance.²⁵

A. T. Robinson parses this word *χωρῆσαι* as a "first aorist active infinitive of *χωρέω* which is an old verb meaning "to make room". He mentions Acts 17:30, Romans 11:32, I Timothy 2:4 and Hebrews 2:9 as passages where this concept, of God's giving man

²¹Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, Greek English Lexion (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1889) p. 1750

²²Demarest, op. cit., p. 205

²³F. C. Cook, Holy Bible with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary Vol IV (Charles Scribner's and Sons, New York) p. 264

²⁴Herman Hoyt, An Analytical and Devotional Commentary on the Second Epistle of Peter (Grace Theological Seminary, 1946) p. 149

²⁵Ibid

opportunity for repentance, can also be seen.²⁶

Cook agrees with those already mentioned in this section when he makes the following statements.

"I Timothy 2:4 says, 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth'. This is saying the same thing as II Peter 3:9 only in different words."

"God offers His gift to all who will accept it and this offer is hinted at in the word *ἡμετέρας* which the authorized version translates should come, but the word contains the idea of "opening for the reception of anything" and thus shewing a willingness to accept it".²⁷

A closing quote by Thomas Adams, shows the importance of understanding that God has provided for man ample opportunity for repentance.

"Though God from all eternity knew how to reward every man, either with bliss or pain; yet he never imposed upon any man either a necessity or a will to sin. Far be it from us, to lay the burden of our sins on the shoulder of predestination, and to make it the womb of our foul enormities".²⁸

²⁶Robinson, op. cit., p. 176

²⁷Cook, op. cit., p. 264

²⁸Thomas Adams, An Exposition upon the Second Epistle General of St. Peter (Edinburg James Nichol and Company, 1963) p. 693

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

After a thorough investigation of the original language, and the writings of various authors upon this text, the writer feels that he has arrived at a satisfactory interpretation of the passage.

Linguistic Argument

There is a great deal of disagreement as to the meaning involved. The word *βουλη* was cited by some, to mean purpose, and others want to give evidence to prove that it meant desire. Just to illustrate this, the writer wishes to point out a couple of cases. I use by the name of Butcher says

"*βουλη*" as is used here by Peter seems to which is a determination. However, in Ecclesiastes Greek this distinction is not always observed. The word *βουλη* is only used twice in Peter's writings. First Peter 2:13 and II Peter 3:15 and in both cases it carries with it the idea of purpose or determination. Thus Peter observes this distinction between *βουλη* and *βουλομαι* thereby justifying translating *βουλη* as wishing."

WRITER'S INTERPRETATION

In contrast to that Hanson Lady says "the word implies deliberate consent." He then continues on to explain what the word teaches:

¹John T. Stewart, A Summary of the Gospel Epistle of Peter (Sheldon and Company, New York, 1883) p. 104

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After a thorough investigation of the original language, and the writings of various authors upon this text, the writer feels that he has arrived at a satisfactory interpretation of the passage.

Linguistic Argument

There is a great deal of disagreement on the word meaning involved. The word *Boûlonai* was cited by some, to mean purpose, and others went to great extremes to prove that it meant desire. Just to illustrate this, the writer wishes to point out a couple of cases. A man by the name of Buttman says:

"*Boûlonai* as is used here by Peter means to wish or desire, *Oûdw* to purpose or determine. However, in Hellenistic Greek this distinction is not always observed. The verb *Oûdw* is only used twice in Peter's writings. First Peter 3:10 and II Peter 3:5 and in both cases it carries with it the idea of purpose or determination. Thus Peter observes this distinction between *Oûdw* and *Boûlonai* thereby justifying translating *Boûlonai* as wishing."¹

In contrast to that Rawson Lumby says "the word implies deliberate consent." He then continues on to explain what the verse teaches:

¹John T. Demarest, A Commentary on the Second Epistle of Peter (Sheldon and Company, New York, 1862) p. 204

word studies. The author would observe in passing how-
ever, that any sinner. If the sinner perishes
it is not because God so designed or desired
or desired. But the question always
comes to our mind why then should
any perish? God could direct all to
repentance. The apostle Peter
answers that question for us right
here. Sinners perish because they
continue in sin and repent not. God
so made us that we are free agents
and He asks from us willing service.
The sinner is asked to come to re-
pentance not to be driven there".²

The author made a word study of both *Βούλωναι*
and *Θέλω* in hopes that it would help in some
way to establish a consistent distinction between the
words.

The following is the result of the word
studies. The word *Θέλω* occurs 209 times in the New
Testament. It is translated 158 times as will or would,
sixteen times will or would have, thirteen times desire,
three times desirous, three times list, two times to
will, and there are also fourteen miscellaneous usages.
On the other hand the word *Βούλωναι* occurs only thirty-
four times in the New Testament. Fifteen times it is
translated will, eleven times would, two times be
minded, two times intend, once be disposed, once be
willing, once list, and once of his own will. As can be
seen from these various translations there are no con-
crete distinctions that can be established from these.

²J. Rawson Lumby, The Epistles of St. Peter
(Funk and Waynalls Company, New York, 1900) p. 350

word studies. The author would observe in passing however, that sixteen times *Θέλω* was translated desire or desirous but not once is *Βούλωμαι* translated desire or desirous.³

In discussing synonyms like these Trench has a word to say regarding them.

"all that we can certainly affirm is that granting this, (namely, that there may be one hundred passages where it would be quite as possible to use the one as the other), there is a hundred and first, where one would be appropriate and the other not, or where, at all events, one would be more appropriate than the other".⁴

It would seem then that here *Βούλωμαι* is used advisedly by Peter.

Lange quotes Calov as interpreting *Βουλόμενος* to mean "to will as the result of conscious deliberation but not with irresistible coercion".⁵

Arndt and Gingrich list two primary meanings for the word *Βούλωμαι*

1. Of the persons desiring, to wish, to want, to desire.
2. Decisions of the will after previous deliberation.

³Jacob Brubaker Smith, Greek English Concordance of the New Testament (Hearld Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1955) p. 66

⁴Kenneth S. Wuest, In These Last Days (Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954) p. 70

⁵John Peter Lange, Commentary on the Holy Scriptures II Peter (Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids) p. 43

It is under this second meaning that they list *Boudonai* in II Peter 3:9.⁶

In contrast to this they define *Ochlō* as meaning what one would like to desire. It is more of an emotional type word. They illustrate this with its usage in I Cor. 10:20, "I would not that ye should have communion with demons". Paul is saying my desire (the way I feel about things) you should not have communion with demons.⁷

Thayer seems to be whole hearted agreement with Arndt and Gingrich when he cites a statement made by a professor Grimm.

"Many agree with Professor Grimm that *Ochlō* gives prominence to the emotional element *Boudonai* to the rational and volitional; that *Ochlō* signifies the choice, while *Boudonai* marks the choice as deliberate and intelligent; yet they acknowledge that the words are used sometimes indiscriminately, and especially that *Ochlō* as the less sharply defined term is put where *Boudonai* would be proper".

Dr. Herman Hoyt stands with these men just cited when he translates this phrase, "God is not planning for any to perish" as the primary meaning of

⁶William Arndt and Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1957) p. 145 and 146

⁷Ibid. p. 355

⁸Ibid. p. 355

in this passage.⁹

The following English versions seem to be in agreement with this kind of translation of *Βουδομενός* in II Peter 3:9.

1. Centenary Translation of the New Testament 1924

"Not purposing that any should perish"

2. Wuest's Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament 1959

"Not having it as his considered will that certain should perish"

3. The New English Bible 1961

"It is not His will for any word used to be lost"

The author understands will here to mean, God's decreed will.

Thus the author feels that the best possible way to translate *Βουδομενός* is, God is not planning, purposing, decreeing, that any should perish.

Contextual Argument

Those who hold to the elect only view, use the context of this verse as an argument in favor of their view.

Gill argues for the elect only view on the basis of the context in the following quote.

"In the text it seems that some men are distinguished from the ones he elect only."

⁹Herman A. Hoyt, An Analytical and Devotional Commentary on the Second Epistle of Peter, (Grace Theological Seminary, 1946) p. 148

wills to come to repentance by the expression to usward. To usward seems to refer to the beloved that are stated in verses one, eight, fourteen, and seventeen and God's longsuffering toward them in their salvation as is clearly stated in verse fifteen".¹⁰

The entire argument is based upon the fact that Peter in this epistle is addressing the elect. The writer is in full agreement that Peter is addressing the elect but that doesn't mean that the letter never refers to anyone else. A letter may be written to one individual but the author may refer to other people throughout the letter.

Dr. Gill makes a great deal of the word usward, as appears in the authorized version. The better manuscripts reject this reading for youward but this wouldn't change his argument a great deal.

Peter explicitly states that "God is longsuffering to youward". He doesn't in that statement limit the longsuffering of God just to those whom he is addressing. In the very next clause he says, God is "not willing that any should perish" and he goes on to say "but that all should come to repentance". Neither the word any *Tivas* nor all *Pantav* seem to be limited in any way. If Peter had said God is not willing that any of you should perish, but that all of you should come to repentance one could readily accept this for the elect only.

¹⁰ John Gill, An Exposition of the New Testament
Vol II (William Hill Collingridge, London, 1853) p. 871

However, since that is not the case, and the language of the context is general, it can be applied to all mankind.

Doctrinal Argument

To interpret this passage, as teaching that God is not planning that any should perish, doesn't conflict with the teaching of other scripture, but rather confirms it.

Paul teaches in many places that some are predestine to be a part of God's family. Ephesians 1:5 expresses very well his teaching.

"Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will".

But as Dr. James Boyer has expressed, though the scriptures teach that God has foreordained many to eternal life, not once do they state that some are predestined for eternal punishment. That some folks are elected to hell isn't derived from scripture, but rather from human logic. Throughout both the Old and New Testament we see God saying, "whosoever will may come" and this passage only confirms that teaching.

Our minor problem then falls in line with our major problem. Lord, (*Κυριος*) is the subject of the sentence. In the clause with which we are dealing, not planning, *Βουλομενος* is the main verb. Thus we would say, the Lord is not planning that any should perish, but He is planning that all should have opportunity for repentance.

Linguistic Argument

We must not forget that the word *κυρῆσαι* has the meaning 'to make room'. This translation is set forth by Liddell and Scott, A. T. Robertson¹¹, Cook¹², Demarest¹³, Hoyt¹⁴, and many others.

The following English versions also collaborate in translating *κυρῆσαι* to mean, 'to make room'.

1. Norlie's Simplified New Testament 1961

"but rather that everyone should be prevailed upon to repent".

2. Williams Translation 1950

"but for all to have opportunity to repent".

The contextual and doctrinal arguments for interpreting this phrase (but that all should come to repentance) would be the same as those arguments from the context and doctrine considered in dealing with the major problem. Thus on the basis of the language, the context, and the doctrine, the author has concluded that this passage teaches that God hasn't planned the destruction of any, but He has planned that all have ample opportunity for repentance.

¹¹A. T. Robertson Word Pictures in Greek New Testament (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1953) p. 176

¹²F. C. Cook (Editor) Holy Bible with an Explanatory on Critical Commentary Vol IV (Charles Scribner's and Sons, New York) p. 108

¹³Demarest, op. cit., p. 305

¹⁴Hoyt, op. cit., p. 149

CONCLUSION

In spite of all that the Arminians might say, against God's decree and plan, this verse will still stand as an evidence of the sovereign will of God. In spite of all that the Arminians might claim, the general language of this verse makes salvation possible for all mankind.

God is sovereign, He does have a plan, but a part of that plan is that the wicked should be condemned to eternal punishment. God is not planning that any should be saved, but that all should have an opportunity.

CONCLUSION

There is a great deal to be learned from the teaching of this verse.

There are two main points of view. The first is that of the Calvinists. They believe that God has a plan to save all men, but that He will only save those who are predestined. The second is that of the Arminians. They believe that God has a plan to save all men, but that He will only save those who are willing to be saved. The Calvinists believe that God's plan is to save all men, but that He will only save those who are predestined. The Arminians believe that God's plan is to save all men, but that He will only save those who are willing to be saved.

The second view refers to God who does all things after the counsel of His own will, "known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world".

CONCLUSION

In spite of all that the Arminians might say, against God's decree and plan, this verse will still stand as an evidence of the marvelous sovereignty of God. In spite of all that the hyper-Calvinists might claim, the general language of this verse makes salvation possible for all mankind.

God is sovereign, He does have a plan, but a part of that plan is not that certain individuals are condemned to eternal punishment. God is not planning that any should perish, but God is planning that all should have an opportunity to repent.

Thomas Scott does a good job in summarizing the teaching of this verse.

"There are two consistent views of willeth. One view accords to the sinner who first hears the word of God. To them the "longsuffering of God" the provisions of the gospel, the general invitation, the commands for all men to repent, the promises of Christ that no one who calleth upon Him shall be cast out, there are so many assurances that "the Lord is not willing that any should perish" but that it is His will for sinners of all descriptions to come to repentance and that they who repent do that which pleases him, and shall be accepted".¹⁵

¹⁵ Thomas Scott, Scott's Bible Vol VI (Samuel T. Armstrong and Crocker and Brewster, New York, 1830) p. 638

The second view refers to God who does all things after the counsel of His own will, "known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world". And unto the established believer it was the work of God that he attributes his willingness to repent. And he admits, had not the grace of God taken hold of his life he would have perished in his love for sin and enmity against God.¹⁶

"God willeth all men to repent in exactly the same manner, as he willeth all men to be saved. So that none who do not repent can have any benefit from his willingness that all should be saved".¹⁷

PARAPHRASE

¹⁶Ibid. p. 38

¹⁷Ibid

PARAPHRASE

and is not a simple statement. It
provides an idea and a way of thinking
but is largely a way of thinking and the
coming for a long time. We each of
you, not always speaking, thinking
ing, that we shall know. After
He is pleased that each individual
will have the opportunity to know
the soul, the mind, the heart.

PARAPHRASE

God is not negligent concerning His promise as some men count negligence; but is longsuffering (putting off His coming for a long time) to each of you, not planning (purposing, decreeing) that any should perish. Rather He is planning that every individual will have the opportunity (the space, the room, the time) to repent.

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