

The Doctrines of Grace #3

# Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption

Various Scripture References

Introduction:

1. We learned about total depravity
  - a. There is no good in man as far as God is concerned
  - b. When Adam fell, all mankind fell and died spiritually
  - c. Men cannot come to Christ
  - d. Mankind does not want to come to Christ
  - e. Man's heart, mind and understanding are all darkened
2. Next we learned that God decided to save some – election
  - a. In eternity past, God chose some
  - b. He did not look down into the future and see who would trust Christ and then choose them
3. Today we examine – limited atonement
  - a. I don't like the word "limited"
  - b. I'd rather say "particular" or "definite"
4. There are three different ways of looking at the atonement
  - a. The universalism view
    1. Jesus died for the sins of all people without exception
    2. Since Christ died for all, then all people will be saved
    3. This view is common among theological liberals
    4. But all men are not saved
      - a. Matt 7:13-14 – Many are on the road to destruction
      - b. Matt 7:21-23 – Many will hear Christ say, "Depart from me..."
  - b. The inconsistent universalism view
    1. Christ died for all people without exception but only those who trust Christ as Savior will be saved.
    2. This means that many for whom Christ died will go to hell
    3. These people believe that Christ's death did not actually secure the salvation of anyone, but made salvation a possibility to all
    4. Many evangelicals and fundamentalists hold this view
  - c. The particularist view
    1. Christ died only for the sins of the elect
    2. Christ only died for those whom the Father gave Him
    3. The heavenly Father chose them. Christ died for them and the HS draws them
5. Christ's atonement is not limited in power
  - a. He has power to save even to the uttermost the worst sinner
  - b. His atonement is limited in its scope

## **I. The Position of a Limited Atonement**

### **A. It Follows from Unconditional Election**

1. If from eternity, God has determined to save a portion of humanity and not another, then it is a contradiction to say that Christ's work has equal reference to both groups
2. Why would Christ die for those whom God had already determined not to save
3. A definite election leads to a definite atonement

### **B. It Follows from the Definition of Grace**

1. If salvation is by grace, God does not owe it to anyone
2. If Christ died for all people, God would have to save all
3. If God was thus obligated, then salvation is not by grace

### **C. It Follows from Common Sense**

1. A love that causes God to send Christ to die for all people would cause Him to save all
2. And all are not saved

## **II. The Proof of a Limited Atonement**

### **A. Christ Died for Many**

1. Isa 53:11-12
2. Matt 20:28; 26:28
3. Heb 9:28

### **B. Christ Died for His People**

1. Isa 53:8
2. Matt 1:21
3. Lu 1:68, 77

### **C. Christ Died for His Sheep**

1. Jn 10:11, 15, 26
2. Matt 25:33

### **D. Christ Died for His Friends – Jn 15:13**

**Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.**

### **E. Christ Died for His Church**

1. Acts 20:28
2. 1Cor 5:7
3. Gal 1:4
4. Eph 1:6
5. Eph 5:25
6. Rom 5:8; 8:32

### **III. The Power of a Limited Atonement**

#### **A. It Gives Power to the Atonement of Christ**

1. Christ's death really saves those for whom it was intended
2. God is not hoping, trying to save some
3. The Arminian limits the power of Christ's death to save
4. *God is trying to save people, but they won't cooperate*
5. *Everyone who dies and goes to hell is a ghastly monument to God's inability to save them.*
6. *The atonement of the Arminian is weak and powerless*
7. *God is helpless and all He can do is sit and wait for the sinner to save himself by choosing Christ*
8. *If this is true, then God's plan of salvation is a colossal failure*
9. The Calvinist does not limit the power of the atonement, but he limits the extent or design of the atonement

#### **B. It Makes Salvation Certain**

1. If Christ's death made salvation possible to all – then this would be a venture and not a victory
2. This would be a gamble.
  - a) *If Jesus intended to save all, but only some were saved*
  - b) *Then some of Christ's blood was wasted – it was spilled*
  - c) *Christ's death made salvation certain for the elect*

### **IV. The Problem of a Limited Atonement**

#### **A. Didn't Christ Die for the World? – Jn 3:16**

1. Jn 3:16
  - a) *Arminians teach that God loves all people without exception and Christ died for all indiscriminately*
  - b) *Remember the context of this verse – Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a Jew who would consider the “world” of the Gentiles to be accursed /hopeless as far as salvation is concerned*
  - c) *Jesus corrects that thinking of Nicodemus by stating that God loved and gave His son to die for whosoever would believe in Christ, whether they be Jews or Gentiles*
  - d) *Does the “world” include Esau? – Rom 9:13*
  - e) *Does the “world” include those who were in hell already as Nimrod, Pharaoh and Cain?*
  - f) *Does world include those in Jn 17:9 that Jesus didn't pray for?*
2. 2Cor 5:19
  - a) *“World” here cannot mean all people without exception since the Scriptures teach that many die in their sins without ever being reconciled to God*
  - b) *Jn 8:21 ←*

## **B. Didn't Christ Die for All?**

1. 1Tim 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.
  - a) *Not all without exception as in vs 1 when we are told to pray for all men – not all without exception*
  - b) *All without distinction – all classes, all kinds, as in vs 2*
  - c) *Did Christ pray for Judas or Pharaoh?*
2. Heb 2:9 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.
  - a) *Man is not in the text*
  - b) *Vs 10-17 describe every man of God's sons – vs 10*
  - c) *Vs 11 – Christ's brethren*
  - d) *Vs 13 – Gods' children*
3. Joh 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.
4. 1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
5. 2Pe 3:9 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.
  - a) *Arminians often read the second half of this verse*
  - b) *The "us-ward" are the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" – 1Pet 1:2*
6. "All" often has a limited sense
  - a) *"All have sinned" does not include Christ*
  - b) *Lu 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*
  - c) *Col 1:5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:*
7. If a ship sank and the newspaper report said that "all" were saved. It would not refer to all who were in the world, but all who were on the ship

### **C. Didn't Jesus Die for the World**

1. There are at least 8 different uses of the word "world" in the NT
  - a) *It can refer to the entire created order – the universe – Acts 17:24*
  - b) *It can refer to the earth itself – Jn 13:1; Eph 1:4*
  - c) *It can mean the evil world system – Jn 12:31; 1Jn 5:19*
  - d) *It can refer to the whole human race – Rom 3:19*
  - e) *Sometimes it refers to unbelievers only – Rev 12:9; 13:13*
  - f) *It can describe the Roman Empire or the civilized world at the time – Lu 2:1; Rom 1:8*
  - g) *It can be a general term for the human race as a class of beings – 2Cor 5:19*
2. **Joh 3:16 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.**
  - a) *"that whosoever believes" restricts the word "world"*
  - b) *Christ died only for those who believe on Him*
  - c) *Did God love Pharaoh? Rom 9:17*
  - d) *Did God love the Amalekites – Ex 17:14*
  - e) *Did God love the Amalekites whose extermination he ordered? – Deut 20:16*
  - f) *Did He love the Ammonites and Moabites whom He would not allow into the congregation forever? – Deut 23:3*
  - g) *Does God love the workers of iniquity? – Ps 5:5*
  - h) *Does he love the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction? – Rom 9:22*

### **D. Doesn't Man Have a Free Will?**

1. We saw in a previous lesson that man is totally depraved
  - a) *Every part of man is depraved*
  - b) *Man's will is depraved – it is not totally free*
2. There is some freedom of the will
  - a) *This morning you chose Corn Flakes instead of Cherios*
  - b) *You chose the white skirt instead of the blue skirt*
3. You do not have freedom of will...
  - a) *To will yourself a million dollars*
  - b) *To will your toothache pain to disappear*
4. God must open a person's heart so he can receive the gospel
  - a) *Rev 17:17; 2 Thess 2:11-12*
  - b) *Rom 9:18-21; Ex 10:1, 20; Jn 12:39*
  - c) *Lu 24:4; Acts 16:14*

### **E. Does God Command What Man is Unable to Do?**

1. One common argument against sovereign grace is that God would never command man to do something that he was unable to do
2. If God commands all people to be saved, then all must have the ability to be saved
3. The Bible is abundantly clear...
  - a) *That all are sinners – Rom 3:9*
  - b) *That none are righteous – Rom 3:0*
  - c) *That no one does good – Rom 3:12*
  - d) *That none seek after God – Rom 3:11*
  - e) *That all are corrupt – Ps 14:3*
  - f) *That none have the ability to repent – 2Pet 3:13; Jer 13:23; Rom 8:6-8*
  - g) *That the fall of Adam rendered man unable to respond to the gospel and yet “God commands all men everywhere to repent” – Acts 17:30*
4. God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel and demanded perfect obedience yet it is impossible for man to keep them
5. Christ commanded his disciples to be perfect (Mt 5:48) but John says that no one is perfect (1Jn 1:8)
6. Lazarus was dead in the tomb for four days but he was commanded to come forth
7. The idea that God can only base his commands on what man can do is thoroughly and humanistic to the core
8. Why should God lower his perfect standard of righteousness to cater to man’s sinful infirmities?

### **F. This is a Hindrance to Evangelism**

1. Arminians say that if we can’t say, “Christ died for you” then it would hurt evangelism
2. But some of the most successful preachers in history have been Calvinistic
  - a) *Spurgeon*
  - b) *Whitefield*
3. They would never say, “Christ died for you” to an audience
4. It is a great encouragement in evangelism