



**IF GOD LOVES
EVERYONE,
WHY DOESN'T HE
SAVE EVERYONE?**

If God Loves Everyone, Why Would He Not Save All?

Note: All italics in scripture quotations have been added for emphasis.

INTRODUCTION STATED:

The objection, “If God truly loves everyone, why would He not elect everyone?” is one of the most emotionally charged yet theologically confused challenges raised against sovereign grace. It *assumes* a modern, sentimental, Western definition of love and superimposes that assumption onto Scripture. But the Bible presents a far richer and more demanding doctrine of divine love: one that is covenantal, effectual, and inseparable from God’s sovereign purpose in redemption.

What follows is a comprehensive biblical answer in seven parts, each demonstrating from Scripture itself that God’s saving love is always particular, always efficacious, and always inseparable from His electing grace.

1. COVENANT LOVE VS. GENERAL BENEVOLENCE

Scripture distinguishes between God’s general benevolence toward all humanity and His covenant love toward His people.

General Benevolence:

God shows *real* kindness to all people:

“...for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.” (Luke 6:35, NASB1995)

“...He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matthew 5:45, NASB1995)

Jesus healed and fed the multitudes indiscriminately. He even healed the ear of the guard who came to arrest Him after Peter hacked it off. In these ways, and more, Jesus modeled His command to “love one another” – even one’s “enemies.” From the unspeakable agony of the cross – having already been mercilessly tortured, Jesus prayed “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.” By saying Jesus – in *these* ways “loved” His enemies - I am not saying He had *relational* love for them. Rather, He did *the opposite of hating them*.

Meaning,

1. He did not retaliate against them.
2. He “did good” to them, not evil.
3. He prayed for them.

This is what constitutes the command to “love your enemies.” And Jesus was the perfect embodiment of His own command.

But this should not be confused with *personal, relational* love. The former example that Jesus modeled is not saving, not covenantal and does not redeem. **It does not retaliate, but it does not redeem.** The latter – as we will see - is what He had for ‘the church’, “His own.”

So, God is kind, benevolent and grants *natural blessing* – sunshine, rain, life, breath, food, shelter, clothing - are all essential and necessary for natural life on this planet. These things are not spiritual blessings. This distinction is necessary, or as we will see, scripture will become impossibly, inherently contradictory.

Covenant Love:

God’s covenant love across both Old and New covenants is *always* particular, effective, and tied to election:

“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number... but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore...” (Deuteronomy 7:7–8, NASB1995)

The Hebrew “hesed” (steadfast love), is never applied universally. It is relational, covenantal, and secure.

1. God chose Israel *because* He loved Israel.
2. So, what does that say about every other nation He did not choose?

2. OLD TESTAMENT WITNESSES

The Old Testament gives explicit examples of God *withdrawing* saving love from some while bestowing it on others.

“I will *no longer have compassion* on the house of Israel...” (Hosea 1:6, NASB1995)

NIV strengthens the nuance:

“I will *no longer show love* to Israel, that I should at all forgive them.” (Hosea 1:6, NIV)

“And the LORD said, ‘Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God.’” (Hosea 1:9, NASB1995)

1. These statements reveal further the, discriminating love of God even among those who belong to His “chosen, covenant” people Israel.
2. Such statements from God are incompatible and incomprehensible according to the modern teaching on the love of God.
3. Here we must ask a question – *Has the nature of God ever changed?*

Psalm 103:11 also *limits* relational love to a distinct group:

“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness *toward those who fear Him.*” (Psalm 103:11, NASB1995)

This is not universal love. It is covenant, saving, individual love. And *if* the modern emphasis that God loves everyone regardless of whether they fear – “reverence” Him is correct, then the crucial caveat here by the Psalmist, is not merely irrelevant, it is flat out misleading and incorrect.

3. THE UNCHANGING NATURE OF GOD

God’s covenant love was selective in the Old Testament. Since God declares He does not change *then* the claim that in the New Testament God either *does* or *must* love all people individually with saving love, collapses.

“For I, the LORD, *do not change*; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.” (Malachi 3:6, NASB1995)

“...the Father of lights, with whom *there is no variation* or shifting shadow.” (James 1:17, NASB1995)

“God is light and in Him is *no darkness at all*” (1 John 1:5)

“Jesus Christ is *the same* – yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 13:8)

These expressly teach what theologians refer to as the *immutability* of God. “Immutable” means unchanging. In His fundamental being – His nature and His attributes -God does not undergo change. He is now what He has always been, and He will always be what He is now – *perfect in His nature and ways*.

The perfect God, with whom there is not even the slightest degree of “variableness,” who is “light,” who “does not change,” who is “the same, yesterday, today and forever,” is the *same* God who:

1. Loved and chose Israel out of all nations and peoples.
2. Showed further discrimination even among national Israel by withdrawing His compassion and love – hence His forgiveness, from the house of Israel but maintained it to the “house of Judah”, per Hosea.

3. Loved those who “fear Him.”

Since God’s nature is unchanging, requires:

- His justice has not changed.
- His holiness has not changed.
- His covenantal particularity has not changed.
- His ability to righteously *choose* whom He will love has not changed.

To argue that God’s saving love suddenly became universal after the cross is to deny or at least call into question God’s immutability. The cross reveals the intensity of divine love *for those for whom it was offered* - not a new indiscriminate love.

Now, as surely as God was righteously able to show discriminating love to some not all in the Old Testament, means He *could* also choose to now love everyone in the New Testament. One cannot consistently argue that God was capable of such a choice then, but not now. The question, therefore, is not *can* God choose to personally love everyone? – but *has* He so chosen?

4. JESUS’ EXCLUSIVE PERSONAL LOVE FOR HIS OWN

John’s Gospel is explicit: Jesus’ redeeming love is directed *to* a particular people.

“Having loved *His own* who were in the world, He loved *them* to the end.” (John 13:1, NASB1995)

“He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and *he who loves Me will be loved by My Father and I will love him...*” (John 14:21, NASB1995)

“If anyone loves Me... *My Father will love him...*” (John 14:23, NASB1995)

“For the Father Himself loves you, *because you love Me and have believed I came forth from the Father.*” (John 16:27, NASB1995)

- Three times in as many chapters, Jesus states and restates a rather unpopular truth – God the Father and He Himself love and will love those who believe in, love and obey Christ!
- Jesus – the living “Word”, who is “the Truth” personified, knew the Old Testament obviously. He knew Psalm 103:11 and His statements are in perfect harmony with it.

Whose word are we to take as authoritative here? The synergist – who never teaches the obvious force and meaning of these passages? Or the Lord Himself? Was Jesus perhaps unaware of the way this sounded? The obvious implications it has for theology and soteriology? Did He immediately qualify these statements with “Just so there is no confusion or misunderstanding, I don’t *really* mean what I just said three times”? No.

If these mean God loves “more”: Houston, We have A Problem

Synergism must at best redact or re-define “love” in these passages to mean God has *more* love for those who love and believe in His Son than He has for the rest. Or they must ignore or at worst – deny these.

Let’s examine the first one. Do these passages mean God loves those who believe in and love His Son *more* than He loves those who don’t? Psalm 103:11 states that God's love for those who revere Him is “as high as the heavens are above the earth,” employing figurative language to convey the concept of infinity, as the distance between heaven and earth cannot be precisely measured. So, *if* this is merely a comparative statement – then we must conclude that God loves those who don’t “fear Him” in an obviously lessor way or degree.

This is a massive theological problem give the perfection of God’s nature and attributes! “As for God His way is blameless” (2 Sam 22:31, NASB1995).

The Hebrew תָּמִים “Tamim” means, “entire (literally, figuratively or morally); also (as noun) integrity, truth -- without blemish, *complete, full, perfect*, sincerely (-ity), sound, without spot, undefiled, upright(-ly), *whole*.”

The word itself allows no variation in God’s “way” – His nature and attributes. He is truly PERFECT. This is why James said God is “the Father of lights, with whom *there is no variation* or shifting shadow.” (James 1:17, NASB1995).

Because there is not even the slightest degree of *variation* in God and His way is perfect – whole, complete, full, when He loves He does so perfectly.

✚ Thus, there can be no degree or variation in His love – He does not and cannot, love some *more* than He does others. Whoever He loves therefore, He loves *perfectly*!

The Synergist recoils at this truth. How can this be useful for evangelism they would object? I will address this objection later. But for now, I will ask a question of my own:

How is it effective to say to the unbeliever “God and Jesus love me *infinitely more* than they love you”? Or, as the objection later will claim that it is only in comparative sense - the same sense as when Jesus said we are to “hate” our wives, children, parents. So, if this is true, how is it effective for evangelism to tell the unbelieving sinner “God loves me so much *more* than He loves you that His love for you is the practical equivalent of hate”?

Context Determines Meaning: John 17:2, 9-15, 20-24

Mere hours from the Garden of Gethsemane and the horrors of the cross, knowing He was about to be offered as “the lamb of God,” Jesus, the Saviour prayed with intentional specificity and exclusion when He said,

“I ask on *their* behalf; I *do not ask on behalf of the world...*” (John 17:9, NASB1995). His prayer specifically was that the Father would “keep” those *He had given* to the Son. But this prayer asking God to “keep” (preserve, protect) from the evil one (John 17:10-15). Synergists often emphasize this in their attempts to negate the force of the statement. They argue that “protection” from the evil one is the scope of Jesus’ prayer – not salvation itself. Of course, their appeal to surrounding context backfires spectacularly here, for they ignore the defining statement of His mission in His own words in verse 2! Referring to Himself in the third person, Jesus explicitly stated His mission in His own words and understanding thus:

“Even as You (the Father) gave Him (the Son) authority over all flesh, *that to all You have given Him*, He may give eternal life.” (John 17:2, NASB1995)

- **This is Jesus’ mission in *His own* words. And it is in perfect harmony with the prophetic declaration by Gabriel before He was born – “...You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save *His people from their sins.*” (Matt.1:21, NASB1995)**

1. Jesus here does not pray for the world - He prays for those “given to Him by the Father” per John 17:2, 9, 20-24. See also, John 6:37, 44, 65.

Just as striking is His *explicit* statement of His personal desire – again, in the context of His imminent death – where He said “Father, I *desire* that *they also whom You have given Me*, be *with Me* where I am *so that they* may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” (John 17:24, NASB1995)

2. Jesus here does not say, “I desire *all men* to be with Me, to see My glory...”
3. His *desire – will*, is that *those given to Him by the Father* will be *with Him*.

Note: The world Jesus was born into was patriarchal and practiced the custom of *arranged* marriages. The bride did not choose her husband – as in the modern, Westernized and recent in history practice. **The bride’s father CHOSE her husband for her.**

Jesus understood this and was / is content to leave the choosing to His Father – not to His bride. For Jesus *never* refers to the church as “those who gave themselves to Me,” per synergistic teaching. But always and consistently in John as those *the Father gives to Him*. If the Father waits until the sinner first “gives themselves” to the Son, then the Father’s act of “giving” is *redundant meaningless and anticlimactic – they are already Christ’s then*

In the analogy of the church being “the bride of Christ,” Jesus’ statement here in John 17:24 is consistent with the historical principle of the Father of the bride choosing her groom for her principle. This is the culture He was raised and approved of. How do I know He “approved” of that practice? Because He *attended* the wedding in Cana and performed His first miracle there! And there is zero reason to assume that marriage was not also “arranged.” Further to this, the practice of arranged marriages still goes on in places like India and other parts of the Middle East. This brings us now to the specific framing of Ephesians 5:25.

5. CHRIST’S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH (EPHESIANS 5:25)

“Christ also *loved the church* and gave Himself up *for her*.” (Ephesians 5:25, NASB1995)

Paul here expressly qualifies *who* Jesus “loved”, and you will note He died *for those whom He loved*. This demonstrates an *important* principle – God’s love is not mere sentimentality or emotion – it is grounded in redemption and covenant.

In short – He *saves* those whom He loves, and He loves *the church and gave Himself up for her!*

This is further affirmed by the teaching of the Apostles in Acts 20:28, who said it was “the church of God which He *purchased with His own blood*.”

6. EVANGELISTIC EMPHASIS IN ACTS – NOT “Jesus Loves you”

Here I will address the synergistic objection that particular love would be a detriment to evangelism. This is an incorrect and forced assumption that is

wholly disproven by every record of personal or corporate evangelism we have a record of in the book of Acts.


Acts is our Spirit-inspired model of evangelistic preaching – it is the scriptural blueprint if you will. This may surprise the reader, but when witnessing *to unbelievers*, no one in the early church – as recorded for us in scripture, ever included the modern evangelical formula, “God loves *you*” or “Jesus died for *you*.” It is not mentioned in even one of the 14 examples we have in Acts where any Apostle or member of the early church “witnessed” to an as yet unbeliever. Check for yourself. In the following examples given for us in the record of the book of Acts:

1. Peter’s day of Pentecost sermon – Acts 2
2. Peter in Solomon’s Portico – Acts 3
3. Peter’s next major public sermon – Acts 4
4. Stephen before the Sanhedrin – Acts 7
5. Phillip with the Ethiopian Eunuch – Acts 8
6. Peter with Simon the Sorcerer – Acts
7. Peter with Cornelius – Acts 10
8. Paul in Antioch – Acts 13
9. Paul and Barnabas in Lystra – Acts 14
10. Paul and the Philippian Jailer – Acts 16
11. Paul in Athens, Thessaloniki and Berea – Acts 17
12. Paul before Felix – Acts 24
13. Paul before Festus – Acts 25
14. Paul’s evangelism in Rome – Acts 28

In *none* of these is the common, popular emphasis that “God loves *you*,” or “Jesus died for *you*” ever said to any current unbeliever.

Is this an *unintended omission*? Did the Holy Spirit forget to inspire Luke to record such an emphasis?

Or does this clearly reveal *the consistent pattern and message* of the early church? – those who personally knew, walked with and were eyewitnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord.

 **The silence in book of Acts recording even one instance where an unbeliever was told “Jesus loves *you* and died for *you*,” is *deafening!***

This is not an “argument from silence”, the objection is

This is not an “argument from silence” that I am making. It is an argument from what *is* stated! The only ones who would be making an argument from silence here are those who will argue that even though this is never stated in any written record we have – it was “still there.” Such a conclusion is arbitrary, forced and in my opinion completely unreasonable given the sheer number of examples the Holy Spirit “inspired” Luke to write.

If the modern emphasis was not ever part of the witness of the early church, then what *was* their message?

Instead, the apostles proclaim:

“God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent.” (Acts 17:30, NASB1995)

“He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world...” (Acts 17:31)

“The promise is for... as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” (Acts 2:39)

And the theological conclusion of Luke, after the message was proclaimed to all but believed by some was th:

“As many as *had been appointed to eternal life* believed.” (Acts 13:48, NASB1995)

7. THE MISREAD OF “SO” OF JOHN 3:16

“For God *so* loved the world...” (John 3:16, NASB1995)

John 3:16 is frequently mistranslated and therefore misunderstood and misinterpreted by many. Perhaps no other single verse is more widely cited to support a doctrine not taught by the Apostles or the Lord Himself, nor the early church, nor the scriptures, than this. It is a matter of fact that the Greek word translated “so” in the sentence “God so loved the world,” is an adverb not an adjective. As such, it does not describe the *degree* or quantum of love God had, but the *way ...or manner...*in which He *showed* His love. The Greek houtōs means “in this manner,” not “so much.”

The following versions correctly render the Greek adverb for “so”:

CSB — Christian Standard Bible

1. Perhaps the clearest major translation:

“For God loved the world in this way...”

1. This explicitly translates houtōs as **“in this way.”**

ESV (2024 Updated Edition)

2. The revision now renders:

“For in this way God loved the world...”

This is a major change and matches the Greek adverb precisely.

NET Bible

3. The NET uses a translator’s note to make the meaning explicit:

“For this is the way God loved the world...”

4. The note explains that houtōs refers to manner, *not degree*.

Lexham English Bible (LEB)

“For **in this way** God loved the world...”

5. Precise, formal, and aligned with standard Greek grammar.

Young’s Literal Translation (YLT)

“For God **did so love** the world...”

6. Where “so” = “thus,” meaning “in this manner.”
7. (This predates the modern misuse of “so much.”)

World English Bible (WEB)

“For God so loved the world...”

8. But the translators' preface clarifies their retention of the older meaning “so = thus,” not “so much.”

Jubilee Bible / Several modern-literal versions

9. Many more literal renderings use:

“*In this manner* God loved the world...”

10. These are less widely known but often cited in academic discussions.

NOTABLY:

Translations that do NOT convey the correct meaning (because English readers interpret “so” emotionally) include:

1. KJV
2. NKJV
3. NASB 1995 / 2020
4. NIV
5. NLT
6. They all say “so loved,” but *modern readers misinterpret* “so”.
7. In 17th–19th century English, “so” meant “thus / in this way.”
8. Today, it is mistakenly read as, “so much.”

- Most people do not realize this shift in meaning happened over time and assume their modern take on “so” as meaning “so much” is intrinsically valid.

John also uses the Greek *houtōs* in 1 John 4:9 with the same meaning:

“*By this* the love of God was manifested...” (NASB1995)

John 3:16 describes the manner of God’s love – *how* He showed it, not either a degree, nor a universal affection identical in scope to contemporary sentimentality.

John also *explicitly* clarifies the scope – “*so that* all the believing ones” (lit. rendering) should not perish but have everlasting life.

Note re: “houtōs”

Some Lexicons (Thayer, BDAG) acknowledge *houtōs* can mean either “in this way” or “to this degree,” but the parallel with 1 John 4:9 (“**By this** [*houtōs*] the love of God was manifested”) shows John consistently uses it to describe *manner*, not *quantity*. Yet even if we grant it means “degree” – and the fact that God was willing to send His own Son to pay such an extreme price certainly supports “degree” as well – the fact is John *still* further clarifies the intentional scope of the sending – “*so that all the believing ones will not perish...*” Thus, whether “degree” or “manner” or some element of both – the scope of the sending is explicitly particular. It is “universal” only in the sense that the gospel is to be proclaimed in all nations, and Revelation 5:9 reveals there will be a “great multitude *from* or *out of* every nation, tribe and tongue” who are before the throne, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

8. THE “JEKYLL/HYDE” PROBLEM

If God loves all people with personal, relational, saving love, then *eternal* punishment makes no theological sense. This is not true of *chastening*. Scripture is clear that in chastening – which is always remedial and of limited duration, God is acting in love for those whom He chastens. And in fact – *if He does not chasten it is because He does not love!* But punishment – especially *unending* punishment...that is incomprehensible in that it consists of *eternal, conscious, torment* is utterly, absolutely, irrevocably, incompatible with *any* biblical or even contemporary meaning of “love.” Consider the following description of “agape – love” from 1 Corinthians 13:

1. Love “never fails.” (1 Corinthians 13:8, NASB1995)
2. Love “does not seek its own.” (v.5)
3. Love “bears all things... endures all things.” (v.7)
4. Love “keeps no record of wrongs” (v.5)

Which part of *eternal, conscious, torment* is harmonious with these statements?

Towards His covenant people, we read that even when God may be angry with them, it is brief compared to His mercy:

“His anger lasts *for a moment*, but His favour lasts for a lifetime.” (Psalm 30:5)

“For *a brief moment*, I forsook You, But with great compassion I will gather you. In an outburst of anger, I hid My face from you but with *everlasting loving kindness* I will have compassion on you says the Lord your Redeemer” (Isa 54:7-8)

- **This is not true of those He consigns to eternal fire.**

If God’s love is universal and saving:

1. Why does it fail – meaning end for billions?
2. Why does *eternal* wrath fall on those He supposedly loves salvifically?

3. How can everlasting wrath be an expression of divine love when “love keeps no record of wrongs”?

To claim that God eternally loves those upon whom He *eternally* pours out wrath is a contradiction so deep - a logical and theological impossibility - that it collapses the doctrine of divine love into absolute incoherence.

This view creates a truly gigantic theological contradiction: a God whose love is *temporary* for the few years of physical life, but whose wrath and is *eternal*.

So, in this view, God does the unthinkable: He reverses His own declaration “*I will not always accuse, nor be angry forever*” (Jer. 3:12). The God who supposedly loved each sinner personally during their brief earthly life now undergoes a radical moral reversal—displaying a wrath that is both incomprehensible and incompatible with His own definition of love. Please note: I am *not* arguing that it is punishment itself – even severe punishment that constitutes this reversal. I am saying that given His *own* statements of what He said is true of His anger toward those He “loves,” *unending* punishment is.

An Absurd Objection Refuted

The objection “God punishes them forever, because their rebellion persists forever – even in hell, they are still rebels” or anything similar, is a gross fallacy and is expressly refuted by the scriptures. Jesus and the writers of scripture explicitly affirm that punishment in the next life is based on “the things done in the body” – in *this* life. See:

Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31–46; John 5:28–29; Romans 2:5–8; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:7–8; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 2:23; Revelation 20:12–13; Revelation 22:12.

These all expressly teach that judgment in the next life is *based on* what transpired in this life. Not something that is perpetually meriting judgment thereafter.

And for this reason – the problem of how temporary sin can merit *eternal* wrath is still a problem. It could be answered that because God is an infinite Being, sin is an infinite affront to Him, thereby meriting infinite punishment is within the bounds of orthodoxy. But the glaring contradiction to His own pattern and word for those He loves, as well as His own definition that “love keeps no record of wrongs” and “endures all things,” remains.

For those He loves with covenantal-personal, saving love, He *can* and *has* poured out anger and judgment on His people for a *short* “*brief moment.*” But per His word, His compassion and love will be everlasting – something that eternal wrath is incompatible with...*if* He loves them.

Thus, we are left with the staggering, insurmountable theological problem of the “Jekyll and Hyde” God who loves in the few physical years of life and hates for eternity.

CONCLUSION

The one undeniable biblical fact is this: **God saves every person He truly loves.**

His covenant love is not a passive affection but an active, sovereign, effectual power that accomplishes what it intends. To claim God loves everyone salvifically but saves only some is to make divine love weak, unstable, and self-contradictory.

But Scripture presents a God whose love is:

- Covenant-bound
- Electing
- Effectual
- Unchanging
- Victorious

The Rescuing Parent

Consider what any loving parent would do. If they saw their child in imminent, life-threatening danger—and had the means, capacity, and ability to intervene—they would act decisively. Without hesitation. Without pausing to ask, “Do I have your consent?”

I know this from experience. I once saw my son in very real distress and danger in rough water. The instant I saw his condition, I acted -jumping in, swimming to him, literally pulling him to myself and carrying him back to safety. I did not stand on the rocks debating the morality of intervention. I did not ask permission. I simply...decisively, *rescued* him.

My son thanked me - repeatedly. He never once said it was a “violation” of his freedom. He never complained that my unilateral, decisive action made him a “robot.” Neither did His mother, nor any family member or friend! Such objections, routinely raised by synergists, collapse when tested against real-life experience.

“But Adults Aren't Children”

Some object: “It is not reasonable to compare a parent's action toward a child with God’s acts toward fully grown adults.”

This objection is irrelevant. Compared to God, regardless of our physical age, we are all “little children.” Jesus Himself called His disciples - all of them full-grown men – “*little children*” (John 13:33). The Apostle John repeatedly addressed his readers the same way (1 John 2:18; 3:7; 4:4; 5:21). The analogy fits.

God's Love Is Greater

If sinful, fallen, finite parents act decisively to save the children they love, how much more does God? His love is infinitely greater than that of the most devoted earthly parent. His action cannot be less - it is immeasurably *more*.

It is not enough to say, “He provides a way or a means of rescue.” No loving parent does only that. Such an idea is an affront to the lived experience of countless parents who have instantly acted to save their children when it was within their power to do so.

God is greater in His love, morality and sovereign right and ability than all of best, most loving parents combined!

- **Therefore: Love does not merely invite salvation. Love *accomplishes it!***

APPENDIX: MORE OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Objection 1: “You’re conflating different kinds of love’

Response: Scripture itself conflates them!

Jesus doesn't say, “I love everyone sentimentally but save only some.” He says, “I love *My own*... I pray for *those You gave Me*... I do not pray for the world... I lay down My life *for the sheep*” (John 10:15; 13:1, 17:9). The distinction is Jesus' own.

Objection 2: “John 3:16 says ‘world’- that means everyone”

Response:

1. *Kosmos* (“world”) often means “world of humanity” or “Gentiles” (as opposed to Jews only), not “every individual.” It is a forced *assumption* that ‘Kosmos’ does or must always mean every individual without exception.
2. John 17:9 uses the same word negatively: “I do not pray for the *world*.”
3. The scope of John 3:16 is clarified: “so that *all the believing ones* should not perish.”
4. Scripture often employs synecdoche- where the whole is put for what is literally only a part. Compare John 6:37, 44, 65 and John 12:32.
5. It is clear that John 6:37 interprets John 6:44, and as such demonstrates that *all* the Father “gives” to the Son *will / do* come and thus, the Father’s “drawing” in John 6:44 is 100% effective.
6. Whereas, if Jesus in John 12:32 meant He will “draw *all men*” literally, rather than draw *more* than Jews alone, but Gentiles *from* “every nation, tribe and tongue,” He has not even remotely succeeded, but has failed. He did not say, “I *want* to draw all men...” or “I *hope* to draw all men...” He said, “I *will*...”

Objection 3: “God desires all to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Pet. 3:9)”

Response:

1. 1 Tim. 2:4 is in context of praying for all kinds or types of people (“kings, authorities”) refer to classes, not every individual. Who has *ever* obeyed this and prayed, faithfully...literally for *everyone*?
2. 2 Pet. 3:9 says God is patient “toward you” (in context, it is explicitly referring to believers), not willing that “any” - of *you* perish.

3. If God's will is sovereign and He wills all to be saved, universalism follows. But Scripture denies universalism (Matt. 7:13-14, 25:41, Rev. 20:15).

Objection 4: “This makes God arbitrary or unjust’

Response:

1. God *owes* salvation to no one. All deserve wrath (Rom. 3:23, 6:23).
2. Mercy is by definition undeserved. If God must give it equally, it's not mercy—it's obligation!
3. Paul explicitly addresses this, quoting God who says, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy” (Rom. 9:15).
4. Paul rebukes human arrogance which presumes it has the right to challenge God’s sovereign dispensing of His mercy to whom He wills – “Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?” (Rom. 9:20)

Objection 5: “This undermines evangelism”

Response:

1. The apostles believed in election *and* evangelized vigorously (Acts 13:48 – “as many as were appointed believed”)
2. We don't know who the elect are, so we preach to all.
3. Election secures success – “My word will not return void” (Isa. 55:11).

Objection 6: “Paul said Jesus ‘loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*.’ Does that mean Jesus died *only* for Paul?”

Response:

This argument is easily answered. But for the sake of clarity, I will do so.

1. Paul said, Jesus loved and gave Himself *for* the church. Jesus said, “I lay down My life *for* the sheep.” The Apostles said, Jesus “purchased the church of God with His own blood.” Matthew 1:21 – prophetically declared *who* Jesus would save – “His people” and from why He would save them from – “Their sins.” John said, Jesus “loved *His own* who were in the world” and loved “*them to the end*.”
2. As a saved sinner and chosen Apostle, Paul is *included in all of these statements*. And *none* of these statements *exclude* him from the group.

3. Though Paul was not a believer at the time of some of these statements, God has *always* foreknown His elect (Rom 8:29-30; 2 Peter 1:1-2). Thus, from the perspective of His foreknowledge, God can both love one who is elect – but not yet brought to saving faith and also love them *when* they are brought to saving-faith and love for His Son per John 14:21, 23; 16:27.
4. This is also consistent with Jesus’ prayer in John 17:20 which contemplated not only those who were *currently* “His” but also “those who *will believe* on Me...”
5. In this way, *both* Jesus’ statements in John 14:21, 23; 16:27; 17:20 and John’s statement – “We love Him *because* He first loved us” (1 John 4:19) are harmonized.
6. Paul said, we “were *by nature* children of wrath even as the rest” (Eph 2:1-3) is consistent with the fact that God sent His Son for us “*while* we were yet sinners” (Rom 5:8).

Objection 7: “Romans 5:18 says ‘all men’ receive justification”

Response:

1. Romans 5:18 is parallel to 5:12 and must be understood with 1 Cor 15:22 in mind. Just as “all die **in Adam** (meaning all *in Adam*), so “*all* are justified who are **in Christ** (meaning all *in Christ*). Paul is not teaching universalism - he is contrasting two representative heads: Adam (condemnation for *his* seed) and Christ (justification for *His* seed). See also 1 Cor 15:22 – “In Adam all die, *in Christ* all shall be made alive.”