

## Two Views of the Atonement

There are two views of the nature of the atoning work of Christ on the cross. The one view is called "universal" atonement and the other is called "particular" atonement. They are also called "limited" and "unlimited" atonement. One is based on the free will of man and the other is based on the free and sovereign grace of God. The real question is this: "What did Christ accomplish in His death on the cross? Did His death make salvation possible for all men or did His death make salvation certain for the elect of God?" Here are the two answers. I have chosen every word with great care.

### Answer of Free Will Religion

Atonement is **universal** in **intention** and **provisional** in **character**. God has an *unlimited purpose* (to save all men), but His *power is limited* (by man's free will). The atonement of Christ, in and of itself, does not assure that anyone will be saved for sure but it does make it possible for all men to be saved by choosing to believe with their free will. 1 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 2:2; John 3:16. (*claimed as support*)

### Answer of Free Grace Religion

Atonement is **particular** in **intention** and **redemptive** in **character**. God has a *limited purpose* (to save His elect) and He is *unlimited in His power*. The atonement of Christ, in and of itself, guarantees that some men, all of the elect, will be saved. Repentance and faith are part of the gifts purchased by Christ in His atoning death. Job 23:13; John 10:11; Hebrews 9:28; Eph. 5:25.

Let me point out several clear facts from the above.

(1) The **intention** of God in giving His Son up to death is different in the two systems.

In the one case, God's intention in giving His Son is universal in the sense that He sincerely desires and earnestly tries to save all men without exception.

In the other case, God's intention is particular in the sense that He has purposed to make certain that some specific, or particular, individuals will be saved.

(2) The **success** or fulfillment of God's intention in giving Christ is different in the two cases.

In the one case, God's intention to save all men without exception is thwarted and is impossible of attainment because of man's free will.

In the other case, God's decreed intention to save His elect is fully realized because the atonement of Christ purchases the gifts of both repentance and faith.

(3) The **power** of God is different in both cases.

In the one instance, God's intention is totally limited by man's free will. God has a limited power that cannot accomplish His unlimited purpose.

In the other instance, God has an unlimited power to accomplish everything His sovereign will desires. It is His purpose that is limited and not His power.

(4) The real issue is the **nature**, or character, of the atonement.

In the one case, the sufferings of Christ is "provisional" in character. His death, in and of itself, cannot really redeem anyone. The most that Christ's sacrifice accomplished was the opportunity for men to save themselves by *their* faith in Christ.

In the other case, the sufferings of Christ were "redemptive" in nature. His death really and fully paid for sin in such a way that it actually redeemed those for whom it was made.

A careful comparison of these two views will show that one has an atonement that really redeems and the other can only make redemption a possibility that is totally dependent on man's free will for its success. We insist that the first view is only a "hypothetical" atonement that does not redeem. In reality, the free will religion has, (1) a *redemption* that does not redeem but leaves many for whom it was made eternally still in their bondage; (2) it has a *reconciliation* that still leaves many eternally unreconciled to God and in their sin; (3) a *substitutionary* death that still leaves the sinner eternally without forgiveness of sins and forever lost in hell; and (4) a *propitiation* that leaves some for whom it was made still under the wrath of God. One must change the biblical meaning of the above four words and empty them of their biblical content in order to believe in universal atonement and the Free Will Religion.

## **The Perfect Price, Power and Purpose of God in the Punishment Poured out on Christ** (The following will be text considered during lecture)

### **The Precisely Measured Nature of Divine Punishment**

**Ecclesiastes 12:14** For God will bring every deed into judgment, with<sup>1</sup> every secret thing, whether good or evil.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

“what is due for what he has done” The phrasing indicates that the punishment is meted out in measure as deserved by the deeds. I won’t pretend to be able to give the measurement for any particular sins or even attempt to distinguish greater from lesser, but the amount or degree of wrath poured out and punishment suffered varies from sinner to sinner.

**Matthew 12:36** <sup>36</sup> I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak,

**Matthew 16:27** For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

**Romans 2:5** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works (*this passage goes on to say that every unbelieving sinner will face wrath and fury, tribulation and distress, yet verse 5 again seems to indicate that each receives a measure distinctly according to actual deeds. The “storing up” of wrath has the sense of a savings account, without any interest, were as time passes sometimes little or much one is “setting or putting aside” in storage. Fribergs lexicon says: “of divine wrath make more intense, cause to be more extensive”*)

**Romans 2:16** on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

**1 Corinthians 4:5** Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart...

**Colossians 3:24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality (again the pay-back is specific to the wrong done)

**Jude 1:14** It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of his holy ones, <sup>15</sup> to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

**Revelation 2:23** and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.

**Revelation 20:12-13** And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.

**Revelation 22:12** "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.

Each and every person’s every word, deed and secret thoughts

### **The Perfect Price Paid in Full: Bought with a PRICE**

**1 Corinthians 6:20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

**1 Corinthians 7:23** You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.

In the context of “bought” the semantic meaning of “price” is as follows:

τιμή, ἥς f. the amount of money or property regarded as representing the value or price of something - amount, price, cost.' ἐνοσφίσατο ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς 'he kept back (some money) from the price (received)' [Ac 5.2](#); ἔλαβον τὰ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ τετιμημένου ὃν ἐτιμήσαντο ἀπὸ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ 'they took the thirty silver coins, the price the people of Israel had agreed to pay for him' [Mt 27.9](#); τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε 'you have been bought with a price' [1 Cor 7.23](#). It would be wrong to assume that τιμή in [1 Cor 7.23](#) necessarily means 'a high price.' The notion 'high' comes from the contextual reference to the death of Christ. In [1 Cor 7.23](#), however, the implication is that a price was set and that the payment has been made. If the passive expression in [1 Cor 7.23](#) must be made active, one may translate as 'Christ bought you with a price' or 'Christ paid for you.' (Louw-Nida Lexicon)

**Acts 20:28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God,<sup>1</sup> which he obtained with his own blood.<sup>2</sup>

**Hebrews 9:12** he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

**1 Peter 1:18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,

**Revelation 5:9** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

**1 Peter 1:18-21** <sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, <sup>21</sup> who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (Who does the YOU refer to? The book is written to "the elect" (vs.1), sanctified and obedient (vs. 2), born again (vs. 3, 23), those of genuine faith (vs.7). All the ransomed are set free from slavery to sin and the condemnation of God's wrath by the accomplished work of Jesus Christ! This is not EVERYONE in the WORLD. But His own (John 10, 12, 17 etc.)

**Colossians 2:13-14** <sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

There is a "record of debt" document for each and every person. This document accounts for the totality of sins of every person individually. For some, as seen in Revelation 20 numerous other passages, the "record of debt" will be used for their final judgment. For others that debt, in its full and exact amount (price, like with ransoms and redemptions etc.) was paid. The others remain to be paid by the sinner for all eternity.

### **Specific sins borne (and the punishment/wrath/price due them)**

**1 Peter 2:24** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

**Revelation 1:5** and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

**Isaiah 53:5, 11** But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed....**11** Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see<sup>1</sup> and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. (*All "iniquities" that the bore are gone and those "many" will be "accounted righteous", brought peace and healed from their transgressions.*)