

forced to sell herself as a slave in order to obtain food and lodging. Hosea is commanded by God to go down to the slave market and redeem Gomer. He pays 15 pieces of silver and 9 bushels of barley for her. He freed her and graciously took her back as his wife again. This was meant to illustrate what God would do for His people.

In Scripture “redemption” involves freedom from slavery to sin. Christ “came to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28) and to redeem His people from the bondage of sin (Matt 1:21). Every person ever born is in bondage to sin. You are held as a captive to Satan and carnal lusts (Eph 2:1-3). “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (slave) of sin” (Jn 8:34). You are under total bondage to a nature which is corrupt, evil, and separated from God. Now “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (I Tim 1:15). He came to redeem them from the power and penalty of sin. This is why Paul said to the believers at Corinth, “Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price” (I Cor 6:19-20). Notice that Christ’s shed blood actually procured redemption for all those for whom He died. In other words, Christ’s death is not simply a potential redemption. Since He paid the ransom price those sinners He redeemed must be delivered from their sin.

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Heb 9:12).

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb 2:14-15).

Christ’s redemption secured everything necessary for an individual’s salvation (all the spiritual blessings of Eph 1 have been “obtained”), including the gift of faith (Eph 2:8). If Christ paid the ransom for your soul, then there is no possibility of you remaining enslaved to sin. You will be set free! Yet multitudes perish because they remain in bondage to Satan and sin. Those who are not “redeemed” by Christ do not escape “the snare of the devil,” but remain a “captive” (II Tim 2:26), and are never delivered.

2. “THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

Christ’s sacrifice procures divine forgiveness of sins. The sinner is granted a full pardon from the penalty of sin. The black record of your sins is purged if you are redeemed by Christ. This is essential for every sin must be severely punished by a holy God. God does not overlook sin. His justice demands full satisfaction. You may not have given much thought to the terrible consequences of your sin. “God is angry with the wicked every day” (Psa 7:11). He is hotly displeased with you as a transgressor of His commandments. This idea seems so foreign to our culture where you are constantly told, “Smile, God loves you!” However, this sentiment is a perverse lie! “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men” (Rom 1:18). The everlasting punishment of hell-fire awaits those whose sins are not blotted out (Matt 25:41). It is clear from Scripture that the sins of some people have not been forgiven. Jesus said, “If ye believe not that I am He [Messiah the Savior], ye shall die in your sins” (Jn 8:24). Some people die in an unforgiven state and will bear the awful wrath of God for

all eternity for transgressions such as unbelief, murder, idolatry, sexual sin, and lying (Rev 21:8). “Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt 12:32). The purpose of Christ acting as the Redeemer was to “save His people from their sins” (Matt 1:21) for multitudes will be damned as they die in their sins.

Israel’s greatest holy day was Yom Kippur, the day of atonement. On that day the High Priest selected 2 unblemished sacrificial goats. One goat was killed and his blood was sprinkled on the altar as a sacrifice for sin. The High Priest then placed his hands on the head of the other goat, symbolically laying the sins of the people on the animal. The goat was then taken out deep into the wilderness, so far that it could never find its way back. In symbol the sins of the people went with the goat never to return to them again. This was a picture of God’s forgiveness of their sin. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus actually took the transgressions of sinners upon His own head, so to speak. And He carried them an infinite distance away. Those sins can now never return to condemn those for whom Christ died. When your transgressions are forgiven, God pronounces the penalty paid in full. You are released from the punishment you rightly deserved.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not [does not charge to his account] iniquity...” (Psa 32:1-2).

“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us” (Psa 103:12).

The vastness and comprehensiveness of this forgiveness is seen in Paul’s statement that it is according to the “riches of God’s grace.” God forgives undeserving sinners in a lavish manner. “Where sin abounded [increased], grace did much more abound [excel]” (Rom 5:20).

Many years ago I received a phone call from the local tax office. I was told that I owed back taxes. My wife, Rayna, and I were sure that we had paid the taxes, but the tax man insisted that it did not show on their computer. Well, after carefully sifting through our bank statements we were able to produce the canceled checks indicating the taxes were paid. Even the dates on which the local tax office had deposited the checks in their bank account were recorded. The whole accusation had to be immediately dropped because my tax bills had been fully paid. Their computer was wrong. Those canceled checks were the proof which was needed to convince the tax office. The tax man was then satisfied.

In like manner, if your sin debt is fully paid you are free of any further obligation regarding those sins. God has stamped your account, “Paid in Full.” The key thing here is that Christ’s sacrifice procures the forgiveness of sin for all those for whom He died. Payment for sin has been made and the debt canceled by God. God’s justice is fully satisfied regarding those individuals. “He [God the Father] shall see the travail of His soul [Christ’s suffering on the cross as the substitute for sinners], and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa 53:11).

Summary: You must realize the sacrifice of Christ actually procures salvation.

II. YOU MUST REALIZE THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS MADE FOR THE SALVATION OF GOD’S ELECT ALONE

1. SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT DEMANDS A LIMITED ATONEMENT - “in Whom”

In a sense everyone must limit the atonement in some manner. Either it is limited in EXTENT (Christ did not die for every individual) or EFFECTIVENESS (Christ did not actually secure the salvation of any individual). The term “Limited Atonement” is used in the sense that Christ died only for God’s elect people. If you carefully evaluate what a “substitutionary atonement” means you will be compelled to accept that the atonement is limited in extent.

The words “in Whom” refer to Jesus Christ (V-3-5) as the Mediator and Representative of others. In other words, Christ’s death was a substitutionary death. This means that Christ died on behalf of others bearing the penalty which they deserved. The penalty being paid in full, they cannot be condemned. “There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1).

Franciszek Gajowniczek was a Nazi war prisoner in Auschwitz when a fellow inmate escaped. The standard discipline when anyone escaped was to select 10 men at random and place them in a cell where they were left to starve to death. When Gajowniczek heard his name read, he sobbed, “My wife and my children.” At that moment a fellow inmate named Koble stepped forward and said, “I will die in his place. I have no wife or children.” The German commandant granted his request. Since that time Gajowniczek has gone back every year to Auschwitz on April 14. He goes back to remember the man who died for him on that date in 1941. In his yard, he has placed a plaque to honor the great sacrifice of this man. Koble’s death was a substitutionary death. He died in the place of and on behalf of Gajowniczek.

Most people don’t understand the implications of a substitutionary atonement. If Christ died for others, it must follow that ALL those He took the place of are now free from the wrath and judgment of God. God cannot justly punish both Christ and those for which He was the substitute. That would be a DOUBLE PUNISHMENT for sin! Thus, Christ’s death must be limited in scope. If Christ died for everyone, then everyone must be redeemed and forgiven, for this is what substitution implies. If Christ died for everyone and everyone is not saved, then Christ’s death doesn’t actually procure redemption and forgiveness! There is no other option! If you reject limited atonement then you cannot believe in a substitutionary atonement.

“If Christ has died for you, you can never be lost. God will not punish twice for one thing. If God punished Christ for your sins He will not punish you. Payment God’s justice cannot twice demand; first, at the bleeding Saviour’s hand, and then again at mine.’ How can God be just if he punished Christ, the substitute, and then man himself afterwards?” (C. H. Spurgeon).

2. GOD’S ELECT ARE THE ONES REDEEMED AND FORGIVEN THROUGH CHRIST’S DEATH - “we”

The word “we” refers back to those addressed - i.e. the “saints” and “faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph 1:1). The “we” are further described as being in Christ - “in whom.” Who

are the ones in Christ? The Bible indicates that the “we” are those “chosen...in Him” (V-4) - i.e. the elect of God.

“Election is necessarily and clearly implied by some of the most important terms used in Scripture concerning various aspects of our salvation, yea, they are unintelligible without it. For example, every passage which makes mention of ‘redemption’ presupposes eternal election. How so? Because ‘redemption’ implies a previous possession: it is Christ *buying back* and delivering those who were God’s at the beginning” (A. W. Pink).

Jesus Christ died only for the elect and not for all mankind. This is demonstrated by a number of passages of Scripture:

Isa 53:8 “For the transgression of MY PEOPLE was He stricken.”

Matt 1:21 “He shall save HIS PEOPLE from their sins.”

Matt 20:28 “the Son of Man came...to give His life a ransom for MANY.”

Jn 10:15 “I lay down my life for the SHEEP.”

Eph 5:25 “Christ ... loved the CHURCH, and gave Himself for it.”

These passages indicate a SPECIFIC GROUP for whom Christ died. If Christ died for MANY, then He didn’t die for ALL INDIVIDUALS. If Christ died for the SHEEP, then He didn’t die for the GOATS. If Christ died for the CHURCH, then He didn’t die for ALL MANKIND. If Christ died for HIS PEOPLE, then He didn’t die for the NON-ELECT. If Christ died for US (“WE”), then He didn’t die for EVERYONE ELSE. Every assertion that Christ died for His elect (many, sheep, church, us, etc.) is a repudiation of the idea that he died for all mankind. It is meaningless to declare that Christ “loved the church and gave Himself for it” if He also loved and became the substitute for the entire human race.

What comfort is there if Christ did as much for the elect as He did for Cain, Pharaoh, and Judas, who all perished in their sins? What comfort is there to believe that Christ did as much for the damned in hell as the saved in heaven? If you believe that Christ died for everyone then you must believe that Abel, Moses, and Peter did something in addition to Christ’s sacrifice to acquire salvation. If Christ’s death plus something you did [a condition you fulfilled] saves you, then salvation is really obtained by works!

John Owen, in his THE DEATH OF DEATH IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST, provided an irrefutable argument for Limited Atonement:

“The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and Christ underwent punishment for, either:

1. All the sins of all men, or
2. All the sins of some men, or
3. Some of the sins of all men.

If the last, some sins of all men, then have all men some sins to answer for, and so shall no man be saved; for if God entered into judgment with us, though it were with all mankind for one sin, no flesh should be justified in his sight: ‘If the LORD should mark iniquities, who should stand?’ Ps. cxxx.3. We might all go to cast all that we have ‘to the moles and to the bats, to go into the clefts of the rocks, and

into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty,' Isa ii.20,21. If the second, that is it which we affirm, that Christ, in their stead and room suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the whole world. If the first, why, then, are not all freed from the punishment due unto their sins? You will say, 'Because of unbelief; they will not believe.' But this unbelief, is it a sin, or not? If not, why should they be punished for it? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or [He did] not. If so, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died from partaking of the fruit of his death? If He did not, He did not die for all their sins!"

3. THE GENERAL TERMS OF SCRIPTURE DO NOT CONTRADICT CHRIST DYING FOR THE ELECT

Sometimes Christ's saving work is spoken of in general terms - i.e. "all" or "world." The Bible frequently uses these terms in a restricted sense.

The word "all" is often used in the sense of "all kinds of" or "all sorts of" men - i.e. Jew as well as Gentile, poor people as well as rich people, slaves as well as masters. For instance, the Bible says, "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Lk 7:29). Did every single person who heard John justify God and become a baptized disciple? This must mean people from all classes and walks of life. The very next verse says, "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." Many such examples could be produced.

The word "world" is used in a great variety of ways. Sometimes it refers to the material universe (Acts 17:24), the earth (Eph 1:4), or even Satan's kingdom (Jn 14:30). When it refers specifically to people it can refer to mankind (Rom 5:12), the general public (Jn 18:20), the non-elect (Jn 17:9), or the Gentiles (Rom 11). The context of a passage must be studied to grasp the actual meaning of the word. However, whenever "world" is contrasted with Israel or the Jews, it always refers to the Gentiles. Rom 11 demonstrates this beyond any doubt:

"I say then, Hath God cast away His people [Israel]? God forbid...but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles...Now if the fall of them [Israel] be the riches of the WORLD [the Gentiles], and the diminishing of them [Israel] the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their [Israel's] fulness?...For if the casting away of them [Israel] be the reconciling of the WORLD [the Gentiles], what shall the receiving of them [Israel] be, but life from the dead?" (Rom 11:1,11-12,15,25).

When Christ is said to die for the "world" (Jn 3:16, etc.) it means that He came as a substitute for GENTILES, not that He died for every human being.

One reason for the use of these expressions was to correct the false notion that salvation was for the Jews alone. Such phrases as "the world," "all men," and "all nations," were used to emphasize that Christ died for all men without DISTINCTION (Jew, Greek, Arabian, Swede, American, etc.), yet not for all men without EXCEPTION (every sinner). This is demonstrated by the song of the redeemed in heaven sung in praise of the Lamb of God:

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take

the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev 5:9).

Summary: You must realize the sacrifice of Christ was made for the salvation of God's elect alone.

MAIN CONCLUSION:

1. SALVATION IS FOUND IN CHRIST'S REDEMPTION

Sin always leads to misery and ultimately to eternal death in the Lake of Fire. Sin is the cause of your unhappiness and alienation from God. You need forgiveness of sin. Jesus is the only answer - "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12). All self-righteousness and so-called good works must be cast aside and you must trust in Christ's sacrifice alone for your salvation from sin. "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43). Indeed, the risen Christ is presently seated at God's right hand making intercession for His people. Assurance of salvation comes when you know Jesus has died for you and that His blood is what stands between you and eternal hell. If He died in your place then your sins can never condemn you. All those evil thoughts, lies, deceptions, and other violations of God's commandments are covered by the blood of Christ. The thief, prostitute, drunkard, adulterer, etc., can find forgiveness in Christ. No sinner is too great!

2. ONLY LIMITED ATONEMENT PROVIDES THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Many years ago, during a construction phase in Pittsburgh, there was an uncompleted bridge built over a river. This large span only went about half way over the body of water. It stood for a period of time in this unfinished state. It got the nickname "the bridge to nowhere." One day, despite all precautions by the construction team, a motorist accidentally drove his car off the bridge and plunged a great distance into the river below. He managed to get on the bridge but, being only half-way completed, the span could not take him across to the other side of the river.

Those who believe in a universal atonement have a "bridge to nowhere." For though they make the atonement of Christ like a great wide bridge [He died for mankind], it only goes half-way across. It does not actually procure redemption and forgiveness of sins for anyone. If it did, then everyone would end up in heaven! Those who understand that Christ's death actually saves may have a narrow bridge [He died for the elect], but it goes all the way across the river. He "obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12) for His people. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom 8:32). Those for whom Christ died will without question receive every single benefit that substitutionary death procured or else God is a liar!

"The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, 'No, certainly not.' We ask them the next question - Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer 'No.' They are obligated to admit this, if they are consistent. They say, 'No. Christ has died that any man may be saved if' and then follow certain conditions of salvation. Now, who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why you. You say that Christ did not die so as infallibly to secure the salvation of anybody.

We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ's death; we say, 'No, my dear sir, it is you that do it.' We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it" (C. H. Spurgeon).

3. LIMITED ATONEMENT MUST NOT BE COMPROMISED

There are those who wish to argue that Christ died in one sense for the elect and in another sense for the non-elect. Such a teaching undermines a substitutionary atonement.

The compromisers say, "By His death, Christ removed legal barriers in case any man believes." What does this mean? What are the legal barriers? Why are they left undefined? Why use such murky language? Is there a chance someone will believe which God has not elected to salvation (Acts 13:48)? Is faith the gift of God (Eph 2:8-9) or not?

The compromisers say, "Christ's death secured a delay of judgment for the non-elect, though not a permanent one." What good does this do? How is a person benefited by a delayed judgment when all the extra time is spent sinning against God? The longer a person lives the more sins he heaps up! The greater the sin the more severe the punishment! It is not merciful nor gracious for the wicked to live long. They are simply building up a greater "pay-day" regarding divine judgment. Besides, there is not a shred of Scripture which teaches that Christ's death provides a "delay of judgment."

The compromisers say, "On the basis of this universal aspect of the atonement salvation is freely offered to all men." Not all men have heard the Gospel. Millions were already in hell when Christ died who knew nothing of a coming Redeemer. If Christ died so that "all men" could have the Gospel "freely offered" to them, then why hasn't it been? Is His death ineffectual in this regard? Besides, the message of the Gospel is that "Christ came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim 1:15). You do not have to tell anyone "Christ died for you" in order to proclaim the Gospel. Also, if the word "offer" means to present or set forth Christ, fine. But the Bible declares the proclamation of God is a command to repent and believe (Acts 17:30), not an offer. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..." is a divine command. Try explaining to an individual that Christ removed "legal barriers" (if they don't believe) as well as procuring redemption and forgiveness of sins (if they are elect and indeed will believe). This is pure double-talk.

Finally, the compromisers say, "Also Christ died for all men in this sense in order to be Lord of all men." Jesus is already Lord of all by virtue of being the Creator of all things. His death would not change this truth at all. Will not the demons acknowledge Him as Lord? Did He have to die for them for this title to be given to Him?

Liberty Baptist Church Reformed
127 Parkwood Drive
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066
Phone (724) 776-1265
Email: waj@zoominternet.net

LIMITED ATONEMENT

What Christ Actually Accomplished on the Cross

BY JACK A. WERTH

"In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" - Eph 1:7 KJV

Over 1900 years ago, Jesus was crucified atop Mount Calvary, outside the city of Jerusalem. Few today realize the intense pain and terrible suffering that accompanies this cruel form of death. What was the sinless Son of God doing during this agonizing ordeal? Paul speaks about this in our text. Christ shed His blood to secure redemption and forgiveness. Christ died as a substitute in the place of guilty sinners, bearing the punishment due unto their sins. Sadly, people have failed to grasp what Christ accomplished on the cross. Yet Christ's work is vital to a saving relationship with God.

I. YOU MUST REALIZE THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST ACTUALLY PROCURES SALVATION

1. "REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD"

The word "redemption" is used throughout the Bible with reference to Christ's death.

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might REDEEM us from all iniquity" (Tit 2:14).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not REDEEMED with corruptible things, as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet 1:18-19).

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines redemption (apolutrosis) as: "a releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom."

"Redemption" involves releasing from bondage. The deliverance is "effected" and "procured" by the ransom paid. Perhaps the closest idea we have today would be found in a kidnapping case. The family receives a note stating, "If you pay the ransom, we will free your child." The family pays out an enormous sum of money and the child is released unharmed. This is the meaning of the term.

There is little doubt that Paul, in using the word "redemption," has in mind the freeing of a slave. During New Testament times the Roman Empire had as many as 6 million slaves. Buying and selling slaves was a major business. If a person wanted to free a loved one or friend who was a slave, he would have to buy that slave for himself. He would have to pay the demanded price to own the person. Then the buyer could grant the slave his or her freedom. There was a legal procedure for this and a certificate of freedom would be granted to the former slave.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Hosea had a wife who ran off with another man. In fact, she was passed from man to man, evidently having flung after flung. Finally, having been discarded by a number of men, the destitute woman is

