

## L. Limited Atonement

### Limited Atonement

*When Christ died on the cross, He shed His blood **only for those who have been elected and no one else.** [emphasis mine] The effects of the Atonement, by which God forgave sinful humanity, are limited only to those whom He has chosen.<sup>1</sup>*

### Particular Redemption (aka Limited Atonement)

*Jesus on Calvary bore the full punishment due his elect, ensuring their final salvation. **He did not die for the non-elect,** [emphasis mine] who are excluded and hopelessly reprobated.<sup>2</sup>*

### Limited Atonement

*Since salvation is based solely on the desire and will of God, and not on the will of man, and since God unconditionally elects those whom He saves, while damning others, **the atonement is logically therefore limited only to those whom He has elected.**[emphasis mine]<sup>3</sup>*

### Theologian Walter Elwell summarizes the debate over the extent of the atonement this way

*"Although there are variations as to the basic ways in which this subject can be addressed, the choices boil down to two: either the death of Jesus was intended to secure salvation for a limited number or the death of Jesus was intended to provide salvation for everyone. The first view is sometimes called 'limited atonement' because God limited the effect of Christ's death to a specific number of elect persons, or 'particular redemption' because redemption was for a particular group of people. The second view is sometimes referred to as 'unlimited atonement' or 'general redemption' because God did not limit Christ's redemptive death to the elect, but allowed it to be for mankind in general."<sup>4</sup>*

### Eight Arguments Calvinists Use to Support Limited Atonement

- *The following list of eight arguments are taken from an article entitled, "The Extent of the Atonement: Limited Atonement Versus Unlimited Atonement"<sup>5</sup>. My comments will be noted below each of the eight sections in **Bold Italics**.*

Proponents of limited atonement, such as late Reformed scholars Louis Berkhof and Charles Hodge, set forth a number of arguments which they believe conclusively proves the truth of the doctrine. Following are eight of the more notable arguments:

(1) The Bible says Christ died for a specific group of people--the "church," His "people," His "sheep." Berkhof argues, "Scripture repeatedly qualifies those for whom Christ laid down His life in such a way as to point to a very definite limitation. Those for whom He suffered and died are variously called His 'sheep,' John 10:11, 15, His 'Church,' Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27, His 'people,' Matt. 1:21, and the 'elect,' Rom. 8:32-35."

***[I comment on this in a section below called "Some Scriptures Calvinists Use***

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ccfestus.com/books/taylor\\_calvinism.htm](http://www.ccfestus.com/books/taylor_calvinism.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/openhse/calvinism.html> (Calvinism Critiqued - by a Former Calvinist, Steve Jones)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.christianconversationsnow.com/2011/02/07/r-c-sproul-calvinism/#sthash.173pvcOU.dpuf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://home.earthlink.net/~ronrhodes/Atonement.html>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.chafer-cstn.org/BaseT/SOTER/Unlimited\\_Atonement\\_Rhodes\\_72A2A2.htm](http://www.chafer-cstn.org/BaseT/SOTER/Unlimited_Atonement_Rhodes_72A2A2.htm)

***to Support Limited Atonement”]***

(2) Since the elect were chosen before the foundation of the world, Reformed scholars ask how Christ could honestly be said to have died for all human beings? Put another way, how could Christ design something which by virtue of His omniscience He knew would never come to pass? It doesn't make sense, they say. Hodge clarifies this line of argument by suggesting that “if God from eternity determined to save one portion of the human race and not another, it seems to be a contradiction to say that the plan of salvation had equal reference to both portions.” In other words, “it would have been a waste and a lack of foresight on the part of God to have Christ die for those whom he had not chosen to salvation.”

***[This argument starts from a faulty foundation of Unconditional Election. When you start with a false premise you will usually draw a wrong conclusion]***

(3) Some advocates of limited atonement say Christ is defeated if He died for all men and all men aren't saved.

***[This is because they do not believe man has a responsibility in repenting and believing]***

(4) Some advocates of limited atonement say that if Christ died for all people, then God would be unfair in sending people to hell for their own sins. It is argued that “no law court allows payment to be exacted twice for the same crime, and God will not do that either.” Christ paid for the sins of the elect; the lost pay for their own sins.

***[God made the blood of the lamb available to all before the Exodus from Egypt - yet each person had to put it on their doorpost or pay the penalty]***

- ***Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7)***
- ***Mat 26:28 KJV For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.***
- ***Heb 9:22 KJV And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.***
- ***Act 10:43 KJV To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.***

(5) Since Christ didn't pray for everyone in His High Priestly prayer in John 17, but only prayed for His own, Christ must not have died for everyone. It is argued that since the intercession is limited in extent, the atonement must be too. As Berkhof puts it, “Why should He limit His intercessory prayer, if He had actually paid the price for all?”

***[I am not sure how you connect the dots on this one...Christ didn't pray for all ...SO therefore he must not have died for all. In either case, he is referring to Joh 17:9 where Jesus said, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” ... .. but if you read a little further you will also see Joh 17:20 “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;” So this is a case of needing to read a fuller context. You can see that Christ prayer was for His own, but it is not limited to an elected group - but for any who would believe.]***

(6) Some advocates of limited atonement have charged that unlimited atonement tends toward universalism. Hence, unlimited atonement cannot be the correct view.

***[See section below called “Who Did Christ Die For?” There I mentioned there is another option - Christ died for all “unlimited atonement”- yet man is still required to repent and believe - Universalism is not the only other option.]***

(7) In the Middle Ages such scholars as Prosper of Aquitaine, Thomas Bradwardine, and John Staupitz taught limited atonement. It is claimed that even though John Calvin did not explicitly teach the doctrine, it seems implicit in some of his writings. Calvin’s successors then made limited atonement explicit and included it in Reformed confessions of faith such as the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

***[We base our doctrine on the word of God - not the word of men or Confessions]***

(8) Though terms such as “all,” “world,” and “whosoever” are used in Scripture in reference to those for whom Christ died (e.g., John 3:16), these words are to be understood in terms of the elect. In other words, “all” refers to “all of the elect” or “all classes of men” (Jew and Gentile). Berkhof says “the word ‘all’ sometimes has a restricted meaning in Scripture, denoting all of a particular class, 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 1:23, or all kinds of classes, Tit. 2:11.” ... Similarly, the word “world” is said to refer to the “world of the elect” or to people without distinction (Jews and Gentiles). Berkhof says the doctrine of unlimited atonement is based “on the unwarranted assumption that the word ‘world’ . . . means ‘all the individuals that constitute the human race.’ . . . . When it is used of men, [the word] does not always include all men, John 7:4; 12:19; 14:22; 18:20; Rom. 11:12, 15.”<sup>13</sup> He argues that “there are passages which teach that Christ died for the world . . . . In the passages referred to it may simply serve to indicate that Christ died, not merely for the Jews, but for people of all the nations of the world.”<sup>14</sup> In keeping with the above, the word “whosoever” is interpreted to mean “whosoever of the elect.”

***[This seems like a forcing of scripture to fit a theological framework rather than an interpretation based on the simple reading of God’s word.]***

Based on arguments such as those above, Reformed scholars believe that Christ died only for the elect. This ends the section based on this article.<sup>6</sup>

## Some Scriptures Calvinists Use to Support Limited Atonement

Here is some more detail addressing Point 1 in the “Eight Arguments” section above. In the view of the Calvinist these scriptures indicate that Christ died for a subset of people. Again I will give the Scriptural basis used by the Calvinist, then share my comments below each section. We will look at scriptures related to Jesus dying for (1) His people; (2) Many; (3) His sheep; (4) The church; (5) His friends.

### **1. His people**

- Matthew 1:21: "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save ***his people*** from their sins."

#### **1.a. [my comment]** (“His people includes **any** who will believe)

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.chafer-cstn.org/BaseT/SOTER/Unlimited\\_Atonement\\_Rhodes\\_72A2A2.htm](http://www.chafer-cstn.org/BaseT/SOTER/Unlimited_Atonement_Rhodes_72A2A2.htm)

- 1Pe 2:6-10 NIV For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 8 and, "A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message--which is also what they were destined for. 9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

## 2. Many

- Matthew 20:28: "...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as **a ransom for many.**"
- Matthew 26:28: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is **poured out for many** for the forgiveness of sins."
- Hebrews 9:28: "So Christ was sacrificed once **to take away the sins of many people**; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."

**2. a. [my comment]** Using the word many is not a word describing exclusivity as in "limited atonement. It is a word describing an amount. Indeed many have been saved and have had their sins taken away by the sacrifice of Jesus. Below is another interesting use of the word many in scripture and you can see that "many" used here actually means "all".

- Rom 5:12 KJV Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:
- Rom 5:15 KJV But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
- Rom 5:18-19 KJV Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience **many were made sinners**, so by the obedience of one **shall many be made righteous.**

## 3. His sheep

- John 10:11 KJV I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life **for the sheep.**
- John 10:15: "...and I lay down my life **for the sheep.**"

**3.a. [my comment]** (We become His sheep by believing what He has told us. So this is not a description of Limited Atonement - as ANY can believe and in doing so will become His sheep. Being a sheep falls to the choice of man to believe - not limited selection of people.

- Joh 10:25-27 KJV Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

#### 4. The church

- Acts 20:28: "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of **the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.**"
- Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved **the church and gave himself up for her.**"

#### 4.a. [my comment] (Anyone can be placed into the church by believing the gospel)

- Col 1:18-23 NIV And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- 23 **if you continue in your faith,** established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.
  - He is the head of the church which is His body
  - He reconciled all things to himself by making peace through his blood
  - We are reconciled to be holy, without blemish and free from accusation
  - We must continue in our faith - not moved from the hope of the gospel which we HEARD

#### 5. His friends

- John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this, that **he lay down his life for his friends.**"

#### 5. a. [my comment] (Who are his friends?)

- Joh 15:14 KJV Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

#### Summary of this section

These scriptures used by Calvinists to support Limited Atonement simply identify a subset of those who have been saved - they do not state that He died for these groups exclusive of all others -they are not words that describe a limited atonement.

## Who Did Christ Die For?

### An Article by James White

In this article, White indicates that he was a “four-point” Calvinist [i.e. he did not hold to Limited Atonement], and describes what he learned that changed his viewpoint.

*In doing a radio program on the truth of God's electing grace, I was challenged by a caller in regards to the death of Christ. **"Why would Christ die for the whole world if God did not intend to save everyone?"** I looked at my co-host, and he looked at me, and I made a mental note to do more study into that particular question. I grabbed Palmer's book as soon as I returned home, and began to read the chapter on the atoning work of Christ.*

*I became a full "five-pointer" upon reading the following section:*

*The question that needs a precise answer is this: **Did He or didn't He? Did Christ actually make a substitutionary sacrifice for sins or didn't He? If He did, then it was not for all the world, for then all the world would be saved.*** (Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 47.)

*I was faced with a decision. If I maintained a "universal" atonement, that is, if I said that Christ died substitutionarily in the place of every single man and woman in all the world, then **I was forced to either say that 1) everyone will be saved, or 2) the death of Christ is insufficient to save without additional works.** I knew that I was not willing to believe that Christ's death could not save outside of human actions. So I had to understand that Christ's death was made in behalf of God's elect, and that it does accomplish its intention, it does save those for whom it is made. At this point I realized that I had "limited" the atonement all along. In fact, if you do not believe in the Reformed doctrine of "limited atonement," you believe in a limited atonement anyway! How so? Unless you are a universalist (that is, unless you believe that everyone will be saved), then you believe that the atonement of Christ, if it is made for all men, is limited in its effect. You believe that Christ can die in someone's place and yet that person may still be lost for eternity. You limit the power and effect of the atonement. I limit the scope of the atonement, while saying that its power and effect is unlimited!<sup>7</sup>*

### **My comment about this statement**

*"Why would Christ die for the whole world if God did not intend to save everyone?"... .. The question that needs a precise answer is this: Did He or didn't He? Did Christ actually make a substitutionary sacrifice for sins or didn't He? If He did, then it was not for all the world, for then all the world would be saved.*

- He begins with a false premise - the assumption that God did not intend to save the whole world which is the belief in “unconditional election”. But what if he DID intend the whole world to be saved (as described in 2 Pet 3:9 - “not his will that any perish but that all come to repentance”) - and because of that He sent Jesus to shed his blood for all sin?
- His second false premise is if Jesus died for all then all would be saved...but what if in his Sovereignty God chose as we believe to give man a free will - (i.e. to believe or not to believe the good news of the gospel of Jesus?)
- In that case, His atonement remains “Unlimited” [i.e. He died for all mankind] and His atonement is not powerless to perform its intended purpose - it simply requires that man respond in repentance and faith to receive it.
- Without the requirement of man’s repentance and faith then you can see that the Calvinist is only left with Limited Atonement.

### **My comment about this statement**

<sup>7</sup> <http://vintage.aomin.org/Was%20Anyone%20Saved.html>

*I was forced to either say that 1) everyone will be saved, or 2) the death of Christ is insufficient to save without additional works.*

### **There is another option**

Romans 3:21-26 NIV But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. (22) This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (25) God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood--**to be received by faith**. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- (26) he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- That righteousness is given through faith in Jesus to ALL who believe
- ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God - and ALL are justified freely by grace through the redemption that came by Jesus
- That Christ is the sacrifice of atonement - **to be received by faith**.

This element of faith is not an option for Calvinists because if it is received by faith then salvation becomes a matter of Christ AND additional works [synergism] vs the work of Christ alone. But remember - we've already talked about how Abraham **believed** and it was counted as righteousness - and His belief was NOT considered works

- Rom 4:2-5 ASV For if Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not toward God. 3 For what saith the scripture? **And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness**. 4 Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.
- Romans 4:16 NIV Therefore, **the promise comes by faith**, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

So in essence we believe that Jesus died for the sins of **all mankind...and all who believe** receive eternal life. This is summed up nicely in John 3:16-19 NIV

- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. (19) This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

### **Many Scriptures Point to the Truth of Unlimited Atonement**

It is much easier for someone who believes in Unlimited Atonement to explain how Jesus died for His people, the many, the church, the sheep, His friends as we did above, than for someone who believes in Limited Atonement to understand how these scriptures fit their theological framework.

## All Men

- Isaiah 53:5-6 (KJV) But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
  - If “all we” have gone astray is speaking of all people, then the iniquity of “us all” (i.e. all people) has also been laid upon him.
- 1Ti 2:3-6 KJV For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
- Romans 5:18 KJV Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
  - Either Jesus died for all or not all are condemned - same word is used in both places.
  - Both the judgment AND the free gift came upon all
- 1Ti 2:1-6 KJV I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
- 2Pe 3:9 KJV The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
- 1Ti 4:9-10 KJV This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially [Strong's G3122 - particularly] of those that believe.
  - His death is available to all [Saviour of ALL men] but effective for those who believe
  - Galatians 3:22 KJV But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.



- Heb 2:9 KJV But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for **every man**.
- Act 17:30 KJV And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth **all men every where** to repent:
- Tit 2:11 KJV For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to **all men**

### The World

- 1Jn 4:14 KJV And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be **the Saviour of the world**.
- Joh 1:29 KJV The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away **the sin of the world**.
- 2 Corinthians 5:19-21 KJV (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling **the world** unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. (20) Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
  - He was reconciling the world to Himself
  - Yet we appeal to the world to BE reconciled to God to be made the righteousness of God in him
- Joh 1:29 KJV The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin **of the world**.
- Joh 3:16-17 KJV For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but **that the world through him might be saved**.
- Joh 12:47 KJV And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save **the world**.

### The Lost

- Luk 19:10 KJV For the Son of man is come to seek and to save **that which was lost**.

### Sinners

- 1 Timothy 1:15-16 KJV This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. (16) Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life

everlasting.

- He came to save sinners - mercy is to those who believe on him to life everlasting
- Rom 5:6-8 KJV For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
  - The word "sinner" is speaking to all of mankind, not just to those who are the elect.

### **False teachers who deny Him**

- 2Pe 2:1 KJV But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that **bought** them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.
- Bought (Strongs = G59 - properly to go to market, that is, (by implication) to purchase; specifically to redeem: - buy, redeem.
  - 1 Corinthians 6:20 KJV For ye are **bought** with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
  - Revelation 14:3 KJV And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were **redeemed** from the earth.
  - Revelation 5:9 KJV 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;

### **What about the preaching of the gospel?**

The belief in Limited Atonement throttles your ability to point to some scriptures [like the ones above] without the qualifying comment "but you might not be one of the ones he died for".

As Robert Lightner has said, "Belief in limited atonement means that the good news of God's saving grace in Christ cannot be personalized. Those who hold to such a position cannot tell someone to whom they are witnessing that Christ died for him because that one may, in fact, not be one for whom Christ died."<sup>8</sup>

Jesus said the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations (Matt 24:14). He continues with that theme by telling his disciples in Acts 1:8 that they are to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Paul states in Acts 17:30 that God commands ALL people EVERYWHERE to repent.

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<sup>8</sup> This quote is from an article by Robert Lightner in the book, Walvoord: A Tribute, p. 166.

## Limited Atonement is an attack on the character, love and sacrifice of God

If Christ died only for the elect as the proponents of the limited atonement theory insist can the offer of salvation to all humans escape the charge of insincerity and dishonesty on the part of God? How could the offer of salvation be made to all persons, if Christ in fact did not die for all? But if, as these passages clearly proclaim, God does offer His gift of salvation to all humans, on what basis can we maintain that Christ died only for the chosen few?<sup>9</sup>

### A short story to close

*A famous English preacher spoke in an English town, then rushed to catch his train for London. A sinner who heard him preach felt that he must immediately settle the matter of salvation. So he followed the preacher to the train. Just as the train pulled into the station, he took hold of the preacher's lapel and said, "I want to be saved! Tell me how!"*

*The minister said, "I must catch this last train to London. Do you have a Bible?"*

*"Yes, I have one at home," said the anxious inquirer.*

*"Then go home and find Isaiah 53:6. Read it carefully. Go in at the first all, and come out at the last all, and you will be saved."*

*The preacher rushed away, and the anxious sinner was left alone. He went back to his home, and opening his Bible, he turned to Isaiah 53:6. What did the preacher mean, he wondered--"Go in at the first all and come out at the last all, and you will be saved"?*

*He found the verse and read it carefully: "**All** we like sheep have gone astray." Well, he thought to himself, I can certainly go in at the first all. I have gone astray. I am a poor, lost sinner.*

*Then he read the last part of the verse, "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us **all**." He said to himself, "If I come out at the last all, I must believe that all my sins were laid on Christ, that He took my place and paid for my sins. And if I rely upon that, I will be saved. That's what the preacher meant."*

*He then trusted Christ and was saved. He believed that he was a sinner, and that all his sins had been laid on Christ.<sup>10</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.methodist.org.sg/index.php/home/public-square/1032-did-christ-die-only-for-the-elect>

<sup>10</sup> Sword of the Lord; Assumed First edition (1980), Curtis Hudson, p.12