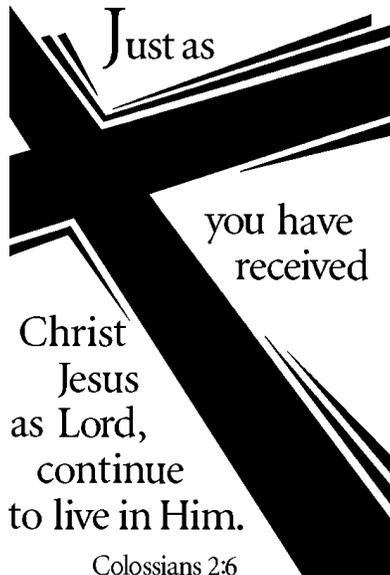


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In this and every issue, by His grace, our only purpose is to honor Jesus Christ.

The Doctrines of Grace ~ 7

Their Third Point—Limited Atonement (3)

By Daniel E. Parks, Pastor

IV. Limited Atonement “for all” and for “the world.”

We previously divided proponents of General or Unlimited Atonement, as opposed to Limited Atonement, into two sorts of Universalists. First are *consistent* Universalists, who aver Christ’s Atonement for everyone is a *real* atonement that will result in all eventually being saved. Second are *inconsistent* Universalists (e.g., Pelagians and Arminians), who aver Christ’s Atonement for everyone is but a *hypothetical or conditional* atonement that will not result in all being saved.

With regard to *real* universalism, it should be observed that this doctrine is contrary to the Scriptural truth that not all men will eventually be saved, and that many will be condemned to eternal punishment (Matthew 7:13).

With regard to *hypothetical* universalism, it should be observed that in the work of salvation Christ did nothing hypothetically. When He shouted in victory in His dying breath, “It is finished!” (John 19:30), He meant exactly what He declared.

With regard to *conditional* universalism, it should be observed that the work of salvation is in no way conditioned upon men, but rather upon Christ alone. If it were conditioned upon men to make Christ’s work of salvation efficacious, none would be saved. Christ declares that no man, of his own volition, apart from divine enablement, is capable of either being *willing* or *able* to believe in Him for salvation (John 5:40; 6:44, 65).

Hypothetical and conditional Universalists will, nevertheless, object upon their claim that, “The shed blood of Christ is sufficient for all, but efficient only for some.” But in so saying, they must admit that if the blood of Christ is efficient for only *some*, then it is of necessity inefficient for the rest. And in admitting that the blood of Christ is inefficient for some, they must admit, also, that the portion of Christ’s blood that is inefficient is therefore worthless. For example, according to their view, the shed blood of Christ was worthless for all who were already in Hades when He died (e.g., the “rich man” of Luke 16:22ff), and will prove to be worthless for countless millions others. Anyone who counts even a single drop of Christ’s blood to be worthless and not as a precious thing resulting in redemption (as in 1 Peter 1:18f), may as well count it, also, as an unholy common thing worthy only of being poured out upon the ground and trampled underfoot in a manner that insults the God of grace! All such persons should heed the warning of Hebrews 10:29—“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified [or so he may claim] a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”

(Continued on the other side of this page.)

The Doctrines of Grace ~ 7

Their Third Point—Limited Atonement (3)

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(Continued from the other side of this page.)

Among the arguments posited by all Universalists, whether consistent or inconsistent, against the doctrine of Limited Atonement, is the fact that Scriptures speak of Christ's death being "for all" and for "the world." They claim this fact *demands* the conclusion that Christ died for everyone without exception.

We here will consider their "proof texts." In each case, note well that what Christ did for salvation is considered an accomplished reality, not as being hypothetical or conditional. This is the case, for example, in Romans 5:18—"Through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life" (cp. vv. 16b, 17b, 19b).

1. Various texts teach Christ died "for all." 1 Timothy 2:5f—"The Man Christ Jesus...gave Himself a ransom for all." 2 Corinthians 5:14f—"One died for all...and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."

i. Consider, first, the meaning of the word, *all*, in the term, "for all." Universalists averring that "all" in these instances means "all without exception" are proven wrong by numerous texts in Scriptures. When Paul the Apostle exhorts "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for *all* men" (1 Tim. 2:1), he does not mean "all without exception"—else he requires us to do the impossible, and to pray a prayer that would never cease, and to pray for even those whom God forbids us to pray (as in Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). When we read "God our Savior...desires *all* men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3f), He does not mean "all without exception"—else God is so inconsistent as to desire the salvation of even those for whom He forbids prayer, and also those whom He has already rejected (as in Jeremiah 6:30).

The clear meaning of "all" in these instances is not "all without *exception*," but rather, "all without *distinction*"—all *sorts* of people, whether Jew or Gentile, ruler or subject, male or female. This was definitely the meaning of Christ when He declared, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw *all* peoples to Myself" (John 12:32). He has not drawn to Himself "all without exception." But He has, indeed, drawn to Himself "all without distinction"—a people "*out of every tribe and tongue, and people and nation*" (Rev. 5:9), not everyone *within* every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

ii. Consider, secondly, the meaning of the word, *for*, in the term, "for all." In the expressions, "Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom *for* all" (1 Tim. 2:56) and, "He died *for* all" (2 Cor. 5:14f), the Greek preposition translated, "for," is *huper*. This preposition in these instances means, "in the place and stead of"—as the substitute and vicariously (as in John 11:50-52). Christ died as the Substitute and vicariously only for God's elect (as in Isaiah 53:8), and for His own sheep in John 10:11, 15, in contrast to those who are not His sheep (vv. 26-29). And when we read that "Jesus...might taste death *for everyone*" (Heb. 2:9), the meaning is for every one of God's elect—the many sons He will bring to Glory (v. 10a), and for whom He will be the Captain of their salvation (v. 10b), and for those who are His brethren (vv. 11f) and God's children (v.13).

The same meaning applies also to the Greek preposition, *anti*, translated, "for," in the expression, "the Son of Man [came]...to give His life a ransom *for* many" (Matt. 20:28).

2. Various texts teach Christ died for "the world." John 1:29—"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 3:16f—"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." John 4:42—"This is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." 2 Corinthians 5:19—"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." 1 John 2:2—"And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." 1 John 4:14—"the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world."

Universalists, having averred previously that the word, "all," means, "all without exception," aver the same here regarding the word, "world." Their error again is so very evident. When the Pharisees complained regarding Christ that, "the *world* has gone after Him!" (John 12:19), they excluded *themselves!* When "a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the *world* should be registered" (Luke 2:1), all nations not under the Roman Empire were excluded. And Christ declared to His Father, "I do not pray for the world, but for those whom You have given Me" (John 17:9).

The Greek word in all these instances translated, "world," is, *kosmos*, which has a variety of meanings—the entire universe or all of creation (Romans 1:20); the earth in contrast to the heavens (1 John 3:17); mankind (John 1:9f); that system of sin that is alienated from God and opposed to Him (John 12:31); Gentiles as distinguished from Jews (Romans 11:12, 15—"their" in these verses denotes Jews); unbelievers as distinguished from believers (John 15:18f); God's people only, as distinguished from unbelievers (in the instances, here, under consideration regarding Christ's Limited Atonement).

And Christ is and has done all these things *actually and unconditionally* to and for all His people, not *hypothetically or conditionally* for all people without exception. Man's unbelief will never nullify any aspect of Christ's glorious Atonement!

(Lord willing, more next month.)
Tell someone today how much you love Jesus Christ.