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A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DEFENSE OF A  
MULTI-INTENTIONED VIEW OF THE EXTENT  
OF THE ATONEMENT

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Gary Lee Shultz, Jr.

December 2008

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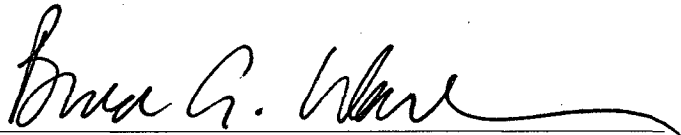
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A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DEFENSE OF A  
MULTI-INTENTIONED VIEW OF THE EXTENT  
OF THE ATONEMENT

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To Kristin,  
my wife, my love,  
and my best friend

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	viii
PREFACE .....	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Evangelical Debate over the Extent of the Atonement .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	7
Thesis .....	12
Methodology of Research .....	13
2. A SURVEY OF THE MAJOR POSITIONS ON THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT .....	19
Introduction .....	19
Augustine .....	20
The Ninth Century .....	26
Medieval Scholasticism .....	29
John Calvin .....	36
Theodore Beza .....	45
Jacob Arminius and the Synod of Dort .....	50
Moïse Amyraut .....	59
Richard Baxter .....	68

Chapter	Page
John Owen .....	73
John Wesley .....	79
Contemporary Evangelicalism .....	84
Conclusion .....	94
<b>3. A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF JESUS CHRIST'S PAYMENT FOR THE SINS OF ALL PEOPLE IN THE ATONEMENT .....</b>	<b>98</b>
Introduction .....	98
Isaiah 53:4-6 .....	101
The Johannine Literature.....	106
The Pauline Literature.....	121
The Catholic Epistles .....	141
A Universal Payment for Sin Does Not Result in Universalism .....	151
Conclusion .....	159
<b>4. THE GENERAL INTENTIONS OF THE ATONEMENT.....</b>	<b>161</b>
Introduction .....	161
A Genuine Universal Gospel Call.....	162
An Additional Basis for Condemnation .....	178
The Provision of Common Grace .....	183
The Supreme Revelation of God's Character .....	195
The Cosmic Triumph over All Sin .....	203
Conclusion .....	222
<b>5. THE PARTICULAR INTENTIONS OF THE ATONEMENT.....</b>	<b>225</b>

Chapter	Page
Introduction .....	225
The Salvation of the Elect .....	226
Sending the Spirit to Save the Elect .....	250
Conclusion .....	273
<b>6. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>276</b>
The Theological Validity of the Multi-Intentioned View .....	276
The Practicality of the Multi-Intentioned View .....	282
Further Areas of Study .....	287
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>290</b>

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ATR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>BETS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>BibSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>CTJ</i>	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DBSJ</i>	<i>Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>EDT</i>	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBTM</i>	<i>Journal of Baptist Theology and Ministry</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
<i>MSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
NAC	New American Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament

NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina</i>
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RTJ</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Journal</i>
<i>SBTJ</i>	<i>The Southern Baptist Theological Journal</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>

## PREFACE

Many people have contributed to the completion of this dissertation. Those at Southern include my dissertation supervisor, Bruce Ware, who suggested near the beginning of my doctoral program that I work on the multiple intentions of the atonement. Since that time he has challenged me to develop thoroughly the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement and to express it clearly and accurately. Professor Chad Brand, who served as the second reader of my dissertation, has offered valuable feedback as I worked to express my thoughts on the extent of the atonement. Professor David Puckett served as the third reader of my dissertation, and he has encouraged me in my work on this topic throughout my doctoral program. In addition to my doctoral committee, Professors Robert Vogel, Stephen Wellum, and Gregg Allison have all played an integral part in my doctoral education. To all of them I am thankful. I am also grateful for my fellow students in the Ph.D. department, many of whom spent time helping me think about the atonement, and all of whom encouraged me throughout my doctoral studies. Finally, I must thank my co-workers of the last two years in Ministry Referral and Student Services, who prayed for me and encouraged throughout my dissertation.

Others who deserve credit include my professors at the Baptist Bible Graduate School of Theology, who helped provide the biblical and theological background necessary for me to complete a Ph.D. in systematic theology. I am grateful for the

prayers and support from the members of Pleasant View Baptist Church, whom I had the privilege to pastor for the first two years of my doctoral work. I am thankful for the prayers and support from the members of Highland Park First Baptist Church, where my wife and I have been members for the last year. My pastor during this time, Jeff Pennington, consistently encouraged me and prayed for me as I wrote, as did my Sunday School class. I am also thankful to Kris Drees, not only for his friendship during this time, but also for the countless hours we have spent talking about the atonement and other theological matters (Prov 27:17).

Without the support of my family, I never would have been able to finish my doctoral work, let alone my dissertation. My parents, Gary and Susan Shultz, provided financial support. My in-laws, Tim and Joy Gray, supported me in many different ways. My wife, Kristin, has always supported and encouraged my educational pursuits. She has sacrificed and worked to support me throughout my doctoral work. Her love and understanding have been indispensable to me. She is truly the personification of God's grace in my life (Prov 18:22), and this dissertation is dedicated to her.

Finally, all praise, glory, and honor to my God and Savior, Jesus Christ. It has truly been a privilege to spend the last three years of my life studying and reflecting upon the atonement, and what God has done for humanity through the sacrifice of his Son. God has given me the strength and grace to write this dissertation. I therefore offer it to him as a sacrifice of worship, and I pray that he would use it for his glory.

Gary Lee Shultz, Jr.

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2008

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **The Evangelical Debate over the Extent of the Atonement**

The extent of the atoning work of Christ is disputed among evangelical Christians.<sup>1</sup> At issue in the doctrine of the extent of the atonement is the question: for whom did Jesus Christ die? Traditionally there have been two primary evangelical answers to this question.<sup>2</sup> The first is that he only died for those who will be saved, or

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<sup>1</sup>This dispute can be seen from the many works that evangelicals have penned about the subject. A recent spate of books published since the turn of the century and describing the merits of either the Calvinist or the Arminian theological system and the demerits of the other, including discussions of the corresponding positions on the extent of the atonement, also illustrates this point. These books include James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Essentials of Evangelicalism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); Dave Hunt, *What Love is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God* (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2004); Dave Hunt and James White, *Debating Calvinism: Five Points, Two Views* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2004); James White, *The Potter's Freedom: A Defense of the Reformation and a Rebuttal of Norman Geisler's Chosen But Free* (Amityville, NY: Calvary, 2000); Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006); Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, *Why I Am Not an Arminian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); David S. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia: P&R, 2004); and Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

<sup>2</sup>Walter A. Elwell, "Atonement, Extent of," in *EDT*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 115. Another possible answer to this question, but one that has until recently been considered outside the realm of evangelicalism, is universalism. Universalism holds that Christ died for all people and that his atonement secured the salvation of the elect, since these two groups are the same. A classic representative of this position is Friedrich Schleiermacher (*The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and

the elect. This position is most commonly referred to as “limited atonement,” but is also called “definite atonement” or “particular redemption.”<sup>3</sup> Particular redemption asserts that God offered his Son as an atoning sacrifice in order to save a particular group of people, his elect, and therefore Christ only paid for the sins of the elect.<sup>4</sup> This position is based in part upon verses of Scripture that seem to restrict the atonement to those who are saved, such as Matthew 1:21; John 6:37-40; 10:11, 15; Acts 20:28; Romans 8:31-39; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:14; and Revelation 5:9. Advocates of particular redemption also appeal to several theological arguments to make their case.<sup>5</sup>

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J. S. Stewart, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928], 62-68, 560-65). Although this position was held by church fathers such as Origen and Gregory of Nazianzus, it has generally been considered heretical by evangelicals. The position has recently made inroads into evangelicalism, however, primarily through the work of Thomas Talbott. See Thomas Talbott, “Towards a Better Understanding of Universalism,” in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 6-11. It will be assumed throughout this dissertation that universalism is not a viable evangelical answer to the question concerning the extent of the atonement. For reasons why, see the responses to Talbott’s essay in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*.

<sup>3</sup>This dissertation will refer to this position as “particular redemption” instead of “limited atonement.” Many who hold to this position dislike the term “limited atonement” because they believe that the name has put the position at a disadvantage, for who wants to believe in an atonement that is limited in some way? See Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 228-29; and Roger Nicole, “Particular Redemption,” in *Our Savior God: Studies on Man, Christ, and the Atonement*, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 168-69.

<sup>4</sup>Particular redemption is defined as “Christ’s actual substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners, through which God was reconciled to them, their liability to punishment was for ever destroyed, and a title of eternal life was secured for them.” J. I. Packer, “Introductory Essay,” in *The Death of Christ* by John Owen (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 7.

<sup>5</sup>Supporters of particular redemption assert (1) since God is completely sovereign, and his will can never be thwarted, all people would be saved if Christ died for

The second answer often given to the question of whom Jesus died for is that Jesus died for every single person who has ever lived and who ever will live. This position is most popularly known as “unlimited atonement,” but is also called “general atonement,” “general redemption,” or “universal atonement.”<sup>6</sup> Unlimited atonement asserts that God offered his Son as an atoning sacrifice in order to pay for the sins of

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all people, and hence unlimited atonement logically results in universalism. (2) If Christ paid for all people’s sins, then God would be unjust to send anyone to hell, because he would then be making them pay for sins that had already been paid for by Christ. If even the sin of unbelief is paid for, then God would be unjust to punish sinners for their unbelief. (3) Since Christ died to actually secure salvation for his people (Rom 5:10; Gal 1:4, 3:13; Eph 1:7), he could not have died for all people because not all people are saved. (4) Scripture seems to present Christ’s atonement and intercession as coextensive (John 17), which means that Christ only died for those whom he intercedes for, the elect. (5) Unlimited atonement creates conflict within the Trinity because it has the Son working to save all people while the Father and the Spirit work to save only the elect. (6) Unlimited atonement undermines union with Christ, for if believers are presently united with Christ, they were certainly united with him in his death and resurrection.

Particular Redemption is the traditional Calvinist position. For a representative argument for particular redemption, see John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), along with the introductory essay in that book by J. I. Packer. Other representative evangelical explanations of the position include Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 392-99; Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932), 150-61; Arthur Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 149-74; Wayne E. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 594-603; A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 347-429; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner’s, 1872-73; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 2:544-62; R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959); Letham, *Work of Christ*, 225-47; Gary D. Long, *Definite Atonement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2006); Robert A. Morey, *Studies in the Atonement* (Shermans Dale, PA: Christian Scholars, 1989), 57-74; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 59-75; Roger Nicole, “The Case for Definite Atonement,” *BETS* 10 (1967): 199-207; John Reisinger, *Limited Atonement* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2002); and Sam Waldron, “The Biblical Confirmation of Particular Redemption,” in *A Southern Baptist Dialogue: Calvinism*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brad J. Waggoner (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 139-52.

<sup>6</sup>This dissertation will refer to this position as “unlimited atonement.”

everyone in the entire world. This atonement then makes salvation possible for all people and becomes effective when accepted by the individual through faith.<sup>7</sup> Unlimited atonement appeals to Scriptures such as Isaiah 53:6; John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 19; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 3:9; 1 John 2:2; and 4:14. Like advocates of particular redemption, supporters of unlimited atonement also use several theological arguments to advance their position.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 846.

<sup>8</sup>Supporters of unlimited atonement assert (1) since God loves all people, it is inconceivable that he would send Christ to die for only part of the human race. (2) God's desire for the salvation of all people demands an unlimited atonement (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9). (3) The universal gospel offer demands an unlimited atonement. (4) The atonement does not automatically save the elect; Christians must put their faith in Christ's atonement for it to save them, therefore unlimited atonement does not necessarily result in universalism. (5) God is not unfair in sending those whom Christ died for to hell as long as they are not in Christ through faith. (6) Passages of Scripture that describe the atonement as being for believers do not necessarily rule out other passage of Scripture that speak of it being for all people.

Unlimited atonement is the traditional Arminian, Lutheran, and Catholic position, although some Calvinists hold to it as well. The Calvinist view of unlimited atonement is often referred to as Amyraldianism or hypothetical universalism, after the scholar Moïse Amyraut. Hypothetical universalism asserts that Christ died for all without exception to make salvation conditionally available to all. People are dead in their sins and unable to believe, however, and therefore God also willed to only send the Spirit to apply the atonement to the elect. In other words, God wills the salvation of all people on the condition that they believe. This view is a variant of unlimited atonement in that God's one intention in the atonement was to make salvation available for all, and it will be treated as such throughout the dissertation. Although the term "Amyraldianism" is often used as a blanket term for all unlimited Calvinistic proposals, Amyraut's view was complex and most contemporary Calvinists who espouse unlimited atonement reject much of what he taught. Therefore this dissertation will refer to unlimited atonement from a Calvinist perspective as "four-point Calvinism" or "hypothetical universalism." Amyraut's views will be explained in more depth in chapter 2.

Representative explanations of unlimited atonement from an evangelical perspective (both Calvinist and Arminian) include Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, *Soteriology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 183-205; Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of

In seeking to ascertain whom Christ died for on the cross, both particular redemption and unlimited atonement are actually attempting to explain the purpose or intent that God had in the atonement.<sup>9</sup> One can see this even in the brief explanations of the two positions offered above. Particular redemption holds that God's intention was effectually to bring about salvation for a specific group of people, and therefore Christ died only for those people. Unlimited atonement holds that God's intention in the atonement was to provide a payment for the sins of all people, a payment that becomes effective at the moment of saving faith, and therefore there is no one for whom Christ did not die. The issue is not whether or not people are saved on the basis of the atonement,

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Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 189-93; Norman F. Douty, *The Death of Christ: Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* (Irving, TX: William & Watrous, 1978); Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 842-52; Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, *Sin, Salvation* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2004), 347-409; Donald Lake, "He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 31-50; Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998); I. Howard Marshall, "For All, for All My Savior Died," in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honor of Clark H. Pinnock*, ed. Stanley P. Porter and Anthony Ricross (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003), 322-46; Terry L. Miethe, "The Universal Power of the Atonement," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 78-85; Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 85-138; David P. Nelson, "The Design, Nature, and Extent of the Atonement," in *A Southern Baptist Dialogue: Calvinism*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brad J. Waggoner (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 115-38; William S. Sailer, "The Nature and Extent of the Atonement: A Wesleyan View," *BETS* 10 (1964):189-98; Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), 771-73; and H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1941), 2:295-300.

<sup>9</sup>"Therefore, the question hinges upon this – not what is the nature and power of Christ's death in itself, but what was the purpose of the Father in appointing him and the intention of Christ in undergoing it." Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 2:459. See also William Cunningham, *Historical Theology: A Review of the Principal Doctrinal Discussions in the Christian Church Since the Apostolic Age* (1862; reprint, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 2:326-27.

nor is it the sufficiency of Christ's atoning death, because both positions generally agree that Christ's death is sufficient for all sin and is efficacious for all who truly believe.<sup>10</sup>

The debate over the extent of the atonement centers on the design or purpose of the atonement.<sup>11</sup> Is the atonement absolutely efficacious, or is it merely provisional?<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>“All agree that Christ's death in itself, because he is the infinite Son of God, has infinite merit and is in itself sufficient to pay the penalty of the sins of as many or as few as the Father and Son decreed. The question is not about the intrinsic merits of Christ's sufferings and death, but about the number of people for whom the Father and the Son thought Christ's death to be sufficient payment at the time Christ died.” Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 597. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* 393-94; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 842; and Nicole, “Particular Redemption,” 166. There are some advocates of particular redemption who do deny the sufficiency of Christ's atonement for all people (such as Theodore Beza and John Gill) but this is certainly a minority position and one that is rejected by Reformed creeds such as the Canons of Dort (1619) and the Westminster Confession (1646). For a contemporary representative of this position, see Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lake Charles, LA: Cor Meum Tibi, 2002), 305-22.

<sup>11</sup>This has been famously articulated by Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 393-94. Advocates of both unlimited atonement and particular redemption agree with this statement. See Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 193; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 225-26; Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 33; Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 200; Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, and Free Will*, 103-04; and Paul Wells, *Cross Words: The Biblical Doctrine of the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006), 236-39. Grudem, however, disagrees with this approach. He believes that it is just another form of the larger dispute between Calvinists and Arminians. Instead, he focuses on the question of whether or not Christ paid for the sins of those who are eternally condemned, and he answers no. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 601. This is an important question to ask, and one that will be dealt with in this dissertation, but it is also a question that can only be answered by considering the purpose(s) of the atonement.

<sup>12</sup>When this dissertation speaks of Christ's atonement, or his atoning sacrifice, it is referring to penal substitution, in which God gave himself in the person of Jesus Christ to suffer the punishment of death rightly due to fallen sinners as the consequence of sin. Christ suffered the wrath of God against sin in the place of humanity, satisfying God's justice and holiness and manifesting his love, so that anyone who believes in Christ by faith is saved from his sin and has an eternal relationship with God. Penal substitution is the foundation of all the other dimensions of the atonement, such as the conquering of evil and the display of God's love toward humanity and hatred toward sin. For explanations and defense of this view, see Steve Jeffrey, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*

### Statement of the Problem

Particular redemption and unlimited atonement both have passionate defenders who offer a wide array of biblical texts and theological arguments in support of their position. Both positions are correct to endeavor to answer the question of whom Christ died for by trying to determine the purpose of the atonement. Both positions also stress clear biblical truths. Particular redemption emphasizes God's sovereignty in salvation, the objective nature of the atonement, and God's special love for the elect. On the other hand, unlimited atonement emphasizes God's love for all people and God's desire for all people to be saved.

Both positions, however, also seem to contradict certain biblical truths.

Particular redemption has historically had a difficult time explaining the meaning of words such as "world" and "all" that the Scripture uses in relation to the saving work of Christ (e.g., Isa 53:6; 2 Cor 5:14-15, 19; 1 Tim 2:4-6; 4:10; 1 John 2:2).<sup>13</sup> Particular redemption seems to contradict verses in Scripture that speak of the atonement as being

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(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007); Thomas R. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 67-98; and John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006).

<sup>13</sup>This is not to say that advocates of particular redemption have not attempted to explain what these verses mean. John Owen attempted to explain the many different possible meanings for the terms "world" and "all" and to explain why verses that employed such seemingly universal terms were not speaking in universal terms. Owen, *Death of Death*, 190-204. For five different contemporary interpretations of the use of "world" in 1 John 2:1-2 from five different advocates of particular redemption, see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 598-99; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 242; J. Ramsey Michaels, "Atonement in John's Gospel and Epistles," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 116-17; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 72-75; and Terrance L. Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 488.

for unbelievers (2 Pet2:1)<sup>14</sup> or that speak of its universal implications (Col 1:19-20).<sup>15</sup>

Some have argued also that the doctrine has a difficult time explaining why the universal gospel call is necessary.<sup>16</sup> It is also difficult to understand why the atonement would be sufficient for all, as most advocates of particular redemption claim, if Christ only died for the sins of the elect.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For two interpretations of these verses from the particular redemption perspective, see Long, *Definite Atonement*, 76-78; and Dan G. McCartney, "Atonement in James, Peter, and Jude," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 177-79.

<sup>15</sup>Many advocates of particular redemption believe that the atonement provides benefits for the nonelect, or at least has universal implications. Kuiper is representative when he states, "According to the Reformed faith the divine design of the atonement is indeed in an important respect limited. But the Reformed faith also insists that in other important respects it is universal. It can be shown without the slightest difficulty that certain benefits of the atonement, other than the salvation of individuals, are universal. That being the case, it follows of necessity that God designed that this should be so. It is the sheerest folly to say that, while God designed to save the elect through the death of His Son, all other results of the atonement are accidental and lie without the pale of the divine purpose." Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 78. These benefits include the universal sufficiency of the atonement, common grace, the universal gospel call, and the eschatological salvation of the world. *Ibid.*, 79-100. It is difficult to understand how the atonement can have universal benefits, however, when it is only designed to pay for the sins of a particular group of people (the elect). It is also difficult to understand why particular redemption insists that the scope of the atonement is confined to the elect if it has so many universal benefits.

<sup>16</sup>"A very difficult situation arises for the limited redemptionist when he confronts the Great Commission which enjoins the preaching of the gospel to *every* creature. How, it may be urged, can a universal gospel be preached if there is no universal provision? To say on the one hand that Christ died only for the elect and on the other hand that His death is the ground on which salvation is offered to all men is perilously near contradiction." Lewis Sperry Chafer, "For Whom Did Christ Die?" *BibSac* 137 (1980): 315, emphasis the author's. For attempts to reconcile the universal gospel call and particular redemption see Roger Nicole, "Covenant, Universal Call, and Definite Atonement," *JETS* 38 (1995): 403-11; and J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961).

<sup>17</sup>As Erickson states, "Advocates of limited atonement face the somewhat awkward situation of contending that while the atonement is sufficient to cover the sins of the nonelect, Christ did not die for them. It is as if God, in giving a dinner, prepared

Unlimited atonement seems to avoid the difficulties of particular redemption but has other problems of its own. It is difficult in the unlimited view to account for numerous Scriptures that seem to emphasize the definite relationship between Christ's atonement and believers (e.g., Matt 1:21; John 6:37-40; 10:11, 15; 15:13; Acts 20:28; Rom 8:31-39; Eph 5:25; and Titus 2:14).<sup>18</sup> It is difficult to reconcile the doctrines of unlimited atonement and unconditional election.<sup>19</sup> Unlimited atonement seems to diminish or at least call into question God's sovereignty in salvation, as God's plan to provide salvation to all people is rejected by so many.<sup>20</sup> Arminians also assert that the

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far more food than was needed, yet refused to consider the possibility of inviting additional guests." Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 852. Nettles, an advocate of particular redemption, agrees with this reasoning and therefore rejects the "sufficient for all" language in discussing the atonement. Nettles, *By His Grace*, 305-19.

<sup>18</sup>As Nicole states, "The specific reference in all these passages certainly indicates that the relationship of the work of Christ to those who are saved is different from that which it bears to those who are lost." Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 201. Advocates of unlimited atonement usually respond by remarking that if Christ died for all, then in certain situations there is no problem with stating that he died for a particular group of people. Sailer is typical when he writes "If Christ died for *all* men, then it is certainly permissible to say that he died for some men when a more intimate group is in the purview of the writer." Sailer, "Wesleyan View," 191. This position is correct as far as it goes, but it does not account for the special relationship between Christ's atonement and believers that these verses seem to emphasize.

<sup>19</sup>This dissertation assumes the truth of unconditional election, which can be defined as "God's gracious choice, made in eternity past, of those whom he would save by faith through the atoning death of his Son, a choice based not upon anything that those so chosen would do, or any choice that they would make, or on how good or bad they might be, or on anything else specifically true about them (i.e., their qualities, characters, decisions, or actions) in contrast to others, but rather based only upon God's own good pleasure and will." Bruce A. Ware, "Divine Election to Salvation: Unconditional, Individual, and Infralapsarian," in *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 4. The truth of unconditional election will be defended in chap. 5.

<sup>20</sup>As Boettner states, "In saying that he sent his Son to redeem all men, but that after seeing that such a plan could not be carried out he 'elected' those whom he foresaw would have faith and repent, they represent him as willing what never takes place, – as

atonement provided prevenient grace for all people, and that it cleanses all people from the guilt of Adam's original sin.<sup>21</sup> The biblical validity of an Arminian view of prevenient grace, however, seems dubious.<sup>22</sup>

The primary problem with both of these positions is that they seem to unnecessarily restrict God's intentions in sending his Son to die on the cross to a single intention, either dying to specifically save the elect or dying to make salvation available

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suspending his purposes and plans upon the volitions and actions of creatures who are totally dependent upon him. No rational being who has the wisdom and power to carry out his plans intends what he never accomplishes or adopts plans for an end which is never attained. Much less would God, whose wisdom and power are infinite, work in this manner." Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine*, 156. Marshall, on the other hand, freely admits that God's purposes of salvation are frustrated, and attributes this to the presence of evil in the universe. He states, "The crucial fact is that there is evil in the universe, and there is no way that God can so work it into his purposes and desires that things are entirely as he would have them be. . . . But once it is recognized that God can have desires and purposes which are not fulfilled, then the binding of atonement and actual salvation to one another need no longer be presupposed." Marshall, "For All," 340.

Four-point Calvinism avoids this charge by explaining how God's sovereignty in salvation is upheld with an unlimited atonement. For example, Douty appeals to the distinction between God's will and God's desires, noting that everything God wills comes to pass, but not everything that he desires. An unlimited atonement then only shows God's desire to see everyone saved, not his intention or will. Douty, *The Death of Christ*, 13-18. Demarest makes a distinction between God's general provision in the atonement and his application of the atonement only to the elect. Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 193.

<sup>21</sup>H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 339; Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 34; Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 158-78; Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 2:353; and Arthur Skevington Wood, "The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 216.

<sup>22</sup>See William W. Combs, "Does the Bible Teach Prevenient Grace?" *DBSJ* 10 (2005), 3-17; Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 83-84; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 938; and Thomas R. Schreiner, "Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 229-46.

to all people. In doing so neither position is able to account, as will be argued, for all of the relevant biblical texts or the theological factors that impact the debate. Scripture seems to teach that Christ's atonement was for all people, but that the atonement did not accomplish the same things for all people. Instead of presenting just one intention in the atonement, the Bible seems to present the atonement as having multiple intentions. The atonement was neither merely provisional nor absolutely efficacious, but provisional for all and efficacious for some. Therefore it seems that a third position is needed – a multi-intentioned approach to the extent of Christ's atonement which endeavors to account for what the Bible teaches about the extent of the atonement in a way that differs from either traditional position, and which hereafter will be referred to as the "multi-intentioned view" of the extent of the atonement.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Some evangelicals are beginning to proclaim the need for a view of the extent of the atonement that moves beyond particular redemption and unlimited atonement by recognizing multiple intentions in the atonement. These evangelicals include D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 73-79; Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005), 572-91; Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 189-95; Wayne S. Hansen, "Two Aspects in the Design of Christ's Atonement," *JBTM* 2 (2004): 85-98; Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3 vols. in 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 2:409-10; Nelson, "Design, Nature, and Extent of the Atonement," 115-38; and Bruce A. Ware, "Extent of the Atonement: Outline of the Issue, Positions, Key Texts, and Key Theological Arguments" (unpublished class handout, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, n.d.), 1-5. G. Michael Thomas's historical study of the debate over the extent of the atonement in Reformed theology from 1536-1675 seems to point toward the validity of this view as well, although Thomas's brief conclusion seems to favor Karl Barth's understanding of the extent of the atonement, which ends up in a universal election of all of humanity in the atonement. G. Michael Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus (1536-1675)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 1997). There has yet to be, however, a full-length scholarly work explicitly explaining and defending a multi-intentioned view. This is a void that this dissertation is designed to fill.

## Thesis

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop, explain, and defend, both biblically and theologically, a multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement. In the course of this explanation and defense, a multi-intentioned view will be shown to be more consistent with all of the relevant biblical texts concerning the debate over the extent of the atonement and to fit more smoothly into an overall theological framework than either particular redemption or unlimited atonement. A multi-intentioned view holds that God the Father, in sending his Son to die on the cross, had both particular and general intentions for the atonement. In accordance with the Father's will, the Son then died to fulfill these multiple intentions. Based upon the Son's atoning death on the cross, the Spirit then works to apply the atonement in both particular and in general ways. God's particular intention in the atonement was to secure the salvation of the elect.<sup>24</sup> The Son fulfills this intention by sending the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to the elect on the basis of his atoning work. The Father's general intention in the atonement was for the Son to pay the penalty for the sins of all people.<sup>25</sup> He did this in order to make the universal gospel call possible, to make general grace (and not only salvific grace) possible, to provide an additional basis of condemnation for those who reject the gospel, to serve as the supreme example of God's character, and to make the reconciliation of all things possible.

God's multiple intentions in the atonement indicate that the atonement is in

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<sup>24</sup>This purpose is termed "particular" in that it only applies to a particular group of people, the elect.

<sup>25</sup>This purpose is termed "general" in that it applies to people in general, both the elect and the nonelect.

some ways for all people, but that it is for the elect in certain ways in which it is not for all people. The assertion that God had multiple intentions in the atonement, that he died with different intentions for the elect and the non-elect, is the primary way in which the multi-intentioned view differs from both particular redemption and unlimited atonement, since both of those positions understand Christ as dying in the same way for all for whom he died. By explaining and defending a multi-intentioned view this dissertation hopes to offer a viable biblical and theological alternative to both particular redemption and unlimited atonement in the evangelical debate over the extent of the atonement.

### **Methodology of Research**

This dissertation will be historical, biblical, and theological. Its purpose is primarily constructive, that is, its purpose is to put forth a multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement as a viable evangelical alternative to the prevailing views of particular redemption and unlimited atonement. The dissertation is only secondarily polemical in that as the view is constructed, the dissertation will endeavor to demonstrate its advantages both biblically and theologically to the alternative positions. As a constructive theological assertion, this dissertation will attempt to verify the validity of the multi-intentioned view by demonstrating its coherence, comprehensiveness, adequacy, and consistency. Grant Osborne terms this verification method “critical realism” in that theological assertions are representations of the “way things are,” but they are not exact depictions of revealed truth.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Osborne elaborates on this view: “Thus critical realists never assume that they have achieved the ‘final’ statement of theological truth; the process of validation and improvement never ceases, for there can be no facile assumption that they have ‘arrived,’ though of course one can verify that a particular statement is an accurate depiction of the

This dissertation will express the coherence of the multi-intentioned view by demonstrating how it coheres with Scripture. As a work of evangelical theology, this dissertation assumes the truth of *Sola Scriptura*, that the Bible is inspired, inerrant, and absolutely authoritative in all matters of faith and practice.<sup>27</sup> Therefore it is absolutely necessary to establish the multi-intentioned view from Scripture.<sup>28</sup> In seeking to

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biblical norm.” Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 310.

<sup>27</sup>As Richard Lints states, “The Christian theological framework finds its shape most definitely, then, in the initiating revelation of God. It must not underemphasize the expectations that the interpreter brings to that revelation, but neither must it negotiate the fundamental starting point in the construction of a theological framework. God must remain the Lord of history and the Lord of theology. The biblical revelation is the final court of appeals for the theologian.” Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 66.

<sup>28</sup>Marshall, in arguing for an unlimited atonement, expresses the importance of establishing any theological position from Scripture, and explains what one should do when both sides of a debate claim that they are being more “biblical” than the other. Marshall, “For All,” 323-25. He uses the example of Daniel Strange’s brief discussion of the extent of the atonement in Daniel Strange, *The Possibility of Salvation among the Unevangelised: An Analysis of Inclusivism in Recent Evangelical Theology* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001). Strange asserts that the interpretation of 1 Tim 2:4 “depends on and is itself evidence of, whether one holds to the doctrine of unlimited atonement or limited atonement.” *Ibid.*, 23. Essentially Strange is arguing that the meaning of the verse is ambiguous and depends upon one’s theological framework. He is using the concept of a hermeneutical circle, in which the meaning of the whole is dependent on the meaning of the parts while the meaning of the parts can only be ascertained in light of the whole (I am not disputing the existence of a hermeneutical circle or spiral). Marshall makes the point, however, that one is not simply justified to choose whatever meaning he likes for a particular verse just because it fits better with one’s overall theological framework. Marshall states that because Strange is pre-committed to a theological framework, Strange fails to adequately consider if texts such as 1 Tim 2:4 are really ambiguous, or if there are more plausible interpretations of such verses, and in turn if limited atonement texts are really as clear as he understands. Even if one does not agree with his interpretation of the text, Marshall’s point is an important one; the most likely interpretations of the text must be allowed to affect and even change one’s theological framework, and one’s theological framework should not be allowed to dominate the biblical text. This is why it is necessary to establish the biblical validity of the multi-intentioned view, despite the commonly expressed view that biblical exegesis cannot

determine Scripture's meaning, it is crucial to seek after the author's intended meaning within Scripture, as this is the only way that Scripture itself serves as the authority in interpretation.<sup>29</sup> For these reasons the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this dissertation will support the multi-intentioned view biblically by exegeting the relevant passages of Scripture that speak to this issue and showing what they contribute to the doctrine.<sup>30</sup> The exegesis of the relevant biblical texts will also establish the comprehensiveness of the multi-intentioned view, in that all of the Bible's teaching on the extent of the atonement is taken into account.

In addition to establishing the coherency and comprehensiveness of the multi-intentioned view, chapters 3 through 5 will also establish the consistency of the multi-intentioned view. The consistency of a doctrine is established by showing how it fits within an entire theological system.<sup>31</sup> Since God is the author of the Bible, doctrines will

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resolve the debate over contentious doctrines such as the extent of the atonement. To assert otherwise is to contradict the evangelical position on the authority of Scripture. See also Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, and Free Will*, 91, 106.

<sup>29</sup>“The Bible itself demands that we understand it on the basis of the author's intended meaning. Therefore we have a responsibility to seek that interpretation which best fits this goal.” Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 290. For a defense of this hermeneutic, see David Clark, *To Know and Love God: Method for Theology*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003), 59-98; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 73-105; Walter Kaiser, “Legitimate Hermeneutics,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 117-47; and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 197-441.

<sup>30</sup>John Warwick Montgomery describes the theologian's work in this way: “The task of systematic theology is to take the truths of revelation as discovered by the exegete, work out their proper relation to the focal center and to each other [the focal center as Montgomery describes it is the truth that the Word became flesh, died for the sins of the world, and rose again for its justification], and construct doctrinal formulations that ‘fit’ the revelational truths in their mutual relations.” John Warwick Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1970), 297.

<sup>31</sup>Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 311.

always be consistent with other doctrines. If a doctrine is not consistent with other clearly established biblical doctrines, this is a good indication that it is not a viable doctrine. As this dissertation establishes the biblical validity of the multi-intentioned view it will also demonstrate its theological consistency. The multi-intentioned view will be shown to be internally consistent as well as more consistent with other important Christian doctrines than either of the alternative views and, therefore, a more viable theological option.

Chapter 3 will establish the biblical and theological basis for understanding Christ's atonement as a payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect. The Scriptures that express this truth are Isaiah 53:4-6; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:46-47; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-21; 1 Timothy 2:4-6, 4:10; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2; and 4:14. Chapter 3 will exegete and explain what these passages teach concerning the extent of the atonement in four sections: Isaiah 53:4-6, the Johannine literature, the Pauline literature, and the General Epistles. The biblical defense of Christ's payment for the sins of all people will be followed by a section that explains why a complete and unlimited payment for sin does not entail universalism.

Chapter 4 will specifically focus on the biblical and theological explanation of God's general intentions in the atonement. God the Father sent God the Son to the cross in order to pay for the sin of all people so that he could make the universal gospel call possible, so that he could provide an additional basis of condemnation for those who hear the gospel and reject it, so that he could provide common grace to all of his creation, so that he could provide the supreme example of his character, and so that he could reconcile all things to himself. This biblical and theological explanation will establish

that the Bible teaches that the atonement had general intentions.

Chapter 5 will specifically focus on the biblical explanation of God's particular intention in the atonement: securing the salvation of the elect. The chapter will first seek to biblically establish God's intention of securing the salvation of the elect in the atonement. This intention is evident because of God's sovereignty throughout salvation, his special love for the elect, and the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation. Chapter 5 will then biblically and theologically establish Christ's accomplishment of this particular intention. Christ accomplished the securing of the salvation of the elect by sending the Spirit to apply salvation to the elect on the basis of his atonement. This chapter will also explain how the particular aspects of the atonement cohere with the universal aspects. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 all together will establish the biblical and theological validity of the multi-intentioned view.

The fourth criterion of validity for a theological assertion is adequacy. This criterion seeks to establish that the multi-intentioned view is a better description of the biblical texts than competing views.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation will endeavor to establish the adequacy of the multi-intentioned view in two ways. First, the chapters of biblical and theological explanation will demonstrate how the multi-intentioned view makes better sense of all the relevant biblical data than either particular redemption or unlimited atonement. This will be done by interacting with commentaries and theological works on the subject from scholars who hold both positions. Before this is done, however, it is necessary to explain how others throughout church history have made sense of the biblical data and theological arguments concerning the extent of the atonement.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 311.

Therefore chapter 2 of the dissertation will offer an historical survey.

In particular, chapter 2 will be a detailed survey of the most historically significant views on the extent of the atonement. This survey will show the development of the doctrine throughout church history and will include representative explanations of particular redemption, unlimited atonement, and four-point Calvinism. The views on the extent of the atonement from eight theologians (Augustine, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, Jacob Arminius, Moïse Amyraut, Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Wesley) as well as three key periods of church history for the doctrine of the extent of the atonement (the ninth century, medieval scholasticism, and modern evangelicalism) will be explained. By setting forth the different explanations of the extent of the atonement, particularly the ones most similar to the multi-intentioned view, this dissertation also seeks to show how a multi-intentioned view endeavors to build upon their strengths and improve upon their weaknesses.

Following the historical survey and the biblical and theological support for a multi-intentioned view, chapter 6 will serve as a brief conclusion to the dissertation. It will recapitulate the findings of the dissertation, offer some practical implications, and propose some suggestions for further areas of study concerning the multi-intentioned view. It is hoped that the reader will see the multi-intentioned view to be biblically sound, theologically consistent, and a timely alternative to the prevailing opinions within evangelicalism concerning the extent of the atonement.

## CHAPTER 2

### A SURVEY OF THE MAJOR POSITIONS ON THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

#### Introduction

Doctrinal debate does not form in a vacuum, and that is certainly evident in the doctrine of the extent of the atonement. The evangelical debate between particular redemption and unlimited atonement can trace its roots all the way back to the debate over the doctrine during the Reformation, which in turn goes back to Augustine.<sup>1</sup> In order to set the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement in its proper context, it is therefore necessary to trace the development of the doctrine of the extent of the atonement from the time of Augustine to the present. This historical survey will serve two purposes. First, it will put this proposal in its proper context, showing how it intends to build upon and go beyond positions that have been proposed by Christian scholars in the past. Second, it will help to demonstrate the need for this dissertation by showing how a detailed explanation of the multi-intentioned view has not yet been done.

Due to space constraints, it is not possible to document every contribution to the doctrine of the extent of the atonement throughout church history. Instead, this

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<sup>1</sup>While the doctrine of the extent of the atonement did not become a major dispute until the late sixteenth century, it was a subject of debate at various periods in the early church, beginning with Augustine. Raymond A. Blacketer, "Definite Atonement in Historical Perspective," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 307-08.

dissertation will include the explanations of particular redemption and unlimited atonement from the theologians and time periods throughout church history that are most pertinent to the current debate. The theologians are Augustine, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, Jacob Arminius, Moïse Amyraut, Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Wesley. The particular times in church history are the ninth century, medieval scholasticism, and contemporary evangelicalism. The explanations of each view will be presented in chronological order.

### Augustine

Before Augustine (354-430), there was no debate over the extent of the atonement. It is generally accepted that the early church fathers before Augustine held to unlimited atonement.<sup>2</sup> It is during the debate between Augustine and Pelagius that the

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<sup>2</sup>For example, in the words of a committed advocate of particular redemption, “The church fathers before Augustine usually speak very universalistically about the saving will of God and the atonement of Christ.” Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 456. See also John Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ*, in *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, vol. 2, trans. Josiah Allport (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1831), 317-39. This point is so accepted among scholars that almost all historical works on the extent of the atonement begin their discussion with Augustine. J. N. D. Kelly notes that the grand theme of the early church fathers’ concept of redemption before Augustine is Irenaeus’ recapitulation theory, which holds that just as all people were somehow present in Adam, so were they somehow present in Christ (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. [San Francisco: Harper, 1978], 376-77). This of course would demand an unlimited atonement. Chad Brand also notes that it was Augustine who “first attempted a self-conscious examination of the relationship between divine grace and the freedom of the human will by appeal to all relevant Scripture texts.” It is out of this examination that the concepts of unconditional election and then the debate between particular or unlimited atonement flowed. Chad O. Brand, “The History of the Doctrine of Election” (unpublished paper, Louisville, KY, n.d.), 7.

issue first came into dispute.<sup>3</sup> At the heart of this debate were two completely opposite doctrines of human nature, which resulted in opposite understandings of God's grace and salvation.

Pelagius taught that human beings had an unconditional free will and therefore the ability by nature to act rightly or wrongly. God has given human beings the power to act, and it is completely up to them how they act.<sup>4</sup> Human beings have the ability to obey God completely and to eschew sin, and they are obliged to do so. Based on his notion of human nature, Pelagius rejected the doctrine of original sin and taught that humans' wills have no bias toward sin as a result of the Fall; Adam's sin is merely propagated by example. These conceptions of human nature and sin led Pelagius to assert that grace was universal and was merely God's demonstration to humanity of how to act in order to receive salvation.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 456; G. Michael Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus (1536-1675)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 1997), 4; Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 2:455. Davenant states, "I think then it may be truly affirmed, that before the dispute between Augustine and Pelagius, there was no question concerning the death of Christ, whether it was to be extended to all mankind, or to be confined only to the elect." Davenant, *Dissertation*, 318-19. Pelagius first put forth his views in response to Augustine's doctrines of original sin and God's sovereign grace in salvation. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 361.

<sup>4</sup>Pelagius argued that there are three components to human action: power (*posse*), will (*velle*), and the realization (*esse*). The first comes from God alone, but the other two are abilities of human beings. See Peter Brown, "Pelagius and His Supporters: Aims and Environment," in *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine*, ed. Peter Brown (London: Farber and Farber, 1972), 192-99; and Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 358.

<sup>5</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 315.

Believing that Pelagianism was not only unbiblical, but compromised the gospel, Augustine voiced his opposition to Pelagius and asserted the doctrines of original sin and God's sovereign grace. Augustine taught that humanity was created free, with the ability not to sin (*posse non peccare*), but that because of its fall into sin the human race is now without the ability not to sin (*non posse non peccare*).<sup>6</sup> The entire human race was in Adam when he sinned, and therefore the entire human race is a mass of damnation (*massa damnationis*).<sup>7</sup> Each human being still has a free will, but one's free will is in bondage to sin and can only choose to sin.<sup>8</sup> Therefore the will of a person must be transformed if he or she is to desire salvation. God imparts to some the ability to choose him, and this is his grace; he makes unwilling people willing to choose him.<sup>9</sup> This view of grace led Augustine to assert that God has predestined all who will be saved, the elect, by an act of his sovereign will and according to his own good pleasure; all others are left justly condemned in their sins.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Augustine, *The Perfection of Human Righteousness*, 9, in *Answer to the Pelagians*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Roland J. Teske, *The Works of St. Augustine* pt. 1, vol. 23 (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1997), 292.

<sup>7</sup>Augustine, *On the Gift of Perseverance*, 35, in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge, with an introduction and notes by William J. Colinge, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 86, (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 302-04.

<sup>8</sup>Augustine, *Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians*, 1.5, in *Answer to the Pelagians II*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Roland J. Teske, *The Works of St. Augustine* pt. 1, vol. 24 (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1998), 117-18.

<sup>9</sup>Augustine, *The Augustine Catechism: The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*, 32, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Bruce Harbert, with an introduction by Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1999), 62-63.

<sup>10</sup>Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, 19, in *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, vol. 86, trans.

Augustine's attempts to protect and preserve God's sovereignty of grace in salvation led him to touch on the extent of the atonement.<sup>11</sup> For if the Father had predestined the elect to salvation and the Spirit only redeems the elect, then it seems that Christ's intention on the cross would be in harmony with the Father's and the Spirit's intentions in the salvation. Therefore his atonement would only be for the elect. Although Augustine never explicitly stated that he held this view, he makes some statements that point strongly in this direction. For example, he equated those who were predestined to those whom Jesus had come to redeem by the shedding of his blood.<sup>12</sup> Augustine indicated that those who were not elect were not bought by the blood of Christ's atonement.<sup>13</sup> Augustine also stressed that the blood of Christ was a special gift for the elect,<sup>14</sup> and that Christ's death actually saved those people for whom it was

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John A. Mourant and William J. Collinge, with an introduction and notes by William J. Colinge (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 241-42.

<sup>11</sup>William Robert Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism: The Debate of the Atonement at the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1974), 72.

<sup>12</sup>Augustine, "Sermon 138 – On the Words of the Gospel of John 10:30: 'I and the Father are One,'" in *Sermons*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, *The Works of St. Augustine*, pt. 3, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, NY: New City, 1992), 388.

<sup>13</sup>Augustine, "Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium," LXVIII, 4, in *PL*, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 35, column 1742. Concerning this statement, Jonathan Rainbow notes "The apposition of the phrases *ad sempiternam interitum praedestinos* and *non ad vitam aeternam sui sanguinis praetio comparatos* was theologically significant; it showed that in Augustine's mind predestination to destruction and not having been won to eternal life by the blood of Christ were parallel concepts, for both concepts describes those who are not 'sheep.' And the sheep in this context were the elect." Jonathan Rainbow, *The Will of God and the Cross: An Historical and Theological Study of John Calvin's Doctrine of Limited Redemption* (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1990), 12.

<sup>14</sup>Augustine, in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1953-), 36:404.

intended.<sup>15</sup>

More indicative of Augustine's view on the extent of the atonement, however, are several statements that he makes in regard to many of the texts normally used to defend unlimited atonement. Augustine understands the use of the term "world" in John 3:16-17 and 2 Corinthians 5:19 not in universal terms, but as referring to the "world of the elect."<sup>16</sup> He interprets 1 John 2:2 as stating that Christ is the propitiation for the "whole world" in the sense that he is the propitiation for the "Church in all nations, the Church throughout the whole world."<sup>17</sup> Augustine understands the universalism of John 1:9 and 1 Timothy 2:4-6 in a restricted manner.<sup>18</sup> All of the verses that Augustine could have used to argue for an unlimited atonement he instead interprets in a way that restricts the atonement to the elect only. These interpretations seem to indicate that Augustine

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 36:498.

<sup>16</sup>Augustine, "Sermon 121 – On the Words of the Gospel of John 1:10-14: 'The World Was Made Through Him, Etc.,'" in *Sermons*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, *The Works of St. Augustine*, pt. 3, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, NY: New City, 1992), 234.

<sup>17</sup>Augustine, *Ten Homilies on the First Epistle General of St. John*, trans. John Burnaby, in *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. John Burnaby, LCC, 8:266.

<sup>18</sup>"And so when we hear and read in the sacred scriptures that God wills everyone to be saved, although we are certain that not everyone is saved, we should not for that reason envisage an limitation to the will of almighty God, but understand the words of scripture *who wills everyone to be saved* (1 Tm 2:4) as meaning that nobody is saved except whom he wills to be saved, not because there is nobody whom he does not will to be saved, but because nobody is saved except those whom he wills to be saved, and so we should pray him to will, for what he wills must necessarily come about. The apostle was speaking about praying to God, and that led him to say those words. We must also understand in a similar way the words of the gospel *who enlightens everyone who comes* (Jn 1:9), not that there is nobody who is not enlightened, but that nobody is enlightened except by him." Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 103, emphasis the author's.

believed the extent of Christ's atonement was limited to the elect.<sup>19</sup>

Augustine's views on grace, sin, and salvation were generally affirmed by the church at the Council of Carthage (418), whereas the church deemed Pelagianism to be heresy. Several of the subsequent followers of Augustine and his theology also seemed to limit Christ's death on the cross to the elect alone.<sup>20</sup> For the most part, however, some of Augustine's more controversial doctrines, such as his doctrine of double predestination<sup>21</sup> and his understanding of Christ's atonement as being only for the

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<sup>19</sup>Others who understand Augustine as teaching that the atonement was for the elect only include Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 456-58; Blacketer, "Definite Atonement," 308-10; James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, vol. 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal, 2001), 61-62; Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 379-81; Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 72-74; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 226; Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 9-23; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 4-5.

<sup>20</sup>Among these would be Prosper of Aquitaine, Lucid, and Fulgentius of Ruspe. See Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 456-57; Blacketer, "Definite Atonement," 310; Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 135-36; Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 23-24; and Turretin, *Institutes*, 455.

<sup>21</sup>There is a disagreement as to whether or not Augustine held to double predestination. Those who believe that Augustine held to double predestination include Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 109-10; J. B. Mozley, *A Treatise on the Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1878); Paul K. Jewett, *Election and Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 6; Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 298; and Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 9. Those who believe that he did not hold to double predestination include Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, vol. 2, *The Doctrine of God*, pt. 2, trans. G. W. Bromiley et al. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957), 16; J. V. Fesko, *Diversity within the Reformed Tradition: Supra- and Infralapsarianism in Calvin, Dort, and Westminster* (Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 2001), 18-19; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1872-73; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 2:316; John M. Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," *JTS*, n. s. 20 (1969): 2:420-24; and Larry Sharp, "The Doctrines of Grace in Calvin and Augustine," *EQ* 52 (1980): 89. Augustine rarely addressed this question, but he makes several statements that seem to suggest that he believes in double predestination, and it certainly fits within his theology.

predestined elect, were never accepted by the Catholic Church.<sup>22</sup> The Synod of Orange (529) affirmed a moderate form of Augustine's theology, and its decrees constituted orthodoxy in the Western Church for the following centuries.<sup>23</sup> Unwilling to follow Augustine on the extent of the atonement, the Western church generally taught that Christ's atonement was for all people. This was also the accepted doctrine in the Eastern church, which never accepted Augustinianism, and had a much more optimistic view of the human condition regarding sin and humanity's free will.<sup>24</sup>

### The Ninth Century

After Augustine's elaboration of the doctrine, the next significant episode in church history concerning the extent of the atonement took place in the ninth century,

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<sup>22</sup>As Rainbow states, "Augustine bequeathed a problem to his successors in the middle ages: they all wanted to be 'Augustinian,' but very few of them wanted to believe that God did not really will the salvation of every human, had predestined some to life and some to damnation (what Isidore of Seville, writing some two hundred years later, would call 'double predestination'), and had sent Christ only for those predestined to eternal life." Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 21. See also M. S. Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination from Augustine to Peter Lombard," *BibSac* 47 (1890): 646-47; and Pelikan, *Emergence of the Catholic Tradition*, 327-31.

<sup>23</sup>"The twenty-five canons of Orange asserted the primacy of grace and repudiated the anthropology of Semipelagianism, but left a whole complex of related questions, which had since Augustine been part of the debates, unaddressed and unresolved. Among these was the question of the extent of redemption, about which the canons said absolutely nothing." Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 25. See also Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination," 4.

<sup>24</sup>As Freeman states, "Augustinianism was never adopted by the Eastern church." *Ibid.*, 646. See also Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 372-74. Brand notes that the East were more unified in their belief that election and free will were not antithetical, and thus the issue of the relationship between the two (and consequently the related argument over the extent of the atonement) rarely arose in debate. Brand, "Doctrine of Election," 23.

revolving around a monk named Gottschalk (c.804-c.869).<sup>25</sup> Gottschalk studied Augustine in depth and began to proclaim his doctrine, in particular the doctrines of double predestination and particular redemption. He based his doctrine of particular redemption upon the absolute sovereignty and omnipotence of God in all things, the fact that some are saved and some are lost, the immutability of God's will, and the idea that if Christ died to save any who were not saved then the blood of Christ is wasted and God's will is ineffectual.<sup>26</sup> He believed that there was one intention in the atonement: God only desires to be the redeemer of the elect, and only redeems the elect.<sup>27</sup> Gottschalk's views were highly controversial, and he was accused of heresy, which resulted in his imprisonment for the last twenty years of his life.<sup>28</sup> He did, however, have some support

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<sup>25</sup>For an explanation of Gottschalk's theology and the controversy that surrounded it, see Paul Noel Archibald, "A Comparative Study of John Calvin and Theodore Beza on the Doctrine of the Extent of the Atonement" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1998), 20-33; Brand, "Doctrine of Election," 24-28; Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination," 648-60; Dennis E. Nineham, "Gottschalk of Orbais: Reactionary or Precursor of the Reformation?" *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 40, no. 1 (1989): 1-18; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 3, *The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 80-95; and Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 25-32.

<sup>26</sup>Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination," 651-55.

<sup>27</sup>Archibald, "A Comparative Study," 25, 32.

<sup>28</sup>While the church at the time could be considered Augustinian, Augustine was understood through the findings of the Synod of Orange, and thus Gottschalk's views were considered novel. Also, although Gottschalk was most likely faithful to Augustine's theology and did not shy away from its implications, he also went further than Augustine and made no attempt to accommodate the universalistic thrust of certain New Testament passages such as John 12:32 or 1 Tim 2:4. Instead, he simply understood them as supporting his position. His opponents, most famously Hincmar of Reims, understood Gottschalk to be teaching that God willed sin and that God was arbitrary and unjust; they also believed that his view contradicted Scriptures such as 1 Tim 2:4-6. See Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination," 656-60; and Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 29-

in the church.<sup>29</sup>

Gottschalk and his opponents have an important place in the history of the debate over the extent of the atonement because it was during this ninth century controversy that the two prevailing views and their corresponding arguments were fully developed.<sup>30</sup> Gottschalk's arguments were drawn from Augustine and would be reiterated by many advocates of particular redemption in the future.<sup>31</sup> Likewise, the arguments that Gottschalk's opponents advanced against his understanding of particular redemption and in support of an unlimited atonement would later become standard.<sup>32</sup> One argument that was to have lasting influence was Gottschalk's idea that there were two redemptions: one that was efficient for the salvation of the elect only, and one that applied both to the elect and the reprobate.<sup>33</sup> During the ninth century four councils

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<sup>29</sup>Those who supported Gottschalk included Ratramnus of Corbie, Prudentius of Troyes, Lupes of Ferrieres, Deacon Florus, and Remigius of Lyons. Archibald, "A Comparative Study," 20.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>31</sup>I agree with Archibald's observation that "the details concerning the Ninth Century Predestinarians demonstrate that well before Calvin or Beza made up their minds about the extent of the atonement, the two basic alternatives were well established. . . . In addition to these basic alternatives, one finds in the ninth century controversy many of the detailed arguments that would resurface in the sixteenth century, for and against particular redemption." Ibid., 29.

<sup>32</sup>These arguments included the claim that particular redemption contradicted the incarnation of Christ, that verses such as 1 Cor 8:11 imply that some of those whom Christ died for are lost, that verses such as 1 Tim 2:4-6 and 1 John 2:2 demand a universal understanding of the atonement, that particular redemption implied God was evil towards his creation, and that if particular redemption was true then God was deceptive in regards to the free offer of the gospel. See Archibald, "A Comparative Study," 28; and Pelikan, *Growth of Medieval Theology*, 90-92.

<sup>33</sup>Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

pronounced against Gottschalk and particular redemption, and this was the dominant view in the church, but three councils did pronounce for particular redemption.<sup>34</sup> The debate was never resolved, simply postponed.<sup>35</sup>

### Medieval Scholasticism

#### Peter Lombard

The next significant historical figure who made a contribution to the doctrine of the extent of the atonement was Peter Lombard (1095-1169). Lombard, echoing previous statements, made a fundamental distinction in the extent of the atonement that was to have lasting impact.<sup>36</sup> He introduced the distinction between the “sufficiency” of the atonement made for all people and the “efficiency” of the atonement made for the elect only.<sup>37</sup> He seemed to be attempting to protect both the universality and the particularity of the atonement, but he did not elaborate further on how they fit together.

Lombard’s lack of explanation has led to some confusion over whether or not

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1995), 4:531-32.

<sup>34</sup>The councils of Quiercy (849), second Quiercy (853), Toul (859), and Toucy (860) all pronounced against particular redemption. The councils of Paris (849), Sens (853), and Valence (855), all pronounced for particular redemption. Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 31-32.

<sup>35</sup>“Like the ninth-century controversy over the Eucharist, the ninth century-debate over predestination ‘lacked many later distinctions and theological definitions’ and could not be settled at this time.” Pelikan, *Growth of Medieval Theology*, 93.

<sup>36</sup>Lombard seems to be echoing the sentiments of Hincmar and his two redemptions, one for the elect and one for all people. He might also have drawn from Ambrose, who stated, “If Christ has died for all, nevertheless he suffered especially for us.” Ambrose, *Exposition of Luke’s Gospel*, V.7, quoted in Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism,” 72.

<sup>37</sup>Peter Lombard, *Sentences*, 4.3.20, in *PL*, ed. J. P. Migne, vol. 192, column

he is here affirming particular redemption or unlimited atonement.<sup>38</sup> This confusion over Lombard's position reflects the ambiguity inherent in the "sufficient/efficient" schema, despite its popularity even in the present day as a statement of one's view concerning the extent of the atonement.<sup>39</sup> Instead of explaining God's intentions in the atonement, he seems to have simply described the effects of the atonement.<sup>40</sup> With his explanation

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<sup>38</sup>Even though unlimited atonement was the majority view at this point in church history, strict Augustinians such as Gregory of Rimini and John Wyclif held to particular redemption, so it is possible that the Augustinian Lombard may have held this position as well. Rainbow sees Lombard as a consistent Augustinian, and therefore a limited redemptionist. Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 34. Blacketer concurs with this assessment, although he believes that Lombard's view is ambiguous. Blacketer, "Definite Atonement," 311. Others, however, noting his rejection of double predestination and some of his previous statements concerning the atonement, maintain that Lombard held to an unlimited atonement. Freeman writes concerning Lombard's view, "Through the atonement of Christ, God provided salvation which should be granted to all who should repent and exercise faith. Repentance and faith come only through the operation of the Spirit of God, and this operation of the Spirit constitutes election. God is in no sense responsible for the fact that all men have fallen under condemnation." Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination," 666. See also Stephen A. Strehle, "The Extent of the Atonement within the Theological Systems of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980), 22-23.

<sup>39</sup>During the medieval period Thomas Aquinas and John Wycliffe both employed the "sufficient for all, efficient for some" schema, even though Aquinas held to an unlimited atonement and Wycliffe held to particular redemption. See Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 43-44. Their views will be explained below. During the Synod of Dort all of the disputants affirmed this formula, despite their differing views on the extent of the atonement. See Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 138-40. Advocates of both positions in the present day still employ the formula with its different meanings, although it brings no additional clarity to the dispute. As Archibald states, "The common solution in its medieval form is ambiguous. It does not distinguish between an efficiency based upon a limited intention and efficiency based upon a limited appropriation." Archibald, "A Comparative Study," 366.

<sup>40</sup>"But what is lacking in Lombard is a clear indication of God's intentions in the cross and the specific object and end of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice." Blacketer, "Definite Atonement," 311.

Lombard seems to be trying to maintain both the sovereignty of God in salvation and the universality of the atonement, and hence an unlimited atonement.<sup>41</sup>

### Thomas Aquinas

There is no question concerning what position Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) took on the extent of the atonement. Like Lombard, Thomas departed from the strict Augustinian view of particular redemption by advocating an unlimited atonement. In agreement with Augustine, Thomas believed in the absolute sovereignty and omnipotence of God in all things.<sup>42</sup> Unlike Augustine, however, Thomas believed that in some sense God's saving will and desire are intended for all people, even though all people are not saved. Thomas held these two beliefs together by making a distinction in the will of God. "God wills all men to be saved by his antecedent will, which is to will not simply but relatively; and not by his consequent will, which is to will simply."<sup>43</sup>

Thomas believed that 1 Timothy 2:4 describes God's universal saving will, but that this

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<sup>41</sup>"He was expressing the broad consensus that had arisen in considerations of the extent of the atonement from Augustine onwards, that in some sense Christ's work is adequate of and can be made available to all, but that, however the connections between divine predestination, faith, the human will and the ministrations of the church may be understood, not all receive benefit from it." Thomas, *the Extent of the Atonement*, 5. Lombard was also drawing upon Anselm's satisfaction view of the atonement, which asserted that sin is an infinite offence against God, and therefore it requires an infinite satisfaction, and only Jesus Christ as God and man could offer such an infinite satisfaction. See Anselm, *Why God Became Man*, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans, trans. Janet Fairweather (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 260-356. For an explanation of Anselm's understanding of predestination, see Freeman, "The Doctrine of Predestination," 661-65.

<sup>42</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1947-48), 1.25.5.

<sup>43</sup>Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.23.4.

will in no way abrogates God's will concerning the predestination of the elect.<sup>44</sup> Thomas held together the two aspects of God's saving will in his doctrine of the extent of the atonement by using Lombard's "sufficient for all, efficient for some" formula. Thomas used the "sufficient for all" aspect of this formula to assert that God really and truly wills to save all of humanity through the death of Christ.<sup>45</sup> He believed that Christ on the cross made satisfaction for the sin of all individuals.<sup>46</sup> Thomas stated, "Christ's passion was a sufficient and superabundant satisfaction for the sins of the whole human race; but when sufficient satisfaction has been paid, then the debt of punishment is abolished."<sup>47</sup> Unlike Augustine and Gottschalk, Thomas consistently interpreted universal passages such as John 12:32 and 1 John 2:2 as statements concerning Christ's death for all individuals.<sup>48</sup> He believed that this unlimited satisfaction brought all people, including the reprobate, under Christ's feet, and that even the reprobate were potentially united to Christ's body.<sup>49</sup>

Thomas did certainly not believe, however, that all people are saved by Christ's atonement. He used the "efficient for some" part of Lombard's formula to make the distinction between the benefits of the atonement for believers and unbelievers. In order for the atonement to be efficient for a person, he must be united to Christ.<sup>50</sup> Only

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 3.79.7.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 3.46.1, 3.50.1.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 3.49.3.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 3.48.2.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 3.8.3.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 3.49.3.

the elect are saved, and they are saved as Christ's death is applied to them through the means of grace, or the sacraments.<sup>51</sup> Christ's objective atonement had to be subjectively applied in order to benefit the believer.<sup>52</sup> Thomas wrote that "Christ's passion sufficed for all, while as to its efficacy it was profitable to many."<sup>53</sup> Thomas believed that there were many for whom Christ died that would never experience the saving benefits of his death; there was no necessary connection between the extent of Christ's death and its application.

Thomas's view is significant in that he did not believe God's absolute sovereignty in salvation demanded a limited atonement.<sup>54</sup> He strongly maintained that the atonement was sufficient for every individual and covered every sin. He was the first to explain in detail the "sufficient for all, efficient for some" formula, and he used it to affirm a universal atonement and a limited application of that atonement unto salvation. Thomas's view has also been highly influential. The Council of Trent followed him in

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid. Concerning Thomas's doctrine of salvation, Strehle states, "The passion of Christ becomes the possession of his members by means of the mystical union, through which justifying grace is distributed, the forgiveness of sin infused. All this efficacy within Christ's passion flows from him to his members through an appropriation of the means of grace, that is, the sacraments. On account of this, a real change within the believer is involved in justification; *gratia habitualis* is the basis of the forgiveness of sins. This mystical union for believers, especially in the *Summa*, pervades the soteriological cogitations of Thomas, and represents at least an attempt to bridge the gulf which the Satisfaction theory has wedged between the event of salvation and its application." Strehle, "Theological Systems," 35.

<sup>52</sup>Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, 3.78.3

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Rainbow refers to him as a precursor of Amyraut in this regard, although he curiously attributes double predestination to Thomas. Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 47-48. For Thomas's view of predestination, see *Summa Theologica*, 1.23.1-8.

affirming the universality of Christ's sacrifice and the limited application of its benefits.<sup>55</sup>

It is also possible that Thomas's explanation of the extent of the atonement and his strong stress on God's sovereignty and omnipotent will provided a strong foundation for future explanations of particular redemption, although it is clear that Thomas never draws this conclusion.<sup>56</sup>

### **John Wycliffe**

Thomas's unlimited view of the extent of the atonement, although broadly Augustinian, was rejected by those in the church who considered themselves completely faithful to Augustine. Men such as Thomas Bradwardine, Gregory of Rimini, John Wycliffe, and John Hus all followed Gottschalk and defended particular redemption as the true Augustinian (and biblical) view of the extent of the atonement.<sup>57</sup> John Wycliffe

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<sup>55</sup>“But though he died for all, all do not receive the benefit of his death, but only those to whom the merit of his passion is communicated.” *Council of Trent, Sixth Session, Article 4*, in *Tracts and Treatises on the Reformation of the Church*, vol. 3, ed. T. F. Torrance, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 93.

<sup>56</sup>Strehle believes that Thomas's Aristotelian interpretation of Christ's work led to Duns Scotus's view of particular redemption. “For if the cross of Christ becomes the means by which God accomplishes a particular end, and if the end of Christ's sufferings is deliverance from sin, those who are finally delivered from sin can only be the object for which Christ suffered. It will be left to Duns Scotus to draw this inevitable conclusion.” Strehle, “Theological Systems,” 38. Duns Scotus was a Nominalist who believed that God's will was primary in his dealings with his creation. He did not believe that Christ's satisfaction on the cross was sufficient within itself, as Anselm and Thomas did, but that it was only sufficient insofar as God accepted it. Duns believed that God willed all people to be saved, and that Christ's death could have been sufficient for all of humanity if God willed it, but since God only intends to save some Christ's death could have only been for them. Not only that, but since only Christ's humanity merited satisfaction for sin, it is necessarily limited, and must be understood as finite. For Duns's view, see Strehle, “Theological Systems,” 39-52. Duns's argument that the application of the atonement must determine its extent has become a common one among advocates of particular redemption.

<sup>57</sup>Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 38-47.

(c.1329-1384) in particular is worth mentioning here because of the unique element he contributed to the debate. Wycliffe held to particular redemption, believing that the doctrine of predestination meant that Christ loved the church from all of eternity, and gave himself only for her.<sup>58</sup> Wycliffe followed Thomas, however, in using the sufficient/efficient schema, but instead of using it to defend an atonement that was unlimited in its extent he used the formula to defend his view of particular redemption. Wycliffe employed the formula to affirm that Christ's atonement considered in and of itself was theoretically sufficient for an infinite number of people, although in reality it only bought salvation for the elect (and was therefore efficient only for them).<sup>59</sup>

In employing the formula, Wycliffe asserted that the atonement's theoretical sufficiency for all people brought non-saving benefits of the atonement to the nonelect.<sup>60</sup> The elect receive salvation because of the atonement, but the nonelect also receive nonsalvific blessings because of the atonement. These blessings include the alleviation of punishment for the reprobate, both temporal and eternal, and the presence of righteousness in the reprobate (although this righteousness is never saving).<sup>61</sup> Wycliffe based these blessings not only on the sufficiency of the atonement for all people, but also

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<sup>58</sup>John Wycliffe, *Wycliffe's Latin Works* (London: The Wycliffe Society, 1883-1914), 10:439-40.

<sup>59</sup>Wycliffe based his use of the formula, and the sufficiency of Christ's atonement for the entire human race, on 1 John 2:2. Ibid., 10:60.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., 10:57.

<sup>61</sup>Wycliffe spoke of a "present righteousness" in the reprobate that they have because they are the brothers of Christ. The reprobate are the brothers of Christ because they share Christ's human nature. This righteousness does not result in salvation for the

on the fact that Christ shares the same human nature as the reprobate. Wycliffe used the idea of nonredemptive benefits of the atonement to explain John 12:32, where Jesus says that he will draw all men unto himself. Rainbow calls these nonredemptive benefits of the atonement “scholastic accretions” that found their way into Wycliffe’s particular redemption,<sup>62</sup> but the idea of nonredemptive benefits of the atonement from a particular redemption viewpoint has been a popular one since Wycliffe, and remains so in modern evangelicalism.<sup>63</sup>

### John Calvin

With the exception of Martin Luther, John Calvin (1509-1564) is the most influential theologian of the Reformation.<sup>64</sup> Despite the infamous “L” of the Calvinist

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reprobate, however, but it does provide them the alleviation of eternal punishment. *Ibid.*, 10:468. Wycliffe understood John 12:32 to support this idea. *Ibid.*, 10:468. See also Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 43-44.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>63</sup>For example, R. B. Kuiper’s last chapter in his book on the extent of the atonement (in which he defends particular redemption) is on the universal benefits of the atonement. R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959). John Murray is another example of a prominent advocate of particular redemption who saw benefits in the atonement for the nonelect. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955). Whether there are grounds within the particular redemption view for these nonredemptive benefits will be looked at in chaps. 3 and 4.

<sup>64</sup>Luther’s views on the extent of the atonement are not as relevant to the evangelical debate over the subject, however, and will not be surveyed here, for two reasons. First, it is extremely difficult to tell what Luther’s views on the subject were. It is likely that he held to particular redemption because Luther was clearly Augustinian and affirmed double predestination. Luther’s Augustinianism and strong views of predestination can particularly be seen in his *Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1957). Concerning the extent of the atonement, Luther rejects the universalistic interpretations of 1 Tim 2:4 and states “For in an absolute sense Christ did not die for all, because he says: ‘This is my blood which is poured out for you’ and ‘for many’ – he does not say: for all – ‘for the forgiveness of sins

TULIP, however, Calvin's position on the extent of the atonement is less than clear. For whatever reason, Calvin never systematically explained his view on the extent of the atonement. He was certainly aware of the issue, having spent time with Martin Bucer in Strasbourg during the time in which Bucer was debating the issue with the Anabaptists.<sup>65</sup>

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(Mark 14:24; Matt 26:28).” Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jeroslav Pelikan (vols. 1-30) and Helmut T. Lehmann (vols. 31-55), vol. 25, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Walter G. Tillmanns (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 232. Luther does make some statements, however, that can be taken as supporting unlimited atonement (see Norman F. Douty, *The Death of Christ: Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* [Irving, TX: William & Watrous, 1978], 139). Strehle believes that Luther's Christocentric soteriology and strong *Christus Victor* overtones in his doctrine of the atonement indicate that he held to an unlimited atonement. Strehle, “Theological Systems,” 63-84. As Thomas points out, Luther never formulated a clear doctrine of particular redemption, although it certainly fits with his views of election. Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 7. In my opinion Luther saw both particularity and universality in the atonement and was never clear on how they fit together.

Second, the issue did not become a debate in Lutheran theology like it did in subsequent Reformed theology, because no matter what Luther's position may have been, it is clear that the Lutherans who followed Luther held to unlimited atonement. Lutheranism as a whole would go on to reject particular redemption in the Formula of Concord (1580). The Formula affirmed both unlimited atonement and unconditional election without attempting to reconcile the two doctrines (in fact teaching that attempts to reconcile them always fail), thus taking a middle road between Calvinism and Arminianism. See Archibald, “A Comparative Study,” 40-46; and Strehle, “Theological Systems,” 96-120. Contemporary Lutheranism agrees with the Formula of Concord, believing the relationship between the two doctrines to be similar to the mystery of the Trinity. The multi-intentioned view agrees with Lutheranism that both doctrines are biblical, but believes they can be reconciled. For contemporary expressions of the Lutheran view, see Frank Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), 32; and David Scaer, “Nature and Extent of the Atonement in Lutheran Theology,” *BETS* 10 (1967): 179-87.

<sup>65</sup>Bucer believed that Christ died only for the elect, but that the gospel should be preached to all people. He reconciled these two views by calling all people to believe in their election, since all who would believe would be elect (Martin Bucer, *Common Places*, ed. and trans. D. F. Wright [Nashville: Abingdon, 1972], 98-100). Many Anabaptists, who held to unlimited atonement, resided in Strasbourg, and public debates concerning the issue took place between Bucer and Hans Denck in 1526. Denck was expelled from Strasbourg, as was Melchior Hoffman in 1533. See Archibald, “A Comparative Study,” 37-39; Alvin J. Beachy, *The Concept of Grace in the Radical Reformation* (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands: Hes and De Graff, 1977), 16-20; W. P. Stephens,

He also addressed the extent of the atonement in a polemical context.<sup>66</sup> Calvin wrote many statements that seem to indicate that he believed in particular redemption, but he also wrote many statements that seem to indicate that he believed in unlimited atonement.

Calvin's vagueness on the issue has led to numerous explanations of what his view of the extent of the atonement was. Many scholars believe that he held to unlimited atonement, and that subsequent followers of his theology such as Moïse Amyraut correctly interpreted his views on the subject.<sup>67</sup> Many scholars, however, believe that Calvin held to particular redemption, as tradition has normally understood him to believe, and that followers of his theology such as Theodore Beza were the accurate interpreters

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*The Holy Spirit in the Theology of Martin Bucer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 23, 106; Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 49-63; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 7-8.

<sup>66</sup>As Thomas points out, "Calvin was challenged to pursue the theme of the extent of the atonement in his debates over predestination with Pighius and Georgus, which to some degree anticipated the later divide between 'Calvinists' and 'Arminians.'" Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 12. See John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trans. J. K. S. Reid (Cambridge, England: James Clark & Co., 1961), 148. This point rebuts the claim that Calvin would have put forth particular redemption much more clearly as his view if it had been a contested point. See Paul Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinists* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1982), 18; and Frederick S. Leahy, "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement," *RTJ* 8 (1992): 54-64.

<sup>67</sup>These scholars include Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 265-66; M. Charles Bell, "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement," *EQ* 55 (1983): 115-23; Curt D. Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill" (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1983), 777-828; Douty, *The Death of Christ*, 141; Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 382-85; Basil Hall, "Calvin against the Calvinists," in *John Calvin*, ed. G. E. Duffield (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 19-37; R. T. Kendall, *Calvinism and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 13-28; Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin*, *Studies in Biblical Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); Anthony Lane, "The Quest for the Historical Calvin," *EQ* 55 (1983): 95-113; Strehle, "Theological Systems," 84-95; and James B. Torrance, "The Incarnation and 'Limited Atonement,'" *EQ* 55 (1983): 83-94.

of his thoughts on the subject.<sup>68</sup> Some scholars have also proposed that it is simply impossible in light of Calvin's ambiguity on the issue to know his position.<sup>69</sup> What position Calvin held concerning the extent of the atonement is quite controversial, and it is impossible to survey the whole of Calvin's thought on the subject and the various interpretations of it here. Due to Calvin's importance in the subsequent debate, however, this section will briefly examine the most significant arguments on the subject in order to put forth some tentative conclusions concerning his view.

One strand of thought in Calvin that is undeniable is that he repeatedly referred to redemption and the atonement in universal terms.<sup>70</sup> He often referred to Christ's dying

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<sup>68</sup>These scholars include Archibald, "A Comparative Study," 69-384; Blacketer, "Definite Atonement," 313-15; W. Robert Godfrey, "Reformed Thought on the Extent of the Atonement to 1618," *WTJ* 37 (1976): 137-39; Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinists*, 13-50; Leahy, "Calvin," 54-64; Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*, Studies in Historical Theology 2 (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth, 1986), 33-35; John Murray, "Calvin on the Extent of the Atonement," *Banner of Truth* 234 (1983): 20-22; Roger Nicole, "John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement," *WTJ* 47 (1985): 197-225; and Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 64-185.

<sup>69</sup>Hans Boersma, "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement," *EQ* 64 (1992): 333-55; Robert A. Peterson, *Calvin and the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1999); and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 12-35, all conclude that Calvin was ambiguous on the topic and a definitive decision on the matter is not possible, but that particular redemption is more likely than not his view.

<sup>70</sup>It is clear that Calvin's use of the words "all," "every," or "world" are not always used to indiscriminately refer to all individuals. Sometimes they do, however. As always, these words must be understood in their respective contexts. As Thomas states, "It may be granted that citations referring to 'all,' 'the world,' 'mankind,' and 'the human race,' do not prove that Calvin intended to speak of an unlimited universality, since he sometimes could assert that the terms 'all' and 'world' should be understood of 'all sorts' or 'all peoples' or the church throughout the world [as in his commentaries on 1 John 2:2 and 1 Tim 2:4-6]. Nevertheless, there are numerous places where an unrestricted universality must be intended." Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 27.

for “all”<sup>71</sup> or for the “world.”<sup>72</sup> There are several times when Calvin interprets passages that use the word “many” to mean “all.”<sup>73</sup> He stated that unbelievers are doubly culpable

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<sup>71</sup>“For it is very important for us to know that Pilate did not condemn Christ before he himself had acquitted him three or four times, so that we may learn from it that it was not on his own account that he was condemned but for our sins. We may also learn how voluntarily he underwent death, when he refused to use the judge’s favorable disposition to him. It was this obedience that made his death a sacrifice of sweet savor for expiating all sins.” John Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959-72), 3:343.

“[Paul] says that this redemption was procured by the blood of Christ, for by the sacrifice of his death all sins of the world have been expiated.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, in *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 148.

<sup>72</sup>“They had already been warned so many times that the hour was approaching in which our Lord Jesus Christ would have to suffer for the redemption of the whole world.” John Calvin, *The Deity of Christ and Other Sermons*, trans. Leroy Nixon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 55.

“For it is the will of God that we should seek the salvation of all men without exception, as Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, in *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 157.

“For it was not a common or small favour that God deferred the manifestation of Christ to that time, when yet he had ordained him in his eternal council for the salvation of the world.” John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, in *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 22, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 52.

<sup>73</sup>Instead of using these verses to support particular redemption, Calvin often universalized them. Speaking of Matt 10:28, Calvin states, “‘Many’ is used, not for a definite number, but for a large number, in that he sets himself over against all others. And this is the meaning also in Rom. 5:15, where Paul is not talking about a part of mankind but of the whole human race.” Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, 2:181. In speaking of Mark 14:24, Calvin states, “The word ‘many’ does not mean a part of the world only, but the whole human race: he contrasts ‘many’ with ‘one,’ as if to say that he would not be the Redeemer of one man, but would meet death to deliver many of their cursed guilt. No doubt that in speaking to a few Christ wished to make his teaching available to a larger number.” Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, 2:311. Calvin made similar remarks concerning Isa 53:12; Rom 5:15; and Heb 9:27. See Kennedy, *Union with Christ*, 32-35. These interpretations are in marked contrast to advocates of particular redemption such as Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 62-63; and John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 45-46.

for rejecting Jesus Christ because he died for their sins.<sup>74</sup> He strongly affirmed a universal offer of God's grace in the gospel call.<sup>75</sup> He emphasized the need for believers to be in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in order to avail themselves of Christ's death for them.<sup>76</sup> The classical theme as well as the penal substitution theme was likely significant that Calvin did not respond to the Council of Trent's assertion of unlimited atonement.<sup>77</sup> For all the evidence that points toward an unlimited atonement in

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<sup>74</sup>“Our Lord Jesus suffered for all and there is neither great nor small who is not inexcusable today, for we can obtain salvation in him. Unbelievers who turn away from him and who deprive themselves of him by their malice are today doubly culpable, for how will they excuse their ingratitude in not receiving the blessing in which they could share by faith?” John Calvin, *Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy of the Death and Passion of Christ*, ed. and trans. T. H. L. Parker (London: James Clarke, 1956), 141.

<sup>75</sup>Commenting on Rom 5:18, Calvin states, “Paul makes grace common to all men, not because it in fact extends to all, but because it is offered to all. Although Christ suffered for the sins of the world, and is offered by the goodness of God without distinction to all, yet not all receive him.” John Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, 5:78. In a sermon on Isa 53 Calvin states, “God does not wait for us to ask him to sprinkle us; he takes the initiative and offers himself freely and sets before us his only Son with his teaching. And in this he shows himself worthy of love, that he ought to be received without any argument. Should we not all be inflamed with zeal that makes us despise everything else and embrace this Redeemer who has appeared? But far from that being the case, hardly one in ten of those who hear are touched to the quick.” Calvin, *Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy*, 41.

<sup>76</sup>Commenting on Gal 2:20, Calvin writes, “The words, *for me* are very emphatic. It will not be enough for any man to contemplate Christ as having died for the salvation of the world, unless he has experienced the consequences of this death, and is enabled to claim it as his own.” Calvin, *Galatians*, 76, emphasis the author's. In a sermon on the same passage, Calvin states, “Whereas it is said that the Son of God was crucified, we must not only think that the same was done for the redemption of the world: but also every one of us must on his own behalf join himself to our Lord Jesus Christ, and conclude, it is for me that he hath suffered.” Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, 106.

<sup>77</sup>John Calvin, *Tracts and Treatises on the Doctrine and Worship of the Church*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1849; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 3:109. Kennedy states, “It has been widely recognized that in Calvin's refutation of the decrees from the Council of Trent, Calvin did not disagree with the statement on universal atonement. Indeed, he specifically mentions the decree dealing with the extent of the atonement and states that he is not in disagreement

Calvin's writings however, there is at least as much evidence that supports the idea that he held to particular redemption. As undeniable as it is that Calvin often referred to redemption and the atonement in universal terms, he just as often described Christ as redeeming a particular group of people, such as his elect,<sup>78</sup> his church,<sup>79</sup> his people,<sup>80</sup> and his sheep.<sup>81</sup> Calvin found the "sufficient for all, efficient for some" formula inadequate because it did not explicitly recognize God's sovereign will in the application of

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with it. . . . Had Calvin held to particular redemption, it is difficult to believe that he would not have taken the opportunity to dispute the Council of Trent on this point." Kennedy, *Union with Christ*, 38. See also Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill," 790; Kendall, *English Calvinism*, 12; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 28.

<sup>78</sup>"For the word Saviour is not taken here in his proper and necessary signification, as they call it, in respect of everlasting salvation which God promiseth his elect." John Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, trans. L. T. London and G. Bishop (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983), 403.

"For it is said that Christ was sent as a Redeemer to the holy and elect people of God." John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 16, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 68.

<sup>79</sup>"We must always bear in mind the purpose of God in training his Son, from the commencement, under the discipline of the cross, because this was the way in which he was to redeem his church. He bore our infirmities, and was exposed to dangers and fears, that he might deliver his church from them by his divine power, and bestow upon it everlasting peace." Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, 162.

<sup>80</sup>"For the prophet expressly says concerning Christ, that he will deliver his own people, not by pomp and splendor, but because he will endure the punishment due to their sins." *Ibid.*, 302.

"Lo, you see plainly that Christ bore the penalty of sins to deliver his own people from them." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC, vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 3.24.2.

<sup>81</sup>"From the extraordinary affection which he bears toward the sheep, he shows how truly he acts toward them as a shepherd; for he is so anxious about their salvation, that he does not even spare his own life." John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 17, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 402.

salvation.<sup>82</sup> He also interpreted several of the most crucial passages often used to support unlimited atonement (1 John 2:2; 1 Tim 2:4-6; John 12:32) in a way that seems to rule out unlimited atonement.<sup>83</sup> In these interpretations, Calvin followed Augustine's understanding of these texts, and the strong Augustinian influence upon Calvin only supports the view that he held to particular redemption.<sup>84</sup> In at least one place, Calvin also seemed strongly to deny that Christ's atonement was for unbelievers.<sup>85</sup> Finally, in

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<sup>82</sup>Calvin, *Eternal Predestination*, 149. See Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 31. Calvin did say in one place, however, that he allowed the truth of the sufficient/efficient schema, although he did not think that it was applicable in 1 John 2:1-2. Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 173.

<sup>83</sup>For example, Calvin understood the "world" in 1 John 2:2 to refer only to those who would believe throughout the various regions of the earth, not to all individuals. Calvin, *Catholic Epistles*, 173. He also understood the term "all" in 1 Tim 2:4-6 to refer to "classes of men but never to individuals." John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 57. It is interesting that in his sermon on this passage, Calvin struggled to hold together his interpretation of "all" as "all classes" and the offer of salvation to all, where "all" includes those who reject the gospel, and thus unbelievers. Calvin, *Sermons on Timothy*, 145-85. See Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 32-33.

<sup>84</sup>One of the main theses of Rainbow's book is that Calvin stands in the line of strict Augustinians and therefore it would be extraordinary if he were an advocate of unlimited atonement. See particularly Rainbow, *The Will of God*, 47, 134. Archibald also advances this idea. Archibald, "A Comparative Study," 354-55. Their evidence is quite convincing.

<sup>85</sup>In speaking of the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and how only believers truly partake of Christ in the Lord's Supper, Calvin states, "But the first thing to be explained is how Christ is present with unbelievers, to be the spiritual food of souls, and in short the life and salvation of the world. And he [Heshusius, Calvin's adversary in this debate] adheres so doggedly to his words, I should like to know how the wicked can eat the flesh which was not crucified for them, and how they can drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins?" John Calvin, *Theological Treatises*, trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC, vol. 22 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 285. There are some, however, who try to explain how this statement can fit into an unlimited atonement perspective. See Bell, "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement," 120; Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill," 821-22; and Kennedy, *Union with Christ*, 54-56.

light of the strong opinions of many other Reformers in favor of particular redemption (such as Bucer and Theodore Beza), it is difficult to imagine that Calvin would not have challenged their views if he disagreed.<sup>86</sup>

After accounting for all of the evidence, those who resolutely describe Calvin as holding to one view or the other seem to be overstepping their bounds. Instead, Calvin seems to hold to both universality and particularity in the atonement. He held to universality in regards to the universal gospel offer and particularity in regards to election. Depending upon the context of his remarks, he stressed either the particularity or the universality of the atonement. He never fully resolved this tension. Several elements of Calvin's theology, however, suggest that if the tension were to be resolved, it would be resolved in the direction of particular redemption.<sup>87</sup> Many of Calvin's

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<sup>86</sup>Concerning Beza's straightforward explanation of particular redemption in his *Tabula Praedestinationis*, Michael Jinkins writes, "Published in 1555 as a clear statement of Reformed doctrine, indeed as a defense of the Calvinist position on predestination, we find no indication that Beza's summary was rejected by Calvin. And, since Calvin did not seem to hesitate to criticize those with whom he did disagree, we may assume that Calvin did not see Beza's early statement on predestination as being essentially at variance with his own views, at least not at this critical point." Michael Jinkins, "Theodore Beza: Continuity and Regression in the Reformed Tradition," *EQ* 64 (1992): 135. See also Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 47-48.

<sup>87</sup>Thomas points out four elements in Calvin's theology where he clearly seemed to favor the particular over the universal. Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 34-35. (1) Predestination and providence are closely related, and God's will can be seen from the result of both predestination and providence. Therefore if all do not hear the gospel and believe, this is because God had particular intentions for the gospel. (2) Of God's two wills, the absolute/particular and the revealed/universal, Calvin believed the former was more basic. (3) Election for Calvin is always eternal, while God's promise in the gospel has its place in the temporal dealings of God with his creation. (4) While election and promise are both tied to Christ, Christ is not the whole meaning of election as he is of the promise of the gospel. In election, therefore, we deal with the hidden God. Thomas ends this section by stating, "In the scope thus given for speculation and logical deduction, a theology more consistently particularistic than Calvin's own was almost bound to emerge." Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 35.

followers (down to the present day) held to strict positions of particular redemption, and they fully believed that they were adhering to Calvin's own position in doing so.<sup>88</sup> No matter which view Calvin held, the ambiguity in his theology is significant for three reasons. First, it leaves open the possibility that particular redemption is not the only way to account for the God's sovereignty in salvation and particularity in the atonement. Second, Calvin's lack of clarity may indicate his own intuitions that some kind of limited/unlimited position is needed. Third, it would result in heated debate in the future, as Reformed theologians struggled with how to articulate the extent of the atonement during the Synod of Dort and the Amyraldian controversy.

### Theodore Beza

Theodore Beza (1519-1605), Calvin's friend and successor in Geneva,<sup>89</sup> perhaps did more than anyone else to solidify particular redemption as the "Reformed" view on the extent of the atonement. Beza held to the view so strongly and was influential to the point that some scholars claim him as the source of particular redemption within Reformed theology.<sup>90</sup> As Calvin's successor, Beza spent much of his

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<sup>88</sup>Theodore Beza, Calvin's close friend and fellow theologian, is the best example of this. As we will see in the section of Moïse Amyraut, Amyraut believed that Calvin held to unlimited atonement in the same way that he did. This was strongly objected to by other Reformed theologians of the time, however, and was certainly a minority view.

<sup>89</sup>"As John Calvin lay dying he recounted his life in Geneva and commended to its citizens 'Monsieur de Beza' who they had elected to 'hold my place.' Indeed Theodore Beza was the chosen successor to Calvin's place of leadership, the man groomed as guardian of the Geneva Reformation." Jinkins, "Theodore Beza," 132.

<sup>90</sup>Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 41-42, 137-38; and Hall, "Calvin against the Calvinists," 27. As we have seen, this is clearly not the case, for even if Calvin did not hold to particular redemption, Martin Bucer, Ioannes Oecolampadius, and Pietro Vermigli all did. Robert Letham, "Theodore Beza: A Reassessment," *SJT* 40

time defending Calvin's teachings against Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Socinians, and his writings on the extent of the atonement reflect this.<sup>91</sup> In these polemical contexts Beza stressed the particular aspects of Calvin's theology because they were the ones most often in dispute.<sup>92</sup> Beza's view is noteworthy not only because of his relationship with Calvin, but because of the supralapsarian structure of his theology and the logical precision he brought to the doctrine.<sup>93</sup>

Beza's views on the extent of the atonement can clearly be seen in his early writings. In 1551 Beza wrote to Heinrich Bullinger<sup>94</sup> and asked him for his support of Calvin's views concerning predestination and reprobation. In this letter Beza had already outlined his supralapsarianism, convinced that the logic of unconditional election demanded that reprobation be based solely on the decree of God as well, and not the foreseen sin of humanity.<sup>95</sup> Beza published his famous *Tabula Praedestinationis* in 1555

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(1986): 30.

<sup>91</sup>Jenkins, "Theodore Beza," 134.

<sup>92</sup>"As someone attempting to adhere to theological positions established by his predecessor, and defend them against increasingly determined opposition, Beza's thought was hardly likely to escape the influence of controversy. The outline of his theology would be, almost inevitably, more stark, its structure mores systematic, its positions more rigid." Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 42.

<sup>93</sup>"Faced with theological controversy and the need to transmit learning from one generation to the next, Beza opted for terminological precision, logical clarity and, to serve these ends, metaphysical speculation." Letham, "Theodore Beza," 26.

<sup>94</sup>For Bullinger's view concerning the extent of the atonement, see Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 66-86.

<sup>95</sup>Theodore Beza, *Correspondance de Théodore De Bèze*, ed. Hoppolyte Aubert, Fernand Aubert, and Henri Meylan (Geneva: E. Droz, 1960), 71-73.

in which he fully explains his supralapsarian theology and its implications.<sup>96</sup> In Beza's double predestination, Christ's atonement is subordinated to election, demanding particular redemption.<sup>97</sup>

Beza's mature view on the subject can clearly be seen in his participation in the Colloquy of Montbéliard in 1586, and it is the same as his view in 1551. The main controversy at Montbéliard was between the Reformed and Lutherans over the Lord's Supper, but in the context of this debate issues concerning predestination were also discussed.<sup>98</sup> Beza was the main representative of the Reformed contingent, and Jakob Andreae was the representative of the Lutherans. The colloquy did not go well, and afterwards a Calvinist, Eusebius Schonbergius, published a tract attacking the Lutheran positions presented there. The Lutherans responded to this by publishing their own tract in 1587. Beza in turn responded to this Lutheran tract and presented a detailed explanation of his view of the extent of the atonement in *Ad Acta Collquii Montisbelgardensis Tubingae Edita, Theodori Bezae Responsio*.<sup>99</sup>

Beza believed that the benefits of the atonement must be confined to the elect

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<sup>96</sup>A reproduction of this table can be found in Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 46.

<sup>97</sup>"The rigorous application of the decree-execution, or primary-secondary causality, framework is apparent in the way Christ is seen as a means, albeit chief among other means, for the execution of the decree of God to glorify himself by saving an elect portion of mankind. This subordination of Christ to the decree pointed the way to a doctrine of limited atonement." *Ibid.*, 47. Strehle states, "Christ is taken from the centrality which he held in the theology of Calvin and is explicitly demoted to the position of a secondary cause; in particular, a formal and material cause." Strehle, "Theological Systems," 132.

<sup>98</sup>Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 82-83; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 52.

<sup>99</sup>Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 83-84.

alone. He interpreted verses such as John 3:16, 1 Timothy 2:4-6, and 1 John 2:2 as referring only to the elect, and denied that they should be understood universally.<sup>100</sup> The atonement was entirely efficacious; salvation was not made possible in Christ, but was made actual for the elect.<sup>101</sup> In no way did Christ die for those who were damned, for if he had, his death would have failed.<sup>102</sup> For Beza, the atonement guaranteed the salvation of the elect, for if sin is expiated, then salvation must follow. He believed that Andreae's position of unlimited atonement implied that people were not condemned for their sins, but only for their unbelief in Christ.<sup>103</sup> Andreae denied this, but Beza was unwilling to consider that any might perish for whom Christ had died.<sup>104</sup>

Andreae's main response to Beza's arguments was to invoke the sufficient/efficient formula, insisting that Christ's death is sufficient for all individuals.<sup>105</sup> Beza granted the general truth of this statement, but rejected it as inadequate. He rejected it for the same reasons Calvin did, as he believed the statement was ambiguous and failed to explain God's intention in the atonement.<sup>106</sup> He seemed to have even less use for the

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<sup>100</sup>Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 56.

<sup>101</sup>Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 85.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>103</sup>Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 57.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>105</sup>Andreae stated, "He has satisfied sufficiently for the sins of all individuals, so that there would be no need for a new or additional sacrifice if a thousand worlds, so to speak, remained to be reconciled to God. One drop of the blood of the Son of God would suffice for them." Quoted in Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 57.

<sup>106</sup>"Beza was concerned about the ambiguity of the statement and felt that the particularity of God's saving intention in Christ could be better stated without this distinction. Christ died for all men only in the sense that his death was of infinite value.

formula then Calvin, however, because he saw no universality in the atonement whatsoever.<sup>107</sup> Beza's rejection of the sufficient/efficient formula was not followed by subsequent Reformers.<sup>108</sup> Particular redemption, however, was widely accepted, and by the end of the sixteenth century it was the majority view concerning the extent of the atonement in Reformed theology.<sup>109</sup>

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His death was not for all men individually either with respect to the intention of the Father in sending his Son to die or with respect to the actual effect of his death." Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 86-87.

<sup>107</sup> "It is not surprising to find him even less interested in the formula than Calvin was, for, lacking any doctrine of a real universal saving will or promise, he had no need to maintain any kind of universality in the atonement. Indeed, it was in his interest, in defending his logical system of predestination, to deny it." Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 57.

<sup>108</sup> Abraham Musculus, Beza's contemporary, appealed to the sufficient/efficient formula to defend his view of particular redemption. He also repeatedly claimed that this view was the universal consensus of the Reformed church. This view would also become the consensus view of the Synod of Dort. See Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 87-88; and Jinkins, "Theodore Beza," 142. "Indeed Beza's strict formulation, rejecting the traditional distinction between sufficiency and efficiency, was not accepted by the majority of the Reformed theologians." Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 89.

<sup>109</sup> The majority of the Reformers following Calvin, such as Beza, Musculus, Casper Olevianus, Zacharius Ursinus, David Pareus, Peter Vermigli, Jerome Zanchi, and William Perkins all held to particular redemption. Blacketer, "Definite Atonement," 313-17; Godfrey, "Reformed Thought," 139-52; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 226-27; and Roger Nicole, "The Doctrine of Definite Atonement in the Heidelberg Catechism," *Gordon Review* 3 (1964): 138-45. Thomas does an excellent job, however, highlighting the diversity among the Reformers concerning the extent of the atonement in the sixteenth century (*The Extent of the Atonement*, 12-125). He concludes that there was never was a "Reformed" position on the extent of the atonement, but that there had always been diverse opinions on the matter. Particular redemption may have been the majority opinion, but it was not the consensus. Theologians such as Bullinger, Kimerdoncius, Tossanus, Ward, Ussher, Davenant, and Martinus all held to unlimited atonement before the Amyraldian controversy. See Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 248-51. Godfrey, on the other hand, states, "In this survey of the period before the Arminian controversies came to the fore, it is evident that there was a general consensus on the death of Christ. There were differences and ambiguities of expression to be sure, but the issue was not a matter of controversy within the Reformed community." Godfrey,

### Jacob Arminius and the Synod of Dort

Jacob Arminius (1559-1609) was a student of Theodore Beza, but his differences with the accepted tenants of Reformed theology resulted in the movement that bears his name, Arminianism.<sup>110</sup> Arminius considered himself to be a part of the Reformed community and never wished to leave it,<sup>111</sup> but his different views concerning predestination, providence, the will and grace of God, human freedom, and the extent of the atonement resulted in great controversy that eventually led to the condemnation and exclusion of his views. In 1602 Arminius wrote his most comprehensive treatment of predestination and its related subjects in response to the supralapsarian doctrine of William Perkins.<sup>112</sup> Perkins's views concerning predestination and the atonement were

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“Tensions within International Calvinism,” 99.

<sup>110</sup>For overviews of Arminius and his theology, see Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); F. Stuart Clarke, *The Ground of Election: Jacobus Arminius' Doctrine of the Work and Person of Christ* (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2006); Charles M. Cameron, “Arminius: Hero or Heretic?” *EQ* 64 (1992): 213-27; Archibald Walter Harrison, *The Beginnings of Arminianism to the Synod of Dort* (London: University of London Press, 1926), 16-130; Donald M. Lake, “Jacob Arminius' Contribution to a Theology of Grace,” in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 223-41; Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); William Gene Witt, “Creation, Redemption, and Grace in the Theology of Jacob Arminius” (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1993); and A. Skevington Wood, “The Declaration of Sentiments: The Theological Testament of Arminius,” *EQ* 65 (1993): 111-29.

<sup>111</sup>Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism,” 101; and Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 49-51.

<sup>112</sup>Jacob Arminius, *An Examination of a Treatise, Concerning the Order and Mode of Predestination and Amplitude of Divine Grace, by Rev. William Perkins, D.D., A Theological Writer of England*, in *The Writings of James Arminius*, trans by James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956), 3:266-525.

similar to Beza's, as Perkins also espoused particular redemption.<sup>113</sup> Arminius's view of unlimited atonement as presented in this work is the view that the Remonstrants believed in, the Synod of Dort rejected, and which is essentially the same as the view held by many evangelicals today.<sup>114</sup>

Arminius's conception of election was fundamentally different than the accepted Reformed view. He believed that predestination relates to people as sinners, whereas supralapsarianism considers people before they have even been created.<sup>115</sup> He asserted that predestination must be understood as having its grounds only in Christ, and on the basis of his sacrificial death.<sup>116</sup> For Arminius this meant that election could not be understood as a decree that Christ executes on the cross or as an ordination of God in which the believer plays no part; election is only on the basis of a person's being in

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<sup>113</sup>Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 93-95; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 129. For an overview of Perkins's views, see M. T. Malone, "The Doctrine of Predestination in the Thought of William Perkins and Richard Hooker," *ATR* 52, no. 2 (1970): 103-17; and Jonathan D. Moore, *English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 27-68.

<sup>114</sup>E.g., Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will; Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 85-138.

<sup>115</sup>"For the predestination, of which the Scriptures treat, is of men in their relation to sinners." Arminius, *Order and Mode of Predestination*, 291. See Bangs, *Arminius*, 209-10.

<sup>116</sup>"Finally, since God can love no sinner unto salvation, unless he be reconciled to himself in Christ, hence it is, that there could be no place for Predestination, except in Christ. And since Christ was ordained and given for sinners, it is certain that Predestination and its opposite, Reprobation, could have no place before human sin – its existence as foreseen by God – and the appointment of Christ as Mediator, and indeed his performance, in the prescience of God, of the functions of the office of Mediator, which pertains to reconciliation." Arminius, *Order and Mode of Predestination*, 295.

Christ through faith.<sup>117</sup> This conception of election led Arminius to reverse the traditional order of decrees. For Arminius, the decree to elect did not precede the decree to send Christ to make atonement for sin, as in traditional Reformed theology.<sup>118</sup> Since election is only on the basis of Christ's death, the decree to send the Son to pay for the sins of the world must have preceded the decree to elect those who would believe in the Son's atonement.<sup>119</sup> Arminius essentially equates election with the application of Christ's death.<sup>120</sup>

By reversing the order of the decrees, Arminius was able to assert that Christ's death was not intended only for the elect, and was therefore unlimited in scope. Out of

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<sup>117</sup>“There, that phrase ‘in Christ’ marks the meritorious cause by which grace and glory are prepared, and the existence of the elect in him, without which they could not be elected in him. The definition, then, is susceptible of this form. ‘Election is the decree of God, by which, of Himself, from eternity, He decreed to justify in (or through) Christ, believers, and to accept them unto eternal life, to the praise of his glorious grace.’” *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>118</sup>“The decree of Predestination prescribes nothing to the universality of the price paid for all by the death of Christ. It is posterior, in the order of nature, to the death of Christ and to its peculiar efficacy. For that decree pertains to the application of the benefits obtained for us by the death of Christ: but his death is the price by which those benefits were prepared.” *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>119</sup>“Therefore the assertion is incorrect, and the order is inverted, when it is said that ‘Christ died only for the elect, and the predestinate.’ For predestination depends, not only on the death of Christ, but also on the merits of Christ's death; and hence Christ did not die for those who were predestinated, but they, for whom Christ died, were predestinated, though not all of them. For the universality of the death of Christ extends itself more widely than the object of Predestination. From which it is also concluded that the death of Christ and its merit is antecedent, in nature and order, to Predestination.” *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup>“What else, indeed, is predestination than the preparation of the grace, obtained and provided for us by the death of Christ, and a preparation pertaining to the application, not to the acquisition or provision of grace, not yet existing? For the decree of God, by which he determined to give Christ as a Redeemer to the world, and to appoint him the head only of believers, is prior to the decree, by which he determined to really apply to some, by faith, the grace obtained by the death of Christ.” *Ibid.*, 346-47.

his universal love for humanity, God sent Christ as the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of all people.<sup>121</sup> Arminius avoided universalism by appealing to the sufficient/efficient formula: Christ's death was universally sufficient, but efficacious only for those who believe in it.<sup>122</sup> For Arminius, the only way to avail oneself of Christ's atonement was through faith. He stated that God requires faith from all people, as seen in the universal gospel offer, and this also demands that the atonement was for all.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Arminius held to a penal substitutionary atonement; he did not hold to the governmental theory. H. D. McDonald writes that for Arminius Christ's death was not a payment of a debt or an equivalent for the punishment due to sin (*The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation, and History* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985], 200-01). This assertion seems to be explicitly contradicted by Arminius. Arminius believed that sin must be punished, and it can be punished either in the individual sinner or in a substitute. God provided the equivalent punishment due to the sins of humanity in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, and in Christ's death mercy and justice coincide. This sacrifice was for all sinners, and therefore for all people. Arminius states, "The justice of God may be displayed in the exaction of punishment from the individuals who have sinned; the same justice may also be displayed in the exaction of the same punishment from him, who has, according to the will of God, offered himself as a pledge and surety for those sinners." Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, 3:214. For a defense of the view that Arminius held to a penal substitutionary view of the atonement, see Clarke, *The Ground of Election*, 88-89; and John Mark Hicks, "The Theology of Grace in the Thought of Jacobus Arminius and Philip Van Limborch: A Study in the Development of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Arminianism" (Ph.D. diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985), 70-79.

<sup>122</sup> "The ransom or price of the death of Christ, is said to be universal in its sufficiency, but particular in its efficacy, i.e. sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and for the expiation of all sins, but its efficacy pertains not to all universally, which efficacy consists in actual application by faith and the sacrament of regeneration, as Augustine and Prosper, the Aquitanian, say." Arminius, *Order and Mode of Predestination*, 345.

<sup>123</sup> "You say also, that 'an exhortation or command to believe is joined with the promise [of Christ's death and its benefits], and that this is more general than the promise.' In this last assertion you are, in my judgment, in an error. For the promise, as made, and the command to believe are equally extensive in their relation. If the promise does not refer to all, to whom the command to believe is given, the command is unjust, vain, and useless. It is unjust, since it demands that a man should have faith in the promise, not generally, that it pertains to some persons, but specifically, that it was made

Arminius also believed that Christ's sacrifice on the cross and Christ's present intercession in heaven should be carefully distinguished.<sup>124</sup> There is a clear difference between the accomplishment of salvation and the application of salvation. Christ's work brought about potential reconciliation for all, and it is through faith that the potential reconciliation becomes actual for believers.<sup>125</sup> This faith is a work of the Holy Spirit through prevenient grace, which frees the human will in order to accept or reject the message of the gospel.<sup>126</sup> Prevenient grace itself is a result of Christ's universal

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for himself. But the promise was not made for him, if the command is more extensive than the promise. This command is vain, since it is in reference to nothing. It commands one to believe, but presents no object of faith, that promise which is the only object of faith, having been taken away. For which reason, also, the command is useless. It can in no way be performed by him, to whom the promise, as made, does not pertain. Indeed, should he attempt to obey out the divine purpose of applying the promise; so in the latter case, the command is proposed to the non-elect, without the divine purpose that they should fulfill or obey the command." Ibid., 327-28.

<sup>124</sup>"The sacrifice is prior to the intercession. For he could not enter into the heavens that he might intercede for us in the presence of God, except by the blood of his own flesh. It is also prior, as sacrifice has reference to merit, intercession to the application of merit. For he is called the Mediator by *merit* and the *efficacy* of its application. He acquired merit by sacrifice; he intercedes for its application. He does both, as Priest; but he makes that application as King and Head of his church." Ibid., 347.

<sup>125</sup>"It [Christ's death] is not an actual removal of sins from these or those, not an actual remission of sins, not justification, not an actual redemption of these or those, which can be bestowed upon no one without faith and the Spirit of Christ; but it is reconciliation with God; obtainment from God of remission, justification, and redemption; by which it is effected that God may now be able, as Justice, to which satisfaction has been made, interposes no obstacle, to remit sins and to bestow the spirit of grace upon sinful men." Ibid., 347.

<sup>126</sup>"Grace is present with all men, by which their free will may be actually bent to good; but that there is in all men such a will as is flexible to either side upon accession of grace." Ibid., 470-71. Concerning Arminius's thought, Bangs states, "The part man plays in salvation is believing. Evangelical belief is the free choice to receive offered grace, which offered grace makes the free choice possible. In all this man does nothing apart from grace: he earns nothing; he contributes nothing; but he chooses freely, and it is a choice which can refuse to make, for grace is not an irresistible force." Bangs,

atonement.<sup>127</sup>

Arminius died in 1609, but by the time of his death his theology had a strong following. In 1610, forty-three of his followers met in the Netherlands where they wrote a statement of their convictions, their “Remonstrance.” The second article of the Remonstrance described the Arminian position on the extent of the atonement.<sup>128</sup> The majority of Reformed theologians during this time reacted strongly against Arminianism.<sup>129</sup> This negative reaction led to the Synod of Dort in 1618-19, where Arminianism was decisively rejected and a comprehensive statement of Reformed theology was written.

### **Synod of Dort**

The purpose of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) was to resolve the controversy over Arminian theology, including the extent of the atonement. Deputations from all of the Reformed nations commented upon the Remonstrant positions, and the final articles

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*Arminius*, 216.

<sup>127</sup>“Arminius has a very high theology of grace. He insists emphatically that grace is gratuitous because it is obtained through God’s redemption in Christ, not through human effort.” Witt, “Creation, Redemption, and Grace,” 259-60.

<sup>128</sup>The second article reads: “That in agreement with this Jesus Christ the Savior of the world died for all men and for every man, so that he merited reconciliation and forgiveness of sins for all through the death of the cross; yet so that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer – also, according to the word of the gospel of John 3:16, ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.’ And in the first epistle of John 2:2, ‘He is the propitiation for our sins; and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the world.’” Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism,” 106. See also Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 131.

<sup>129</sup>For an explanation of the Reformed reaction before the Synod of Dort, see Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism,” 106-31.

of the Synod were based upon these reports. The Remonstrants did not make any contributions to the debates, and were not present when their views were condemned.<sup>130</sup> The details of this Synod have been presented in several other places,<sup>131</sup> but due to the importance of this Synod for Reformed theology, a brief summary of its findings concerning the extent of the atonement will be presented.

The Synod unanimously rejected the Arminian concept of unlimited atonement.<sup>132</sup> There was, however, much disagreement among the deputations as to how the extent of the atonement should be explained.<sup>133</sup> Views ranged from the strict supralapsarian particularism of Geneva to the “hypothetical universalism” of Great Britain.<sup>134</sup> Following Beza, Geneva rejected the sufficient/efficient formula because it

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<sup>130</sup>Stephen Strehle, “The Extent of the Atonement at the Synod of Dort,” *WJT* 51 (1989): 4-7; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 131.

<sup>131</sup>Archibald, “A Comparative Study,” 390-95; Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism,” 132-269; Roger Nicole, “Moyse Amyraut and the Controversy on Universal Grace” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1966), 21-29; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 4, *Reformation of Church and Dogma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 237-45; Strehle, “Theological Systems,” 204-50; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 128-59.

<sup>132</sup>Archibald also points out that all of the delegates used virtually the same arguments against the Arminian position: the implications of the substitutionary nature of the atonement, the unity of Christ’s work, the perfection of Christ’s work, and the connection of the extent of the atonement with the doctrine of predestination. Archibald, “A Comparative Study,” 392.

<sup>133</sup>Godfrey points out two problems that impacted the Synod’s explanation of the extent of the atonement. One, as has been demonstrated, although most Reformers held to particular redemption, different Reformers explained themselves in different ways. Some appealed to the common solution while others rejected it. Two, almost all of the discussion concerning the extent of the atonement had emerged in a polemical context. The Synod would have to decide whether their explanation would be polemical or a more balanced, constructive statement. Godfrey, “Tensions within International Calvinism,” 130-31.

<sup>134</sup>“The various Theses presented to the Synod on the Second Article revealed

was too ambiguous, while Great Britain based their position upon it, believing that it was absolutely necessary to assert both the atonement's universal sufficiency and its limited efficacy.<sup>135</sup> In light of these differences, the Synod compromised by using the sufficient/efficient formula, but carefully explained in detail what that formula meant and did not mean.<sup>136</sup>

The way in which the universal sufficiency of the atonement is explained by the Synod clearly demonstrates its advocacy of particular redemption.<sup>137</sup> The atonement is not universally sufficient in that it paid for the sins of all people, it is universally sufficient due to the fact that Christ's sacrifice is of infinite worth and value because he is the perfect God-man.<sup>138</sup> The universal sufficiency of the atonement is because of its

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a considerable diversity of expression and thought among the Orthodox. . . . A careful examination indicates three broad divisions into which the various *Judicia* fall. The largest group is composed of those delegations which expressed a simple, strict Calvinist point of view. All the provincial Dutch delegations, as well as the Palatine, the Helvetian, the Genevan, and Emden delegations belonged to this group. The Theses of Martinius represented the second, moderate group although the sympathies of Davenant and Ward were also with Martinius. The third group, which might be called the mediating group, placed themselves between the strict Calvinists and the moderates. This aggregation included the Dutch professors, Lubbertus, the English, Crocius, and Pareus. The Theses of Isselburg, Hesse, Nassau, and DuMoulin may also belong with the mediating group, although they reflect a more rigorous approach than others of this group." *Ibid.*, 225-26.

<sup>135</sup>Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 134-36.

<sup>136</sup>For an explanation of the reasoning behind this compromise, see Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 225-37.

<sup>137</sup>Strehle maintains, however, that the statement of the Synod was more ambiguous. Strehle, "Synod of Dort," 19-20.

<sup>138</sup>The Second Head of the Canons of Dort concern Christ's death and humanity's redemption. The third article of this section states, "This death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and worth, abundantly sufficient for expiating the sins of the whole world." This translation is from Anthony A. Hoekema, *A New English Translation of the Canons of Dort*, CTJ 3

intrinsic nature; it is not because the atonement has a universal saving intention.<sup>139</sup>

Rather, the atonement effectually redeemed only the elect, and its efficacy was meant only for them.<sup>140</sup> God never meant to bestow the benefits of the atonement equally upon humanity, and there is no hypothetical aspect of atonement.<sup>141</sup> The Canons of Dort do emphasize the universal gospel offer, however, and also acknowledges that people perish because of their own sin and not because of any defect in Christ's death.<sup>142</sup> As Thomas points out, though, no explanation is offered as to how the universal sufficiency of the atonement relates to the nonelect.<sup>143</sup>

The Synod of Dort's explanation of particular redemption became the accepted explanation of the extent of the atonement for the Reformed church. It clearly rejects the Arminian view, and defends the particularity of God's sovereignty in the atonement. It also represents a more moderate view of particular redemption that attempts to account for some universality in the atonement, such as in its intrinsic worth and the universal gospel call.<sup>144</sup> Due to its nature as a compromise, however, the Synod's statement on the

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(1968): 133-61.

<sup>139</sup>*Canons of Dort*, Second Head of Doctrine, Article 4.

<sup>140</sup>“God willed that Christ, through the blood of the cross (by which he confirmed the new covenant) should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and tongue all those and only those who were from eternity chosen to salvation and were given to him by the Father.” *Ibid.*, Second Head of Doctrine, Article 8.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*, Second Head of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors VI.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, Second Head of Doctrine, Article 3.

<sup>143</sup>Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 133.

<sup>144</sup>“Indeed, the Synod represented the victory of a moderate form of contemporary Calvinism. The moderate infralapsarians, who were a considerable majority at the Synod, triumphed on the First Article. The moderates on the extent of the

extent of the atonement never clarifies exactly how the atonement is both particular and universal.<sup>145</sup> Despite the Synod's best efforts, the ambiguity of the common solution is not entirely overcome. The debate over the extent of the atonement would resurface thirty years later in the controversy over Amyraldianism.<sup>146</sup>

### Moïse Amyraut

Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664) developed the theological system now referred to as Amyraldianism, known especially for its unique views of predestination and the extent of the atonement.<sup>147</sup> While he was not the first to make an attempt at combining unconditional election and unlimited atonement, his views were the most influential and

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atonement, who were a considerable minority at the Synod, also triumphed by wresting important concessions from their colleagues." Godfrey, "Tensions within International Calvinism," 268.

<sup>145</sup>“The absence of an attempt to reconcile apparently opposite concepts is significant. As a result of the biggest disagreement of the Synod, it was impossible to find an acceptable way of relating universal and particular aspects of the atonement in the final document.” Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 133.

<sup>146</sup>Amyraut and his followers insisted that their views were in line with the Synod's conclusions, despite the efforts of their opponents who claimed that they were contradicting the Synod. See Strehle, “Synod of Dort,” 22-23.

<sup>147</sup>For overviews of Amyraut's position on the extent of the atonement and his theology in general, see Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 71-287; Jürgen Moltmann, “Gnadenbund and Gnadenwahl: Die Prädestinationslehre des Moïse Amyraut, dargestellt im Zusammenhang der heilsgeschichtlich-pföederaltheologie Tradition der Akademie von Saumur” (Ph.D. diss., Göttingen, 1951); Roger Nicole, “Amyraut, Amyraldus, Amyraldianism, etc.,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. Edwin H. Palmer (Wilmington, DE: National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964), 184-93; idem, “Moïse Amyraut,” 37-95; Leonard Proctor, “The Theology of Moïse Amyraut, Considered as a Reaction against Seventeenth-Century Calvinism” (Ph.D. diss., University of Leeds, 1952); Stephen Strehle, “Universal Grace and Amyraldianism,” *WJT* 51 (1989): 345-57; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 187-223.

also the most controversial.<sup>148</sup> Amyraut first explained his views in a 1634 publication that was intended for a popular audience,<sup>149</sup> the *Brief Traitté de la Predestination et de ses principales Dependances*. This treatise was controversial, especially as it clearly espoused an unlimited atonement as well as a conditional will of God by which he desires the salvation of all people.<sup>150</sup> Amyraut responded to this controversy by publishing six sermons meant to clarify his position in 1636,<sup>151</sup> as well as a work where he attempted to demonstrate the compatibility of his doctrine with John Calvin's.<sup>152</sup> These writings led to

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<sup>148</sup>As we have seen, Thomas Aquinas in the twelfth century held these two doctrines together. Heinrich Bullinger did as well; see Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 66-86. Several English theologians, most notably James Ussher and John Davenant, also espoused a hypothetical universalism. For a description of their views of the extent of the atonement, see Moore, *English Hypothetical Universalism*, 173-213. The most significant influence upon Amyraut was his professor and mentor, John Cameron. Almost all of the distinctive elements in Amyraut's theology originated in Cameron's theology. Amyraut's system was a further development of Cameron's thought. As Armstrong states, "John Cameron was the inspiration for, and father of, the distinctive teachings at the Academy at Saumur. Amyraut himself often acknowledged his debt and fondness for Cameron." Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 42-43. Another student of Cameron, Paul Testard, published a work on hypothetical universalism right before Amyraut did, and his views were almost exactly the same. See Nicole, "Moyse Amyraut," 33-36. For an explanation of Cameron's theology and its impact upon Amyraut, see Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 42-70; Nicole, "Moyse Amyraut," 29-32; Strehle, "Universal Grace," 345-48; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 162-86.

<sup>149</sup>Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 80-81; Nicole, "Moyse Amyraut," 37-38.

<sup>150</sup>"Its most debated teaching was the affirmation that God sent his Son into the world to redeem all men provided that they believe. That is, as we have seen in Cameron, there is an antecedent will of God which extends salvation to all men but which becomes effective only as it is appropriated by faith." Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 82.

<sup>151</sup>These sermons were entitled *Six Sermons de la Nature, Estendue, Necessité, Dispensation, et Efficace de l'Evangile*. An explanation of their contents can be found in Nicole, "Moyse Amyraut," 67-75.

<sup>152</sup>This work was entitled *Eschantillon de la Doctrinede Calvin touchant la*

a heresy trial at the National Synod of Alençon in 1637, where Amyraut was pronounced orthodox but also warned to stop using certain language that was causing offense.<sup>153</sup> The remainder of Amyraut's life would be consumed with the controversy over his doctrine of universal grace,<sup>154</sup> and shortly after his death his views would be decisively condemned at the Swiss Formula Consensus Helvetica in 1675.<sup>155</sup>

Amyraut's view of the extent of the atonement is a form of what is commonly referred to as "hypothetical universalism."<sup>156</sup> Christ in the atonement paid for the sins of

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*Predestination*, and was prefaced to the six sermons. An explanation of its contents can be found in Nicole, "Moyse Amyraut," 75-84.

<sup>153</sup>For a description of the events at this Synod, see Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 88-96; and Nicole, "Moyse Amyraut," 119-32.

<sup>154</sup>Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 80.

<sup>155</sup>For an explanation of this opposition up to and including the 1675 formula, see Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 224-44. Those who opposed Amyraut the most vehemently during this time included Pierre du Moulin, Friedrich Spanheim, John Owen (who wrote his famous *Death of Death* as a response to Amyraldian and Arminian views of the extent of the atonement), and Francis Turretin.

<sup>156</sup>"Amyraldianism" and "hypothetical universalism" are usually used synonymously to refer to the Calvinist view of unlimited atonement, or to the mediating position between strict Calvinism and Arminianism. This was the practice in the seventeenth century, as can be seen in Richard Baxter, *Plain Scripture Proof of Infants Church-membership and Baptism* (London: For Robert White, 1651), 289, 332. It is also the practice in the present day, as can be seen in Armstrong, Godfrey, Helm, Thomas, and B. B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 94. Moore is correct to point out, however, that hypothetical universalism as it was developed by Ussher and Davenant is not exactly the same as Amyraldianism, and that the two views were developed independently. Amyraldianism places the decree of election after the decree to send Christ to redeem the world, making the object of predestination redeemed humanity, while hypothetical universalism was generally infralapsarian. Therefore, while both views are subsets of unlimited atonement, they should properly be distinguished. See Moore, *English Hypothetical*, 217-20. It is also clear that most contemporary Calvinists who espouse unlimited atonement reject much of what Amyraut taught, and should not be referred to as Amyraldians. I agree that the views should properly be distinguished for the sake of clarity, however this has normally not been the case among scholars. This dissertation will use the term "Amyraldianism" to refer specifically to

all individuals; not only is the atonement sufficient for all sin but Christ actually intended to die for all individuals.<sup>157</sup> The atonement is only hypothetically or conditionally universal, however, for the salvation that the atonement provides is only effectual when the condition of faith is fulfilled.<sup>158</sup> Amyraut believed that only the elect would fulfill the condition of faith, and the Holy Spirit is the one who applies the atonement to the elect through faith, according to the absolute will of the Father.<sup>159</sup>

Amyraut based his unlimited atonement upon a distinction in the will of God:

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Amyraut's (and the school of Saumur's) view, while the term "hypothetical universalism" will be used more generally to refer to any system that asserts that Christ died for all without exception to make salvation conditionally available to all, and that God also willed to only send the Spirit to apply the atonement to the elect. In this way, Amyraldianism is seen as a specific explanation of hypothetical universalism. See also n. 8 on p. 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>157</sup>“The sacrifice that he has offered for the propitiation of their offenses has been offered equally for all. And the salvation that he has received from his Father in order to communicate it to men in the sanctification of the spirit and the glorification of the body is destined equally to all, provided, I say, that the disposition necessary in order to receive it is also equally present.” Moïse Amyraut, *Brief Traitté de la Predestination et de ses principales Dependances* (Saumur: J. Lesnier, 1634), 78; trans. and quoted in Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 211. It should be noted that the word “equally” was dropped in each case from the 1658 edition of the *Brief Traitté*.

Amyraut believed strongly in a penal substitutionary atonement. As Thomas states, “Amyraut took for granted the concept of satisfaction, viewing punishment of the sinner, or satisfaction on the sinner's behalf, as absolutely necessary in view of the divine justice. He stated that penal language about the atonement is more strictly accurate than the language of debt, for debts can be simply cancelled, but God is bound by his justice to exact punishment for sin.” Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 200.

<sup>158</sup>“It is to be noted, of course, that each mention of the universality of the design of Christ's atonement is qualified by a ‘provided that.’ Amyraut is very much concerned that it be understood that the will of God which desires universal salvation is made on the condition that the stipulation be fulfilled, and if that stipulation is not fulfilled He does not will it. This is perhaps the most adequate definition of ‘hypothetical universalism’ which can be given. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 212.

<sup>159</sup>*Ibid.*, 215.

God has a conditional will and an absolute will.<sup>160</sup> This idea of God's two wills (hidden and revealed, commanding and decreeing, permissive and absolute) is a familiar one in Reformed theology, but Amyraut uses it in a unique way by reversing the traditional emphasis. Like other Reformers, for Amyraut, God's absolute will includes his unconditional election and irresistible grace, and it is always infallibly effective.<sup>161</sup>

Whereas this absolute will was the primary object of theology for a traditional Reformed theologian such as John Calvin or Theodore Beza, Amyraut believed that God's absolute will was incomprehensible and therefore not a proper object of theological study. For Amyraut, this means that God's conditional will is paramount, and it is therefore the focus of his theology.<sup>162</sup> In addition to an absolute election of some to salvation according to his absolute will, God conditionally elected all people to be saved according to his conditional will.<sup>163</sup> Christ's atonement fulfilled God's conditional will, and since

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<sup>160</sup>“As is true with his mentor, the bifurcation of the divine will into two basic categories provides the framework for Amyraut's system pertaining to the extent of the atonement. All of his discussions upon the subject revolve around the same identical distinction within the divine will: between God's universal, conditional will to save all men upon the condition of faith, and his absolute irresistible will which leads men to faith.” Strehle, “Universal Grace,” 348.

<sup>161</sup>Strehle, “Universal Grace,” 348-49; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 194.

<sup>162</sup>“It is, then, the conditional will, and therefore the conditional covenant, which is the primary object of consideration in Amyraut's theology.” Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 201.

<sup>163</sup>“Predestination to salvation being conditional, and having regard to the whole human race conditionally, and the human race being universally corrupted by sin and incapable of accomplishing this condition upon which salvation depends, it happens necessarily, not through any fault of predestination in itself, but through the hardness of heart . . . that this first predestination is in vain for those who do not have a part in the second.” Amyruat, *Brief Traitté*, 163-65; trans. and quoted in Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 190.

God desires the salvation of all people on the condition that they believe, Christ died for all people provided that they believe.<sup>164</sup> Amyraut could also state Christ died especially for the elect, because only the elect believe, but for him the particularity of the atonement was always subordinate to its universality, just as the absolute will was always subordinate to the conditional will.<sup>165</sup>

Amyraut's conception of God's will matched his understanding of God's covenants with humanity. Amyraut believed that the universal, conditional love of God was displayed in a universal, conditional covenant, and that this universal covenant was based upon Christ's atonement.<sup>166</sup> This universal, conditional covenant also revealed God's universal, conditional will for the salvation of all people, which in turn revealed

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<sup>164</sup>“In his first will, God is said to desire in general the salvation of the whole human race, wishing to give them redemption upon the condition of faith. He is also said to procure the necessary means for that salvation, being not merely touched with compassion, but sending his own Son to die for their sins. Thus the cross of Christ in this phase of the divine will excludes no one from its scope, and univocally invites all to share in its fruits, if, of course, they do not prove unworthy.” Strehle, “Universal Grace,” 348.

<sup>165</sup>“The same Scripture which teaches us so distinctly that Christ died universally for the whole world also sometimes speaks in a way which seems to say that he died only for the small number of those elected to faith. It is necessary to distinguish carefully ways of speaking which arise from the consideration of results only and those which come from consideration of the plans of God.” Amyraut, *Brief Traitté*, 163-65; trans. and quoted in Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 203.

<sup>166</sup>Amyraut, following Cameron, believed that the concept of covenant was at the center of theology. Amyraut believed that there were three covenants: the covenant of nature, the covenant of law, and the covenant of grace. These covenants build upon one another, so the covenant of grace is superior to the covenants of nature and law. They also succeed one another in history, so that now the covenant of grace is the preeminent manifestation of God's mercy and goodness. Amyraut believed that each covenant was appropriately attributed to one of the members of the Trinity. The covenants of nature and law pertain chiefly to the Father, the covenant of grace relates to the Son, and the application of the covenant of grace is the Spirit's work. For an explanation of Amyraut's covenantal theology, see Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 140-57, 203-21; and Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 194-97.

his love, mercy, and goodness.<sup>167</sup> The atonement must be unlimited in light of God's nature as one who is loving and merciful.<sup>168</sup> Because the covenant was universal, the gospel call was meant for all people, and Amyraut argued that it was therefore only possible because of Christ's unlimited atonement.<sup>169</sup> Alongside this universal, conditional covenant of grace was an absolute covenant of grace, but this absolute covenant was not the work of the Son; it was the work of the Spirit.<sup>170</sup> For Amyraut, the atonement was only universal, and the particularity of God's saving work was appropriated to the Spirit. Amyraut also expressed this difference in the Son and the Spirit's work by making a distinction between objective grace (the universal work of the Son in the atonement) and subjective grace (the particular work of the Spirit in applying

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<sup>167</sup>“For Amyraut [God's] philanthropy meant a love, universal by definition, for human beings as human beings. It was from this universal philanthropy that the sending of Christ, and his work of atonement, proceeded, so that, irrespective of the human response or lack of it, the goodness of God is revealed.” Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 193.

<sup>168</sup> Another reason why God's universal saving will is never in vain is that, even though it may not be universally fruitful, yet his goodness and mercy is universally revealed. Whatever the human response, God has acted in accordance with his nature.” Ibid., 194.

<sup>169</sup>“It is necessary that the mind . . . in order to perform the first act of faith, should judge that object to be universal by divine institution.” Moïse Amyraut, *Specimen Animadversionum in Exercitationes de Gratia Universali* (Saumur: J. Lesnier, 1648), 2:311; trans. by and quoted in Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 201. Thomas also states, “If the object of faith were not suitable to all, faith could not be commanded to all. The preacher, therefore, should declare the universal love of God and atonement of Christ, not mentioning election until after his hearers have come to faith.” Ibid., 201. See also Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 211-12.

<sup>170</sup>“The Son and the Spirit, however, have each his proper period or time of activity. And what is most important, their periods of activity coincide with the two heads of the covenant of grace we have previously discussed. The work of the Son is the fulfillment of God's conditional will and the basis of the *foedus hypotheticum*, while the work of the Spirit is in response to God's absolute will and illustrates the *foedus absolutum*.” Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 209.

salvation to believers).<sup>171</sup>

Amyraut's view of the extent of the atonement was driven somewhat by apologetic, pastoral, and homiletic concerns.<sup>172</sup> Ultimately, however, Amyraut's unlimited atonement was demanded by his unique system of theology, as it was a necessary corollary to his universal, conditional covenant and the universal, conditional saving will and love of God. There were a multitude of charges brought against Amyraldianism, and Reformed theologians attacked as it as vehemently as they did Arminianism. They frequently labeled Amyraut's views as illogical and absurd,<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup>Armstrong explains, "And as the sun was designed to give light to all men, so the objective grace procured by Christ is designed for all men. However this sufficient objective grace must be desired, must be willingly received. If a man does not open his eyes the light of the sun is of no avail to him. The analogy holds in relation to grace as well, for although Jesus is the light of the world, he is of no avail to the one the eyes of whose understanding have not been illuminated, who does not participate in this light through faith." Amyraut used this distinction to keep the provision of salvation by Christ and the application of salvation by the Spirit as two separate activities. For Amyraut, there is no necessary connection between the atonement of salvation by Christ and the application of salvation by the Spirit. Strictly speaking, while salvation is only possible because of the atonement, the atonement in and of itself does not save anyone. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, 210-11. See also Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 203.

<sup>172</sup>Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 200-03.

<sup>173</sup>Francis Turretin leveled four absurdities against Amyraldianism. First, it requires that Christ died for multitudes that have never heard and will never hear the gospel. Second, it requires that Christ died for those whom the Father has eternally decreed would never receive salvation (those he predestined to reprobation). Third, it requires that he died for those who are already in hell, and that he suffered the punishment for those who are already suffering the punishment for their sins. Fourth, this view requires that Christ be the Savior and Redeemer of those who are never saved, and therefore he would be an imperfect and impartial Savior; the author of the acquisition of salvation but not its application. Turretin, *Institutes*, 471-72. As Thomas notes, this charge of absurdity was based upon the logical precision of the orthodox, Reformed position. This position could not account for a conditional will of God. Amyraut's position was not necessarily absurd if Amyraut's theological presuppositions, which were quite different from those of the orthodox Reformed, were granted. See Thomas, *The*

rationalistic,<sup>174</sup> and novel.<sup>175</sup> Many of the same arguments used against the Arminian view of unlimited atonement were used to argue against Amyraut's view as well.<sup>176</sup>

Despite their censure in the Swiss Consensus of 1675, however, Amyraldian views and hypothetical universalism in general were held by a number of Christians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>177</sup> The controversy over the extent of the

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*Extent of the Atonement*, 226-30.

<sup>174</sup>Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 237.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid., 236.

<sup>176</sup>These arguments can all be found in Owen's work. (1) It was argued that the atonement could not have been for all since many were already in hell when Christ died; to suffer for them would have been useless. Owen, *Death of Death*, 61, 135-36. (2) The sacrifice, intercession, and resurrection of Christ, and the giving of the Spirit, are all apart of one work, and cannot be divided. Ibid., 110-24. Owen, however, divorced Christ's universal lordship from his death, probably because he saw the implications of this universal lordship at least suggested an unlimited atonement. Ibid., 92. (3) If Christ died for all sins, then he died for unbelief, therefore unbelief cannot be why some people are not saved by the atonement. Ibid., 61-62. (4) God cannot require a double payment for sin. Ibid., 157-58. (5) Biblical texts require particular redemption. Ibid., 124-309. Owen essentially saw the atonement as an accomplished fact, and to separate the procurement of salvation from its application or to introduce conditionality into the atonement was to make it an empty atonement.

<sup>177</sup>"In historical terms, no-one 'won' the controversy over universal grace. Amyraut's views became general in France, but the French church was dispersed by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Anti-Amyraldian views were enshrined in the Swiss Consensus, but this statement was far from wholeheartedly received, and the issues were soon to be largely lost sight of on the eve of the Enlightenment. In England, in spite of the fact that a number of deputies at the Westminster Assembly (1643-47), including Calamy, Seaman, Arrowsmith, and Vines, favoured universal redemption, the Confession set the redeeming work of Christ in the context of particular redemption, and coordinated the acquisition and application of salvation. Nevertheless, as the century progressed, the Baxterian middle way gained a wide following among the Presbyterians, while the Anglican bishops of the Restoration generally shared a distaste for all forms of predestinarianism. The 'Marrow' controversy in Scotland at the beginning of the eighteenth century saw conflict and division over the same issue again. It seems fair to conclude that the question of the extent of the atonement, already handled ambiguously by the Synod of Dort, was never satisfactorily answered by the Reformed churches throughout their early and classical period." Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement*, 241.

atonement within the Reformed community was again not resolved, and it has not been resolved to the present day.

### Richard Baxter

Richard Baxter (1615-1691) is an example of one who held to hypothetical universalism but not Amyraldianism.<sup>178</sup> His view on the extent of the atonement is noteworthy because of the unique way that he explained it and the impact that Baxter's theology has had upon evangelicalism.<sup>179</sup> J. I. Packer, an advocate of particular redemption, goes so far as to state that "Baxter made the best of 'hypothetical universalism' that can ever be made of it."<sup>180</sup> Baxter's view, even more so than

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For evidence of the Amyraldian presence at Westminster, see A. Craig Troxel, "Amyraut 'at' the Assembly: The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Extent of the Atonement," *Presbyterion* 22 (1996): 43-55.

<sup>178</sup>Baxter wrote *Universal Redemption of Mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ*, his book defending this view, by 1650, although it was not published until 1694. For overviews of his theology of redemption, see Timothy K. Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion: A Study of the Puritan Concept of Becoming a Christian* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor Imprint, 2007); Hans Boersma, *A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy* (Zoetermeer, Netherlands: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993); and J. I. Packer, *The Redemption and Restoration of Man in the Thought of Richard Baxter* (Vancouver: Regent College, 2003). Beougher points out two reasons Baxter is not strictly an Amyraldian, (*Richard Baxter and Conversion*, 53-55). First, Baxter developed his view independent of Amyraut. Second, he modified Amyraut's views somewhat, as we will see.

<sup>179</sup>Baxter's theology represented a *via media* between Arminianism and strict Calvinism. This middle way greatly influenced English theology, both Anglican and Dissenting, in his own day and into the next two centuries. Baxter also influenced the development of American evangelical theology as can be seen through his impact upon the New England School via Samuel Hopkins. See Herbert Boyd McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace: John Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001), 66-67; and Alan F. Sell, *The Great Debate: Calvinism, Arminianism, and Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 31-32, 109-10.

<sup>180</sup>Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 400.

Amyraut's, is truly a "middle way" between Calvinism and Arminianism.<sup>181</sup> It is a way that few have followed, however, for reasons that will be explained below.

Baxter believed that the atonement was unlimited, and that Christ died for the sins of every individual.<sup>182</sup> He also believed in God's sovereignty throughout redemption, holding to unconditional election and irresistible grace.<sup>183</sup> In this way Baxter held to hypothetical universalism, just as the British deputies at the Synod of Dort and Amyraut did.<sup>184</sup> What set Baxter's view apart from previous explanations of hypothetical universalism, however, is his use of the "political method."<sup>185</sup> This theological method

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<sup>181</sup>Baxter was attempting to mediate between the extremes of the two positions. He saw the Arminian view as an extreme reaction against particular redemption and the popularization of the Calvinist view as an extreme reaction against Arminianism. *Ibid.*, 229-30.

<sup>182</sup>Baxter, *Universal Redemption*, 286-87.

<sup>183</sup>Baxter believed that God has done all that the Arminians affirm (universal grace), and more, and this more is his particular grace in election and the application of salvation. Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter: With a Life of the Author and a Critical Examination of His Writings by William Orme* (London: J. Duncan, 1830-58), 8:529. See also Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 227-28.

<sup>184</sup>Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 228.

<sup>185</sup>"Baxter's soteriology was a reformulation of the covenant theology of the Westminster Confession according to a 'political method.' Theology was to him . . . 'doctrina de regno Dei.' The present age is the period of the 'regnum Christi.' The lynch-pin of his doctrine was a clearly drawn and consistently maintained distinction between God's will as *dominus* and as *rector*." *Ibid.*, 213. Beougher explains further, "The Kingdom of God and his government of man, being the central theme in Scripture, must therefore become the central focus for our theology. Thus the fall of man and the plan of redemption must be seen from a 'political' framework. A failure to follow this 'political method' would lead to erroneous conclusions about God's relation to his creation. But Baxter went even further. Having seen that the Kingdom of God is the central theme in Scripture, Baxter next argued that we must understand Scripture in terms of what we know about kingdoms. He therefore took seventeenth century political thought as his frame of reference from which to interpret Scripture. God should be thought of as a governor and the gospel as part of his legal code." Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, 38.

and emphasis made Baxter's position unique in two ways. First, it led him to assert a governmental theory of the atonement instead of penal substitution, similar to that of Hugo Grotius and the majority of Arminians after Arminius.<sup>186</sup> This meant that for Baxter, Christ did not satisfy the law in the place of sinners through substitution, but instead satisfied the justice of the Lawgiver (God) so that all people could now be accepted on account of their faith rather than through the law.<sup>187</sup> Baxter did not follow Grotius's view completely, however, but maintained some Anselmic and Reformed emphases in contradiction to Grotius and the Arminians.<sup>188</sup>

The second way that Baxter's political method impacted his view of the extent of the atonement is because his idea of the universal government of God in the covenant

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<sup>186</sup>Baxter, *Universal Redemption*, 390. For an explanation of Grotius's governmental theory of the atonement, see Robert S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, n.d.), 2:48-73; and McDonald, *Atonement of the Death of Christ*, 203-07.

<sup>187</sup>“The fundamental difference between Baxter and traditional Calvinists at this point can be boiled down to one concept: the idea of law. Standard Reformed teaching maintains that Christ satisfied the law in the sinner's place through substitution; Baxter asserted that Christ satisfied the Lawgiver and so obtained a change in the law. . . . Thus the wisdom and mercy of God are seen in that he still attained the ends of the law and government, but in a better way than by executing the law. The law is therefore but a means to an end, and God may justly change his law provided the same end is attained.” Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, 49-50.

<sup>188</sup>“While indebted to Grotius for his basic formulation, Baxter differed from him in two key points. First, Baxter maintained an Anselmic component in his formulation. Whereas Grotius had argued that satisfaction is rendered to God, not as God, but only as Governor, Baxter correctly asserted that Christ offered satisfaction to God as God. Second, Grotius shifted to the Arminian position and maintained that all men are now able to fulfill the new law obtained in Christ's death. Baxter refused to accept this view, still retaining the traditional Reformed emphases of unconditional election and irresistible grace.” *Ibid.*, 50. See also Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 223-24.

of grace demands a universal atonement.<sup>189</sup> God's work as governor is for all people. Through Christ's unlimited atonement, God provides common grace<sup>190</sup> and the universal gospel call,<sup>191</sup> meaning that all those who perish apart from Christ do so because of their rejection of him, not because they were ordained by God to do so. In this way, universal redemption also protected the justice of God<sup>192</sup> and preserved the horrors of hell.<sup>193</sup> Baxter insisted that all people had a chance to be saved; any notion of particular redemption harmed evangelism.<sup>194</sup> Baxter also insisted, however, that only the elect would be saved. Christ's death provided everyone an opportunity to be saved if they would choose Christ, but only the elect choose Christ through the power of the Spirit.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>189</sup>Baxter, *Universal Redemption*, 446-47.

<sup>190</sup>“Because Christ died for all, if any perish it is only because they did not take the remedy offered in Christ. Christ's death has provided common grace to be extended to all men. If men will but use this common grace, they can draw nearer to Christ than they are now. No man shall be damned for the lack of a Savior to die for him, but for the abusing or refusing of his mercy.” Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, 52.

<sup>191</sup>Baxter, *Universal Redemption*, 104. Packer states, “Baxter thought of evangelism as the proclamation to every man of the rule of the Redeemer and His deed of gift in the gospel, followed by a demand for submission to the world's rightful Lord. God-redeemer commands all men everywhere to repent, promising them salvation if they do. This is the law of His kingdom, and it is every man's duty, as well as his wisdom, to comply with it. Now it cannot be supposed that God demands the universal acceptance of a salvation which in reality is not universally available.” Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 231.

<sup>192</sup>See Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, 52.

<sup>193</sup>See Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 233-35.

<sup>194</sup>Baxter, *Universal Redemption*, 223.

<sup>195</sup>“Baxter constantly insisted that God has given every man an opportunity of salvation and that everyone could be saved if he would. But he knew in advance that all but the elect, whom Baxter makes willing, would in fact deliberately reject the gospel offer.” Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 229. See also Beougher, *Richard Baxter and Conversion*, 55-58.

For Baxter Christ's work on the cross is wholly universal and his redemption includes all people; it is only the Spirit's regenerating work that is confined to the elect.<sup>196</sup> Baxter carefully distinguished the absolute promises of God for the elect from the moral government of God which was for all people because of Christ's unlimited atonement.<sup>197</sup>

Baxter's hypothetical universalism is unique in that he attempted to unite the Arminian view of the atonement, both in scope and nature, with a Calvinistic view of God's sovereignty in redemption. Packer believes that in doing so, Baxter avoids what he sees as the glaring inconsistencies of other versions of hypothetical universalism.<sup>198</sup>

Despite this assertion, Baxter's precise view of the extent of the atonement is not appealed to by evangelicals today. This seems to be the case for two reasons. First, Baxter's political method is clearly a product of his time, and is no longer used.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>Baxter, *Universal Redemption*, 347.

<sup>197</sup>Ibid., 305, 430-31. Packer states, "His [Christ's] infallible drawing of the elect, by which he brings them to faith, the covenant condition, is no part of moral government, as such, but the act of a Divine Proprietor 'as absolute Lord above Laws.' Nor is Christ's statement about his intention thus to draw them any part of the law of his kingdom, the covenant of grace. Those who included absolute promises to the elect in their definition of the covenant, Baxter held, were confusing the exercise of *imperium* and *dominium*, which must be held apart. In fact, Christ bestows varying degrees of grace and opportunity upon different individuals, according to the dictates of infinite wisdom. But this is something quite distinct from his legislation, by which he offers salvation on equal terms to all." Packer, *Redemption and Restoration*, 223.

<sup>198</sup>Packer believes that hypothetical universalism makes God unwise because Christ's death for the nonelect was pointless, and it makes God unjust because God is bound to save those for whom Christ has died. According to Packer, Baxter avoids these inconsistencies by accepting an Arminian view of the nature of the atonement and by denying that one can inquire into the relationship between God's general love for the world and his special love for the elect. Ibid., 399-400.

<sup>199</sup>As Packer states, "His [Baxter's] assumption that seventeenth-century political ideas were the key to Biblical theology appears today absurdly naïve." Ibid., 402.

Second, Calvinists generally reject the governmental theory of the atonement, with the result that four-point Calvinists generally do not appeal to the governmental nature of the atonement as support for their views. From both sides of the debate, Baxter's mediating position on the extent of the atonement seems to concede too much truth.

### John Owen

John Owen's (1616-1683) sixteenth century work on the extent of the atonement, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1648), is a polemical work directed against the Arminian, Amyraldian, and hypothetical universalism views of unlimited atonement.<sup>200</sup> Many reformed theologians consider it to be the definitive work defending particular redemption.<sup>201</sup> Owen's defense of particular redemption is not substantially different from prior explanations of the doctrine, but the thoroughness of his arguments, both for particular redemption and against unlimited atonement, make his work perhaps the most exhaustive treatment of particular redemption ever written.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup>As J. I. Packer states in his introduction to Owen's book, "He is writing against three variations on the theme of universal redemption: that of classical Arminianism, noted earlier; that of the theological faculty at Saumur (the position known as Amyraldianism, after its leading exponent); and that of Thomas More, a lay theologian of East Anglia." J. I. Packer, "Introductory Essay," in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* by John Owen (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 23. Later in life Owen would debate Richard Baxter concerning the extent of the atonement, although Baxter's views on the subject were not published until 1694. Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 225-26.

<sup>201</sup>For example, Packer states, "It is safe to say that no comparable exposition of the work of redemption as planned and executed by the Triune Jehovah has ever been done since Owen published his. None has ever been needed." Packer, "Introductory Essay," 12-13. See also Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 225.

<sup>202</sup>As Packer states, "Nothing that needs discussing is omitted, and (so far as the writer can discover) no arguments for or against his position have been used since his day which he has not himself noted and dealt with." Packer, "Introductory Essay," 13.

Owen's view of particular redemption is also noteworthy due to the influence he has had upon the evangelical debate concerning the extent of the atonement, as all who deal seriously with the subject must interact with his arguments.

*The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* is divided into four "books." The first two books attempt to demonstrate the truth of particular redemption by explaining the intentions behind Christ's atonement and the atonement's actual accomplishments. For Owen, the intentions and accomplishments of the atonement demanded particular redemption, because he understood all of the intentions and the accomplishments of the atonement as salvific.<sup>203</sup> Owen argued that because God's intention in the atonement was to save all for whom Christ died, unlimited atonement either resulted in God's failure to achieve his intention, which was blasphemous, or it resulted in universalism, which was unscriptural.<sup>204</sup> In order to demonstrate that God's intentions in the atonement were only for the elect, and that therefore Christ died only for the elect, Owen spends the first half of his book setting forth the agent of salvation (the Triune God), the means of salvation (the atonement and intercession of Jesus Christ), and the end of salvation (the glory of God through the salvation of the elect).<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>203</sup>Concerning the intention of the atonement, Owen states, "Thus clear, then, and apparent, is the intention and design of Christ and his Father in this great work, even what it was, and towards whom, – namely, to save us, to deliver us from the evil world, to purge and wash us, to make us holy, zealous, fruitful in good works, to render us acceptable, and to bring us to God." Owen, *Death of Death*, 46. For Owen, this means that the application of the atonement is only salvific; all for whom the Father intended the atonement will be saved by the atonement. "The death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ hath wrought, and doth effectually procure, for all those that are concerned in it, eternal redemption, consisting in grace here and glory hereafter." *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>204</sup>*Ibid.*, 47-48.

<sup>205</sup>*Ibid.*, 51.

Owen begins his defense of particular redemption by explaining the unity of the Triune God in redemption, both in intention and means. The Father has two intentions in his plan of redemption. First, he sends the Son into the world in order to save the world, with the world referring to believers.<sup>206</sup> Second, the Father lays the punishment of the sins of the elect upon the Son.<sup>207</sup> In turn, the Son submits to the intentions of the Father in his incarnation, oblation, and intercession.<sup>208</sup> The Holy Spirit assists the Son throughout the Son's incarnation, oblation, and resurrection.<sup>209</sup> As the Father and the Spirit's work in redemption concentrates in Christ,<sup>210</sup> Owen then explains

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<sup>206</sup>Owen distinguishes three acts of the Father in sending the Son into the world. First, the Father appointed Christ to the office of Mediator, and in doing so promises Christ that he will give him his people and certainly apply the saving benefits of the atonement to them. Second, the Father furnished the Son with all of the gifts and graces that would be necessary for his saving work. Third, the Father entered into a covenant with the Son, promising him that his atonement would certainly accomplish the salvation of the elect. All of these actions of the Father require particular redemption. *Ibid.*, 51-59.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*, 59-62. Owen understood the atonement to be an identical, penal, and substitutionary payment for the sins of the elect. This meant that Christ fully satisfied the wrath of God against the sins of the elect, and therefore that the elect are actually saved by the atonement. For Owen, the nature of the atonement was such that if the atonement was for all people than all people had to be saved. Concerning the atonement Owen states, "It was a full, valuable compensation, made to the justice of God, for all the sins of all those for whom he made satisfaction, by undergoing that same punishment which, by reason of the obligation that was upon them, they themselves were bound to undergo. . . . Now, whether this will stand in the justice of God, that any of those should perish eternally for whom Jesus Christ made so full, perfect, and complete satisfaction, we shall so presently inquire; and this is the first thing that we are to consider in this business." *Ibid.*, 157-58, emphasis the author's. See also McDonald, *Atonement of the Death of Christ*, 293-96.

<sup>208</sup>Owen, *Death of Death*, 62-65.

<sup>209</sup>*Ibid.*, 66-67. Owen includes no mention of the Spirit's work in applying the atonement to the elect, instead describing the application of the atonement as a work of the Son throughout his book.

<sup>210</sup>*Ibid.*, 67.

the means of redemption, or the Son's atonement and intercession. Owen maintains that the atonement and intercession of Christ are inseparably connected and are for the exact same people, which demands particular redemption.<sup>211</sup> After expounding the agent and means of redemption, Owen then explains the goal of redemption. The supreme goal of redemption is the glory of God,<sup>212</sup> and this is achieved through the intermediate goal of redemption, or the actual salvation of God's elect people.<sup>213</sup> Throughout the first two books of *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* Owen denies that there are multiple intentions in the atonement.<sup>214</sup> The sole purpose of the atonement is to save the elect, for the elect alone are the objects of God's love.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>211</sup>“That though the *oblation* and *intercession* of Jesus Christ are distinct acts in themselves, and have distinct immediate products and issues oftentimes unto them . . . yet they are not in any respect or regard to be divided or separated, as that the one should have any respect to any persons of any thing which the other also doth not in its kind equally respect. But there is this manifold union between them.” Ibid., 68-69, emphasis the author's. Due to the importance of this argument for particular redemption, Owen takes great pains to explain and defend it. Ibid., 67-88.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., 89.

<sup>213</sup>“There is an *end* of the death of Christ which is *intermediate* and subservient to that other, which is the last and most supreme, even the effects which it hath in respect of us, and that is it of which we now treat; which, as we before affirmed, is the *bringing of us unto God*. . . . A real, effectual, and infallible bestowing and applying of all these things, – as well those that are the means as those that are the end, the condition as the thing conditioned about, faith and grace as salvation and glory, – unto all and every one for whom he died, do we maintain to be the end proposed and effected by the bloodshedding of Jesus Christ.” Ibid., 90-91.

<sup>214</sup>“That there is any other end of the death of Christ, besides the fruit of his ransom and propitiation, directly intended, and not by accident attending it, is utterly false. Yea, what other end the ransom paid by Christ and the atonement made by him can have but the fruits of them, is not imaginable.” Ibid., 104. See also Owen, *Death of Death*, 79-80, 87-88, 99, 105, 118.

<sup>215</sup>“The fountain and cause of God's sending Christ is his eternal love to his elect, and to them alone.” Owen, *Death of Death*, 119. Owen also states, “We deny that

In the last two books of his work Owen brings forth sixteen arguments against unlimited atonement and responds to all of the biblical and theological arguments brought against particular redemption. Some of the most significant arguments that Owens uses to refute unlimited atonement are that the gospel does not go out to all people, meaning that if Christ did die for all people than God is either unwise, unloving, or frustrated;<sup>216</sup> Christ's satisfaction for the sin of the people for whom he died ensured their salvation, meaning he could not have died for all;<sup>217</sup> Christ is the mediator for all for whom he died;<sup>218</sup> Christ procured sanctification and the gift of faith for all for whom he died;<sup>219</sup> and Christ actually redeemed, reconciled, and satisfied the sins of those for whom he died.<sup>220</sup> In responding to the arguments used for unlimited atonement, Owen first goes through all of the texts typically used to argue for unlimited atonement and explains why they do not support that doctrine.<sup>221</sup> He then specifically responds to several arguments of Thomas More, who had written a book entitled *The Universality of God's Free Grace in Christ to Mankind* (1646) defending unlimited atonement.<sup>222</sup> Owen ends his book by

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all mankind are the object of the love of God which moved him to send his Son to die.”  
Ibid., 115.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid., 126-28.

<sup>217</sup>Ibid., 134-37.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid., 137.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., 137-45.

<sup>220</sup>Ibid., 146-74.

<sup>221</sup>Ibid., 182-256. Many of these exegetical arguments will be examined or noted in chaps. 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

<sup>222</sup>Ibid., 256-91. Concerning More's book, Packer notes, "More's exposition seems to be of little intrinsic importance; Owen, however, selects it as the fullest

briefly responding to several theological arguments used to support unlimited atonement,<sup>223</sup> and by including several quotes from the early church fathers that seem to indicate their support for particular redemption.<sup>224</sup>

Owen's work on the extent of the atonement is a model of Reformed, supralapsarian theology. Everything that God wills to happen will happen, which means that if God desires the salvation of someone he or she will be saved. Therefore Christ could have only died for the elect, because it is clear that all people are not saved. Due to the atonement's nature as an exact substitution for the sins of the elect, the atonement was an objective fact that actually accomplished the salvation of the elect, and it was in no way conditional.<sup>225</sup> Owen did allow for the universal sufficiency of the atonement, following the Synod of Dort, but he maintained that this sufficiency was empty apart from intention, and that the atonement was in no way for the nonelect.<sup>226</sup> Owen's view of particular redemption is the same as the standard reformed view in evangelicalism, and

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statement of the case for universal redemption that had yet appeared in English and uses it unmercifully as a chopping-block." Packer, "Introductory Essay," 24.

<sup>223</sup>Owen, *Death of Death*, 292-309.

<sup>224</sup>Ibid., 310-12. Owen includes quotes from several of the early church fathers, such as Athanasius and Ambrose, but it is likely that the only two men whom Owen quotes that actually believed in particular redemption were Augustine and Prosper. See pp. 20-26 of this dissertation.

<sup>225</sup>"Christ did not die for any upon condition, *if they do believe*; but he died for all God's elect, *that they should believe*, and believing have eternal life." Ibid., 123, emphasis the author's.

<sup>226</sup>Owen believed that the universal sufficiency of the atonement grounded the universal gospel call, but that this sufficiency in no way meant that the atonement was for the nonelect. The intention of the atonement determines who it was for, not its intrinsic nature, and for Owen the atonement was only intended for the elect because it only saves the elect. See Owen, *Death of Death*, 264, 271-72; and Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 234.

many of his arguments are still used in the contemporary debate over the extent of the atonement.

### John Wesley

John Wesley (1703-1791) has had an immense impact on evangelicalism, as his views, perhaps even more so than Jacob Arminius's, have greatly influenced Arminian theology.<sup>227</sup> His view of unlimited atonement is not substantially different from Arminius's view, but it does have several particular emphases that are common in Arminian evangelical theology today. Whereas Arminius's view was more academic, Wesley's was more popular and practical.<sup>228</sup> His first major exposition opposing the

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<sup>227</sup>“Wesley is a major source of Arminianism of the heart; he never defected from classical, orthodox Protestant belief; in spite of rejecting Calvinism, he affirmed passionately and wholeheartedly justification by grace alone through faith alone because of what Christ has done on the cross. . . . After Wesley's death, most of the leading Arminian theologians were his followers. The entire Methodist movement and its offshoots (e.g., the multiform Holiness movement) adopted Wesley's version of Arminian theology, which differed hardly at all from Arminius himself.” Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 24-25. For a discussion of how Wesley came to be an Arminian, and the relationship between his thought and Arminius's, see David Eugene Eaton, “Arminianism in the Theology of John Wesley” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1988). For an overview of Wesley's theology, see Eaton, “Arminianism in the Theology of John Wesley”; McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace*; Albert C. Outler, *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, ed. Thomas C. Oden and Leicester R. Longden (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991); John Rutherford Renshaw, “The Atonement in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley” (Th.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 1966); and Arthur Skevington Wood, “The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace,” in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 209-22.

<sup>228</sup>Outler calls Wesley a “folk theologian,” whose chief concern was “theology for the laity.” Outler, *Wesleyan Theological Heritage*, 43. For Wesley, theology was judged by its import for experiential Christianity. Wesley was no systematic theologian (and he never wrote a systematic theology), but his views were theologically driven and explained so that all people could understand them. *Ibid.*, 40-54. Thomas Oden systematizes Wesley's theology in Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

Calvinist views of predestination and the extent of the atonement was a sermon he preached April 29, 1739 entitled *Free Grace*, which he subsequently published.<sup>229</sup> This sermon was based upon Romans 8:32 and its thesis was that the grace of God which brings salvation is free in all and free for all.

In this sermon Wesley advances his notion of free grace by challenging the doctrine of unconditional election. He asserts that any unconditional decree of only some to salvation entails a corresponding decree to damnation for the rest.<sup>230</sup> He then proceeds to list the consequences of this doctrine. Predestination makes preaching void because the destiny of all men is already irresistibly decreed, it undermines the call to holy living because it tends to destroy the pursuit after godliness, it takes away the comfort of Christianity because people will always fear that they might be reprobate, it takes away the zeal for good works, and it makes the gospel unnecessary because the gospel can add nothing to the already certain salvation of the elect or change the fate of the nonelect.<sup>231</sup> Wesley rebuts Calvinism exegetically by appealing to verses such as 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9; and 1 John 2:2, insisting that such verses teach God's universal love for humanity and rule out any notion of an absolute decree of predestination.<sup>232</sup> Wesley

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<sup>229</sup>The text of this sermon can be found in John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial ed., ed. Frank Baker (Nashville: Oxford, 1975-93), 3:542-63.

<sup>230</sup>“Call it therefore by whatever name you please – ‘election,’ ‘preterition,’ ‘predestination,’ or ‘reprobation’ – it comes in the end to the same thing. The sense of all is plainly this: ‘by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved.’” Wesley, *Works*, 3:547.

<sup>231</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:547-53.

<sup>232</sup>*Ibid.*, 3:553-54.

made no attempt to ground free grace in Romans 8, but instead insisted that free grace was a result of Christ's unlimited atonement.<sup>233</sup> This sermon facilitated the division of the burgeoning Methodist movement into two camps: an Arminian one led by Wesley and a Calvinist one led by George Whitefield.<sup>234</sup>

Although there is no evidence that he ever preached this sermon again, Wesley published it nine times during his lifetime,<sup>235</sup> and his views on the subject of predestination or the extent of the atonement never changed.<sup>236</sup> In 1741, Wesley published another anti-Calvinist work where he focused more on the extent of the atonement.<sup>237</sup> In considering the question of whose sins Christ died for, Wesley presented all of the texts that speak of Christ dying for the "world," "all," "whosoever," etc. as teaching that Christ died for the sins of every person. He presents seven arguments that demand Christ's unlimited atonement: the prophets, Christ, and the

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<sup>233</sup>Ibid., 3:559-63.

<sup>234</sup>For details of the controversy between Wesley and Whitefield and the division of the Methodist movement, see McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace*, 119-29; Irwin W. Reist, "John Wesley and George Whitefield: A Study in the Integrity of Two Theologies," *EQ* 67 (1975): 26-40; and Sell, *The Great Debate*, 61-76.

<sup>235</sup>McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace*, 120.

<sup>236</sup>Renshaw notes that Wesley's "The Arminian Magazine," which he edited from 1778 until his death in 1791, was published to counter the doctrine "that God is not loving to every man; that his mercy is not over all his works; and consequently, that Christ did not die for all, but for one in ten, for the elect only." Renshaw, "Atonement in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley," 115.

<sup>237</sup>This work is entitled *The Scripture Doctrine Concerning Predestination, Election, and Reprobation. Extracted from a late Author. By John Wesley*. Wesley included it in his 1758 apologetic work *A Preservative against Unsettled Notions of Religion*. It was published six times during Wesley's lifetime, and Wesley took great pains to make sure that it stayed in publication. McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace*, 140.

apostles all teach it, there is not one Scripture that says he did not die for all or affirms that he only died for some, God commands the gospel to be preached to every person, he calls all people to repent (Acts 17:30), those who are lost are damned for not believing in Christ and so he must have died for them or they would be damned for not believing a lie, and Scripture speaks of those whom Christ bought by his death who do not believe in him (2 Pet 2:1). There are also dreadful absurdities that follow from believing limited atonement: if Christ did not die for all, then unbelief is not a sin because the lost have nothing to believe in; it would be a sin for the lost to believe in Christ because they would have to believe a lie; those who preach the gospel to all people are lying; and the view makes God unjust when he declares that he is not willing that any should perish (2 Pet 3:9), because he is willing that many should perish.<sup>238</sup> People are not lost because Christ did not die for them; rather, they are lost because of unbelief, and all people are not saved because all people do not believe.<sup>239</sup>

Wesley also believed that an unlimited atonement was necessary for prevenient grace. Prevenient grace is one of the key doctrines of Arminianism,<sup>240</sup> and it was extremely important for Wesley.<sup>241</sup> According to Wesley, prevenient grace is God's

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<sup>238</sup>Ibid., 140-43.

<sup>239</sup>Wesley believed in a penal substitutionary atonement, but rejected the strict Calvinist notion that a substitutionary atonement demanded the salvation of all for whom Christ was the substitute. Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 231-33. See also n. 246 on pp. 83-84 of this dissertation.

<sup>240</sup>Ibid., 159. The Arminian doctrine of prevenient grace is decisively rejected by Calvinists. See Thomas R. Schreiner, "Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?" in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 229-46.

<sup>241</sup>Renshaw, "Atonement in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley," 151.

initial work in salvation,<sup>242</sup> and this grace is available to all people, including the unregenerate, because it is freely offered in Christ's atonement.<sup>243</sup> Wesley based this view on his understanding of Romans 5:18.<sup>244</sup> Like Arminius, Wesley believed that through prevenient grace God restored free will to every human being, allowing each person to accept or reject the gospel.<sup>245</sup> Prevenient grace does not in and of itself save, but as a person responds to this grace God gives him more grace that leads to his salvation. For Wesley, justification is by grace alone through faith alone. Wesley followed in the footsteps of Arminius and the Remonstrants, shunned the liberal excesses of Arminianism in the eighteenth century, and affirmed the central Reformed doctrines of original sin, justification by faith alone, and the substitutionary atonement of Christ.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup>“Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) *prevenient grace*; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. All these imply some tendency toward life; some degree of salvation; the beginning of a deliverance from a blind, unfeeling heart, quite insensible of God and the things of God.” John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley* [CD-ROM], ed. Thomas Jackson (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1994), 6:509.

<sup>243</sup>“We conceive farther, that through the obedience and death of Christ, (1) The bodies of all men become immortal after the resurrection. (2) Their souls receive a capacity of spiritual life. And, (3) An actual spark or seed thereof. (4) All believers become children of grace, reconciled to God; and, (5) Made partakers of the divine nature.” *Ibid.*, 8:277.

<sup>244</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>245</sup>For an explanation of how Wesley's concept of free will is directly based upon his idea of prevenient grace, see Renshaw, “Atonement in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley,” 155-59.

<sup>246</sup>McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace*, 330-31; and Wood, “Contribution of John Wesley,” 209-22. Like Arminius, Wesley unequivocally affirmed penal substitutionary atonement and unlimited atonement. This truth is almost universally recognized by Calvinists and Arminians alike. Wesley believed that Christ's work on the cross was the objective payment of a ransom for the sins of humanity. Christ bore the punishment for sin rightly due to humanity, and in doing so he paid for the sins of

His Arminianism is thoroughly evangelical.<sup>247</sup> Wesley's view of unlimited atonement is the view of unlimited atonement that is commonly held among evangelical Arminians today.<sup>248</sup> The particular redemption that Wesley so strongly opposed is also the view of particular redemption that is held today, and demonstrates that the debate over this doctrine in the eighteenth century, which followed over 1,000 years of previous debate, is still taking place today.

### Contemporary Evangelicalism

The contemporary evangelical movement is a descendant of the great eighteenth-century evangelical revivals led by men such as John Wesley, George

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humanity. The atonement is based not only on God's love for humanity, but also on God's just wrath toward sin. Wesley saw no contradiction between penal substitution and unlimited atonement. The atonement is universal, but its salvific blessings are only applied to those who repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Wesley believed that the entire ground of justification by faith is Christ's penal substitutionary atonement. He states, "He 'bare our sins in his own body on the tree,' that 'by his stripes we might be healed.' And 'by that one oblation of himself once offered' he 'hath redeemed all mankind,' having thereby 'made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the world.' So that for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes on one only condition (which he himself also enables us to perform) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us to his favor, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal." John Wesley, "Justification by Faith," in John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Bicentennial ed., ed. Frank Baker (Nashville: Oxford, 1975-93), 1:186. For an explanation of John Wesley's penal substitutionary view of the atonement, see H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1988), 332-35; Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*, 187; Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 231-33; and Renshaw, "Atonement in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley," 59-148. Many of Wesley's followers deviated from him by affirming the governmental theory of the atonement as opposed to penal substitution, but not all of them did. See the section below on unlimited atonement in contemporary evangelicalism.

<sup>247</sup>McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace*, 331.

<sup>248</sup>E.g., William S. Sailer, "The Nature and Extent of the Atonement: A Wesleyan View," *BETS* 10 (1964): 189-98.

Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards.<sup>249</sup> Just as Wesley and Whitefield did, today's evangelicals unite around key theological issues such as biblical inspiration, the importance of evangelism, the need for a conversion experience, and the importance of living a life of discipleship,<sup>250</sup> but they differ in regard to the Calvinism/Arminianism debate. Evangelicalism continues to divide over the issue of the extent of the atonement, whether it is particular only for the elect or unlimited for all. There is little that is new in the evangelical literature on the extent of the atonement, as the two main positions and their various variations have been debated since the time of Augustine. The majority view in evangelicalism today (and of Christianity outside of evangelicalism) is unlimited atonement,<sup>251</sup> and this position is explained from both Calvinistic and Arminian perspectives. Particular redemption is still a strong minority view, however, and most evangelicals who consider themselves to be Reformed hold this view.

### **Particular Redemption**

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the "Princeton" theologians such as A. A. Hodge, Charles Hodge, and B. B. Warfield provided a strong biblical and theological basis for particular redemption within evangelicalism.<sup>252</sup> These men were

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<sup>249</sup>For an account of this movement from the revivals to today, see Chad Brand, "Defining Evangelicalism," in *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times*, ed. Millard J. Erickson, Paul Kjoss Helseth, and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 284-87.

<sup>250</sup>*Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>251</sup>Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, vol. 4 of *Christian Foundations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 168; and Roger Nicole, "Particular Redemption," in *Our Savior God: Studies on Man, Christ, and the Atonement* ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 165.

<sup>252</sup>A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 347-429;

Reformed theologians who followed the theology of Augustine, John Calvin and the Westminster Confession of Faith. Regarding the atonement, they taught a strict penal substitutionary view in which Christ satisfied the demands of God's law in the sinner's place.<sup>253</sup> Particular redemption was for them a necessary doctrine not only because they believed that Scripture taught it, but because it was consistent with the covenant of grace, the doctrine of election, the special love of God for the elect, and the nature of the atonement. All three men restated and affirmed the sufficient/efficient formula, following the Synod of Dort.<sup>254</sup> Particular redemption was also understood to be the classical Reformed position, and seen as a necessary part of Calvinist theology.<sup>255</sup>

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idem, *Outlines of Theology*, rev. ed. (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1878), 401-25; Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:544-62; B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950), 325-530; and idem, *Plan of Salvation*, 89-106. James A. Boyce, one of the earliest Southern Baptist theologians, following his mentor Charles Hodge, also affirmed particular redemption. James A. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology* (Cape Coral, FL: Founder's, 2006), 336-40. Other significant defenses of particular redemption in the nineteenth century include William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (1862; reprint, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 2:323-70; Robert Lewis Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 513-35; William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), 2:464-89; Smeaton, *Apostle's Doctrine*; and William Symington, *The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1863; reprint, Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2006), 184-234.

<sup>253</sup>Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, 401-15; Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:480-543; and Warfield, *Person and Work*, 325-530.

<sup>254</sup>Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, 418-21; Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:544-46; and Warfield, *Plan of Salvation*, 100-06.

<sup>255</sup>For example, Warfield writes, "Calvinism insists that the saving operations of God are directed in every case immediately to the individuals who are saved. Particularism in the processes of salvation becomes thus the mark of Calvinism. As supernaturalism is the mark of Christianity at large, and evangelicalism the mark of Protestantism, so particularism is the mark of Calvinism. The Calvinist is he who holds with full consciousness that the Lord, in his saving operations, deals not generally with mankind at large, but particularly with the individuals who are actually saved." Warfield,

Following the Princetonians, there have been several other notable evangelical works defending the doctrine of particular redemption in the twentieth century. Loraine Boettner<sup>256</sup> and Louis Berkhof<sup>257</sup> both articulated and defended a robust Calvinistic theology in which particular redemption was seen as a necessary and significant doctrine. John Murray's classic book on Reformed soteriology, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, includes a chapter on particular redemption that ties the extent of the atonement to the nature of Christ's atonement as a penal substitutionary sacrifice.<sup>258</sup> R. B. Kuiper<sup>259</sup> and Gary Long<sup>260</sup> both wrote books defending the doctrine of particular redemption. Kuiper's book is significant in contrasting particular redemption with other views of the extent of the atonement and because it includes a chapter on the general intentions in the atonement. Long's book is a theological defense of particular redemption that emphasizes the unity of the triune God's saving works and purposes. Theologians such as Roger Nicole<sup>261</sup> and J. I. Packer<sup>262</sup> have written several articles and essays defending

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*Plan of Salvation*, 89.

<sup>256</sup>Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932), 150-61.

<sup>257</sup>Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 392-99.

<sup>258</sup>Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 59-75.

<sup>259</sup>Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*

<sup>260</sup>Gary D. Long, *Definite Atonement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2006).

<sup>261</sup>For example, Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 199-207; idem, "Covenant, Universal Call, and Definite Atonement," *JETS* 38 (1995): 403-11; idem, "Heidelberg Catechism," 138-45; idem, "John Calvin's View," 197-225; and idem, "Particular Redemption," 168-69.

<sup>262</sup>For example, Packer, "Introductory Essay," 1-25; idem, "The Love of God: Universal and Particular," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election*,

the classic articulation of particular redemption. A few systematic theologies of the twentieth century also defended the doctrine of particular redemption.<sup>263</sup>

Recent explanations of particular redemption typically build upon and reiterate most of the biblical and theological work done by the above theologians and their predecessors such as Augustine, Calvin, Beza, and Owen.<sup>264</sup> Some recent defenses of penal substitutionary atonement have defended particular redemption as the only view of the extent of the atonement that is consistent with the biblical nature of the atonement as penal substitution.<sup>265</sup> There have also been several popular books recently published on

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*Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 277-91; idem, "To All Who Will Come," in *Our Savior God: Studies on Man, Christ, and the Atonement*, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 179-89; and idem, "What Did the Cross Achieve: The Logic of Penal Substitution," *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 3-45.

<sup>263</sup>For example, James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 2:70-133; Wayne E. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 594-603; and Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 671-702.

<sup>264</sup>For example, Tom Barnes, *Atonement Matters: A Call to Declare the Biblical View of the Atonement* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press USA, 2008); Duane A. Dunham, "The Limited Atonement Revisited" (paper presented at the Northwest regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Portland, OR, 8 April 1995); Grant T. Elliott, "A Biblical Defense of Particular Redemption" (paper presented at the Eastern regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Lancaster, PA, 4 April 2003); John Reisinger, *Limited Atonement* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2002); and Tom Wells, *A Price for a People: The Meaning of Christ's Death* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1992).

<sup>265</sup>For example, Charles E. Hill, and Frank A. James III, eds., *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); Steve Jeffrey, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 268-78; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 225-47; Robert A. Morey, *Studies in the Atonement* (Shermans Dale, PA: Christian Scholars, 1989), 57-74; and Paul Wells, *Cross Words: The Biblical Doctrine of the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006), 233-46.

Reformed soteriology that include defenses of particular redemption.<sup>266</sup> Particular redemption continues to be a doctrine that many evangelicals feel is necessary to preserve the substitutionary aspects of the atonement and God's gracious sovereignty throughout salvation.

### Unlimited Atonement

The Arminian view of unlimited atonement entered into evangelicalism through the works of Jacob Arminius and the John Wesley. Several nineteenth century Arminian theologians, such as Richard Watson,<sup>267</sup> William Burton Pope,<sup>268</sup> and Thomas Summers,<sup>269</sup> defended unlimited atonement along with penal substitutionary atonement, just as Arminius and Wesley did. Other nineteenth century Arminian theologians,

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<sup>266</sup>For example, James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Essentials of Evangelicalism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); Frederick Leahy, *The Victory of the Lamb* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001); Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, *Why I Am Not an Arminian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); John Piper, *Fifty Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006); Duane Edward Spencer, *TULIP: The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979); R. C. Sproul, *The Truth of the Cross* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2007); David S. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Philadelphia, P&R: 2004); and James White, *The Potter's Freedom: A Defense of the Reformation and a Rebuttal of Norman Geisler's Chosen But Free* (Amityville, NY: Calvary, 2000).

<sup>267</sup>Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851), 2:102-37.

<sup>268</sup>William Burton Pope, *A Compendium of Christian Theology* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1874), 2:263-316.

<sup>269</sup>Thomas Summers, *Systematic Theology* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1888), 2:35-44.

however, such as Charles Finney<sup>270</sup> and John Miley,<sup>271</sup> advocated a governmental theory of the atonement along with unlimited atonement. This led to the charge that the governmental theory of the atonement is the Arminian view, and that unlimited atonement is incompatible with a penal substitutionary atonement.<sup>272</sup>

Twentieth and twenty-first century Arminian theologians have also been divided on the nature of the atonement, but they have been united in their view of unlimited atonement. Some, such as F. Leroy Forlines,<sup>273</sup> Thomas Oden,<sup>274</sup> and Robert Picirilli<sup>275</sup> hold to penal substitution, while others such as H. Orton Wiley,<sup>276</sup> R. Larry Shelton,<sup>277</sup> and H. Ray Dunning<sup>278</sup> hold to the governmental theory of the atonement.

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<sup>270</sup>Charles Finney, *Finney's Lectures on Systematic Theology*, ed. J. H. Fairchild (1878; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 258-82.

<sup>271</sup>John Miley, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 2:65-240.

<sup>272</sup>Letham, *Work of Christ*, 230-31; Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 202; Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 221-41; Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), 47-48; Peterson and Williams, *Why I Am Not an Arminian*, 198-99; Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will*, 97-99; and Robert L. Reymond, "A Consistent Supralapsarian Perspective on Election," in *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, ed. Chad O. Brand (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 165-68.

<sup>273</sup>F. Leroy Forlines, *The Quest for Truth* (Nashville: Randall House, 2001), 187-203.

<sup>274</sup>Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, *The Word of Life* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 344-425.

<sup>275</sup>Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will*, 85-138.

<sup>276</sup>H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1952), 2:279-300.

<sup>277</sup>R. Larry Shelton, "Initial Salvation: The Redemptive Grace of God in Christ," in *A Contemporary Wesleyan Theology: Biblical, Systematic, and Practical*, ed. Charles W. Carter (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury, 1983), 485-505.

<sup>278</sup>Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness*, 331-93.

Recent work articulating and defending unlimited atonement has included several articles and essays<sup>279</sup> as well as some popular-level books.<sup>280</sup> The most common arguments for unlimited atonement from an Arminian perspective continue to be the numerous universal texts of Scripture describing God's salvific work and desire, the universal nature of God's love, the consistency of unlimited atonement with other Arminian doctrines such as conditional election and prevenient grace, and the necessity of the universal gospel call.

Although there were some Calvinists who defended unlimited atonement in the nineteenth century,<sup>281</sup> four-point Calvinism has persisted as a viable option within evangelical theology due primarily to the work of the Dispensationalist movement and Baptists. Dispensationalist theologians such as Lewis Sperry Chafer,<sup>282</sup> Henry C.

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<sup>279</sup>For example, Donald Lake, "He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 31-50; I. Howard Marshall, "For All, For All My Savior Died," in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honor of Clark H. Pinnock*, ed. Stanley P. Porter and Anthony Ricross (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003), 322-46; idem, "Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 51-69; Terry L. Miethe, "The Universal Power of the Atonement," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 78-85; and William S. Sailer, "The Nature and Extent of the Atonement: A Wesleyan View," *BETS* 10 (1964):189-98.

<sup>280</sup>For example, Dave Hunt, *What Love is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God* (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2004), 293-308; and Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

<sup>281</sup>The most notable ones include John McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1856; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1996); and Ralph Wardlaw, *Discourses on the Nature and Extent of the Atonement* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1854).

<sup>282</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, *Soteriology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 183-205.

Thiessen,<sup>283</sup> Emery H. Bancroft,<sup>284</sup> John Walvoord,<sup>285</sup> Charles Ryrie,<sup>286</sup> and Robert Lightner,<sup>287</sup> have all held to unlimited atonement within a generally Calvinistic soteriology. They hold to doctrines such as penal substitutionary atonement, effectual calling, total depravity, and unconditional election, but do not believe that these doctrines demand particular redemption. On the contrary, they argue that the biblical teaching demands unlimited atonement. These theologians do share some affinities with Arminians, however, as at least some believe that an unlimited atonement paid for sin to such an extent that those who do not personally commit sin (such as infants) are never guilty of sin and therefore saved on the basis of the atonement.<sup>288</sup> They also agree with Arminians that the only basis for condemnation is unbelief, as people are no longer culpable for their other sins because every other sin has been paid for in the atonement.<sup>289</sup> In order to differentiate between the ways that the atonement affects the elect and the nonelect, the provision of salvation in the atonement and the application of salvation are

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<sup>283</sup>Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 240-42.

<sup>284</sup>Emery H. Bancroft, *Christian Theology: Systematic and Biblical*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Ronald B. Mayers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 118, 154.

<sup>285</sup>John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord* (Chicago: Moody, 1980); and idem, "Reconciliation," *BibSac* 120 (1963): 3-12.

<sup>286</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor, 1986), 318-23.

<sup>287</sup>Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998).

<sup>288</sup>Bancroft, *Christian Theology*, 154; and Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 241-42.

<sup>289</sup>Bancroft, *Christian Theology*, 154; Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 195-99; Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 94, 100-02; Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 241;

distinguished.<sup>290</sup>

Baptists have been divided over the Calvinist/Arminian debate almost since their inception.<sup>291</sup> Unlike many denominations, Baptists have always included both Calvinists and Arminians in their ranks, and many have attempted to mediate between the two systems. One way to do this is by incorporating Arminian elements, such as unlimited atonement, into a generally Calvinistic soteriology. Twentieth century evangelical Baptists such as Augustus Strong,<sup>292</sup> E. Y. Mullins,<sup>293</sup> Norman Douty,<sup>294</sup> Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest,<sup>295</sup> Millard Erickson,<sup>296</sup> and James Leo Garrett,<sup>297</sup> have all argued for unlimited atonement while avoiding Arminianism. These arguments

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and Walvoord, "Reconciliation," 11.

<sup>290</sup>Bancroft, *Christian Theology*, 118; Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 193-94; Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 90-91; Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 322-23; and Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 242.

<sup>291</sup>For a discussion of the differences between Particular and General Baptists as they relate to the extent of the atonement, see Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, 65-66. Thomas Nettles does an excellent job tracing the history of the debate over soteriology among Baptists. See Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lake Charles, LA: Cor Meum Tibi, 2002).

<sup>292</sup>Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), 771-73.

<sup>293</sup>Edgar Young Mullins, *The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1917), 336.

<sup>294</sup>Douty, *Death of Christ*.

<sup>295</sup>Gordon R. Lewis, and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3 vols. in 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 2:409-10.

<sup>296</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 842-52.

<sup>297</sup>Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, 59-69.

are normally exegetically and practically based,<sup>298</sup> and appeal is often made to the difference between the provision and application of salvation.<sup>299</sup> Recently there has been much debate about Calvinism and Arminianism, including the extent of the atonement, within Southern Baptist circles, with advocates for both particular redemption and unlimited atonement.<sup>300</sup> These debates mirror those in evangelicalism as a whole, as the extent of the atonement continues to be a point of contention among Bible-believing Christians.

### Conclusion

Augustine was the first theologian to challenge the consensus of unlimited atonement in the early church, proposing that Christ died for the elect alone. In this he was attempting to preserve the sovereignty of God throughout salvation. His views on God's sovereignty in salvation were generally accepted in a modified form by the Church, but his view of the extent of atonement was for the most part rejected. The Gottschalk controversy in the ninth century revolved around a revival of Augustine's views on the extent of the atonement. From then on, the two primary positions in the debate as well as the majority of their respective exegetical and theological arguments were established. Some, such as Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, attempted

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<sup>298</sup>Erickson is typical when he states, "We conclude that the hypothesis of universal atonement is able to account for a larger segment of the biblical witness with less distortion than is the hypothesis of limited atonement." Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 851.

<sup>299</sup>*Ibid.*, 851-52; Garrett, *Systematic Theology*, 69; Lewis and Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 2:409-10; and Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 772-73.

<sup>300</sup>For an example of this recent debate, see Brad J. Waggoner and E. Ray Clendenen, eds., *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue* (Nashville: B&H, 2008).

mediating positions. John Calvin helped introduce Augustinian theology into Protestantism and most of his Reformed contemporaries and disciples, such as Theodore Beza, argued for particular redemption. Jacob Arminius, Moïse Amyraut, Richard Baxter, and John Wesley all rejected the prevailing Reformed view of particular redemption and offered their own variations of unlimited atonement. Arminius and Wesley rejected Calvinistic soteriology and proposed views of unlimited atonement that were consistent with their Arminian theology, while Amyraut and Baxter both accepted Calvinistic soteriology and attempted to offer mediating positions on the extent of the atonement. Contemporary evangelicalism carries on the debate over the extent of the atonement with the same positions and their variations that have been offered throughout church history.

The multi-intentioned view fits into neither of the two historical positions on the extent of the atonement. It could be considered as a form of particular redemption because it argues that Christ on the cross intended to certainly secure salvation for the elect and the elect alone. On the other hand, it could be considered as a form of unlimited atonement because it argues that Christ paid for the sins of every single person, elect and nonelect. It fits into neither of these views, however, because it holds to what each view rejects. Christ intended both to secure the salvation of the elect and to pay for the sins of all people in his redemption.

In attempting to hold together the particular and the general in the atonement, the multi-intentioned view could also be considered as a form of hypothetical universalism or four-point Calvinism, as the intent of these views is to do the same thing. In this way the multi-intentioned view is similar to the views of theologians such as

Thomas Aquinas, John Davenant, Moïse Amyraut, Richard Baxter, and four-point Calvinists such as Lewis Sperry Chafer or Millard Erickson. The multi-intentioned view, however, differs from hypothetical universalism and contemporary four-point Calvinism in four important respects. First, as will be explained in chapter 4, it understands God's general redemption to be for specific purposes that go beyond the revealed will of God for the salvation of all. In other words, Christ intended to die on the cross to pay for the sins of all people in order to accomplish the universal aspects of God's plan for creation. There is therefore nothing "conditional" or "hypothetical" about the atonement; it accomplishes exactly what God wants it to accomplish. Second, as will also be seen in chapter 3, Christ actually paid for the sins of all people in order to accomplish his general purposes; he did not hypothetically or conditionally pay for the sins of the nonelect. Third, as will be explained in chapter 5, Christ's atonement itself is in some sense particular. Hypothetical universalism understands the atonement in and of itself to be only universal, and only the application of the atonement to be particular. In the multi-intentioned view the atonement is for all, but it is not for all people in the same way. It does some things for all people, and some things that are just for the elect. Fourth, the general payment for sin in the atonement does not absolve people from their responsibility for their sin. Unlike the common assertions of contemporary four-point Calvinism, the multi-intentioned view does not hold that people are only condemned for their lack of faith or that the general payment for sin guaranteed the salvation of anyone.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>301</sup>It is only the particular intentions of the atonement that save the elect. This includes children who die in infancy as well as those who are not mentally competent to respond to the gospel. For a defense of infant salvation from a Calvinistic perspective,

The debate over the extent of the atonement has a long and colorful history. Particular redemption and unlimited atonement have both been attempts to understand what the Scriptures teach about the subject. Evangelicals have argued for both positions as the best way to understand the doctrine. The multi-intentioned view hopes to advance the debate by demonstrating how the extent of the atonement is both universal and particular at the same time. The multi-intentioned view is not an attempt to find a “middle way” between Calvinism and Arminianism, or an attempt to incorporate Arminian elements into a Calvinistic soteriology. Instead, it hopes to approach the debate from a fresh perspective so that all of the Bible’s teaching on the subject is properly emphasized.

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see Ronald H. Nash, *When A Baby Dies: Answers to Comfort Grieving Parents* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). The reason that the atonement saves people is because Christ secured the salvation of the elect in the atonement (his particular intention), not just because he made a general payment for sin.

## CHAPTER 3

### A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF JESUS CHRIST'S PAYMENT FOR THE SINS OF ALL PEOPLE IN THE ATONEMENT

#### Introduction

Jesus Christ's payment for the sins of the elect and the nonelect through his penal substitutionary atonement is necessary in order to account for the multiple intentions that God had in the atonement. Not only are God's particular, salvific intentions for the elect grounded in the atonement, but his general intentions for the creation are grounded in the atonement as well. The idea that a universal payment for sin was necessary in order for the atonement to affect the nonelect and the creation is disputed by advocates of particular redemption. Most advocates of particular redemption freely admit that there are universal implications or benefits of the atonement, but see no need to ground these benefits in a universal payment for sin.<sup>1</sup> Instead, these universal

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<sup>1</sup>Roger Nicole, for example, states, "The Reformed as well as others admit, yea are eager to acknowledge, that there are certain blessings short of salvation, which are the fruits of the work of Christ, which may terminate upon any and all men, and which do in fact substantially benefit some who will never attain unto salvation." Roger Nicole, "The Case for Definite Atonement," *BETS* 10 (1967): 199. See also Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 470-75; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 438; Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932), 160-61; R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 78-81; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 61-62; and Terrance L. Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 100-02.

benefits are based upon the universal sufficiency of Christ's atonement,<sup>2</sup> the universal mediatorial dominion of Christ,<sup>3</sup> or seen as flowing incidentally to the nonelect through the blessings bestowed upon the elect in the atonement.<sup>4</sup>

There are problems, however, with these understandings of the basis of the atonement's general intentions. As the next two chapters will demonstrate, general benefits of the atonement can only be grounded in the atonement's universal sufficiency if this sufficiency refers to an atonement that sufficiently pays for the sins of all people. Particular redemption does not understand sufficiency in this way, but instead understands the universal sufficiency of the atonement to refer to its intrinsic merit as the sacrifice of the infinite God-man.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, particular redemption, despite holding to the universal sufficiency of the atonement, still does not see the atonement as doing anything for the nonelect.<sup>6</sup> In light of this, it is difficult to see how an atonement that is

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<sup>2</sup>Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 79-81.

<sup>3</sup>Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 61-62.

<sup>4</sup>Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 471; and Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 438.

<sup>5</sup>Commenting on the sufficient for all/efficient for some formula adopted by the Synod of Dort, Hans Boersma states, "Christ's death is sufficient for the whole world simply because of who Christ is and because of what he suffered. Dort does not add that his death is sufficient for the whole world because it actually extends to the whole world." Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 71.

<sup>6</sup>"Advocates of limited atonement face the somewhat awkward situation of contending that while the atonement is sufficient to cover the sins of the nonelect, Christ did not die for them. It is as if God, in giving a dinner, prepared far more food than was needed, yet refused to consider the possibility of inviting additional guests. Advocates of unlimited atonement, on the other hand, have no difficulty with the fact that Christ's death is sufficient for everyone, for, in their view, Christ died for all persons." Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 852.

designed to be only for the elect has designed benefits for the nonelect.<sup>7</sup> The idea that the general benefits of the atonement are indirect benefits of an atonement that was only for the elect seems to be more consistent, but is also unable to recognize any specific intentions in the atonement for the nonelect. The view that these benefits accrue to the nonelect because of Christ's universal dominion (cf. Phil 2:5-11; Col 1:19-20) is true as far as it goes, but it seems difficult to uphold the unity of Christ's work if his kingly work is universal while his priestly work is limited.

The idea that Christ paid for the sins of the elect and the nonelect is necessary in order to account of the general intentions that God had in the atonement.<sup>8</sup> It is therefore central to the multi-intentioned view. In light of this importance, the purpose of this chapter is to biblically and theologically demonstrate Christ's payment for the sins of all people. The Scriptures that express this truth are Isaiah 53:4-6; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:46-47; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-21; 1 Timothy 2:4-6, 4:10; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2; and 4:14. This chapter will exegete and explain what these passages teach concerning the extent of the atonement in four sections: Isaiah 53:4-6, the Johannine literature, the Pauline literature, and the General Epistles. The

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<sup>7</sup>“The very admission of limited redemptionists that some benefits extend to the non-elect means they make the design of God twofold, applying some benefits directly to the elect and others indirectly to the non-elect. Thus, there is inconsistency in the limited view when some of Calvary's achievements are made to extend to all men while others are restricted to the elect. Consistency would restrict all the benefits to the one for whom Christ died; and since in the limited concept Christ died only for the elect, it is illogical to include the non-elect in any sense.” Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 110.

<sup>8</sup>The truth of this statement will be demonstrated not only throughout this chapter, but in the following chapter as well.

biblical defense of Christ's payment for all sin will be followed by a section that explains why a complete and unlimited payment for sin does not entail universalism. Special care will be taken throughout this chapter to respond to the arguments of particular redemption against an unlimited scope in the atonement. In doing so this chapter will seek to demonstrate how the multi-intentioned view differs from particular redemption.

### **Isaiah 53:4-6**

Isaiah 52:13-53:12<sup>9</sup> is the fourth "Servant Song" in the book of Isaiah (following Isa 42:1-9; 49:1-13; and 50:4-11), and is one of the most well known passages in the Bible that describes the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, the Servant, in the place of sinners.<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 53 describes how Israel can be reconciled to God despite its sin; God will satisfy his justice through the vicarious suffering and death of the Servant for the sins of the people.<sup>11</sup> As John Oswalt states, "This poem expresses the means of salvation that is anticipated in Isaiah 49-52 and in which the people are invited to

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<sup>9</sup>This passage will be referred to as "Isaiah 53" throughout the dissertation.

<sup>10</sup>F. Duane Lindsey, "The Career of the Servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12," *BibSac* 139 (1982): 312-29. For a defense of this passage as affirming penal substitutionary atonement, see Peter J. Gentry, "The Atonement in Isaiah's Fourth Servant Song (Isaiah 52:13-53:12)," *SBJT* 11 (2007): 20-47; J. Alan Groves, "Atonement in Isaiah 53," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 61-89; and Steve Jeffrey, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 52-67. For a defense of the view that understands the servant in this passage to be Jesus Christ, see Robert B. Chisholm Jr., "The Christological Fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant Songs," *BibSac* 163 (2006): 387-404.

<sup>11</sup>Lindsey, "Career of the Servant," 313-14; John N. Oswalt, "Isaiah 52:13-53:12: Servant of All," *CTJ* 40 (2005): 85-90.

participate in chs. 54-55.”<sup>12</sup> The passage is divided into five stanzas: 52:13-15; 53:1-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12, and each stanza expresses a different facet of the Servant’s person and work.<sup>13</sup> The third stanza is the one that speaks to the extent of the atonement, as it describes whose sins God put upon the Servant.

Isaiah 53:4-6 states, “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”<sup>14</sup> The Servant here suffers, not for his own sins, but for the sins of others.<sup>15</sup> He bears the griefs, sorrows, transgressions, and iniquities of others, and through that suffering others can be healed from their sin.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>12</sup>John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 385.

<sup>13</sup>“In 52:13-15, he is exalted but shocking; in 53:1-3, he is rejected and despised; in 53:4-6, he suffers for sinners (‘us’); in 53:7-9, his ministry is unrecognized; and in 53:10-12, he is the sacrificial victor. In this regard, we see the destiny of servanthood, the results of servanthood, the burden of servanthood, the outcome of servanthood, and the goal of servanthood.” Oswalt, “Isaiah 52:13-53:13,” 90.

<sup>14</sup>All quotations in this dissertation are from the NASB, unless indicated otherwise. Italics throughout these quotations are in the original unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>15</sup>“The substitutionary character of his suffering is highlighted by the repeated contrast in Isaiah 53:4-6 between *he*, *his*, and *him* on the one hand, and *we*, *us*, *we all*, and *us all* on the other.” Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 54.

<sup>16</sup>For a defense of these terms referring to sin and of Christ’s healing in these verses referring to the healing from sin (as opposed to the view that sees physical healing in these verses), see Gentry, “Atonement,” 33; and Richard L. Mayhue, “For What Did Christ Atone in Isaiah 53:4-5?” *MSJ* 6 (1995): 121-41.

question that arises in this passage concerning the extent of the atonement is who these “others” are. Does this passage affirm that the Servant atones for the sins of only his elect people, thereby leading to particular redemption, or does he atone for the sins of all people, leading to an unlimited atonement?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to understand whom the first person plural pronouns are referring to throughout this passage. There are three possible answers to this question: the nations of 52:13-15, the nation of Israel through the voice of Isaiah, or the collective voice of the prophets.<sup>17</sup> The third answer does not fit into the context of 53:3-6 and can be rejected, but the other two answers are both possible. The first answer, however, seems to require an understanding of the Servant as the nation of Israel instead of Christ, and therefore can also be rejected. The second answer seems most likely for three reasons. First, the normal referent for “we” throughout the book (e.g., 16:6; 24:16; 42:24; 64:5-6) is the nation of Israel.<sup>18</sup> Second, there is nothing in the context that shows the passage moving from recording the reactions of the nations in 53:13-15 to recording what they say in 53:1-9.<sup>19</sup> Third, the New Testament seems to support this interpretation with how Isaiah 53:1 is quoted in John 12:38 and Romans 10:16. This means that in this chapter Isaiah is describing what the Servant does on the behalf of and in the place of the nation of Israel.

This understanding seems to support an unlimited extent of the Servant’s

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<sup>17</sup>Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, 381.

<sup>18</sup>Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, trans. James Martin (1887; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 2:310-11.

<sup>19</sup>Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, 381.

sacrifice. If the servant bore the sins of the entire nation of Israel, he bore the sins of both the elect remnant and those who rejected God. Those who hold to particular redemption are forced to understand Isaiah as only speaking of the elect remnant in 53:4-6.<sup>20</sup> This understanding of the text not only contradicts the referent of the first person plural pronouns, but it also seems to contradict the use of the word “all” in 53:6. In this verse, Isaiah states that all have gone astray, that all have sinned. He then states that God caused the sins of all to attack the servant.<sup>21</sup> The “all” who have sinned is here equated with the “all” whose sins God caused to attack the servant.<sup>22</sup> As Millard Erickson states, “This passage is especially powerful from a logical standpoint. It is clear that the extent of sin is universal; it is specified that *every one* of us has sinned. It should also be noticed that the extent of what will be laid on the suffering servant exactly parallels the extent of sin. It is difficult to read this passage and not conclude that just as everyone sins, everyone is also atoned for.”<sup>23</sup> The elect remnant are certainly not the only people who have sinned against the Lord.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>See for example, Tom Wells, *A Price for a People: The Meaning of Christ's Death* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1992), 73-75.

<sup>21</sup>For a defense of the understanding of “attack” instead of “laid on,” in Isa 53:6, see Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 120.

<sup>22</sup>In using the word “all,” Isaiah moves from just referring to the nation of Israel to referring to the entire human race. “The entire people is [*sic*] compared to a flock of sheep. *All of us* both opens and closes the verse, emphasizing the extent of the problem, and by its lack of specificity inviting an extension to the whole human race.” Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, 389.

<sup>23</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 847.

<sup>24</sup>“As sin and iniquity is universal, so also is Christ's saving provision. . . . The objects of the Messiah's sufferings are identified in v. 6b as the people of Israel at

That the “all” in 53:6 is universal, and that the passage is referring to the sins of humanity instead of just the sins of Israel, is clear from the broader context of the passage. Isaiah also speaks of the servant’s mission as being a light to the nations (Isa 42:6; 49:6) and as establishing the rule of God among the nations (Isa 42:1, 4), indicating that the Servant’s ministry is not only for Israel, but for all people.<sup>25</sup> The outcome of the Servant’s sacrifice also involves people from all nations, as the Servant will “justify the many” and “bear their iniquities” (Isa 53:11). The “many” referred to in this verse includes the nations mentioned in Isaiah 52:13-15.<sup>26</sup> Jesus’ statement that he came to give his life as a ransom for many (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45) alludes to this verse<sup>27</sup> and indicates that Jesus thought of himself as the Suffering Servant who gave his life for all

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large.” Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 189.

<sup>25</sup>Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, 384.

<sup>26</sup>“Yet vv. 11-12 speak of many who will benefit from the Servant’s life work. The first will be Israel, but the nations will also be included as is clear from the fact that the many in 11b, 12a and 12e explicates the many in 14a and 15a, who are the nations.” Gentry, “Atonement,” 37. See also John W. Olley, “‘The Many’: How is Isaiah 53:12a to be Understood?” *Biblica* 68 (1987): 353-55.

<sup>27</sup>Many advocates of particular redemption appeal to the word “many” in these verses as proof of particular redemption, that Christ only dies for the “many,” and not for all. See for example, Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 201; John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 45; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 73-75. This interpretation is one possible understanding of Jesus’ statement, but if it is correct than it seems to be pitting Isa 53:11 against Isa 53:6. The emphasis within Isaiah 53, moreover, is on Jesus bearing the sins of “all” or the “many,” and the use of “many” in 53:11-12 is not meant to be restrictive in any sense. See Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, 403-08. It is likely that the term “many” as used in Matt 20:28 and Mark 10:45 (and Isa 53:11-12) refers to a great host of people that cannot be numbered, and is therefore emphasizing the unlimited extent of Christ’s ransom. “‘The many’ underlines the immeasurable effects of Jesus’ solitary death; the one dies, the many find their lives ‘ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,’ a great host no man can number.” D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 433.

peoples.<sup>28</sup> Christ is the Servant who dies for Israel's sins, but he also dies for the sins of the Gentiles in order to bring together both Gentiles and Jews into the church, the people of God (Eph 2:11-22). Christ's death on the cross as the Suffering Servant also inaugurated the New Covenant (Luke 22:20), which, while clearly for Israel (Jer 31:31-34), is potentially for all people (Heb 8-10), and which replaced the old covenant that was only for the nation of Israel.<sup>29</sup> Isaiah 53 proclaims that the elect and the nonelect from all races have their sins paid for by the Servant's substitutionary sacrifice.

### **The Johannine Literature**

#### **The Gospel of John**

A repeated emphasis in John's Gospel is that Jesus' death was for the "world." In John 1:29 John the Baptist, upon seeing Jesus, exclaims that he is the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 3:16-17 states that God, out of his love for the world, gave his Son so that all who believe in whom would have everlasting life, that the world through him might be saved. The Samaritan villagers at Sychar call Christ the "Savior of the world" in John 4:42. Jesus said that he is the bread from God which "gives life to the world" (John 6:33) and that he gives his flesh "for the life of the world" (John 6:51). In John 12:47 Jesus states that he did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. What these verses teach concerning the extent of the atonement depends on the meaning of the term "world" (*kosmos*) in these verses. Does the term "world"

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<sup>28</sup>"Most scholars have also recognized in 'the many' a clear reference to Isaiah. The implication of the cumulative evidence is that Jesus explicitly referred to himself as Isaiah's Suffering Servant (see 26:17-30) and interpreted his death in that light." Carson, *Matthew*, 434.

<sup>29</sup>Chisholm, *Handbook on the Prophets*, 122.

refer to all of humanity, or does it refer only to the elect?

Advocates of particular redemption often insist that seemingly universal terms such as “world” must be understood in their contexts and not simply understood as referring to all people.<sup>30</sup> This is certainly true, as the term “world” does not always refer to all people without exception, but this recognition does not give one the warrant to dismiss the reality that the term “world” often does refer to all people.<sup>31</sup> What is necessary is to understand all of the ways in which John’s Gospel uses the term, and then to understand how it uses the term in each of the specific verses referenced above. John, in his Gospel, uses the term *kosmos* in three different ways.<sup>32</sup> First, *kosmos* sometimes refers to the totality of creation, or everything that exists (John 17:5; 21:25). Second, *kosmos* is used to refer to the world of humanity (John 1:10, 29; 6:33, 51; 12:19; 14:17, 19; 16:20; 17:21). Third, and most often, *kosmos* refers to the world of humanity that is in opposition to God, that is lost and separated from its creator (John 7:7; 8:23; 12:31; 14:22, 27, 30; 15:18-19; 16:8, 11, 33; 17:6, 9, 14).<sup>33</sup> There is no place in the Gospel of

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<sup>30</sup>“These terms need to be considered carefully in their context, however; each of them has a scope which is not necessarily co-extensive with the human race but which the context alone can reasonably determine.” Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 205.

<sup>31</sup>“The fact that the term [world] does not always include all people does not settle the question of what it means in the crucial texts. It is a flexible term. It can refer to the world or universe in which people live or to the world and its people, with the accent on the latter. It can be used hyperbolically. It signifies primarily the world of human beings rather than inanimate nature.” I. Howard Marshall, “For All, for All My Savior Died,” in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honor of Clark H. Pinnock*, ed. Stanley P. Porter and Anthony Ricross (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003), 337.

<sup>32</sup>W. Hall Harris III, “An Out-of-this-World Experience: A Look at ‘κόσμος’ in the Johannine Literature,” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington, DC, 18 November 2006), 7-10.

<sup>33</sup>“But *world* for John has more specific overtones. Although some have argued that for John the word *kosmos* (‘world’) sometimes has positive overtones (‘God

John where the term *kosmos* is used to refer to a limited group of people, such as believers or the elect, or Gentiles as opposed to Jews.<sup>34</sup>

John's use of *kosmos* means that when Christ's death is spoken of in relation to the "world," it is spoken of in relation to all people or to all lost people who are opposed to God and the ways of God. Either way, John continually speaks of Christ's atoning

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so loved the world,' 3:16), sometimes neutral overtones (as here [1:9]; cf. also 21:24-25, where the 'world' is simply a big place that can hold a lot of books), and frequently negative overtones ('the world did not recognize him,' 1:10), closer inspection shows that although a handful of passages preserve a neutral emphasis the vast majority are decidedly negative. There are no unambiguously positive occurrences. The 'world,' or frequently 'this world' (e.g., 8:23; 9:39; 11:9; 18:36), is not the universe, but the created order (especially of human beings and human affairs) in rebellion against its Maker (e.g., 1:10; 7:7; 14:17, 22, 27, 30; 15:18-19; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14). . . . In fact, the 'world' in John's usage comprises no believers at all. Those who come to faith are no longer of this world; they have been chosen out of this world (15:19). If Jesus is the Savior of the world (4:42), that says a great deal about Jesus, but nothing positive about the world." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 122-23. Similarly, Harris states, "Thus although in the Fourth Gospel some of the occurrences of κόσμος appear at first glance practically neutral, it becomes clear as the narrative unfolds that ultimately the κόσμος represents the world of humanity as lost, alienated, and separated from its Creator and in opposition to him, under the control of the Enemy and to be overcome by the Christian just as it was overcome by Jesus himself (16:33)." Harris, "Out-of-this-World Experience," 10.

<sup>34</sup>In order to be consistent with their view, advocates of particular redemption must understand *kosmos* in a limited sense. John Owen argues at length that *kosmos* does not mean all people in any of the verses quoted above. According to Owen, John 1:29 refers to Christ bearing sin that is common to all. The term "world" in John 3:16 refers to the elect. In John 4:42 and 6:51 the use of "world" simply means that Christ is the only Savior for sin, and that he is the Savior of all who are saved. See Owen, *The Death of Death*, 209-31. Similarly, William Shedd notes that the term "world" sometimes refers to believers (as in John 6:33, 51), it sometimes refers to those who are contrary to the church, and it sometimes refers to nations in distinction from the Jews (as in John 3:16). See William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), 2:479-80. Louis Berkhof believes "world" denotes the nations as opposed to Israel in John 1:29; 6:33, 51. See Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 395-96. Marshall offers a good response to these interpretations when he states, "It is not possible to limit 'world' to mean 'all without distinction but not all without exception'; the plain sense of the sayings is that salvation is available for all and is offered to all and can be received by those who believe." Marshall, "For All," 338.

death as unlimited in extent, and not only for the elect or for believers. John the Baptist's proclamation in John 1:29 makes it clear that Christ's atoning sacrifice as the Lamb of God is for all people.<sup>35</sup> The Samaritans' statement in John 4:42 that Christ is the "Savior of the World" means that he is not the Savior of the Jews alone, but that he came to be the Savior of all people, Jews and Gentiles.<sup>36</sup> Jesus' statement in John 6:33, that he is the bread of God who gives life to the world, carries a similar meaning; Jesus is not the Savior of Israel alone, but he has come to offer life to all people who are lost.<sup>37</sup> When Jesus says that he gives his flesh for the life of the world in John 6:51, he means that he

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<sup>35</sup>"Here the sin which is removed by the Lamb of God is that of 'the world' (*kosmos*); the universal note so struck is heard again in the course of this Gospel (e.g., 3:16 f.; 4:42; 6:51) and in the First Epistle (2:2; 4:14). The reader of the Gospel as a whole finds John's proclamation much less cryptic than its first hearers must have done with no such context to guide them in its meaning. The 'world' embraces all without distinction of race, religion, or culture (cf. John 12:32)." F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 53. For a defense of understanding this verse as referring to substitutionary atonement, see Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 51-53; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 148-51; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 66-68; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 129-43; and Christopher W. Skinner, "Another Look at 'The Lamb of God,'" *BibSac* 161 (2004): 89-104.

<sup>36</sup>"Jesus was Messiah, but when the Samaritans called him 'the Savior of the World,' they used a title that was associated not with Samaritan or Jewish messianic expectations but with worldwide dominion. They recognized that Jesus transcended national boundaries; like Caesar he was a figure of universal significance." Craig R. Koester, "'The Savior of the World' (John 4:42)," *JBL* 109 (1990): 668. Köstenberger also notes, "By recognizing Jesus as 'Savior of the world,' the Samaritans accept that salvation may be from the Jews, but it is ultimately for all people. This universal note fits well with the evangelist's own consistent emphasis on the universality of salvation offered through Jesus." Köstenberger, *John*, 165.

<sup>37</sup>"Here 'the bread of God' is the bread which God supplies: like the manna, it comes down from heaven, but unlike the manna, it gives life – eternal life – to all mankind." Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 152. See also Carson, *Gospel of John*, 287.

gives his life (i.e., he dies) so that all people might have life.<sup>38</sup> Jesus makes salvation available to all people when he states that he did not come to judge the world, but to save the world in John 12:47.<sup>39</sup> One of the main aspects of Jesus' mission was to give his life as an atoning sacrifice that paid for the sins of all people so that all people might be saved.<sup>40</sup>

John 3:16-17 is particularly clear in relating the death of Jesus to all people.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>“Give for the life of the world’ has a sacrificial connotation. In the larger narrative context this refers to Jesus’ body given on the cross for the sins of humanity.” Köstenberger, *John*, 215. See also George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 93-94; and Merrill C. Tenney, *John*, in vol. 9 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 77. Some commentators also see an allusion here to Isa 53, heightening the universality of the sacrifice, as Jesus suffers for the iniquity of all. See Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 158; and Carson, *Gospel of John*, 295. J. Ramsey Michaels, an advocate of particular redemption, states that “this is about as close as the Gospel of John ever comes to universal (as distinct from definite) atonement.” J. Ramsey Michaels, “Atonement in John’s Gospel and Epistles,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 108.

<sup>39</sup>“The purpose of his coming is not condemnation but transformation and deliverance from the wrath of God and the sentence of eternal death, which rest on humanity as a whole.” Köstenberger, *John*, 303. See also Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 274-75; and Carson, *Gospel of John*, 452-53.

<sup>40</sup>Wayne Grudem, an advocate of particular redemption who recognizes the meaning of *kosmos* in the Johannine literature, understands these verses in John to simply be saying that sinners in general will be saved, and that verses speaking of Christ dying for the world are referring to the free offer of the gospel. Therefore unlimited atonement is not a necessary conclusion from these passages. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 598. While Grudem is correct to note that Jesus did die for sinners and to freely offer the gospel, John’s language in these verses is in no way restrictive. There is no warrant in these verses for making a distinction between sinners in general and all sinners, other than a preconceived notion of particular redemption. Not only that, but, as will be shown in chap. 4, a universal gospel offer demands an unlimited atonement.

<sup>41</sup>The giving of the Son in these verses embraces both the incarnation and the atonement. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 51; and Carson, *Gospel of John*, 206.

The reason that God gave his Son to the world is because of his love for the world.<sup>42</sup> The purpose behind God's giving the Son is so that whoever believes in him can have eternal life.<sup>43</sup> By sending the Son into the world, God's saving will is shown to be for the world, or all people without distinction or exception<sup>44</sup> This verse so clearly expresses God's love for the world and Jesus' mission as pertaining to the world that many advocates of particular redemption insist that the term 'world' in these verses must refer to the elect only.<sup>45</sup> This understanding of 'world' not only contrasts with John's usage of *kosmos*; it does not make sense within the context of the verses.<sup>46</sup> In John 3:16-17 God is declaring

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<sup>42</sup>Beasley-Murray, 51; *John*, and Köstenberger, *John*, 128.

<sup>43</sup>Beasley-Murray, *John*, 51; and Köstenberger, *John*, 129-30.

<sup>44</sup>“The love of God is limitless; it embraces all mankind. . . . Nor was it for one nation or group that he was given: he was given so that all, without distinction or exception, who repose their faith on him (*eis auton* here, as against *en auto* in the preceding verse), might be rescued from destruction and blessed with the life that is life indeed. The gospel of salvation and life has its source in the love of God. The essence of the saving message is made unmistakably plain, in language which people of all races, cultures, and times can grasp, and so effectively is it set forth in these words that many more, probably, have found the way of life through them than any other biblical text.” Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 89-90.

<sup>45</sup>“By the ‘world,’ we understand the elect of God only, though not considered in this place as such, but under such a notion as, being true of them, serves for the farther exaltation of God's love toward them, which is the end here designed; and this, as they are poor, miserable, lost creatures in the world, of the world, scattered abroad in all places of the world, not tied to Jews or Greeks, but dispersed in any nation, kindred, and language under heaven.” Owen, *Death of Death*, 209. Owen actually paraphrases the verse as follows: “God so loved the elect, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish.” *Ibid.*, 214. See also Gary D. Long, *Definite Atonement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2006), 9-13. D. A. Carson notes, however, “Clever exegetical devices that make ‘the world’ a label referring to the elect are not very convincing.” D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 75.

<sup>46</sup>“Let us follow through with the limited view and interpretation of the world ‘world’ in such a simple and familiar passage as John 3:16. If ‘world’ means the elect only, then it would follow that he ‘of the elect’ that believeth may be saved and he ‘of the

his love towards sinful humanity, and out of this love he sends his Son to die in the place of sinful humanity so that sinful humanity might be saved and have eternal life.<sup>47</sup> This interpretation is so plain that some contemporary advocates of particular redemption recognize the universal nature of John's "world" language in this passage, even if they refuse to understand the atonement as paying for the sins of all of sinful humanity.<sup>48</sup> In these verses John expresses the unlimited extent of Christ's saving work, just as he does throughout his Gospel.

## 1 John

The meaning of the term 'world' in John's first epistle is no different than it is

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elect' that believeth not is condemned (cf. John 3:18). This absurdity would contradict the most basic point of Calvinism, namely, that God has elected from eternity past certain individuals and they alone will be saved. Whoever heard of elect people being damned, and yet that is precisely what the limited interpretation leads to in John 3:16-18 when the limited concept is followed through." Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 70.

<sup>47</sup>Beasley-Murray, *John*, 51; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 205; and Köstenberger, *John*, 129.

<sup>48</sup>This is usually done by speaking of Christ dying for sinners in general, instead of sinners in particular. John Frame, for example, states, "Since all people who are apart from Christ are cursed for their unbelief and disobedience (John 3:36), *world* includes everybody apart from grace. It is a universal term. . . . My conclusion is that God sent his Son, motivated by his love for the world." John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 418. John MacArthur is another example. "So the context of John 3:16 requires the verse to speak of God's love to sinful mankind in general." John F. MacArthur, Jr. "The Love of God for Humanity," *MSJ* 7 (1996): 13. It is difficult, however, to understand how Christ died for sinners in general if he did not die specifically for all sinners. Robert Letham and R. B. Kuiper understand the term *kosmos* in John 3:16 to be referring only to the evil quality of the world, and therefore as not reflecting on the question of the extent of the atonement. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 30; and Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 240-41. John's use of *kosmos*, however, even when it has a negative connotation, refers to people who are evil. The question of whom Christ died for in these verses cannot be avoided.

in John's Gospel.<sup>49</sup> Just as he did in the Fourth Gospel, John states that Christ's atoning sacrifice is for the world. This thought is expressed in two verses: 1 John 2:2 and 4:14. The latter of these verses states, "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world." The designation "Savior of the world" is unique to the Johannine literature, occurring only one other time in John 4:42.<sup>50</sup> In that context the phrase was emphasizing that Jesus is the Savior of all the people of the world, not just the Jews.<sup>51</sup> The context of the statement in 1 John is different, however, because the question of whether Jesus was the Savior of the Jews only or of all humanity was not a pressing issue for John's readers.<sup>52</sup> John most likely uses this phrase here to emphasize that Jesus has come in the flesh as the atoning sacrifice for all sin.<sup>53</sup> This emphasis was necessary as a response to heretics who believed that salvation was an intellectual exercise

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<sup>49</sup>"Turning to the 24 instances of κόσμος in the Johannine Letters, we find considerable overlap with the usage we have already encountered in the Fourth Gospel." Harris "Out-of-this-World Experience," 10.

<sup>50</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 111; and Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 164.

<sup>51</sup>See n. 36 on p. 109 of this dissertation.

<sup>52</sup>"The concerns of 1 John are different from those of the Fourth Gospel. The background of 1 John was strife within the Christian community. The question of whether Jesus is the Savior *of the world* was not the issue. What was in question was whether Jesus needed to be recognized as Savior at all. In particular, it was whether belief in Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice for sin was necessary. Those who had seceded from the author's community denied that they had sinned (cf. 1:6-2:2) and argued that Jesus' atoning death was unnecessary, and did not take place (cf. 5:6-8). Those who, with the author, acknowledged their sins, confessed the importance of Jesus' atoning sacrifice which provided cleansing from their sins. They confessed that the Father 'sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.'" Kruse, *Letters of John*, 164, emphasis the author's.

<sup>53</sup>Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, WBC, vol. 51 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 253.

involving deliverance from ignorance instead of sin, and that faith in Jesus' death as an atoning sacrifice was not necessary for salvation.<sup>54</sup> Jesus Christ, as the Savior who has been sent by the Father, is the Savior of the world, including even the heretics to whom John is referring. The term "world" is used here to denote humanity in opposition to God, ascribing the widest possible scope to the saving purposes and activity of God.<sup>55</sup>

First John 2:2, like 1 John 4:14, also ascribes the widest possible scope to Christ's death. It is one of the clearest expressions in all of Scripture that the atonement is not for believers only.<sup>56</sup> First John 2:1-2 states, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world.*" One of the reasons John is writing this epistle is so that his readers will not sin. In case they do sin, however, John encourages them with the truth that Jesus Christ the righteous one is their advocate before

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<sup>54</sup>"An antagonistic thrust may be included in the reference to Jesus as 'savior of the world.' Against those heretics who regarded salvation as an intellectual exercise, and as deliverance from ignorance rather than sin, John makes it clear that this 'savior' has come in the flesh, and that his death is the atoning sacrifice for all sin (cf. 1:7; 2:2; 4:2, 10; 5:6). *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>55</sup>"As earlier, where he speaks of Christ as 'the propitiation . . . for all the world' (1 John 2:2), so here John ascribes the widest scope to the saving purpose of God." Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 111.

<sup>56</sup>"*Few biblical texts are stronger in their stress upon the universal potentiality of Christ's atonement than 1 John 2:1-2!*" Donald Lake, "He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 39, emphasis the author's. Due to its seemingly straightforward affirmation of the atonement being unlimited, this verse is probably the most contested verse in the debate over the extent of the atonement.

the Father.<sup>57</sup> His readers can take comfort in the surety of Christ's advocacy because he is the propitiation for their sins.<sup>58</sup> John adds to this encouragement by proclaiming that

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<sup>57</sup>The use of *paraclete* here to describe Jesus denotes his intercessory ministry for believers. "In short, Jesus is now in the Father's presence as the eternal High Priest, who, having atoned for the sins of his people, now stands as their effective Advocate to ensure that their sins do not disqualify them from fellowship with the Father. On the one hand, John's readers could follow the heretics in denying their sin and Jesus, and thus sinning (probably the somewhat cryptic 'sin unto death' mentioned in 1 John 5:16), which was the path of death. On the other hand, John's readers could confess their sins by believing in God's word concerning Jesus, which takes care of their sins for all time and is the path of life." Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 82. This ministry of Jesus is similar to his High Priestly ministry as described in Heb 7:25ff. See also Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 48-50, Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 36-37, and John R. W. Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 85-86.

<sup>58</sup>The translation of the word *hilasmos* in this verse is controversial, with the words "propitiation" and "expiation" both attested as possible meanings. The word "propitiation" depicts God as the object of the atonement and understands his wrath as placated by the atonement. The word "expiation" depicts God as the subject of the atonement, as he is the one who removes the defilement of sin by covering it. C. H. Dodd is the most famous defender of translating *hilasmos* as "expiation." He based this translation primarily on linguistic evidence, arguing that Hellenistic Judaism as depicted in the Septuagint did not regard sacrifices as means of pacifying the Deity, but as means of delivering people from sin. Therefore the New Testament occurrences should be interpreted in the same way. See C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932); idem, "Hilaskesthai: Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms in the Septuagint," *JTS* 32 (1931): 352-60; and idem, *The Johannine Epistles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1946). Dodd's conclusions, however, have been challenged, most notably by Leon Morris and Roger Nicole. Both demonstrate that the linguistic evidence Dodd produces is not conclusive, and that the Old and New Testaments both refer to propitiation. See Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 144-213; and Roger Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *WJT* 17 (1955): 117-57. "Propitiation" is to be preferred in 1 John 2:2 for two reasons. First, the notion of propitiation includes expiation, while expiation does not include propitiation. The former is inclusive while the latter is not. See Michaels, "Atonement," 114-16; and Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 38-40. Second, the context of 1 John 2:2 makes God the object of the propitiation, as Jesus Christ is the advocate with the Father. That Jesus is our advocate, interceding for our sins before the Father, implies that the Father is displeased with sin. As I. Howard Marshall states, "There can be no doubt that this [propitiation] is the meaning. In the previous verse the thought was of Jesus acting as our advocate before God; the picture which continues into this verse is of Jesus pleading the cause of guilty sinners before a judge who is being asked to pardon their acknowledged guilt. . . . In

Christ is not only the propitiation for their sins, but he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.<sup>59</sup> In stating that the Son has propitiated the sins of the whole world, John emphasizes that Christ's propitiation for sin is not only for believers (or the elect), but also for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect.<sup>60</sup> Just as he did in 4:14, John stresses that Christ's saving work encompasses the sins of all people so that the heretics

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order that forgiveness may be granted, there is an action in respect of the sins which has the effect of rendering God favorable to the sinner." I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 118. For a similar understanding of *hilasmos* in 1 John 2:2, see Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 82-84; Glenn W. Barker, *1, 2, and 3 John*, in vol. 12 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 313; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 74-76; and John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 166-73.

<sup>59</sup>"The repeated *περὶ* ('for') in this final phrase [of 1 John 2:2]) makes it clear that the *sins* of the world are the concern of the 'atoning sacrifice' made by Jesus, rather than 'the world' in general (against Westcott, 45). John's teaching provides an encouragement for the believer who sins, but also a challenge to the heretic who claims to be sinless." Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 40, emphasis the author's. See also Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 84-85. It is also important to note that Christ is the propitiation for "our sins" (believers) in the same way that he is the propitiation for "the sins of the whole world" (unbelievers). The verb "is" (*estin*) is in the present tense and the indicative mood, and governs both clauses. See Long, *Definite Atonement*, 112.

<sup>60</sup>"As in the Gospel of John, the scope of divine salvation is ultimately regarded as all-inclusive. The fourth evangelist describes Jesus as the 'Savior of the world (4:42; cf. 3:16); and here John refers to him as the one whose 'atoning sacrifice' relates to the sins of 'the whole world.' The adjective 'whole,' (*περὶ ὅλου*), is intensive. The sacrificial offering of Christ is effective not just for the sins of the 'world' (which could refer to a section of it), and still less for 'our' sins (those of John's immediate circle) alone, it embraces the sins of the *whole* world." Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 40, emphasis the author's. Similarly, Bruce states, "Nor will John let his readers think of their blessings in restrictive terms. The propitiation that has availed to wipe out their sins is sufficient to do the same for all. Jesus is 'the General Saviour of mankind' as well as the particular Saviour of each believer. According to the Fourth Gospel, He is 'the true light that enlightens every man' (John 1:9) or, in the forerunner's language, He is 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world' (John 1:29). Christians must not rest content with the assurance of their own salvation, but spread the joyful news worldwide." Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 50. See also Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 84-86; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 73-75; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 117-20; and Stott, *Letters of John*, 88-89. All of these authors advocate a similar understanding of these verses.

in the community would know that their sins were forgivable on the basis of the atonement.<sup>61</sup>

The meaning of the phrase “the whole world” is what is disputed in 1 John 2:2, as Christ’s atonement is explicitly said to be for the sins of the whole world. If the term ‘world’ here refers to unsaved humanity as explained above, then Christ has propitiated the sins of unsaved humanity, and John without question teaches that the atonement is unlimited. There have been several proposals, however, that attempt to explain how the term ‘world’ in this verse does not refer to unsaved humanity, and therefore John’s statement here does not contradict particular redemption. One understanding has been to interpret the phrase “the propitiation for our sins” as referring to Jewish believers and the phrase “the sins of the whole world” as referring to Gentile believers; therefore Christ is the propitiation for the elect from all races.<sup>62</sup> Another possibility is that John was

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<sup>61</sup>Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 40-41.

<sup>62</sup>This is how John Owen explains the verse. “‘He,’ saith he, ‘is the propitiation for our sins,’ – that is, our sins who are believers of the Jews; and lest by this assertion they should take occasion to confirm themselves in their former error, he adds, ‘and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world,’ or, ‘the children of God scattered abroad,’ as John xi. 51, 41, of what nation, kindred, tongue, or language soever they were. So that we have not here an opposition between the effectual salvation of all believers and the ineffectual redemption of all others, but an extending of the same effectual redemption which belonged to the Jewish believers to all other believers, or children of God throughout the whole world.” Owen, *Death of Death*, 220. See also Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 465; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 242; Long, *Definite Atonement*, 117-19; Arthur Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 258-59; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 488. This interpretation has fallen out of favor, however, because it misunderstands the context of 1 John. Michaels, an advocate of particular redemption, explains: “But his [Pink’s] attempt to show that 1 John is addressed to Jewish Christians is unconvincing. 1 John is written to a Christian community without reference to its ethnic background, whether Jewish or Gentile or both. Its concern, as we have seen, is with the sins of Christian believers after their conversion.” Michaels, “Atonement,” 116-17. See also Norman F. Douty, *The Death of*

indicating that Christ's sacrifice is not confined to one generation, but is applicable to all generations.<sup>63</sup> Some advocates of particular redemption hold that John's statement is emphasizing the exclusiveness of Christ's propitiation; there is only one way of salvation in the entire world and that is Christ.<sup>64</sup> Others maintain that John is simply stating that Christ is the propitiation who is available to pay for the sins of anyone in the world.<sup>65</sup>

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*Christ: Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* (Irving, TX: William & Watrous, 1978), 122-25; and Marshall, "For All," 338.

<sup>63</sup>"It was necessary for John to remind his readers of the perpetuity of Jesus' propitiation. It is this propitiation that endures as such through all the ages – its efficacy is never diminished, it never loses any of its virtue. And not only is it everlasting in its efficacy but it is the perpetual propitiatory for the ever-recurring and ever-continuing sins of believers – they do not plead another propitiation for the sins they continue to commit any more than do they appeal to another advocate with the Father for the liabilities which their continuing sins entail." Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 73-74. See also Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 206; George Smeaton, *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* (1870; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 460; Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 488; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 56-57. This understanding of the verse does not do justice to the meaning of the term *kosmos*. How one arrives at this meaning for the phrase "the sins of the whole world" is difficult to understand.

<sup>64</sup>"There is not one 'propitiation' for us and another for the rest of the world, but Jesus (καὶ αὐτὸς) is the only sacrifice, and the only way of salvation for all. The point is not that Jesus died for everyone indiscriminately so that everyone in the world is in principle forgiven, but that all those forgiven are forgiven on the basis of Christ's sacrifice and in no other way." Michaels, "Atonement," 117. See also Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 73; and Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 206. This understanding has the verse saying the same thing as John 14:6 and Acts 4:12. This interpretation is correct to note that John is saying all sins can be forgiven on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, but incorrect to limit the verse to just teaching this, because this understanding does not do justice to the intensive "olou" (whole) or the meaning of *kosmos*.

<sup>65</sup>"It would be entirely consistent with the language of the verse to think that John is simply saying that Christ is the atoning sacrifice who is available to pay for the sins of anyone in the world." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 598-99. See also Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1872-73; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 2:558-59; and Letham, *Work of Christ*, 242. This statement is true as far as it goes, but it is difficult to see how this interpretation fits with particular redemption. If Christ's propitiation only paid for the sins of the elect, then how is it available to pay for the sins of anyone in the world, unless the term 'world' is only

Another possible explanation is that John wanted to emphasize that Christ's atonement was not only for the disciples or those who came under apostolic influence, but was in fact for people from all nations.<sup>66</sup> Finally, another interpretation is that John is referring to "eschatological universalism," in that Christ will have a saved world to present to the Father when the gospel has subdued it.<sup>67</sup> Many advocates of particular redemption offer

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referring to the elect? The term 'world' here, however, is referring to unbelieving humanity in contrast to believers, or the elect.

<sup>66</sup>"It was necessary for John to set forth the *scope* of Jesus' propitiation – it was not limited in its virtue and efficacy to the immediate circle of disciples who had actually seen and heard and handled the Lord in the days of his sojourn upon earth (cf. 1 John 1:1-3), nor to the circle of believers who came directly under the influence of the apostolic witness (cf. 1 John 1:3, 4). The propitiation which Jesus himself extends in its virtue, efficacy, and intent to all in every nation who through the apostolic witness came to have fellowship with the Father and Son (cf. 1 John 1:5-7). Every nation and kindred and people and tongue is in this sense embraced in the propitiation." Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 73. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 396; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 22, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 173; Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and for His Glory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lake Charles, LA: Cor Meum Tibi, 2002), 299; Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:480; and William Symington, *The Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1863; reprint, Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2006), 222.

<sup>67</sup>"Jesus Christ is a propitiation for the whole world, that is he has expiated the whole world's sins. He came into the world because of love of the world, in order that he might save the world, and he actually saves the world. Where the expositors have gone astray is in not perceiving that this salvation of the world was not conceived by John – any more than the salvation of the individual – as accomplishing itself all at once. Jesus came to save the world, and the world will through him be saved; at the end of the day he will have a saved world to present to his father. John's mind is running forward to the completion of his saving work; and he is speaking of his Lord from the point of view of this completed work. From that point of view he is Savior of the world. . . . He proclaims Jesus the Savior of the world and declares him a propitiation for the whole world. He is a universalist; he teaches the salvation of the whole world. But he is not an 'each and every' universalist: he is an 'eschatological' universalist." B. B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), 1:167-77. See also Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 35-36. While the idea of "eschatological universalism" is biblical (Eph 1:10; Col

more than one of these possible explanations when discussing 1 John 2:1-2.<sup>68</sup>

None of these proposals does justice to the meaning of the words “whole” or “world,” or the context of 1 John 2:2.<sup>69</sup> In this verse John indicates that Jesus’ saving work is for all of humanity, just as he does in 1 John 4:14. In particular, 1 John 2:2 states that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of believers and unbelievers. There is no clearer statement in Scripture indicating that Christ died to pay the penalty for the sins of all people. The Son, by his atonement, satisfied the wrath of the Father regarding the sins of the elect and the nonelect. First John, just as the Gospel of John, uses the term *kosmos* in relation to Christ’s atoning work in order to indicate that Jesus’ saving work is for all people, believers and unbelievers alike.<sup>70</sup>

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1:20), it is not present in 1 John 2:2. This interpretation has no basis in the context of the passage.

<sup>68</sup>Many advocates of particular redemption offer two or three of the possible interpretations of 1 John 2:2 and do not conclusively state what the passage is saying. See, for example, Letham, *Work of Christ*, 242; Long, *Definite Atonement*, 101-19; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 72-75; Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 206; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 488.

<sup>69</sup>This is why I. Howard Marshall states that the understanding defended in this dissertation is “the natural meaning of the text, and [it] should be adopted unless there is reason to reject it.” Marshall, “For All,” 338.

<sup>70</sup>“We also encounter κόσμος in the Epistles of John in the sense of ‘the world of humanity’: in 1 John 2:2 ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου (‘the whole world’) is distinguished quite clearly from the author and his readers (‘not only for our sins’). The usage of κόσμος here seems to fall easily in line with statements in the Gospel of John like 3:16-17 and 12:46-47 where the κόσμος as the world of humanity is the object of Jesus’ salvific mission. Without becoming sidetracked into discussion over the extent of the atonement, it is safe to say that κόσμος here encompasses the (unsaved) world in contrast to those who are already believers (‘our sins’).” Harris, “Out-of-this-World Experience,” 11.

## The Pauline Literature

### 2 Corinthians 5:14-15

In the first seven chapters of 2 Corinthians Paul is defending the integrity of his gospel ministry.<sup>71</sup> Second Corinthians 5:11-21 is a significant passage in this first part of the letter, as Paul is here hoping to persuade the Corinthians that his ministry is a credible apostolic ministry (vv. 11-12).<sup>72</sup> In verses 14-15, Paul explains why he was devoted to serving God and the Corinthians (v.13). Second Corinthians 5:14-15 reads, “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” The reason that Paul ministered to the Corinthians was because the love of Christ compelled him to do so.<sup>73</sup> The reason that Paul was convinced of Christ’s love was because he died for all.<sup>74</sup> After expressing this

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<sup>71</sup>Murray J. Harris, *2 Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 315; and David L. Turner, “Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation in 2 Cor. 5:11-6:2,” *CTR* 4 (1989): 78.

<sup>72</sup>Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC, vol. 40 (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 118.

<sup>73</sup>For Paul, “Christ’s love is a compulsive force in the life of believers, a dominating power that effectively eradicates choice in that it leaves them no option but to live for God.” Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 419.

<sup>74</sup>“In the second part of the verse Paul explains that he knows of, and is controlled by, ‘the love of Christ,’ because he became ‘convinced’ that ‘one died for all.’ In other words, Paul’s sense of ongoing compulsion to evangelize (‘controls’) arose from his considered judgment (‘we are convinced’) when he understood that ‘[Christ had] died for all.’ Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 288. This death for all was clearly substitutionary. As Harris states, “When Christ died, he was acting both on behalf of and in the place of all human beings. He represented them by becoming their substitute. Such an understanding suits the repeated phrase ὑπὲρ πάντων (vv. 14, 15a).” Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 421.

conviction Paul then states two consequences of Christ's death for all. First, the consequence of Christ dying for all is that all died; his death involved their death (v. 14).<sup>75</sup> Second, the purpose of Christ's death was so that those who live in him should live for him (v. 15).<sup>76</sup>

The pertinent interpretive question in this passage for the extent of the atonement is how extensive the term "all" (*pantes*) is. Does Paul use "all" to refer to all people without exception, or does he use the term to refer to all believers?<sup>77</sup> A related question is who is included in the group "they who live." Are "they who live" the same group as the "all," or is Paul referring to a different group of people here? Advocates of particular redemption understand all four expressions (the three uses of "all" and "they who live") as referring to believers.<sup>78</sup> The "all" that died are those who died to sin when Christ died for them on the cross.<sup>79</sup> The "all" are the same people as "they who live"

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<sup>75</sup>The two deaths clearly took place at the same time. Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 421.

<sup>76</sup>Turner, "Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation," 80-81.

<sup>77</sup>Each of the three uses of *pantes* is referring to the same group. As Harris states, "Each view rightly recognizes that the three successive uses of πάντες must have the same referent, since οἱ before πάντες is anaphoric, pointing to the πάντες just mentioned, thus 'they all'; and, whether καὶ in v. 15a is epexegetic or conjunctive, the phrase εἰς ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀπέθανεν must bear an identical sense in vv. 14 and 15." Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 420.

<sup>78</sup>For example, Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 465; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 396; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 29-30; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 241; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 69-72; Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 205; Owen, *Death of Death*, 238-40; Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:480; Symington, *Atonement and Intercession*, 224-25; Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 488-89; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 76-82.

<sup>79</sup>"Paul's point is this: when Christ died, His people died to sin. Once more we see what we have seen again and again: Paul speaks of the result of Christ's death as

because Christ's death and resurrection are a unity, and all for whom Christ died are the same people for whom he rose.<sup>80</sup> This understanding is supported by an appeal to Romans 6:4-8, which asserts that those who died with Christ in the likeness of his death are also made to live with him in the likeness of his resurrection.<sup>81</sup>

The other possible meaning for *pantes* is that it refers to all people without exception, or the whole of humankind. The phrase "they who live" may then refer to all people without exception as well, or it may refer to those in Christ. It seems clear that they phrase "they who live" refers to believers.<sup>82</sup> This is so for three reasons: because

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having taken place right there at the cross, when he was crucified." Wells, *Price for a People*, 78. See also Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 131.

<sup>80</sup>"In approaching this passage, we recall that Paul consistently see Christ's death and resurrection as a unity. Here Christ is said to rise in union with those who live for him and not for themselves. In other words, he rises in union with his believing people. For his death to be other than in union with these would introduce a disruption into what everywhere else Paul maintains as a unity. The context is governed by the theme of Christ's union with his people and can hardly support a different reference." Letham, *Work of Christ*, 241.

<sup>81</sup>"We have found already that according to Paul's teaching all for whom Christ died also died in Christ. He states that truth emphatically here – 'one died for all: therefore all died.' But elsewhere he makes perfectly plain that those who died in Christ rise again with him (Rom 6:8). Although this latter truth is not stated in so many words in this passage, it is surely implied in the words, 'he (Christ) died for all in order that those who live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto him who died for them and rose again.' If we were to suppose that the expression 'all who live' is restrictive and does not have the same extent as the 'all' for whom Christ died, this would bring us into conflict with the explicit affirmations of Paul in Romans 6:5, 9 to the effect that those who have been planted in the likeness of Christ's death will be also in the likeness of his resurrection and that those who died with him will also live with him. The analogy of Paul's teaching in Romans 6:4-8 must be applied to 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15. Hence those referred to as 'those who live' must have the same extent as those embraced in the preceding clause, 'he died for all.' And since 'those who live' do not embrace the whole human race, neither can the 'all' referred to in the clause 'he died for all' embrace the entire human family." Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 71-72.

<sup>82</sup>"The οἱ ζῶντες appears as those who are spiritually alive as people, freed from the bondage of sin. He who accepts the atonement of Christ puts to death his

this is how Paul describes believers elsewhere (Rom 6:4), because this would be an odd way to refer to all human beings, and because if this were true, universalism would result.<sup>83</sup> If “they who live” are believers, however, then it strongly suggests that *pantes* refers to all people without exception, and not to believers. Paul introduces a new category of people with the phrase “they who live,” and this category is distinct from the “all.”<sup>84</sup> If Paul had meant to indicate that “all” and “they who live” were the same group of people, then why did he not simply continue to use the word “all?” Paul in these verses states that Christ died for all so that all died,<sup>85</sup> and so that those who live (believe in him) should no longer live for themselves, but for him, the one who died and rose on their behalf.<sup>86</sup> These verses therefore affirm Christ’s substitutionary death for all people

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‘unregenerate life’ [Gen 2:7; Rom 6:23], in which the old sinful self was regarded as the proper centre of reference, and begets a new life which is centred upon Another.” Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 132.

<sup>83</sup>Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 421.

<sup>84</sup>“The very addition of the expression οἱ ζῶντες suggests that a new, distinct category is being introduced; while all persons ‘died’ when Christ died, not all rose to new life when he rose from the dead.” Ibid., 421.

<sup>85</sup>The death that the all died was not a death to sin or self, as this would indicate that all of humanity is saved. It is also not a potential death (contra Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 289-91), as the language here indicates an actual death. The death that all die in Christ’s death is most likely the death that all deserve because of their sin. All have died in the sense that Christ in his death suffered the penalty for all sin, and therefore for all death. As R. V. G. Tasker states, “Christ’s death was the death of all in the sense that they should have died; the penalty of their sins was borne by him (1 Cor 15:3; 2 Cor 5:20); He died in their place.” R. V. G. Tasker, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 86. See also David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 279; and Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 422.

<sup>86</sup>“While all persons died, in one sense, when the Man who represented them died, not all were raised to new life when he rose. Paul is not suggesting that irrespective of their response and attitude, all people have new life in Christ or experience selfless living. There is universalism in the scope of redemption, since no person is excluded

without exception.

## 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Second Corinthians 5:18-21 enlarges upon and completes the truths expressed in 5:14-15. Second Corinthians 5:16-17 describes two consequences of Christ's death for those who believe (cf. 5:15). First, for believers there is now a completely different way of viewing reality (v. 16).<sup>87</sup> Second, anyone who is in Christ is a new creation, and a part of Christ's new order for the universe (v. 17).<sup>88</sup> All of these benefits of being in Christ are from God (v. 18a),<sup>89</sup> as God is the one "who reconciled us to Himself through Christ

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from God's offer of salvation; but there is a particularity in the application of redemption, since not everyone appropriates the benefits afforded by this universally offered salvation." Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 423. This truth accords with Rom 6:4-8, where Paul is speaking of believers who die and rise with Christ because they are united with him through baptism (which is the evidence of faith). Paul does not speak of unbelievers in Rom 6:4-8. Advocates of particular redemption are correct to understand the unity of dying and rising with Christ for believers from Rom 6:4-8, but they are incorrect when they say that Rom 6:4-8 demands that only believers died with Christ in 2 Cor 5:14-15.

<sup>87</sup>"From the time Paul realized the significance of the death of Christ – 'one has died for all' therefore all have died' (v. 14) – the love of Christ for him expressed therein had been the motivating power of his whole life, and not only so, but has also changed his whole outlook. He could no longer regard others from a human standpoint. Things which once had been regarded as important were now seen to have no real value at all (cf. Phil 3:4-8)." Colin Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 124. See also Turner, "Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation," 81.

<sup>88</sup>"Those who come to be 'in Christ' by faith in the gospel are part of a new order for the universe. The former Adamic order (τὰ ἀρχαία) is gone and a new order has come to exist. The cross has once for all radically changed Paul's view of reality by its power to being the renewal of the universe by renewing individuals within it (5:16-17)." Turner, "Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation," 82. See also Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 286-88; and Kruse, *Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 125-26.

<sup>89</sup>"Although τὰ πάντα can mean 'the universe' (e.g., Phil 3:21; Col 1:16-17), there is nothing in the immediate context to suggest that Paul is here affirming the divine origin of the cosmos. Rather, 'all this' (RSV, REB, NRSV), 'all these consequences'

and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18b-19). These verses state that God reconciled the world to himself through Christ, and the results of this reconciliation are the forgiveness of sins and the preaching of the cross.<sup>90</sup>

Reconciliation is a distinctly Pauline idea,<sup>91</sup> and most broadly it refers to God’s work in which, out of his love, he acts to bring about harmonious relations between himself and his creation.<sup>92</sup> God reconciles through Jesus Christ, on the basis of the work

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(Barrett 162), looks back to the new attitudes of v. 16 and the new creation of v. 17, that is, the new order (καινή, v. 17), all the benefits of the Christ-event. . . . In vv. 18-21 Paul proceeds to explain how this newness came about.” Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 435.

<sup>90</sup>“These two participles state two implications or consequences of reconciliation, the first (forgiveness) being related to humans in general (αὐτοῖς. . . αὐτῶν = κόσμον, v. 19a), the second (proclamation) being related to Paul and his colleagues in particular (ἐν ἡμῖν).” Ibid., 444.

<sup>91</sup>Paul is the only author in the New Testament who uses the word group that relates to reconciliation in a redemptive context. He does so in Rom 5:10, 11; 11:15; 2 Cor 5:18, 19, 20; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20, and 22. For Paul’s theology of reconciliation, see Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 303-15; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 289-90; Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 435-39; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 492-98; I. Howard Marshall, “The Meaning of Reconciliation,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd*, ed. Robert A. Guelich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 117-32; Ralph P. Martin, *Reconciliation: A Study of Paul’s Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981); Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 214-50; Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 189-99; Turner, “Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation,” 77-95; and John Walvoord, “Reconciliation,” *BibSac* 120 (1963): 3-12.

<sup>92</sup>Reconciliation is necessary because of humanity’s sin. As Ladd states, “The very idea of reconciliation suggests estrangement. Reconciliation is necessary between two parties when something has occurred to disrupt fellowship and to cause one or both parties to be hostile to the other. Sin has estranged humankind from God.” Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 492. Concerning broader and narrower senses of reconciliation, Marshall states, “The verb [reconcile] has a broader and a narrower

of Christ, the atonement.<sup>93</sup> Reconciliation is primarily an objective act; it is something that God has done for humanity in the cross of Christ.<sup>94</sup> It is also a subjective act, however, because human beings must themselves subjectively experience the reconciliation that God has wrought in order to have fellowship with him.<sup>95</sup> Both the objective and the subjective senses of reconciliation are present in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

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meaning in Paul. The narrow sense is found when 'God reconciles men to himself' means that he puts away the wrath which he has toward men and women on account of their sins so that there is no longer any barrier on his side to fellowship with them. The broad sense is found when 'God reconciles men to himself' means that God enters into the fellowship with men which the death of Jesus has made possible." Marshall, "Meaning of Reconciliation," 128.

<sup>93</sup>“For although in these verses [2 Cor 5:18-21] the apostle does not specifically mention the death of the Lord, there is not the slightest doubt but that he has it in mind. On Paul's view it is only through this death that man's trespasses are put away, and thus the cross is vividly present to his mind in verses 19, 21.” Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 230. See also Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 195-97.

<sup>94</sup>“A close examination of the passages in Romans 5 and 2 Corinthians 5 leads to the inescapable conclusion that reconciliation is not primarily a change in humanity's attitude toward God; it is, like justification, an objective event that is accomplished by God for humanity's salvation. Reconciliation was wrought first by God for human beings, not in human beings. It is while we were enemies that we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son (Rom 5:10). The death of Christ itself accomplished a reconciliation while we were in a state of enmity to God. The same thought is earlier expressed in different words: 'While we were yet sinners Christ died for us' (Rom 5:8). The love of God manifested in reconciliation is not here focused upon the moment when the individual believes in Christ and finds his or her attitude toward God changed from enmity to love; the manifestation of God's love took place while we were yet sinners, in the objective, historical event of the death of Christ. Reconciliation was accomplished by that death. Therefore reconciliation is a gift that is to be received (Rom 5:11). It comes to men and women from God and is not directly or indirectly due to any act of their own.” Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 493-94.

<sup>95</sup>“Until God's offer of objective reconciliation has been received in an attitude of glad surrender, no person is in fact reconciled to God; she or he is still a sinner and in the last day will suffer the full and awful outpouring of the wrath of a holy God. The content of reconciliation, therefore, while first of all the objective act of God, is also the affirmative reaction of people to the proffer of reconciliation. Only then does reconciliation become effective for the sinner; only then is he or she reconciled to God.” Ibid., 496.

Second Corinthians 5:18-19 are parallel statements, in that verse 19 repeats and amplifies the thoughts of verse 18.<sup>96</sup> The objective work of reconciliation appears at the beginning of each verse, in that God has reconciled “us” (v. 18) or “the world” (v.19) to himself. The need for a subjective receiving of God’s reconciliation is highlighted at the end of each verse, as Paul speaks of the ministry and the message of reconciliation.<sup>97</sup> This ministry and message of reconciliation is clarified in verse 20, which states “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” In light of God’s reconciling act and consequent entrustment of the message of reconciliation to Paul, Paul describes himself (and others who follow after him)<sup>98</sup> as Christ’s ambassador. God makes his appeal through his ambassadors, and people need to believe this appeal in order to be reconciled to God; they need to subjectively experience the objective reality

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<sup>96</sup>“Paul now [in v. 19] replays in essence what he asserted in v. 18. The sentence thus has the effect of reinforcing and explicating the ministry of reconciliation – both Christ’s and Paul’s – that was set forth there.” Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 305. See also Marshall, “Meaning of Reconciliation,” 122; and Turner, “Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation,” 84.

<sup>97</sup>The message and the ministry of reconciliation are the same. As Harris remarks, “τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς is clearly parallel to διακονίαν τῆς καταλλαγῆς (v. 18). The ministry is the proclamation of the message. Whether God is said to ‘give the ministry of reconciliation’ (v. 18) or ‘to entrust the message of reconciliation’ (v. 19) to Paul and others, the emphasis is on the privilege and obligation of the task of proclaiming that reconciliation.” Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 445.

<sup>98</sup>“δι’ ἡμῶν, ‘through us’ (= by our mouth/word), certainly includes Paul and his fellow apostles but probably also all proclaimers of reconciliation. Whoever declares ‘the message of reconciliation’ (v. 19) is both a delegated representative of Christ and an actual spokesperson for God.” Ibid., 447.

of God's reconciliation in order to have a relationship with God.<sup>99</sup> Second Corinthians 5:21 returns to the objective idea of reconciliation and describes how God accomplished reconciliation in Christ.<sup>100</sup> The verse states, "He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

The interpretive issue that impacts the debate over the extent of the atonement is whom the term "world" is referring to in 2 Corinthians 5:19. There are several possible meanings of this term. Some understand it to be referring to all believers, as only believers are actually reconciled and do not have their trespasses counted against them.<sup>101</sup> Similar to this understanding is that Paul, in his use of "world," is enlarging upon the "us" in verse 18, which refers to "Jews," and that "world" refers to Gentile believers.<sup>102</sup> A third possibility is that Paul uses "world" to refer to all of creation (cf.

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<sup>99</sup>Many commentators understand the appeal in v. 20 as directed toward the Corinthian believers who were antagonistic toward Paul and whom Paul was therefore calling on to turn back to him. This is seen as an immediate application of God's reconciling work. See Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 310-312; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 298-300; and Martin, *Reconciliation*, 109. It is better, however, to understand this appeal as the summation of the message of Christ's ambassadors. This interpretation construes "reconciliation" in its soteriological sense, which is what Paul is talking about in this passage. It also allows for a broader application of being an ambassador for Christ, whereas the former view restricts being an ambassador to Paul. Paul makes his specific appeal to the Corinthian believers in 6:1, not 5:20. See Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 447-49; and Marshall, "Meaning of Reconciliation," 123-24.

<sup>100</sup>"This verse [2 Cor 5:21] explains how God did not count the trespasses against us (5:19) and made possible our reconciliation." Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300.

<sup>101</sup>Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 36; Long, *Definite Atonement*, 121-30; Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 205; Owen, *Death of Death*, 227-28; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 119-20.

<sup>102</sup>Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 396; Kruse, *Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 127; Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:480; Symington, *Atonement and Intercession*, 221-22; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 487.

Col 1:20).<sup>103</sup> A fourth option understands Paul as referring to all of humanity with the term “world.”<sup>104</sup>

The fourth option seems to be the best option for three reasons. First, it harmonizes with the understanding of 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 presented above. Paul has already indicated that Christ died for all humanity, so it would be natural for him to repeat this thought when he discusses reconciliation a few verses later. Second, the first two options above, which understand the term “world” to be referring to believers only, do not fit the context of the passage. Not only has Paul emphasized Christ’s death for all, but he emphasizes the objective and subjective sides of reconciliation. It is only those “who live” and those who are “in Christ” who are subjectively reconciled to God through faith, but all people are objectively reconciled to him.<sup>105</sup> The understanding that Paul is referring to Gentiles in distinction to Jews also has no basis in the context, as the word

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<sup>103</sup>Barnett, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 302; Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 158; and Turner, “Paul and the Ministry of Reconciliation,” 85.

<sup>104</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, “For Whom Did Christ Die?” *BibSac* 137 (1980): 313; Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 190; Douty, *Death of Christ*, 106-10; Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 293-94; Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 443; Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 65-66; Marshall, “Meaning of Reconciliation,” 123; and Walvoord, “Reconciliation,” 3-5.

<sup>105</sup>“God reconciles the world to himself” thus means: God acts in Christ to overlook the sins of mankind, so that on his side there is no barrier to the restoration of friendly relations. The message of the Christian preacher is a declaration of this fact. It is first and foremost a gospel, a declaration of the good news of what God has done. Hence it can speak of ‘reconciliation’ as an accomplished fact. But at the same time the indicative forms the basis for an imperative. Now people are commanded: ‘be reconciled to God.’ In view of what God has already done, this cannot be understood to mean that they must render God amenable to them by appropriate action. Rather God and Christ appeal to them to accept the fact that reconciliation has been accomplished and to complete the action by taking down the barrier on their side – the barrier of pride and disobedience and hatred of God. Let them put away their feelings against God and enter into a new relationship with him.” Marshall, “Meaning of Reconciliation,” 123.

“us” in verse 18 includes the Corinthians, who were not all Jews.<sup>106</sup> Third, Paul is clearly referring to humanity with the pronouns “their” and “them,” and with his reference to “transgressions.”<sup>107</sup> God did not count the transgressions of humanity against them, but instead reconciled them to himself in Christ; making forgiveness available to all people (this is essentially the same thought as 5:21).<sup>108</sup> This language rules out the option of understanding “world” in a cosmological sense. Throughout 2 Corinthians 5:11-21 Paul consistently states that Christ’s death, his atoning work of reconciliation, paid the penalty for the sins of all people so that all people might have a relationship with God.

### **The Pastoral Epistles**

There are three statements in the Pastoral Epistles that describe the atonement as being for all people. The first of these is 1 Timothy 2:3-6, which states, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time.” In the context of 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Paul<sup>109</sup> is encouraging

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<sup>106</sup>Whether one takes the word “us” in v. 18 as referring to believers only or to all of humanity, it includes the Corinthians. The church at Corinth was not made up exclusively of Jews. See Acts 18:1-17.

<sup>107</sup>“Paul can also use κόσμος of the world of human beings (e.g., 1:12; Rom 3:6; 5:12-13), a sense that seems demanded here [2 Cor 5:19] by the αὐτοῖς and αὐτῶν that follow (in a *construction ad sensum*) and by the reference to παραπτώματα. The movement from ἡμᾶς (v. 18) to κόσμον (v. 19) with regard to the objects of reconciliation is not a movement from the anthropological to the cosmological, but from the narrower to the wider anthropological focus.” Harris, *Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 443.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., 444.

<sup>109</sup>This dissertation assumes that Paul was the author of the Pastoral Epistles, as they state (1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 2:1; Titus 2:1). For a defense of this position, see Ralph

prayer for all people (v. 1), including kings and those in authority (v. 2), because such prayer is good and pleasing to God our Savior (v. 3),<sup>110</sup> who desires all people to be saved (v. 4).<sup>111</sup> The reasons that God desires for all people to be saved are because he is the one and only God, and because Jesus Christ is the one and only Mediator between God and humanity (v. 5).<sup>112</sup> Jesus is the one who was a ransom for all (v. 6), and the one whom Paul was appointed to preach to the Gentiles (v. 7). Therefore Paul desires that all

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Earle, *1 Timothy*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 341-43.

<sup>110</sup>The phrase “God our Savior” appears 6 times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4). In this context the phrase is clearly soteriological, as “God our Savior” desires the salvation of all, and the verses following speak of Christ as the one Mediator and as a ransom for all. See Steven M. Baugh, “‘Savior of All People’: 1 Tim 4:10 in Context,” *WTJ* 54 (1992): 338-40; I. Howard Marshall, “Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles,” in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 55; and William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Waco, TX: Word, 2000), 84-85.

<sup>111</sup>In light of the universality of the statement “God desires all men to be saved,” some have tried to argue that this verse is not speaking of God’s absolute will or purpose. Instead it merely speaks of his wish or his preference. This is based on a supposed difference between the word *thelo* (used here in 1 Tim 2:3), which means “wish” or “desire” and the word *boule*, which means “intend.” While it is theologically correct to distinguish between God’s “decretive will” and his “permissive will” (see John Piper, “Are There Two Wills in God?” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000], 107-31), there is no linguistic argument for weakening God’s desire for the salvation of all, as 2 Pet 3:9 states the same thing using the verb *boule*. The two verbs have different nuances, but they are essentially synonymous. God genuinely desires the salvation of all. Owen understood that this was the verb’s meaning and therefore argued that “all” could only refer to believers, because he believed that everything God desired would be accomplished. Owen, *Death of Death*, 232-33. For a summary of this argument and support of the above conclusions, see Marshall, “Universal Grace,” 55-57; and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85-86.

<sup>112</sup>“V. 5 possibly adds another argument to 1 Tim 2:1-7. Since there is only one God and only one mediator between God and people; all people are united under that oneness and all people should be offered the benefit of Christ’s ransom. If someone is excluded from salvation in Christ, there is no other salvation available.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 87.

people pray everywhere without wrath or dissension (v. 8).

The primary interpretive issue in this passage that impacts the debate over the extent of the atonement is the meaning of “all” in verses 4 and 6. Advocates of particular redemption argue that “all men” refers to “all sorts of men,” or “all kinds of men”; essentially this passage is stating that God’s desire and Christ’s ransom encompass not only the Jews, but Gentiles as well.<sup>113</sup> On the other hand, advocates of unlimited atonement assert that “all men” means “all people”; God’s desire and Christ’s ransom are for all people without exception.<sup>114</sup> In defense of the first option, appeal is often made to 1 Timothy 2:1-2, where Paul encourages prayers for all people, and then mentions specifically two groups of people, kings and those in authority.<sup>115</sup> First Timothy 2:2 is

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<sup>113</sup>Baugh, “Savior of All People,” 338-40; Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 465; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 396-97; George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 119, 122; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 242-43; Long, *Definite Atonement*, 142; Nettles, *By His Grace*, 299-300; Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 204; Owen, *Death of Death*, 233-36; Symington, *Atonement and Intercession*, 223; Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 489; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 121-24.

<sup>114</sup>Chafer, “For Whom Did Christ Die?,” 324; Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 190-91; Douty, *Death of Christ*, 113-15; Earle, *1 Timothy*, 358; Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 89-91; Marshall, “For All,” 326-33; idem, “Universal Grace,” 51-69; Terry L. Miethe, “The Universal Power of the Atonement,” in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 79-80; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 84-85, 89-90; Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 133-37; William S. Sailer, “The Nature and Extent of the Atonement: A Wesleyan View,” *BETS* 10 (1964): 192-93; and Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 183-86.

<sup>115</sup>“πάντας ἀνθρώπους is picked up from v. 1 to correlate God’s attitude toward ‘all people’ with the request that we pray for all. As in v. 1 Paul means by the phrase all kinds of people, all sorts of people, including civil authorities.” Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 119.

understood as clarifying what Paul meant in 1 Timothy 2:1.<sup>116</sup> Steven Baugh offers three additional arguments for this interpretation.<sup>117</sup> First, the mention of one God and one Mediator (v. 5) echoes Deuteronomy 6:4, and demonstrates that God's salvation is not only for the Jews but for the Gentiles as well.<sup>118</sup> Second, the phrase "in his own time" emphasizes the eschatological nature of Christ's ransom as reaching out to all peoples.<sup>119</sup> Third, in Titus 1:1-3 Paul proclaims that his commission to preach to the Gentiles is confirmation of God's purpose to include Gentiles in salvation through Christ, and this proclamation explains Paul's zeal in defending his apostolic calling in verse 7.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>V. 2 is better understood, however, as a parenthetical reference, instead of explaining what Paul meant in v. 1. The point of the entire passage is that salvation is for all; therefore praying for all is good and pleasing to God. See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85; and Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 88-89. On the particular redemption understanding, the instruction for prayer is reduced to praying for the elect groups of people within all the groups of people in the world, as Christ was the ransom only for those people. This is clearly not the intent of the passage. See Marshall, "Universal Grace," 62-63; and Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will*, 135.

<sup>117</sup>Baugh, "Savior of All People," 339-40.

<sup>118</sup>This statement is certainly true. That there is only one God and one Mediator demonstrates that God desires the salvation of Gentiles as well as Jews, but it also stands in opposition to the synagogue's beliefs that God hates the sinner, that God only wants to save the righteous, and that salvation is only for a select few who have the right knowledge (cf. the statement that God wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth in v. 4). Therefore v. 5 does not support the meaning of "all sorts of people," but rather indicates that God desires the salvation of all people without exception; sinners as well as the righteous and Gentiles as well as Jews. See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85.

<sup>119</sup>While there is an eschatological nuance to this phrase, this is no way demands that God's ransom is only for the groups of the Jews and Gentiles and not all people. This phrase can be accurately understood in its context just as easily if "all men" means "all people without exception."

<sup>120</sup>Baugh is correct to understand this emphasis. This emphasis can just as easily support an unlimited atonement view of this passage, however, as Paul's passionate defense of his ministry could be intended to teach the Ephesian church that the gospel is for all people, including the Gentiles. See Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 92-93.

The second option, that “all men” refers to “all people” and not to “all kinds of people,” seems preferable, however, for four reasons. First, it correctly understands 1 Timothy 2:1 as instructing believers to pray for all human beings, and not various classes of human beings.<sup>121</sup> Second, it makes better sense of Paul’s argument regarding one God and one Mediator. God is the only God and Christ is the only Mediator, and therefore God is the God of all and Christ is the Mediator for all.<sup>122</sup> These statements are true of all people without exception.<sup>123</sup> Third, the focus of Paul’s reasoning in this passage is that Christ is the ransom *for all*.<sup>124</sup> Most commentators understand verse 6 as going back to

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<sup>121</sup>See n. 116 on p. 134 of this dissertation.

<sup>122</sup>“In Paul’s day, sectarian Judaism emphasized ‘our’ in an exclusive sense, and the opponents in the PE were making the same mistake. As a corrective, Paul’s usage goes back to the original emphasis of the Shema on ‘one’ God as opposed to ‘many’ gods. God is not the God of the opponents alone but is the only God and consequently the God of all. . . . In Rom 3:29-30 Paul argues that because there is only one God, all people will be justified in relation to their faith. Likewise here Paul argues that because there is only one God, all people must be the object of prayer since all can be saved through the one God and the one mediator.” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 87. See also n. 118 on p. 134 of this dissertation.

<sup>123</sup>“First, Paul declared that there is one God. He did not intend that this be a prideful claim by an exclusivist Jew but rather an affirmation that the one God is to receive worship from all people. . . . Second, there is a single mediator between God and humankind.” Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 90.

<sup>124</sup>“Paul now arrives at the focal point of the creed and the second reason for his command in v. 1. Building on his earlier statement that ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners’ (1:15), he now says that Christ died for everyone in keeping with God’s desire that all people be saved, the accent being on the word *all*. Therefore, not to pray for everyone is to treat the death of Christ with contempt.” Mounce, *Pastoral*

*Epistles*, 89. Similarly, “Since Paul is not setting out a theory of the Atonement of his own but citing what has become a theological cliché, it is fruitless to speculate about the complex of ideas lying behind it. The important words for him are ‘for all.’” J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 63-64.

the thought of Mark 10:45,<sup>125</sup> which emphasizes the immeasurable greatness of Christ's ransom.<sup>126</sup> The fourth reason, and perhaps the most decisive one, is that this meaning harmonizes with Paul's statement in 1 Timothy 4:10, which states "For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers." This statement is similar to the one in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, and it is extremely difficult to understand "all men" as "all sorts of men" in this verse; it seems clearly to refer to all people without exception.<sup>127</sup> First Timothy 2:3-6 states that Christ's atonement is for all people without exception because God desires the salvation of the all people without exception.

The controversy concerning 1 Timothy 4:10 is not over the meaning of "all men"<sup>128</sup> but instead concerns the meaning of "Savior." Since this verse clearly states that God acts as Savior toward two groups of people, all men (all people) and believers, advocates of particular atonement argue that the term "Savior" in this context is not

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<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 63-64; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 121-22; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 91; William Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 28; Marshall, "Universal Grace," 59; Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 51-52; and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 89-90.

<sup>126</sup>It appears to be firmly established that in Hebrew the word for 'many' often has the sense of 'a great many as opposed to a few,' rather than 'only some as opposed to all.' Thus 'all' is the appropriate paraphrase. It is the natural word to use in moving from a crassly literal rendering of the Hebrew to more idiomatic Greek." Marshall, "Universal Grace," 59. See also n. 27 on p. 105 of this dissertation.

<sup>127</sup>Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85, 256.

<sup>128</sup>As Baugh, an advocate of particular redemption states, "This [understanding 'all men' as 'all sorts of people'] does not solve the problem, though, because we still must ask whether the 'all kinds of people' to whom God is Savior are the elect or not. The answer is apparently not, since Paul refers to them as a different group than the believers for whom God is 'especially' Savior." Baugh, "Savior of All People," 333.

soteriological.<sup>129</sup> Instead, the term “Savior” is understood in a broad sense as “Preserver,” or “Provider.”<sup>130</sup> This understanding interprets the verse as talking about God’s common grace as opposed to his salvific grace.<sup>131</sup> Paul uses the phrase “Savior of all men” to assert that God is the one who provides for all people because his common grace embraces the whole world.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup>There is a way, however, to preserve the soteriological meaning of Savior and to avoid understanding 1 Tim 4:10 as stating that God acts as Savior toward all people. It is possible that the word *malista*, normally translated “especially,” should be translated “namely” in 1 Tim 4:10. On this understanding the verse would state that God is the Savior of all people, namely those who believe. See Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 203-04; Marshall, “Universal Grace,” 55; and T. C. Skeat, “‘Especially the Parchments’: A Note on 2 Timothy 4:13,” *JTS* 30 (1979): 174-75. The word *malista* is used 8 times by Paul (Gal 6:10; Phil 4:22; 1 Tim 4:10; 5:8, 17; Titus 1:10; 2 Tim 4:13; and Phlm 16), and in all but 2 Tim 4:13, Titus 1:10, and the verse under discussion it certainly means “especially.” *Malista* possibly means “especially” in the latter three cases. It seems, however, that in 1 Tim 4:10 Paul is distinguishing two groups of people, and that the translation “especially” is preferable here. This understanding fits the context, as 1 Tim 4:10 is most likely deliberately echoing the universality of 1 Tim 2:3-6. It also fits Paul’s normal usage of the word, as the two other passages that approximate 1 Tim 4:10 in Paul are Gal 6:10 and Phil 4:22, both of which require “especially” as opposed to “namely.”

<sup>130</sup>Baugh, “Savior of All People,” 333-38; John Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, trans. L. T. London and G. Bishop (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1983), 398-99; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 599; Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 96; Symington, *Atonement and Intercession*, 225-26; and Francis Turretin, *Turretin on the Atonement of Christ* (Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1859; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 130.

<sup>131</sup>“1 Tim 4:10 does not relate directly to the issue of the extent of the atonement, nor even to God’s eternal salvation, but rather to God’s care for all of humanity during our time upon earth. This is called God’s common grace among Reformed theologians.” Baugh, “Savior of All People,” 333. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 434-44; and Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 81. Both of these men discuss the verse in the context of common grace and not in the debate over the extent of the atonement.

<sup>132</sup>“Hence Paul shows in v. 10 that God is the provider of earthly beneficence, even for people absorbed by physical discipline which relates to ‘the present life’ (v. 8). But God is especially beneficent to those who train themselves in godliness, because he

Although the ideas of “preserver” and “provider” fit the semantic domain of *soter* (“Savior”),<sup>133</sup> it is doubtful that this is the idea that Paul had when he used this term. The phrase “God our Savior” appears six times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4), and in every other place it is used, the meaning is clearly soteriological. Paul also seems to be repeating the same thought he introduced in 1 Timothy 2:3-6: the gospel is for all people without exception.<sup>134</sup> This understanding fits the soteriological context of the passage, as Paul speaks of the promise of eternal life that comes from godliness in 4:8.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, the interpretation of “Preserver” either

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not only cares for the earthly needs of believers, but also for their needs in the life to come.

“Taken in this light, 1 Tim 4:10 is revealed to be a polemical aside aimed at the false veneration of men who were no longer living, yet who were publicly honored as gods and saviors upon the Ephesian inscriptions. As such, the phrase, ‘Savior of all people, especially of believers,’ should not be interpreted as teaching universal atonement. It is an assertion of the deity of the true and living God in the face of pagan notions of deity; and it asserts that the saviors looked to by the peoples whom Paul and Timothy associated daily could not be compared with the true Benefactor of all people, the Living God, whose common grace embraces the whole world.” Baugh, “Savior of All People,” 338.

<sup>133</sup>Baugh has clearly demonstrated this. *Ibid.*, 334-38.

<sup>134</sup>“The second line of the faithful saying closely parallels Paul’s introduction to the second faithful saying (1 Tim 2:3-4) in its description of God as Savior and as making the offer of salvation to all. . . . There is no exclusivism in Paul’s gospel, contrary to his opponents’ teachings (cf. 1 Tim 2:1-7).” Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 256.

<sup>135</sup>“The context does not favor a broader meaning, such as ‘preserve alive’; verses 9-10 are a comment on verse 8 where the need for godliness is expressed, and the point is made that it has the promise of life, both the present and future life. This can only refer to spiritual life; nothing suggests that the writer was thinking of length of physical life as the result of godliness.” Marshall, “Universal Grace,” 55.

leads to the idea that God bestows more of his common grace upon believers (which contradicts the idea of common grace) or that the noun *soter* be understood in two different ways.<sup>136</sup> Instead, 1 Timothy 4:10 asserts that the Living God acts as Savior<sup>137</sup> toward all people, but especially toward believers. As this verse echoes 1 Timothy 2:3-6, it seems to be saying that God desires the salvation of all people, and he has provided that salvation for all people in the ransom of Christ, but that he acts as Savior toward believers in a much more profound, deeper sense because it is only they who enter a saving relationship with him.<sup>138</sup> First Timothy 4:10, like 1 Timothy 2:3-6, offers strong support for understanding Christ's atonement as being for all people without exception.<sup>139</sup>

The third statement in the Pastoral Epistles that indicates the atonement is for all people is found in Titus 2:11. Titus 2:11 states, "For the grace of God has appeared,

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<sup>136</sup>"This view can be confidently rejected since it imports a sense of 'savior' which is unlikely after the clear previous use in 1 Timothy 2:3-6 and indeed throughout the Pastoral Epistles; it also requires that the term be understood very awkwardly in two different senses with the two nouns that are dependent upon it, in a this-worldly non-spiritual sense with the former and in an eschatological spiritual sense with the latter." Marshall, "For All," 327.

<sup>137</sup>"The noun σωτήρ is anarthous in 1 Tim 4:10, implying that this is not a title for God, but a description of his actions. He is 'a Savior' of all people, because he acts as a Savior toward all." Baugh, "Savior of All People," 332.

<sup>138</sup>"Paul called God 'the Savior of all men' in that he genuinely wants all human beings to experience salvation. . . . In those believers who have trusted him, he is Savior in a far deeper and more profound sense. The term 'especially' introduces the explanation that assurance of salvation belongs to those who have received Christ." Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 136

<sup>139</sup>Millard Erickson believes this verse to be one of the strongest supports for unlimited atonement. Concerning the teaching of 1 Tim 4:10, he states "Apparently the Savior has done something for all persons, though it is less in degree than what he has done for those who believe." Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 851. See also Earle, *1 Timothy*, 373; and Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 105.

bringing salvation to all men.” The issue with this verse, like 1 Timothy 2:3-6, is the meaning of “all men.”<sup>140</sup> Advocates of particular atonement understand the phrase as meaning “all classes of men,” and therefore as only referring to believers.<sup>141</sup> This interpretation of the phrase is based upon the supposition that Paul uses the phrase in the same way in the two passages discussed above, and on the understanding that “all men” is equivalent to “us” in 2:14.<sup>142</sup> If the above interpretations of 1 Timothy 2:3-6 and 4:10 are correct, however, then Paul is most likely using the phrase in the same way to mean “all people.” Furthermore, it is difficult to understand why Paul would use the limited interpretation in this verse. The point of 2:11-14 is to give the theological reasons for the ethical instruction to various groups in 2:1-10. Why would Paul first instruct all of the groups in the correct ways of Christian conduct, and then stress that they are all included

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<sup>140</sup>There is a translation issue in this verse. The KJV and the NIV both make the adjective “bringing salvation” (σωτήριος) modify “the grace of God,” which would result in “the grace of God that appears to all people has appeared to all men.” This translation is most likely not correct, however, because the adjective σωτήριος is in the predicate position, and therefore it describes the effects of the appearing. This interpretation results in the NASB translation quoted above. Either translation is acceptable, and the issue has little bearing on the extent of the atonement, although the NASB translation helps avoid any notion of prevenient grace. William W. Combs, “Does the Bible Teach Prevenient Grace?” *DBSJ* 10 (2005): 13-14. Commentators who understand the verse in this way include Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 319; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 310; Marshall, “For All,” 330; and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 422.

<sup>141</sup>Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 465; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 396; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 319; Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 205; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 489.

<sup>142</sup>“Thus Paul uses ‘all people’ here in the same sense that he has used it throughout the PE (cf. 1 Tim 2:1-6; 4:10 and the comments there). More specifically, ‘all people’ in this soteriological setting equals ‘us’ (ἡμᾶς, vv. 12 and 14) in the following verses, i.e., Christians, who are ‘a people for his own possession’ (v. 14).” Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 319.

in God's saving plan?<sup>143</sup> Instead, the point of the passage is to indicate how Paul's ethical instructions are based upon God's purposes in Christ's saving work,<sup>144</sup> which has made salvation available to all people,<sup>145</sup> and in doing so has also redeemed believers (v. 14).<sup>146</sup> Titus 2:11, like 1 Timothy 2:3-6 and 4:10, indicates that God has made salvation available to all people through Christ's atoning sacrifice for all people.

## The Catholic Epistles

### Hebrews 2:9

Hebrews 2:9 states, "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and

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<sup>143</sup>"To gain the 'limited' interpretation of Titus 2:11 it has to be argued that it refers to the different types of people mentioned in the earlier part of the chapter (older people and younger people, both male and female, and slaves), by providing a motivation for the Christian conduct that is expected of all of them. But why should this have needed stress? Did anyone think that any of these groups were possibly not included in God's saving plan?" Marshall, "For All," 330.

<sup>144</sup>The "grace of God that appeared" was Jesus Christ in his birth, life, death, and resurrection. Thus the incarnation and atonement of Christ are the manifestations of God's grace. See Combs, "Prevenient Grace," 13; D. Edmund Hiebert, *Titus*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 439; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 310; Knight, *Pastoral Epistles*, 318-19; Marshall, "For All," 330; and Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 422.

<sup>145</sup>"The effect of the manifestation was redemptive, not destructive. The adjective rendered "that brings salvation" (*soterios*) asserts its saving efficacy. The dative "to all men" may equally be rendered "for all men," thus stressing the universality of the salvation provided. Salvation is available for all, but its saving effect is dependent upon the personal response of faith." Hiebert, *Titus*, 440.

<sup>146</sup>The fact that Christ's atonement has a special reference to believers (which is also the point of 1 Tim 4:10) does not demand a limited extent of the atonement (as will be explained at the end of this chapter). Instead, this passage presents both Christ's unlimited payment for sin and his particular intention to save the elect. The multi-intentioned view allows both of these truths to be understood without minimizing or dismissing one of them.

honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” This verse is a significant one in its context, as it sums up 2:1-8 and provides the foundation for 2:10-18. In 2:1-4 the author of Hebrews states that because Christ is superior to the angels (Heb 1:4-14) we ought to pay attention to Christ’s message of salvation. The author then goes on in 2:5-9 to demonstrate that Christ is superior to the angels because he is the one to whom the world is subjected.<sup>147</sup> Psalm 8:4-6 is quoted as proof: humanity was meant to subject the world, and actually has subjected the world (v. 8). Currently, we might not see all things subjected to humanity, but we know that they are and one day will be because Jesus has fulfilled this prophecy.<sup>148</sup> The one who was made a little lower than the angels in his incarnation<sup>149</sup> is now crowned with glory and honor because of his death, and it was in the sufferings of his death that, by the grace of God,<sup>150</sup> Jesus tasted

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<sup>147</sup>Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, in vol. 12 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 21-25.

<sup>148</sup>“The recognition of the present unfulfilled state of affairs prepares him to see that the promised subjection has reference not to humankind in general (v. 8) but to Jesus (v. 9), whom God has appointed ‘heir of everything.’” William Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC, vol. 47 (Dallas: Word, 1991), 48. See also Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 153; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 90-91; and Morris, *Hebrews*, 25.

<sup>149</sup>The statement that Jesus “was made for a little while lower than the angels” most likely refers to Jesus’ incarnation. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 48; and Morris, *Hebrews*, 25.

<sup>150</sup>There is an alternative reading “apart from God” for the phrase “by the grace of God” in some ancient manuscripts. The traditional reading “by the grace of God” seems more likely because it is better attested. For a discussion of the options and evidence, see Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 87; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 155-57; and Johnson, *Hebrews*, 92-93. Whichever reading one takes, however, has no effect on the understanding of this verse for the extent of the atonement.

death for everyone.<sup>151</sup> The author then explains in 2:10-18 why the death of Jesus is part of his greatness: it is on the basis of and through Jesus' death that God saves people.<sup>152</sup>

This verse is an important one in the debate over the extent of the atonement because it states that Jesus tasted death for everyone. The question therefore concerns whether "everyone" refers to all people or only to the elect. Those who prefer the latter option come to that conclusion by equating "everyone" with the "many sons brought to glory" (v. 10), "those who are sanctified" (v. 11), those who are the "brethren" of Christ (v. 12), those who are the "children of God" (vv. 13, 14), those who are delivered from the bondage of death (v. 15), and those who are God's people (v. 17).<sup>153</sup> The former interpretation of "everyone" as "all people," is to be preferred, however. Christ's death for everyone in Hebrews 2:9 is not only the explanation for how the elect are saved, it is

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<sup>151</sup>The idea of "tasting" is here used metaphorically as "experiencing," and it is not used to indicate that Jesus' death was quick or short. Jesus' "tasting death" is equivalent to his "suffering of death" and refers to his atonement. Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 157; Guthrie, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 87; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 92; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 49; and James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1924), 26. This "tasting of death" was also substitutionary, as it was "on behalf of everyone" (*hyper pantos*). As Johnson states, "Hebrews asserts that Jesus' death – while entirely his own experience, what he 'tasted' – was undertaken purposely as an act in behalf of others." Johnson, *Hebrews*, 92.

<sup>152</sup>"The writer now explains (vv. 10-18) why Jesus had to suffer and die. Only thus could he save his brother men who lay (whether by nature or as a punishment we are not told) under the tyranny of death." Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 28. See also Guthrie, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 88; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 93; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 52-53; and Morris, *Hebrews*, 26.

<sup>153</sup>Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 465, 489; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 396-97; John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*, trans. and ed. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 61; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 599; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 28-29; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 55; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 61; Nettles, *By His Grace*, 300; Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 205-06; Owen, *Death of Death*, 237-38; Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:479; Symington, *Atonement and Intercession*, 226; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 93-94.

also the explanation of how all things are subjected to him. Christ is the fulfillment of Psalm 8:4-6, a prophecy given to humanity, because he is united with all people in his incarnation and his death.<sup>154</sup> It is also difficult to understand how all things can be subjected to Christ if he did not pay for the sins of all people.<sup>155</sup> The word used for “everyone” in Hebrews 2:9 (παντος) also seems to suggest that Christ’s death was for each and every human being.<sup>156</sup> Hebrews 2:10-18 is certainly speaking of Christ’s death saving the elect, but this is another example of the multiple intentions in Christ’s atonement, moving from the general to the particular (cf. 2 Cor 5:14-15; 1 Tim 4:10; Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 2:1-2).<sup>157</sup> Hebrews 2:9 indicates that Christ’s atonement was for

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<sup>154</sup>Douty, *Death of Christ*, 118; Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 153-57; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 89-93; Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 71-72; Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 24-26; and Morris, *Hebrews*, 25.

<sup>155</sup>This theme will be explored in depth in the following chapter under the section entitled “The Cosmic Triumph over All Sin.”

<sup>156</sup>The word παντος is used in the singular and should be translated as “each” or “every.” It is also clear from the context that the word is referring to human beings and not the entire universe, which is semantically possible. The best translation of the word is therefore “every (or each) person.” As Guthrie states, “It is important to notice that the death of Jesus is related to man, not just corporately, but individually. Although the Greek could be understood to refer to ‘everything’, the main thought in the present passage is so clearly personal that ‘everyone’ is the more likely meaning.” Guthrie, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 87. See also Douty, *Death of Christ*, 118-19; Johnson, *Hebrews*, 92; Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 71-72; and Moffatt, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 25-26.

<sup>157</sup>As Ellingworth notes, “‘Many sons’ thus does not imply the restriction ‘many, but not all.’ Yet Windisch’s comment that πολλοί represents a ‘reduction’ by comparison with ὑπὲρ παντος in v. 9 is not inappropriate, though it reflects an implication rather than a direct statement. Throughout this passage [Heb 2:10-18], the author is concerned with ‘the people’ (v. 17) of God, understood as a matter of course in Jewish terms as ‘seed of Abraham’ (v. 16). There is no question here of ‘the universal sonship possessed by all men’ (Peake). The implications of ὑπὲρ παντος for the gentile mission are not explored, neither are they excluded, they simply do not enter the author’s range of vision.” Ellingworth, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 159-60. See also Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 71-72.

every single human being, meaning that Christ died to pay the penalty of sin for every single human being.

## 2 Peter 2:1

One of the primary reasons that Peter<sup>158</sup> wrote his second letter was to warn the churches about false teachers in their midst.<sup>159</sup> These false teachers are first mentioned in 2 Peter 2:1, which reads, “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” The false teachers are the subject of the entire second chapter of the letter, with 2 Peter 2:1-3 serving as an introduction to their denunciation.<sup>160</sup> The false teachers are similar to the false prophets of the Old Testament (v. 1a),<sup>161</sup> and they stand in sharp contrast to the men who spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21). These

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<sup>158</sup>This dissertation assumes that Simon Peter was the author of 2 Peter, as the letter states (2 Pet 2:1), although there are plausible evangelical explanations as to why this might not be the case. See the discussion in Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 158-62; Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of Jude and 2 Peter*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 123-30; and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Jude, 2 Peter*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 255-76.

<sup>159</sup>Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 154-57; and Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 127.

<sup>160</sup>“Peter gives a concise portrayal of these false teachers (v. 1), indicates their widespread success (v. 2), exposes their deceptive activity (v. 3a), and asserts their sure doom (v. 3b).” D. Edmund Hiebert, “A Portrayal of False Teachers: An Exposition of 2 Peter 2:1-3,” *BibSac* 141 (1984): 256.

<sup>161</sup>Bauckham points out three characteristics of the Old Testament false prophets that can be applied to the false teachers in 2 Peter. “(1) Unlike the true prophets (1:20-21) they did not speak with divine authority (Deut 18:20; Jer 14:14; 23:21, 32; Ezek 13:2-7); (2) frequently their message was one of peace and security in contrast to the prophecies of future judgment uttered by the true prophets (Jer 4:10; 6:14; 14:13, 15;

false teachers were already among the Christian community to whom Peter wrote,<sup>162</sup> and as 2 Peter 2:1 indicates they were secretly introducing destructive heresies, denying the Master who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves.<sup>163</sup>

Advocates of unlimited atonement consider 2 Peter 2:1 to be one of the strongest statements supporting an unlimited redemption, because the verse seems to be saying that Christ died for those who deny him, and are therefore lost. Therefore Christ's atonement is not only explicitly said to be for who do not believe in him, it is said to be

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23:17; 27:9, 16-18; Ezek 13:10; Mic 3:5, 11); (3) they were condemned to punishment by God (Jer 14:15; 23:15; 28:16-17; cf. Deut 18:20)." Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 238.

<sup>162</sup>Peter uses the future tense when speaking of the false teachers, but it is clear from the context (2:13, 15, 17) that the false teachers were present in the community. Schreiner explains, "It is more likely that Peter alluded to prophecies uttered in the early church, predicting the outcome of false prophets (cf. Matt 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; cf. also Deut 123:2-66). He reminded his hearers that the advent of the false teachers was foreknown beforehand and hence that God reigns even in such perilous times. It is instructive to note that in 1 Tim 4:1 and 2 Tim 3:1 the future tense is also used to predict the arrival of opponents, though it is evident their false teaching was already subverting the churches addressed." Schreiner, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 327.

<sup>163</sup>These actions characterize the false teachers and clearly communicate that the false teachers were unbelievers. Hiebert, "Portrayal of False Teachers," 258. The first phrase, "secretly introducing destructive heresies," indicates that the false teachers were bringing erroneous teachings into the community. These teaching are described as destructive "in that they lead those who follow them to destruction, meaning in colloquial terms that they 'send them to hell.'" Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 220. The second phrase states that they are denying Christ, and this was most likely by their actions. As Davids states, "Their problems are not so much heterodoxy as heteropraxy. Their heterodoxy, which will show up in ch. 3, is in support of their aberrant lifestyle. This lifestyle is the root of the problem. They deny their sovereign Lord in that they do not obey him. Far from being his apprentices, they are living in contradiction to his life and teaching." Ibid., 221. See also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 240-41. The third phrase indicates that the false teachers' lifestyles and teachings were bring swift destruction upon themselves. "Their 'destruction' involves all that is the opposite of 'salvation.' It 'consists in the loss of eternal life, eternal misery, the lot of those excluded from the kingdom of God.'" Hiebert, "Portrayal of False Teachers," 260.

for the worst kind of heretics who deny Christ and his atonement.<sup>164</sup> This understanding of the verse is based upon the phrase “denying the Master who bought them,” with “Master” referring to Jesus Christ and “bought” referring to soteriological redemption, but not to actual salvation. This understanding is contested,<sup>165</sup> however, with the two main issues being the meaning of the terms “Master” and “bought.”

The word translated “Master” in 2 Peter 2:1 is *despotes*, which is used ten times in the New Testament. In four of these instances the word clearly refers to masters of households or slave owners (1 Tim 6:1, 2; Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:18). *Despotes* is clearly used of God the Father three times (Luke 2:29; Acts 2:24; Rev 6:10), with each reference stressing the Father’s absolute sovereignty. The word occurs in 2 Timothy 2:21, where it most likely refers to Jesus Christ and stresses his ownership and sovereignty over believers.<sup>166</sup> *Despotes* refers to Jesus Christ in Jude 4, which states, “For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”<sup>167</sup> The term almost certainly refers to

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<sup>164</sup>Lightner notes, “Two things are of extreme importance in the 2 Peter passage. One is that the purchase price of redemption was paid by the Lord for even the false prophets and teachers, even though they quite obviously never accept it. The other important feature is that these for whom the purchase price was paid are heretics of the vilest sort, since they deny the only possible basis of salvation – the substitutionary atonement of Christ.” Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 75.

<sup>165</sup>Long, *Definite Atonement*, 91-99; and Andrew D. Chang, “Second Peter 2:1 and the Extent of the Atonement,” *BibSac* 142 (1985): 56-60 both discuss four different interpretations of this phrase, while Douglas W. Kennard, “Petrine Redemption: Its Meaning and Extent,” *JETS* 30 (1987): 401 lists six different interpretations.

<sup>166</sup>Chang, “Second Peter 2:1,” 53.

<sup>167</sup>There are solid grammatical and contextual reasons for understanding *despotes* as referring to Jesus Christ in Jude 4. Not only does the phrase “our only Master

Jesus Christ in 2 Peter 2:1 as well.<sup>168</sup> Second Peter 2:1 parallels Jude 4,<sup>169</sup> and, no matter how it is understood, the phrase “bought them” almost certainly refers to a work of Christ rather than a work of the Father.<sup>170</sup>

The exact meaning of “bought them” in this context is disputed, however. The word translated “bought” is *agorazo*, which is one of the words used in the New Testament to denote redemption.<sup>171</sup> The word is used 6 times in regards to people (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 5:9; 14:3-4), and except for the disputed use in 2 Peter 2:1 it clearly refers to soteriological redemption. The word is also used 24 times in a nonsoteriological sense, however, in reference to commercial purchases.<sup>172</sup> This has led some to argue that the usage in 2 Peter 2:1 is nonsoteriological, and should mean

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and Lord, Jesus Christ” seem to fit the Granville Sharp rule (meaning that “Master” and “Lord” most likely both refer to Jesus Christ because the words are governed by the same article), but the word *despotes* was used of Jesus in Palestinian circles, and this would have been known by Jude. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 39-40; Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 45; Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 403; and Schreiner, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 439-40.

<sup>168</sup>There are some advocates of particular redemption that understand *despotes* in this verse as referring to God the Father, but this is a minority view. See Owen, *Death of Death*, 251; and Nettles, *By His Grace*, 300-02.

<sup>169</sup>Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 240; Edwin A. Blum, *2 Peter*, in vol. 12 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 276; Chang, “Second Peter 2:1,” 53-54; Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 221; Hiebert, “Portrayal of False Teachers,” 259; Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 403; Long, *Definite Atonement*, 85; and Schreiner *Jude, 2, Peter*, 329.

<sup>170</sup>“A reference to Jesus Christ is likely in the phrase he ‘bought them’ (cf. Rev 5:9).” Schreiner, *Jude, 2, Peter*, 329. See also Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 221; and Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 403.

<sup>171</sup>When it is used in a soteriological sense, “The main emphasis [of *agorazo*] is on the fact that the redeemed are God’s.” Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 55. See also Chang, “Second Peter 2:1,” 54-56; and Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 402.

<sup>172</sup>Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 53.

“acquire.”<sup>173</sup> The meaning of this word is almost certainly soteriological, however, for four reasons. First, as noted above, whenever the word refers to people as the object of purchase in the New Testament, it is always used soteriologically, unless 2 Peter 2:1 is the lone exception.<sup>174</sup> Second, the context of the verse is clearly soteriological.<sup>175</sup> Third, *agorazo* is used soteriologically in Revelation 14:3-4, and there is no mention of a price in those verses.<sup>176</sup> Fourth, there is no reason to understand *agorazo* hypothetically; Christ actually did redeem the false teachers, but they are not in Christ through faith (they deny him with their words and their actions) and therefore they do not subjectively experience that redemption.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>173</sup>Gary Long, for example, offers six reasons why the use of *agorazo* in 2 Pet 2:1 is not soteriological: the word is never used in the Septuagint Old Testament to translate redemption words, the word is never used in a salvation context in the New Testament without the mention of a price, whenever the word is used of people it always refers to believers, the word by itself does not include a payment price and cannot be used soteriologically without the mention of one, *agorazo* is better translated “acquire” or “obtain” when no payment price is stated, and the word is never used in the New Testament in a hypothetical sense.” Long, *Definite Atonement*, 86-87. See also Nettles, *By His Grace*, 301-02.

<sup>174</sup>Chang, “Second Peter 2:1,” 55; and Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 402.

<sup>175</sup>“The context clearly develops soteriological issues. Within this development there is a major emphasis on lifestyle, which is quite appropriate to Petrine redemption. For example, those who have knowledge of Christ are to abundantly appropriate in their lives faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love (2 Pet 1:2-7). This meaningful way of life assures the believer that he shall bear fruit and enter into the eternal kingdom (2 Pet 1:8-11). This meaningful way of life is the reverse of the preredemptive, futile, sinful way of life (1 Pet 1:18; 2 Pet 1:9). So *agorazo* here is best seen as soteriological redemption.” Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 402.

<sup>176</sup>“The lack of a mentioned price is no reason to overthrow this soteriological meaning since half of the NT soteriological meanings of this word omit any mention of a price (2 Pet 2:1; Rev 14:3-4).” *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>177</sup>Cf. the discussion on the difference between objective and subjective reconciliation (as seen in 2 Cor 5:18-21) on pp.125-31 of this dissertation. Just as

The meanings of “Master” and “bought” in 2 Peter 2:1 lead to the conclusion that Jesus Christ redeemed the false teachers who deny him; which means that in his atonement he paid the price for their sins. Therefore 2 Peter 2:1 states that Christ paid the penalty for the sins of unbelievers. The language and context of 2 Peter 2:1 rule out the interpretations of the verse that understand *despotes* to refer to God the Father,<sup>178</sup> or Christ as “Sovereign Creator.”<sup>179</sup> It also rules out interpretations that understand the verse to be referring only to physical or temporal deliverance.<sup>180</sup> Neither are the false

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Christ objectively reconciled the world but not all people are subjectively reconciled to him, Christ objectively redeemed the world, though all are not subjectively redeemed by him. As Chafer states (though I do not agree with the distinctions he makes between *agorazo* and *exagorazo*), “There is, then a redemption which pays the price, but does not of necessity release the slave, and there is a redemption which is unto abiding freedom.” Chafer, “For Whom Did Christ Die?,” 313. See also Blum, *2 Peter*, 276-77; Chang, “Second Peter 2:1,” 60; and Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 74-76.

<sup>178</sup>When *despotes* is understood as referring to God the Father, the phrase “denying the Master who bought them” is usually understood as referring to the Father’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt. The false teachers are therefore Jews who are denying the God who did so much for them as a nation. Deut 32:6 is often used to support this view. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 600; and Nettles, *By His Grace*, 301-02. Besides the semantic problems with this understanding, it is clear that 2 Peter is written to a mixed group of Christians and not to Jews alone. Peter would not have claimed that the exodus was accomplished for Gentiles as well as Jews. See Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 132-36; Kennard, “Petrine Redemption,” 401-02; and Schreiner, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 176-80.

<sup>179</sup>This view understands *despotes* as Christ, but understands *agorazo* in a non-redemptive sense. Therefore the verse is not speaking of Christ redeeming the false teachers, but refers “to the creation of the false teachers by their Sovereign Lord.” Long, *Definite Atonement*, 95. This view is untenable in light of the evidence pointing toward the soteriological understanding of *agorazo*.

<sup>180</sup>This view states that Peter refers to the temporary deliverance of the false teachers from the pollutions of the world because of “their knowledge of the Lord” (2 Pet 2:20). See Owen, *Death of Death*, 251-52. Not only does this view misunderstand the meaning of *agorazo*, it also requires that the false teachers be professing believers. There is no support for this view in the text, and there is good reason to believe that the false teachers were not professing believers. As Chang states, “The Bible does teach temporal deliverance, but his view does not seem to square with the teaching of 2 Peter 2:1. The

teachers charitably treated as professing Christians, a view commonly espoused by advocates of particular redemption.<sup>181</sup> The verse is also clearly speaking of those who are unbelievers, which means that the false teachers are not apostate Christians<sup>182</sup> or former Christians who have lost their salvation.<sup>183</sup> Peter in this verse speaks of unbelieving false teachers who deny Jesus Christ, their Master and the one they should have trusted in and served because he is the one who redeemed them from their sins.

### A Universal Payment for Sin Does Not Result in Universalism

The primary theological argument advanced against Christ's payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect, is that this understanding of the extent of the atonement would demand universalism. Berkhof is representative when he states, "It

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text gives no evidence that these false teachers professed to be believers. Even if they were professing Christians, there is no logical connection between the physical deliverance from the pollutions of the world and the profession itself." Chang, "Second Peter 2:1," 56-57.

<sup>181</sup>"These false teachers are described according to their own profession and the judgment of charity. They gave themselves out as redeemed men, and were so accounted in the judgment of the church while they abode in her communion. This is simple and natural. The passage by no means affirms that any but the true church or the sheep of Christ are truly bought by the atoning blood." Smeaton, *Apostle's Doctrine*, 447. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 397; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 38; Dan G. McCartney, "Atonement in James, Peter, and Jude," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 178-79; Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 204; Schreiner, *Jude, 2, Peter*, 329; Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:481; Symington, *Atonement and Intercession*, 232-33; Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 490; and Wells, *Price for a People*, 90-93. The problem with this view is that there is no basis for it in the text. As with the temporal deliverance view, the text gives no evidence that these false teachers professed to be believers, and much evidence that they did not. See Blum, *2 Peter*, 276-77; Chang, "Second Peter 2:1," 60; Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 221; and Sailer, "A Wesleyan View," 193.

<sup>182</sup>Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 240.

<sup>183</sup>Kennard, "Petrine Redemption," 403-05.

should also be noted that the doctrine that Christ died for the purpose of saving all men, logically leads to absolute universalism, that is, to the doctrine that all men are actually saved. It is impossible that they for whom Christ paid the price, whose guilt he removed, should be lost on account of that guilt. The Arminians cannot stop at their half-way station, but must go all the way.”<sup>184</sup> This argument is behind much of the particular redemption understanding of the verses explored above, as alternate interpretations of those verses are deemed necessary to avoid universalism.<sup>185</sup>

The assertion that a universal payment for sins entails universalism is supported with several arguments. The most common one is that when the Bible speaks of Christ’s death, it speaks of it actually accomplishing salvation instead of just making it possible. If Christ actually paid for the sins of all people, if he actually redeemed all people, reconciled all people, and propitiated the wrath of God for all people, then all

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<sup>184</sup>Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 395. It should be noted that Calvinists are also open to the dangers of universalism. Thomas Talbott, for example, employs Calvinistic arguments in his defense of universalism. Thomas Talbott, “Towards a Better Understanding of Universalism,” in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 3-14. Nevertheless, the charge that Christ’s payment for all sin must logically lead to salvation for all is a common one.

<sup>185</sup>Wells is representative when he states, “When Christ is said to do these things for ‘all’ or for ‘the whole world’ we must either reduce the redemption words, making them say much less than they say, or reduce the universal terms such as ‘all’ and ‘the whole world.’” You can’t say, ‘We won’t do either!’ unless you are prepared to say that Christ redeemed and reconciled and turned the wrath of God away from all men at the cross. But that is just to say that all men will be saved! As I said before, we would like to believe that, but the Bible will not let us do so.” Wells, *Price for a People*, 52. The multi-intentioned view, however, is an attempt to properly understand both the redemption words and the universal words while avoiding universalism.

people would be saved.<sup>186</sup> Supporters of particular redemption also assert that since God is completely sovereign, and His will can never be thwarted, all people would be saved if Christ died for all people, hence unlimited atonement logically results in universalism.<sup>187</sup> They claim that if Christ paid for all peoples' sins, then God would be unjust to send anyone to hell, because He would then be making them pay for sins that had already been paid for by Christ.<sup>188</sup> If even the sin of unbelief has been paid for, then God would be unjust to punish sinners for their unbelief.<sup>189</sup> Finally, since Christ died to actually secure

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<sup>186</sup>As Nicole states, "What kind of redemption would this be where the redeemed are still under the power of the enemy? What kind of propitiation, where God still deals in wrath? What kind of reconciliation where estrangement continues to exist and is even sealed for eternity? These three terms, severally and jointly, bear witness to the fact that the Scripture views the work of Christ as bringing about the effectuation of salvation." Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 201.

<sup>187</sup>Speaking of 1 Tim 2:4, 6, Owen states, "For whatsoever God can do and will do, that shall certainly come to pass and be effected. That God can save all (not considering his decree) none doubts; and that he will save all it is here affirmed: therefore, if these all here be all and every one, all and every one shall certainly be saved. . . . If all, then, here be to be understood of all men universally, one of these two things must of necessity follow: – either that God faileth of his purpose and intention, or else that all men universally shall be saved." Owen, *Death of Death*, 233.

<sup>188</sup>"If Christ's death actually paid for the sins of every person who ever lived, then there is no penalty left for anyone to pay, and it necessarily follows that all people will be saved, without exception. For God could not condemn to eternal punishment anyone whose sins are already paid for: that would be demanding double payment, and it would therefore be unjust." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 595.

<sup>189</sup>"God imposed his wrath due unto, and Christ underwent the pains of hell for, either all of the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men, or some 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. . . . If the second, that is it which we affirm, that Christ in their stead and room suffered for all the sins of the elect of the world. If the first, why then, are not all freed from the punishment of their sins? You will say, 'Because of their 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 underwent the punishment due it, or not. If so, then 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, then did he not die for all their sins. Let them choose which part they will." Owen, *Death of Death*, 61-62.

salvation for His people (Eph 5:25; Titus 2:14; Heb 2:10), He could not have died for all people because not all people are saved.<sup>190</sup>

Christ's universal payment for sin does not entail universalism, however, for two reasons. First, as the exegesis throughout this chapter has shown, the Bible consistently differentiates between Christ's objective work in the atonement and the subjective application of that work to the believer. Christ's atonement actually accomplished reconciliation, redemption, and propitiation for all people, but all people are not saved because all people do not subjectively appropriate what Christ has done for them.<sup>191</sup> In order to experience the reconciliation and redemption that Christ has accomplished in the atonement, one must be in Christ through faith.<sup>192</sup> Arguments asserting that Christ procured the gift of saving faith in his atonement<sup>193</sup> or that he

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<sup>190</sup>“It should be pointed out that there is an inseparable connection between the purchase and actual bestowment of salvation. The Bible clearly teaches that the design and effect of the atoning work of Christ is not merely to make salvation possible, but to reconcile God and man, and to put men in actual possession of eternal salvation, a salvation which many people fail to obtain.” Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 395.

<sup>191</sup>“The objectivity of the atonement is clearly affirmed in the New Testament. Christ does not simply offer reconciliation and redemption, but he also accomplishes what he sets out to do (cf. John 17:4; Rom 5:6, 8; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:19). Christ not only died for all but in Christ all died. . . . Yet we must appropriate what Christ has done for us in faith. It is not enough to see Christ from afar, but the ‘morning star’ must rise in our hearts (2 Pet 1:19). His reconciliation needs to be fulfilled in the experience of redemption made possible by the Holy Spirit.” Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, vol. 4 of *Christian Foundations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 162.

<sup>192</sup>“Atonement in and by itself, separate from faith, saves no soul. Christ might have died precisely as he did, but if no one believed in him he would have died in vain. . . . It is only when the death of Christ has been actually confided in as atonement, that it is completely ‘set forth’ as God’s propitiation for sin.” Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2:477.

<sup>193</sup>For example, “Saving faith, being the gift of God (Acts 13:48; 18:27; Phil 1:29, etc.), is granted to man as a fruit of the saving work of Christ. If this work is universal in scope, it is difficult to see why faith is not conferred upon all men. Yet it is

intercedes only for the elect (and therefore he died only for the elect because his death and intercession are coextensive)<sup>194</sup> do not negate this difference between the objective accomplishment of the atonement and its subjective application.<sup>195</sup> Advocates of

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patently plain that all men do not believe, and the conclusion follows that the work of Christ, as well as its fruition in faith, is designed for the redeemed.” Nicole, “Definite Atonement,” 202.

<sup>194</sup>For example, “Christ’s role as high priest is a whole. It is one unified movement of grace towards humanity whereby he takes our place in obeying the Father, in atoning for our sins and bringing us to God. He makes very clear that he prays for us besides dying for us. This is a dominant theme in his great high-priestly prayer to the Father in John chapter 17. . . . His intercession is limited. He prays for his own and not for the world. It follows that his atoning death is intended for those the Father had given him and not for all in an indiscriminate fashion. If we see the intercession as particular and the cross as universal, we are positing a disruption in the heart of Christ’s high-priestly work.” Letham, *Work of Christ*, 236-37.

<sup>195</sup>These arguments are often used to demonstrate that the application of the atonement is necessarily the same as the provision of the atonement. This is not the case, however, because Christ’s particular intentions for the elect in the atonement do not rule out his general intentions in the atonement for the elect and the nonelect. Concerning the gift of saving faith only for the elect, there is no reason why Christ could not have secured this gift only for the elect through his death for all, as one of his particular intentions in the atonement, if the Bible leads us to believe that he did so. That this is exactly what he did will be argued for in chap. 5. As Marshall states, “To say that God provides the means of acceptance, namely faith and the gift of the Spirit, does not require that God, having given Christ for the sins of the world, should act to save every individual.” Marshall, “For All,” 341. Concerning Christ’s intercession, it is certainly a part of his ministry toward believers (John 17; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1), but does this demand that Christ never prays for the nonelect? This does not seem to be the testimony of Scripture, which records Christ praying for the forgiveness of those who crucified him (Luke 23:34), Paul praying for his lost Israelite brethren (Rom 9:1-5 – why would Paul pray for unbelievers when Christ would not?), and Paul’s instruction to pray for all people (1 Tim 2:1-2). Christ certainly only intercedes unto salvation for the elect, but like the rest of the blessings of the atonement, intercession unto salvation is something that is available to all but only effectual for those who are in Christ. Furthermore, Christ’s role as advocate for the saved involves his pleading against Satan, the Accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10). This advocacy is possible because Jesus gained victory over Satan in the cross, and Jesus’ victory over Satan is only possible because his atonement was the payment for all sin (see pp. 206-11 of this dissertation). Christ procuring the gift of faith only for the elect or interceding unto salvation only for the elect does not require that his atoning death be only for the elect.

particular redemption err by collapsing the application and the provision of the atonement into the same act when the Bible separates them.<sup>196</sup>

Supporting this differentiation between the objective work of the atonement and the subjective application of it is the necessity of faith on the part of believers for salvation. If those who believe in particular redemption are correct, and the atonement actually saved the elect, then it seems to follow logically that nothing else is necessary for the elect to be saved.<sup>197</sup> The Bible makes it clear, however, that faith in Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation, and that without faith in Christ even the elect are subject to God's wrath. In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul is writing about the nature of the salvation that the Ephesian believers possessed. He begins this section by noting that before their conversion they were dead in sin (Eph 2:1),<sup>198</sup> that they were followers of the

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<sup>196</sup>“In terms of the Atonement's *provision* Christ died not merely for the elect but for all sinners in all times and places. Christ drank the cup of suffering for the sins of the entire world. He died as a substitute, a propitiation, a ransom, etc. for the universe of sinners. The non-elect had their sins paid for on the cross, even though through unbelief they do not personally appropriate the benefits of his work. Christ, in other words, provided salvation for more people than those to whom he purposed to apply its saving benefits.” Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 191, emphasis the author's. See also Lightner, *Death of Christ*, 96.

<sup>197</sup>“The point is that if propitiation, say, or reconciliation were actually finished on the cross, then all those whose sins were actually propitiated were on the day Christ died removed from the wrath of God and reconciled to Him. Indeed, those elect not yet born would therefore never be under the wrath of God or estranged from Him in their real lifetimes. But in fact the Bible speaks of Christians as having lived under the wrath of God and in a state of estrangement from Him before their conversion.” Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will*, 94. Also, “An overemphasis on the objective atonement or the finished work of Christ gives the impression that the atonement is automatic and that faith is relatively unimportant.” Robert H. Culpepper, *Interpreting the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 157.

<sup>198</sup>“It was necessary that the readers should be raised to life, because they were spiritually dead, severed and alienated from God, the source of true life. Their spiritual death was the result of their ‘trespasses and sins.’” F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the*

devil (Eph 2:2),<sup>199</sup> and that they used to be children of wrath who deserved nothing but the judgment of God, like all other unbelievers (Eph 2:3).<sup>200</sup> The question then is: how could Paul write that the Ephesian believers were once children of wrath if their salvation had been actualized in Christ's atonement? How could he write that they had been saved by grace, through faith (Eph 2:8)? How can those who were saved at the cross be described as sinners under the wrath of God who need to put their faith in Him in order to be saved? As Bruce Ware states,

Is not saving faith required *for the elect to be saved*? If so, how can it be said of the death of Christ *in itself* that by his death *alone* he saved those for whom he died? As long as one believes that all people (including the elect) are born into this world with the sin of Adam so that until anyone savingly believes in Christ he or she remains *unsaved* and under God's wrath, then we cannot speak correctly of Christ's death as actually and certainly *saving* the elect. No, even here, the payment made by his death on behalf of the elect renders their salvation *possible* (and because of their election, a future *certain* reality) while that salvation becomes *actual* only upon their exercising saving faith. If Christ's death, then, is a payment for sin that

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*Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 280.

<sup>199</sup> Arthur Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 34.

<sup>200</sup> "When they once lived their lives in such total absorption of the flesh, the writer and all believers were, 'children of wrath.' This is a Hebraism, like 'sons of disobedience' in v. 2, which means they were deserving of and liable to wrath. This wrath is clearly God's wrath (cf. Eph 5:6; also Col 3:5, 6) rather than merely an impersonal process of cause and effect or a principle of retribution in a moral universe. The wrath of God is a concept which occurs frequently in Paul's letter to the Romans. It refers to God's active judgment going forth against all forms of sin and evil and is evidence of his absolute holiness. . . . The children of wrath, then, are those who are doomed to God's wrath because through their condition of sinful rebellion, they deserve his righteous judgment. As does Paul in Rom 1:18-3:20, the writer makes this category cover all humanity outside Christ. Ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ means 'like the rest of humanity,' and in this way the sinful condition and its consequences, which the writer has been describing, become all-embracing in their extent. What was once true of the readers (vv 1, 2) was also once true of all believers (v. 3a), and what was once true of all believers is also true of the rest of humanity (v. 3b)." Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 98-99.

makes *possible* the salvation of people, which salvation *actually* occurs only when they savingly believe, then there is no problem saying Christ's death paid the penalty of the sin of *all* the people in the whole world, because until any believes, he or she is not saved.<sup>201</sup>

This biblical truth also effectively responds to the particular redemption arguments that God would be unjust to send sinners to hell or punish them for their unbelief if all sins are paid for on the cross. Without being in Christ by grace through faith all people are culpable for all of their sins (including unbelief)<sup>202</sup> and all people face eternal punishment in hell.<sup>203</sup>

The second reason that Christ's payment for the sins of all people does not necessitate universalism is because there are multiple intentions in Christ's atonement. Christ's unlimited atonement does not thwart God's sovereign will because God intended to accomplish both general and particular purposes in the atonement, and this required payment for the sins of all people.<sup>204</sup> As chapter 4 will explain, God does several things

<sup>201</sup>Bruce A. Ware, "Extent of the Atonement: Outline of the Issue, Positions, Key Texts, and Key Theological Arguments" (unpublished class handout, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, n.d.), 5, emphasis the author's.

<sup>202</sup>This argument will be dealt with further in chap. 4 in the section entitled "An Additional Basis for Condemnation." Suffice it to say presently that those in hell are condemned on the basis of all of their sins, not just unbelief, because they are outside of Christ and his atonement for their sins.

<sup>203</sup>Since all people, including the elect, are children of wrath and culpable for their sin before their salvation in Christ, it seems that no person is rescued from hell until he or she is saved, and therefore the "double payment" argument loses its force. If advocates of particular redemption employ this argument, then they need to explain how they escape it in the case of the elect before the elect are actually saved. As Stephen Strehle states, "The limited atonement arguments of double jeopardy and universalism are not valid, for their proponents too must inconsistently make the atonement ineffectual until it is actually applied." Stephen A. Strehle, "The Extent of the Atonement within the Theological Systems of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980), 278.

<sup>204</sup>See pp. 98-101 of this dissertation, as well as the following chapter.

for his creation and/or unbelievers through Christ's payment for the sins of all people. As chapter 5 will explain, God also accomplishes the certain salvation of the elect through Christ's payment for the sins of all people. God's particular saving work on the cross does not rule out His general work for the non-elect, and is in fact consistent with it. The multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement, which is based upon Christ's payment for the sins of all people, does not result in or in any way demand universalism.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus Christ's payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect, is a truth affirmed throughout Scripture. Though there are not many passages in the Old Testament that speak of the extent of the atonement, Isaiah 53:6 stands out as one text that affirms Christ's atonement is for the sins of all people. The New Testament, centered as it is upon the good news of Christ's death and its implications for humanity, is much clearer about the extent of the atonement. John's Gospel repeatedly describes the atonement in universal terms, as Jesus came to be the Savior of the world (John 4:42) in order to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). First John is no less emphatic, as Christ is described as the propitiation for the sins of believers and of unbelievers (1 John 2:1-2). Paul's position on the extent of the atonement is the same as John's; Christ's death was a ransom for all (2 Tim 2:3-6) and resulted in the reconciliation of the world (2 Cor 5:18-21). The author of Hebrews also describes Christ as tasting death for everyone (Heb 2:9). Finally, Peter makes it clear that even unbelieving false teachers owe their allegiance to Christ, because he bought them in his atonement (2 Pet 2:1).

Although the New Testament consistently confirms Christ's payment for the sin of all people, it never teaches universalism. There is a consistent difference made

between the objective accomplishment and the subjective application of the atonement. Even the elect do not receive the salvific benefits of the atonement until they subjectively appropriate them by grace through faith. Christ's payment for the sin of all people on the cross did not secure the salvation of all people, but instead only secured the salvation of the elect in accordance with the Father's electing will. Christ's procurement of salvation for the elect in his atonement was one of the multiple intentions that God had in the atonement. The atonement also had several general purposes, which flow out of Christ's universal payment for sin. The multi-intentioned view alone is able to account for both the particular and general intentions for the atonement that are found in Scripture. Christ's payment for all sin was for specific purposes, and the universality of the atonement in no way diminishes the value or the power of Christ's atonement.<sup>205</sup> Christ's payment for all sin is instead at the very heart of the atonement's glory and majesty.

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<sup>205</sup>It is often argued that an atonement that pays for all sin, as opposed to an atonement that pays only for the sins of the elect, loses value, power, depth, or effectiveness, as it no longer actually saves all of those for whom it was intended. For example, see Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 468-69; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 63-64; and Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 203. This is in no way the case with the multi-intentioned view, as this view affirms that the atonement accomplishes exactly what God intended it to accomplish. God's intentions for the atonement included both a general payment for all sin and the securing of the elect's salvation.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE GENERAL INTENTIONS OF THE ATONEMENT

#### **Introduction**

The multi-intentioned view holds that God the Father, in sending his Son to die on the cross, had both particular and general purposes for the atonement. The general purposes of God are those purposes that have reference both to the elect and to the nonelect, while the particular purposes are those which concern only the elect. In accordance with the Father's will, the Son died to pay for the sins of all people, the elect and the nonelect, in order to accomplish these multiple purposes. Based upon the Son's atoning death on the cross, the Spirit then works to apply the atonement in both particular and general ways. The general intentions of the atonement were to make the universal gospel call possible, to make common grace (and not only salvific grace) possible, to provide an additional basis of condemnation for those who reject the gospel, to serve as the supreme revelation of God's character, and to make Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin possible. This chapter will seek to demonstrate, both exegetically and theologically, what God's general purposes in the atonement are. It is hoped that through this, the biblical and theological validity of the multi-intentioned view will be evident. In doing so this chapter will also demonstrate the necessity of Christ's payment for the sins of the nonelect.

### A Genuine Universal Gospel Call

One of the primary intentions God had in sending the Son to die for the sins of all people was to render the gospel genuinely and rightly offered to all people. Even though not all people will be saved, Christ died to provide the basis by which all people could be saved if they would trust in Christ. The genuineness of the offer for all people to be saved through Christ's atoning work is necessary because God desires that all people know of his saving love towards them in the atonement (John 3:16), and because there is a sense in which he desires for all people to experience the salvation that only the atonement brings (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9).<sup>1</sup> God offers the universal gospel call because wants all people to hear the good news of the gospel, turn from their sin, and come to him through his Son.<sup>2</sup> As D. A. Carson states, "However much God stands in judgment over the world, he also presents himself as the God who invites and commands all human beings to repent."<sup>3</sup> The universal gospel call genuinely demonstrates God's love toward all of humanity, even if it does not result in salvation for all who hear it.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>"The good news of Jesus Christ is good news *for all* of humanity. There is no limit to the scope of the divine love." Fritz Guy, "The Universality of God's Love," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 39, emphasis the original author's.

<sup>2</sup>The universal gospel call is for all people because it is meant to go out to all people, not because every single person will eventually hear it (Matt 28:18-20). See John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 171-81.

<sup>3</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 17-18.

<sup>4</sup>"The end result of God's love is therefore the gospel message – the free offer of life and mercy to anyone who believes. In other words, the gospel – an indiscriminate offer of divine mercy to everyone without exception – manifests God's compassionate love and unfeigned lovingkindness to all humanity." John F. MacArthur, Jr. "The Love of God for Humanity," *MSJ* 7 (1996): 14. See also John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*

### The Nature of the Universal Gospel Call

The universal gospel call is “the invitation or summons to salvation conveyed through cognitive encounter with the Gospel message,” and it includes a presentation of the plan of salvation, an invitation to come to Christ in faith and repentance, and the promise of forgiveness and salvation.<sup>5</sup> The universal gospel call is based upon the universal invitation to come to God issued in both the Old and the New Testaments. The prophets in the Old Testament continually called both the children of Israel and the nations of the world to come to God. Psalm 22:27 states, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You.” Isaiah 45:22 is another example, “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other” (cf. Isa 55:1; 65:2). This verse makes it clear that “If the Lord is the sole God of the whole world and if he is a savior (v. 21), then he must be the savior of the whole world as well.”<sup>6</sup>

In the New Testament John the Baptist continued the practice of the Old Testament by calling all people to come to God for salvation (Matt 3:1-12; Mark 1:3-8; Luke 3:2-20; John 1:6-8; 19-34).<sup>7</sup> Jesus did the same thing, inviting all people to enter

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(Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 420.

<sup>5</sup>Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 218.

<sup>6</sup>John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 223.

<sup>7</sup>Speaking of the description of John the Baptist’s ministry in John 1:6-8, F. F. Bruce states, “The purpose . . . of John’s witness is ‘that all might believe’; it is the purpose for which the Gospel itself was written (20:31).” F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 35. The universality of John’s witness is also evident in his statement that Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is “the one who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). “The ‘world’

the kingdom of God through repentance and faith (Matt 11:28; 22:1-14; Luke 5:32; 14:16-24; John 7:37-38).<sup>8</sup> He then commanded his disciples to preach his name throughout the ends of the earth in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). Acts records the early Christian evangelists offering the gospel indiscriminately to all people (e.g., Acts 2:38-39; 4:12; 8:22; 17:30). However, this call did not always end with its hearers accepting salvation, but was often resisted and rejected (Luke 13:34; Acts 7:51; 13:46; 17:32), demonstrating that the gospel call goes out to the nonelect just as it does to the elect.<sup>9</sup> As Jesus stated, “For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt 22:14). That the universal gospel call can be rejected illustrates the difference between this call and the Spirit’s particular, effectual calling.<sup>10</sup>

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embraces all without distinction of race, religion, or culture (cf. John 12:32).” *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>8</sup>Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 219.

<sup>9</sup>“A large number of passages show clearly that not all who are exposed to the call of the gospel will in fact be among the redeemed. Many passages assert specifically that some who are ‘called’ – that is, are invited in terms of the gospel message – will harden their hearts and refuse the entreaty of the gospel of grace. . . . Since, then, the gospel call was addressed to some who did not respond positively, it is plain that the extent of the call is greater than that of the appropriate acceptance.” Roger Nicole, “Covenant, Universal Call, and Definite Atonement,” *JETS* 38 (1995): 406.

<sup>10</sup>Effectual calling is “the Spirit’s call to sinners to hear and to believe the gospel, rendered effectual by his supernatural enlivening work, or as the Spirit’s provision of grace resulting in saving faith, rendered irresistible against all blindness, hardness, and unbelief.” Bruce A. Ware, “Effectual Calling and Grace,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 204. The effectual call is always issued through the proclamation of the gospel (2 Thess 2:14), but it is distinct from the general invitation of the gospel (e.g., Isa 45:22; Matt 11:28), which goes out to all people, because it always results in salvation. See also Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 218-29; and Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 942-44.

All supporters of unlimited atonement agree that the gospel call is universal, in that it is meant for all people.<sup>11</sup> They typically understand the universal gospel call as one of the strongest proofs for the truth of unlimited atonement.<sup>12</sup> Supporters of particular redemption also typically believe in the universal gospel call (with some

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<sup>11</sup>There are some advocates of unlimited atonement, usually Arminian, who believe that one of the implications of an unlimited atonement is that all people have an opportunity to accept or reject God's salvation, whether they have heard the gospel or not. For example, "The gracious love that intends salvation for all of humanity also at the same time confronts every person with a genuine choice regarding the meaning of one's present existence and the nature of the ultimate future." Guy, "Universality of God's Love," 45. Another way that this belief is stated is with the idea that God knows who would accept him if they would have heard the gospel, so those people end up being saved, even though they never actually heard the gospel. As Donald Lake states, "A valid offer of grace has been made to mankind, but its application is limited by God's response rather than God's arbitrary selection. God knows who would, under ideal circumstances, believe the gospel, and on the basis of his foreknowledge, applies that gospel even if the person never hears the gospel during his lifetime." Donald Lake, "He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 43. The problem with this idea is that Scripture consistently presents the proclamation, hearing, and acceptance of the gospel as absolutely necessary for the Holy Spirit's work of salvation to take place. The Spirit, as the Spirit of the Father (Matt 10:20; Luke 11:13; 1 John 4:2) and the Spirit of the Son (Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; 1 Pet 1:11), only saves people by explicitly applying the atonement of Jesus Christ through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The atonement's payment for all sin did not procure an opportunity for anyone to be saved apart from hearing the gospel, which is part of the reason the gospel needs to be proclaimed to all people. I defend the necessity of the gospel for salvation in further detail in Gary L. Shultz, Jr., "The Necessity of the Gospel in the Holy Spirit's Saving Work," *JBTM* forthcoming.

<sup>12</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, "For Whom Did Christ Die?" *BibSac* 137 (1980): 315-16; Norman F. Douty, *The Death of Christ: Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* (Irving, TX: William & Watrous, 1978), 45-49; Lake, "He Died for All," 43-44; Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 114-18; I. Howard Marshall, "For All, For All My Savior Died," in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honor of Clark H. Pinnock*, ed. Stanley P. Porter and Anthony Ricross (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003), 345-46; Terry L. Miethe, "The Universal Power of the Atonement," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 83-85; and Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 115-18.

notable exceptions),<sup>13</sup> although they deny that the universal gospel call necessarily results in an unlimited extent of the atonement.<sup>14</sup> As the following sections will demonstrate, however, the Bible makes it clear that Jesus' payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect, was necessary for the universal gospel call to take place. Both the content of the gospel and the motivation for the gospel demand an atonement that was for the sins of all people. The Holy Spirit's work in taking the gospel to all people suggests a universal payment for sin, as the Spirit's work is closely tied to the Son's. Theologically, a strong argument can also be made that an atonement for all people is necessary for the universal gospel call to be genuine, as an offer of salvation to all would seem to imply that provision has been made for the salvation of all.

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<sup>13</sup>These exceptions include Joseph Hussey (1660-1726), John Gill (1697-1771), John Brine (1703-1765), Klaas Schilder (1890-1765), and Herman Hoeksema (1886-1925). Nicole, "Covenant, Universal Call," 407. However, these are exceptions, and most supporters of particular redemption adamantly uphold the universal gospel call. See Nicole, "Covenant, Universal Call," 410-11; and J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1961), 26-27. The rejection of the universal gospel call is usually characterized as hyper-Calvinism. See Thomas J. Nettles, *By His Grace and For His Glory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Lake Charles, LA: Cor Meum Tibi, 2002), 383-424.

<sup>14</sup>Berkhof is typical when he states, "The offer of salvation in the way of faith and repentance does not pretend to be a revelation of the secret counsel of God, more specifically, of His design in giving Christ as an atonement for sin. It is simply the promise of salvation to all those who accept Christ by faith. . . . The universal offer of the gospel does not consist in the declaration that Christ made atonement for every man that hears the gospel, and that God really intends to save each one. It consists in (a) an exposition of the atoning work of Christ as in itself sufficient for the redemption of all men; (b) a description of the real nature of the repentance and faith that are required in coming to Christ; and (c) a declaration that each one who comes to Christ with true repentance and faith will obtain the blessings of salvation." Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 397-98.

## The Content of the Gospel

Paul gives a succinct account of the gospel he preached in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. These verses state, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” This gospel is the message that the Corinthians heard from Paul, received, and believed; and it was through their belief in this message that they were saved (vv. 1-2).<sup>15</sup> At the heart of the gospel is the atoning death of Christ on the cross and his subsequent resurrection, as verses 3-4 make clear (cf. also 1 Cor 1:18, 21, 23, 14).<sup>16</sup> In order for a person to be saved, he or she must believe that “Christ died for our sins.”<sup>17</sup>

The importance of this explanation of the gospel for the extent of the

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<sup>15</sup>“The gospel is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16), and they [the Corinthians] owe their new existence as Christians to Paul’s preaching of the gospel.” David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 613.

<sup>16</sup>Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 201; and Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1189-90.

<sup>17</sup>“But the emphasis in the New Testament *kerygma* is on the Savior’s atoning death for the sins of the world. Well may we echo Paul’s affirmation: ‘I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified’ (1 Cor 2:2).” John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher’s Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 41. See also Sinclair B. Ferguson, “Preaching the Atonement,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 427; and Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 126.

atonement is that the heart of Paul's gospel is the phrase "Christ died for our sins." This phrase indicates that Christ died a substitutionary death for the sins of humanity.<sup>18</sup> It also indicates that Christ died this substitutionary death not only for the sins of the elect, but for the sins of unbelievers. The reason that this is so is because it is the gospel that was preached to unbelievers to lead them to salvation. The Corinthians were not saved at the moment the atonement occurred, but were saved when they believed in the gospel message that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor 15:2).<sup>19</sup> Paul, as he preached this message in Corinth, certainly did not preach it only to the elect, but also preached the gospel to those who would reject it and never be saved. This is certainly the way that the early church preached the gospel as well.<sup>20</sup> If the atonement were limited only to the elect, than how could Paul and the early church preach to a group of unbelievers that "Christ died for our sins"? The word "our" includes both the preacher and those to whom he is preaching. If the atonement was only for the elect, to preach this message to the nonelect would at best be giving them a false hope and at worst would be untrue. The content of the universal gospel call includes the fact that Christ died for all sins, and is therefore

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<sup>18</sup>Thiselton, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1190-92.

<sup>19</sup>This truth also indicates the necessity of subjectively appropriating the truth of the atonement in order to salvifically experience the objective nature of the atonement. Morris, *First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, 200. The gospel proclamation that "Christ died for our sins" is true whether or not people believe it, indicating that the atonement paid for the sins of believers and unbelievers.

<sup>20</sup>In this passage, "The derivative nature of the gospel is stressed. Paul did not originate the message he gave them. He simply passed on what he had received. . . . This is the accepted language for the handing on of tradition. What follows is a very early summary of the church's traditional teaching. Paul is not giving us some views he has worked out for himself; he is passing on what had been told him. This is the *kerygma*, the proclamation, the gospel preached by the early church." Ibid., 201.

based upon an atonement that was for all sins.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Motivation for the Gospel**

Paul not only states that the content of the gospel is Christ's payment for the sins of all people, but he also states that Christ's payment for all people is the motivation for preaching the gospel. He makes this clear in 2 Corinthians 5:11-18. In this passage Paul is defending his ministry to the Corinthians by explaining his motivation for the ministry.<sup>22</sup> Paul first states that his motivation for ministry is the fear of the Lord (v. 11).<sup>23</sup> A few verses later Paul states that another motivation for his ministry is the love of Christ, which is demonstrated in Christ's death for all people (v. 14).<sup>24</sup> As Paul Barnett

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<sup>21</sup>This means that part of the gospel is telling an unbeliever that "Christ died for you," contra Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 397; Nicole, "Covenant, Universal Call," 410; J. I. Packer, "Introductory Essay," in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* by John Owen (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 16-22; and Sam Waldron, "The Biblical Confirmation of Particular Redemption," in *A Southern Baptist Dialogue: Calvinism*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brad J. Waggoner (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 149-50. As Lightner states, "What brings a condemned, hopeless, helpless sinner into the family of God is trust and acceptance of Christ's finished work on the cross as payment for his sin, the one believing. Since this is true, the sinner needs to be told, 'Christ died for you. He paid your debt. Will you accept His payment for your sins?' The one believing in limited atonement cannot honestly say this since he does not believe Christ died for all. . . . What this all means is that limited atonement runs aground when it comes to sharing the gospel of God's saving grace." Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 152-53, emphasis the author's. See also Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 194-95.

<sup>22</sup>Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, WBC, vol. 40 (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 118-19.

<sup>23</sup>"Paul is not 'afraid' of the Lord, but he does have a 'reverential awe' of him and recognizes that his whole life and ministry will come under God's scrutiny. It is with this awareness that he persuades men." Colin Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 119.

<sup>24</sup>For a defense of understanding "all" in 2 Cor 5:14 as "all people without exception," see pp. 121-25 of this dissertation.

explains, “In the second part of the verse Paul explains that he knows of, and is controlled by, ‘the love of Christ,’ because he became ‘convinced’ that ‘one died for all.’ In other words, Paul’s sense of ongoing compulsion to evangelize (‘controls’) arose from his considered judgment (‘we are convinced’) when he understood that ‘[Christ had] died for all.’<sup>25</sup> Paul’s motivation for his ministry is Christ’s payment for the sins of all people; it is what compels him to serve the Lord.

This motivation becomes even clearer in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, which states, “Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” This passage highlights the objective and subjective aspects of reconciliation with God.<sup>26</sup> Christians have the ministry of reconciliation and the word of reconciliation (subjective), and this word and ministry is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself (objective).<sup>27</sup> God wrought a universal reconciliation, therefore he issues a universal

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<sup>25</sup> Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 288.

<sup>26</sup>For an explanation of the objective and subjective aspects of reconciliation in this passage, and for a defense of the word “world” as referring to “all people without exception,” see pp. 125-31 of this dissertation.

<sup>27</sup>“Because God has made Christ sin for us, because God is not reckoning to man their trespasses, therefore there is a word of reconciliation, a message of good news that can and must be proclaimed to men. Well may Paul exhort his readers to ‘receive not the grace of God in vain.’” Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 232.

gospel call, and therefore Christians are to be ambassadors for him (2 Cor. 5:20).<sup>28</sup> Not only are the fear of God (2 Cor 5:11) and the love of God (2 Cor 5:14) the motivation for preaching the gospel, the universal reconciliation that Christ accomplished on the cross ought to drive all gospel preaching.<sup>29</sup> Christians ought to take the gospel to all people because Christ died for all people.<sup>30</sup>

### The Spirit's Work in the Gospel Call

While the Holy Spirit effectually calls the elect to salvation through the

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<sup>28</sup>“Paul’s ambassadorial role was grounded (οὖν) on the divine act of reconciliation (v. 18a) and the institution of the ministry of reconciliation (vv. 18b, 19c) . . . . ‘Through us’ (= by our mouth/words), certainly includes Paul and his fellow apostles but probably also all proclaimers of reconciliation. Whoever declares ‘the message of reconciliation’ (v. 19) is both a delegated representative of Christ and an actual spokesperson for God.” Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 446-47.

<sup>29</sup>It is possible that 2 Tim 2:10 could be used to contradict this assertion. This verse states, “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and* with *it* eternal glory.” In this verse Paul states that he endures hardship in his gospel ministry (2 Tim 2:8-9) for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they may obtain salvation. Paul here describes his motive for preaching the gospel as the salvation of the elect. As this motivation only refers to believers, it is particular, as opposed to universal. See George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 398-400; Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 207-08; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Waco, TX: Word, 2000), 514-15; and Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 503-06. This motivation need not contradict, however, the motivation of God’s love for all people in the atonement or the universal reconciliation wrought by the atonement. Paul’s gospel ministry can certainly be motivated both by God’s general intentions in the atonement, as well as his particular, salvific intentions for the elect. Rather than contradict the findings above, 2 Tim 2:10 complements them, and fits into a multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement.

<sup>30</sup>“Why is the universal gospel message incumbent upon the children of God? According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, it is not because of election or even because of a supposed covenant of redemption but solely because of the universal reconciliation which

gospel,<sup>31</sup> he also works to call an innumerable amount of people in the universal gospel call. The Holy Spirit works to take the gospel to the world just as he works to take it to believers. Perhaps the most significant passage of Scripture describing the Holy Spirit's work in taking the gospel to all people is John 16:7-11, which states, "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And he, when he comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." In this passage, Jesus tells his disciples why it is to their advantage that he go away, because when he goes away he will send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit, when he comes, will then convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.<sup>32</sup> These

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God has wrought in Christ at the cross." Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 118.

<sup>31</sup>Graham A. Cole helpfully points out that there is little exegetical evidence for the Spirit's role in effectual calling. Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 215. There is a strong theological argument to be made, however, that the work of effectual calling is appropriately attributed to the Holy Spirit, as he is the one who works through all stages of salvation to apply that salvation.

<sup>32</sup>"In John 16:8-11, Christ describes the Paraclete's ministry of convicting the world. He says that the Spirit convicts the world concerning its sinfulness, because people do not believe in him. If the world believed in Christ, it would not be guilty but rather forgiven. The Holy Spirit also convicts the world of its false righteousness which can never help it find favor with God. Clear proof that the world's righteousness is empty is seen in Christ's ascension to the Father. Jesus' righteousness was accepted by God, and therefore those who reject him are rejecting the only source of true righteousness. Finally, the Paraclete convicts the world regarding its impending judgment by God. If the prince of this world has been condemned, how can the world which follows him hope to escape similar condemnation? Satan's evident doom is a basis for convincing the world that it stands condemned apart from Christ." John Aloisi, "The Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction: Another Look at John 16:8-11," *JETS* 47

words of encouragement are in light of the disciples' responsibility to testify to the world about Christ, even though the world hated Christ and his followers (John 15:18-16:4).

Their testimony amidst suffering would be with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Concerning the nature of the universal gospel call, this passage makes two things clear. First of all, this passage makes it clear that the Spirit convicts the *world* concerning the message of Christ. The word "world" here refers to all unbelievers.<sup>33</sup> This can be seen from the context of the passage (John 15:18-16:6). The world is hostile toward God, opposes the purposes of God, and hates God. Elsewhere Scripture makes it clear that these characteristics are true of all unbelievers (Rom 1:18-32; 3:9-20; Eph 2:1-3). It is all unbelievers whom the Holy Spirit works to convict. Concerning this convicting work of the Spirit, Bruce states, "The Spirit bears witness to the world (not least through the witness of Jesus' followers, as was affirmed in John 15:16ff.) that Jesus, rejected, condemned, and put to death by the world, has been vindicated and exalted by God. His rejection, condemnation, and execution expressed in violent clarity the world's refusal to believe in him; that unbelief is now exposed as sin."<sup>34</sup> Jesus in this passage is explaining the Holy Spirit's role in the universal gospel call.

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(2004): 65.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 66-69; Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 318-20; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 534-39; Douty, *The Death of Christ*, 85-86; W. Hall Harris III, "An Out-of-this-World Experience: A Look at 'κόσμος' in the Johannine Literature," (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Washington, DC, 18 November 2006), 7-10; Lightner, *The Death of Christ Died*, 130-35; and Merrill C. Tenney, *John*, in vol. 9 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 157.

<sup>34</sup>Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 319. For detailed exegesis that supports the idea of these verses as referring to the universal convicting work of the Spirit, see Aloisi, "Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction," 56-60; and Carson, *Gospel of John*, 534-39.

Second, the Holy Spirit's work of convicting the world through the gospel is here explicitly connected to Christ's work on the cross. Jesus went away from his disciples through his death, resurrection, and ascension, and just as he promised in this passage it was only after those experiences that he sent the Spirit (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 33).<sup>35</sup> This means that all of the Spirit's work in convicting the world of the gospel is tied to Christ and occurs because of Christ's atonement.<sup>36</sup> As John 16:7-11 makes clear, the Holy Spirit's work in the world is not only for the elect. Since the Holy Spirit's work of taking the gospel to all unbelievers, elect and nonelect, is based upon Christ's atonement, it seems that Christ's atonement cannot be limited to the elect.<sup>37</sup> Doing so would result in separating part of the Spirit's work in the world from the Son's work on the cross.

### **The Genuineness of the Gospel Call**

In light of the command throughout Scripture to preach the gospel to all

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<sup>35</sup>“By his ‘departure,’ his death/exaltation, Jesus fulfills the conditions that must be met before he can send the Paraclete; and the gift of the Paraclete is so great that Jesus’ ‘departure’ must be seen as for the disciples’ good (vv. 6, 7). When the Paraclete comes, he extends the ministry of Jesus in ways the disciples could not have foreseen. In particular, he convicts the world of its sin, its righteousness, and its judgment.” *Ibid.*, 537.

<sup>36</sup>“The work of the Spirit, therefore, is a *result of* and *related to* the saving work of Christ. The Spirit’s work centers on Christ.” John Zens, “He Will Testify of Me: An Overview of the Work of the Spirit in the History of Redemption,” *Baptist Reformation Review* 11 (1982): 7-8, emphasis the author’s.

<sup>37</sup>“The Holy Spirit’s work could not reach out beyond the elect if the death of Christ did not have this universal scope since the Spirit’s ministry was procured in and through the cross. In other words, how could a part of the work of Christ on the cross be universal if the whole of it was not? . . . The problem really centers in the convicting work of the Holy Spirit since this is His principle ministry towards the unsaved. How can the Spirit be said to have a ministry toward the entire world in showing all men their need of Christ if the death of Christ did not reach out to the entire world?” Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 130-31.

people, there seems to be a dilemma for those who hold to particular redemption. Lewis Sperry Chafer articulates this dilemma, “A very difficult situation arises for the limited redemptionist when he confronts the Great Commission, which enjoins the preaching of the gospel to *every* creature. How, it may be urged, can a universal gospel be preached if there is no universal provision? To say on the one hand that Christ died only for the elect and on the other hand that His death is the ground on which salvation is offered to all men is perilously near contradiction.”<sup>38</sup> This contradiction is one that even some advocates of particular redemption recognize.<sup>39</sup>

Supporters of particular redemption attempt to resolve this contradiction in one of three ways. First, some hold that particular redemption, far from undermining the universal gospel call, actually supports the sincere offer of the gospel, and that authentic evangelism would be impossible without it.<sup>40</sup> Second, some maintain that the extent of the atonement has nothing to do with evangelism; whether Christ died for all or some

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<sup>38</sup>Chafer, “For Whom Did Christ Die?,” 315, emphasis the author’s.

<sup>39</sup>“That there is great difficulty in the way of harmonizing the general invitations with the Gospel on the one hand with the special reference of the atonement to those who shall eventually be partakers of its benefits on the other hand – it would be altogether fruitless to disguise.” Thomas J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1954), 510. R. B. Kuiper, who holds to particular redemption, calls the universal call and particular redemption a “paradox.” R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 86.

<sup>40</sup>“Far from undermining the sincere offer of the gospel, the doctrine of definite atonement undergirds the call. It provides a real rather than a hypothetical salvation as that which is offered. It does not expect the fulfillment of an unrealizable condition on the part of the sinner as a prerequisite for salvation. But it confidently looks to God who initiates the offer and can also raise sinners from death to life and thus enable them in sovereign grace to repent and to believe so that they will appropriate the benefit secured for them by the death of Christ.” Nicole, “Covenant, Universal Call,” 410. See also John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 65.

does not concern the matter of a universal gospel call.<sup>41</sup> Sinners simply need to be told of what God has done in the atonement, not what he has done specifically for them.<sup>42</sup> Third, some assert that the Bible teaches both particular redemption and a universal gospel call, and although these may seem contradictory, they both need to be held because the Bible clearly teaches both.<sup>43</sup>

Each one of these resolutions has problems, and they are all unnecessary in light of the multi-intentioned view. First of all, the sincere offer of the gospel does not necessitate particular redemption because Christ died both to secure the salvation of His elect (his particular intention) and to pay for the sins of all people (his general intention). Christ procured the offer and provision of salvation for all people on the cross, and he also procured the definite application of salvation for the elect on the cross.<sup>44</sup> God's multiple intentions in the atonement alleviate the concerns of a vacuous gospel offer; there is an objective salvation that Christ accomplished that is certain for the elect and available for all. Second, the extent of the atonement is related to evangelism and does

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<sup>41</sup>“What has to be said about the cross when preaching the gospel is simply that Christ's death is the ground on which Christ's forgiveness is given. And this is all that has to be said. The question of the designed extent of the atonement does not come into the story at all.” Packer, *Evangelism*, 68. See also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 397-98.

<sup>42</sup>See n. 21 on pp. 169 of this dissertation.

<sup>43</sup>Crawford, *Respecting the Atonement*, 510; Wayne E. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 597-603; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 86; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 246; and Terrance L. Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 100. It should be noted that the idea of a paradox is not an illegitimate option. See Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 5-7.

<sup>44</sup>This truth will be defended in chap. 5.

take into consideration the matter of the universal gospel call, as the content of the gospel call makes clear (1 Cor 15:3-5).<sup>45</sup> Third, if one believes that Christ died for all people on the cross, there is no need to believe that the universal gospel call and the particularity of the atonement are contradictory. Rather, the universality of the gospel call is one of God's general purposes in the atonement.

The crux of the issue is how the gospel can be genuinely offered to the non-elect if God made no payment for their sins. As Lightner states, "If Christ died only for the elect, then why take that message to the nonelect? An even more sobering question would be, 'Why does God invite all men if Christ did not provide for all?' It is *His* invitation which is universal and man merely takes it to men."<sup>46</sup> If Christ did not pay for the sins of the non-elect, then it is impossible to genuinely offer salvation to the non-elect, since there is no salvation available to offer them. In a sense, when offered the gospel, the non-elect would be offered something that was never there for them to receive in the first place. There must be a genuine payment for all people, who can, if they so choose, receive it.<sup>47</sup> The need for a genuine gospel call that offers an available salvation to all people, as well as the content of the gospel, the biblical motivation for sharing the

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<sup>45</sup>In addition to this truth, it should be noted that what one believes about the nature, intent, and extent of the atonement affects the whole of the Christian life, including the proclamation of the gospel. See Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 166; and John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 23-50.

<sup>46</sup>Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 114.

<sup>47</sup>"But, since we do not know who the elect and non-elect are, and since we do offer salvation to any and all, then there must have been a genuine payment made which they can, if they choose, receive." Bruce A. Ware, "Extent of the Atonement: Outline of the Issue, Positions, Key Texts, and Key Theological Arguments" (unpublished class handout, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, n.d.), 4.

gospel, and the Holy Spirit's work in taking the gospel around the world, demonstrate that the universal gospel call is based upon, depends upon, and presupposes Christ's payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect.

### **An Additional Basis of Condemnation**

Christ's payment for all sin not only made the universal gospel call possible, but it also provided an additional basis of condemnation for those who explicitly reject his payment for their sins. In addition to demonstrating God's desire for the salvation of all people and his love toward all people, the universal gospel call also results in an additional basis of condemnation for those who hear the genuine offer of the gospel and then reject it. The universal gospel call therefore not only reveals the grace and love of God, but also reveals his justice. Those who reject Christ's atonement for all are judged and condemned already because of their unbelief (John 3:18).<sup>48</sup> This unbelief is not the only reason that people are condemned, as many advocates of unlimited atonement argue,<sup>49</sup> but it results in additional condemnation when unbelievers stand before the

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<sup>48</sup>“Already in need of a Savior before God's Son comes on his saving mission, this person [the one who does not believe] compounds his or her guilt by not believing in the name of that Son. As with the arrogant critic who mocks a masterpiece, it is not the masterpiece that is condemned, but the critic. There is no need to await the final day of judgment (though it will come, 5:26-29): the person who disbelieves in the Father's one and only Son *stands condemned already*, and God's wrath remains on him (3:36). Thus the potential for condemnation is bound up with the mission of the Son to bring salvation.” Carson, *Gospel of John*, 207, emphasis the author's.

<sup>49</sup>Arminians believe that Christ's atonement redeemed all people from the guilt of Adam's sin and therefore the only reason people go to hell is because they explicitly reject Christ's atonement for them. “People go there [hell] not because their punishment was not suffered by Christ but because they reject the amnesty provided by God through Christ's substitutionary death.” Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 65. Four-point Calvinists do not believe that Christ's atonement has redeemed all people from Adam's sin, but they normally argue

judgment seat of God (Rev 20:12).<sup>50</sup> The additional basis of condemnation for those who explicitly reject Christ's atonement is evident from the Holy Spirit's work of convicting unbelievers and Peter's description of the false teachers plaguing the church in 2 Peter 2.

### **The Holy Spirit's Work of Convicting Unbelievers**

In addition to describing the Holy Spirit's role in taking the gospel to the world, John 16:7-11 also makes it clear that the Holy Spirit actually convicts unbelievers of their sin, righteousness and judgment. Not all of the unbelievers who experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit are elect. It is not only believers that are convicted of their sin prior to their salvation, but unbelievers experience conviction that does not result in salvation. The word translated "convict" in John 16:8 (*elegko*) is also used in reference to unbelievers in 1 Corinthians 14:24 and Jude 15. First Corinthians 14:24-25 states that

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that the atonement changed the basis for which people are judged. Walvoord is typical when he states, "A person now proceeds to eternal punishment not because God has failed to provide, or because the love of God has been ineffective, but rather because he has rejected that which God has provided. . . . The condemnation of the sinner now is not simply because he is a sinner, but because he has rejected God's provision to care for his sin." John Walvoord, "Reconciliation," *BibSac* 120 (1963): 11.

<sup>50</sup>This negates the argument that with unlimited atonement, sinners are condemned only for their unbelief, because Christ has paid for all of their sins. Rather, Christ paid for all sins, including unbelief, and the nonelect are judged for all of their deeds (Rom 2:5-7; Rev 20:12). People go to hell because they are sinners who are not in Christ. He who has the Son has life, and he does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:11-12). It is only in Christ that salvation and every spiritual blessing is found (Rom 3:24; 6:23; 1 Cor 1:2; 15:22; 2 Cor 4:14; 5:21; Eph 1:3, 7; 2:5-6; 4:32; Col 1:14, 22, 28; 2:10, 13; 3:1-4; 2 Tim 2:1, 10). See Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1209; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1142-43; Russell D. Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," in *Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 898; and Stephen A. Strehle, "The Extent of the Atonement within the Theological Systems of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980), 291-93.

an unbeliever in the midst of the church assembly might be convicted of his own sinfulness and be forced to acknowledge God's work in the assembly.<sup>51</sup> Jude 15 is even clearer in regard to the conviction of unbelievers, as it speaks of people who are convicted of their own sinfulness but who are not brought to repentance and faith.<sup>52</sup>

Conviction of sin, although it is necessary for salvation, is not in itself effectual in bringing people to trust in Christ for salvation.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>First Cor 14:24-25 states, "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you." Concerning the idea of conviction in these verses, W. Harold Mare states, "The effect of Christian prophecy on the unbeliever is threefold: He will be convicted of his sin (cf. John 16:8); he will be called to take account of his sins and examine his sinful condition; and will have his sinful heart and past laid open to inspection (cf. John 4:16-19). The triple use of 'all' in the Greek (v. 24) emphasizes that all the church through its prophetic message has, in God's providence, a part in bringing the unbeliever to this place of conviction. For the unbeliever in the church service will recognize that God really is present and dealing with him." W. Harold Mare, *I Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 274.

<sup>52</sup>Jude 14-15 states, "*It was* also about these men *that* Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'" Concerning this conviction, Peter H. Davids states, "The Lord's specific concern in this judgment, according to Jude is to convict ungodly people (in context meaning the teachers Jude opposes) of (1) ungodly acts and (2) harsh words spoken against him. The passage calls us back to Jude 4, where the teachers are labeled 'ungodly' (*asebeis*). . . . That is, these teachers are not only people whom he has already labeled and continues to label as 'ungodly,' meaning that they 'live in a manner contrary to proper religious beliefs and practice,' but people who are accused of ungodly acts (Jude 4, 8) and harsh words (Jude 4[?], 8, 10)." Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of Jude and 2 Peter*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 81.

<sup>53</sup>"Conviction is not effectual in bringing sinners to repentance and faith, nor is it intended to be. Conviction does not impart the ability or the willingness to accept Christ. For this, another work of the Spirit is needed, namely, regeneration (1 Cor 2:14). With regard to unbelievers, conviction is a work of the Holy Spirit which convinces them of their sinfulness, their false righteousness, and their coming judgment. Conviction is

The Holy Spirit's convicting ministry among the nonelect is explicitly tied to Christ's work in John 16:7-11.<sup>54</sup> The Holy Spirit only convicts people through special revelation, or the gospel.<sup>55</sup> This means that like the universal gospel call, the Holy Spirit's convicting ministry is an act of common grace and demonstrates God's saving love toward all people.<sup>56</sup> It also means, however, that those who experience the Spirit's convicting ministry and reject it by refusing the gospel experience additional condemnation and judgment. There are different levels of punishment in hell, and they seemed to be based upon a sinner's knowledge of God's will for him or her, including knowledge of the gospel (Luke 12:47-48; Heb 10:29).<sup>57</sup> Christ's payment for the sins of all people results in the Holy Spirit's work among all people, and this work brings both grace and justice as it is received or rejected.

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necessary to salvation, but by itself, it does not bring an unbeliever to salvation." Aloisi, "Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction," 65-66.

<sup>54</sup>See pp. 171-74 of this dissertation.

<sup>55</sup>"Conviction is a special work of the Holy Spirit which is always performed in connection with special revelation. Conviction involves convincing sinners of things which could not be known apart from special revelation. Therefore during the current age conviction may only be experienced by those who have some contact with the Word of God." Aloisi, "Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction," 67.

<sup>56</sup>"This convicting work of the Paraclete is therefore gracious: it is designed to bring men and women of the world to recognize their need, and so turn to Jesus, and thus stop being 'the world.'" Carson, *Gospel of John*, 537.

<sup>57</sup>"The Scriptures seem to indicate that there are degrees of punishment in hell, based on the findings of the tribunal of God at the resurrection. . . . All people will be judged for sin – and will face the wrath of God for such sin, if they are outside of Christ. And every unbeliever's experience of hell is worse than anything we can imagine in this life. But, it would appear, those with access to the light of the gospel, who reject it anyway, face, as again the New Hampshire Confession puts it, 'an aggravated condemnation.' Revelation brings responsibility. Greater revelations bring greater responsibility." Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 899.

### **The Destiny of the False Teachers in 2 Peter 2**

That the explicit rejection of the gospel results in further condemnation for unbelievers is made clear in 2 Peter 2. Second Peter 2:1 states that those who deny their Master who bought them are “bringing swift destruction upon themselves.”<sup>58</sup> This phrase “closely relates their crime with their sure doom. ‘Bringing,’ a present active participle, indicates that their persistent denial of their Master promotes a process which will culminate in their ruin. ‘Upon themselves,’ underlines that their fate is self-inflicted.”<sup>59</sup> The rest of the chapter goes on to describe the sins and judgment of those “false teachers.” Second Peter 2:20-21 expresses their end, “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.” These verses assert that the false teachers “who have for a time escaped from worldly corruption through knowing Christ and then turn away from the light of the Christian faith are worse off than they were before knowing Christ.”<sup>60</sup> These false teachers are unbelievers who once made false professions of faith without ever experiencing regeneration.<sup>61</sup> They are

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<sup>58</sup>Those who deny their Master are those whom Christ died for, and those that reject him and are therefore condemned. For a defense of this understanding of 2 Pet 2:1, see pp. 145-51 of this dissertation.

<sup>59</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert, “A Portrayal of False Teachers: An Exposition of 2 Peter 2:1-3,” *BibSac* 141 (1984): 260.

<sup>60</sup>Edwin A. Blum, *2 Peter*, in vol. 12 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 282.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 282-83; Robert A. Peterson, “Apostasy,” *Presbyterion* 19 (1993): 18-

justly condemned all the more because of their knowledge and explicit rejection of the Christian faith, which includes the death of Christ for their sins (2 Pet 2:1).<sup>62</sup>

Just as the people of Isaiah's time and Jesus' time heaped condemnation upon themselves because of their rejection of God's messages (Isa 6:9-10; Matt 13:11-6), so too do the nonelect who reject the gospel message. The reason that this results is because in rejecting the gospel, people are rejecting the atonement of Jesus Christ, which is the provision of salvation that he made for them when He paid for their sins on the cross. Those who purposely reject the preaching of the gospel will be justly held accountable for their actions, and it will result in great condemnation at the judgment. "When he first shines with the light of his Word upon the undeserving, he thereby shows a sufficiently clear proof of his free goodness. Here, then, God's boundless goodness is already manifesting itself but not to the salvation of all; for a heavier judgment remains upon the wicked because they reject the testimony of God's love."<sup>63</sup>

### The Provision of Common Grace

Throughout the New Testament, God's grace is presented as the basis of his

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20; and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Jude, 2 Peter*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 360-65.

<sup>62</sup>"Christ's death for the sins of those who reject him and are condemned (e.g. 2 Pet 2:1) insures that their judgment for rejecting Christ . . . is just, because they reject a real gift that is really, freely, and graciously offered to them." Ware, "Extent of the Atonement," 4. Also, "These false teachers cannot say they never knew better. They have committed high-handed sin, knowingly rejecting both Christ and the way they must live. Such an unrighteous life will be kept by the Lord under impending punishment for the day of judgment (2:9)." Douglas W. Kennard, "Petrine Redemption: Its Meaning and Extent," *JETS* 30 (1987): 405.

<sup>63</sup>John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3.24.2, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC, vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 967.

salvific work for the elect (e.g., John 1:16; Acts 11:23; 15:11; 20:24; Rom 3:24; 4:16; 5:15; 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 4:15; Gal 1:15; Eph 2:8-9; 2 Thess 2:16; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 1:13).<sup>64</sup> Scripture also presents God's grace in non-salvific contexts, however, and speaks of God's grace toward unbelievers (e.g., Gen 4:15; Pss 66:5, 7; 104:10-11, 14-15; 145:16-17; Matt 5:43-47; Acts 14:16-17).<sup>65</sup> It is evident from experience as well that God's grace is not restricted to those who are Christians; good things happen to unbelievers, and unbelievers are not as sinful as they could be. These differences in God's grace, as it is displayed salvifically towards the elect and non-salvifically towards the elect and the nonelect, have led theologians to distinguish between God's special (or saving) grace and his common grace.<sup>66</sup>

Special grace begins with the Holy Spirit's effectual calling of a person and

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<sup>64</sup>“Ascribed to God, grace is the voluntary, unrestrained, and unmerited favor that he shows to sinners and that, instead of the verdict of death, brings them righteousness and life. As such it is a virtue and attribute of God (Rom 5:15; 1 Pet 5:10), demonstrated in the sending of his Son, who is full of grace (John 1:14ff.; 1 Pet 1:13), and additionally in the bestowal of all sorts of spiritual and material benefits, all of which are the gifts of grace and are themselves ‘grace.’” Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 214.

<sup>65</sup>“Although God directs his goodness and love especially to believers, there are also senses in which God's goodness and love are universal. ‘The Lord is good to all’ (Ps 145:9), and he loves even his enemies by sending them rain and sunshine (Matt 5:44-45).” Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 429.

<sup>66</sup>For an explanation of why the idea of common grace developed see Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 432-34. John Calvin was one of the first to extensively treat the idea of common grace in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.12-18. Other important works in the Reformed tradition on common grace include Herman Kuiper, *Calvin and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids: Smitten Book Company, 1928); Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Foundational Lectures* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943); William Masselink, *General Revelation and Common Grace: A Defense of the Historic Reformed Faith Over Against the Theology and Philosophy of the So-Called “Reconstructionist” Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953); and Cornelius Van Til,

results in that person's salvation; therefore only the elect experience special grace.<sup>67</sup>

Special grace is only experienced through special revelation, or the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is therefore only possible because of the atonement.<sup>68</sup> Common grace, on the other hand, is grace that is not confined to the elect.<sup>69</sup> Common grace is different from special grace because it can come through general revelation, it can be successfully resisted, and it does not result in salvation.<sup>70</sup> It is like special grace, however, in that it is a work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>71</sup> Common grace is also like special grace in that it is based upon and flows out of Christ's atonement.

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*Common Grace* (Philadelphia: P&R, 1947).

<sup>67</sup>“Special grace emerges as the fountainhead of all redemptive blessings. . . . Special grace is the *raison d'être* for the Christian life in its commencement (Eph 2:4-5), its continuation (2 Cor 12:9), and its consummation (1 Pet 1:13). Special grace originates with God the Father (1 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:3, 6; Tit 2:11), is mediated through the saving work of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:15; 1 Cor 1:4; Tit 3:6-7), and is made experientially real through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Zech 12:10; Heb 10:29).” Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 77.

<sup>68</sup>“The clear burden of the NT is that saving grace comes through the person of Jesus Christ. . . . And the NT asserts that the same saving grace is contained in the Gospel message (Acts 14:3; Col 1:5-6). This grace of God conveyed by Christ and the Gospel clearly possesses the power to save.” *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>69</sup>Aloisi, “Paraclete's Ministry of Conviction,” 68. This means that common grace is not necessarily distributed equally, nor does everyone experience all of its aspects in the same way.

<sup>70</sup>See Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner's, 1872-73; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 2:674. It should be made clear that common grace is never of itself saving in any sense, and it is not equivalent to the Arminian notion of prevenient grace, which is not supported in Scripture. See Thomas R. Schreiner, “Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 235.

<sup>71</sup>“The entire work of the Holy Spirit on behalf of the unsaved world is sometimes given the terminology common grace.” John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1954), 107.

Many advocates of particular redemption agree that common grace is a result of the atonement, but do not believe that common grace requires an atonement that pays for the sins of the nonelect.<sup>72</sup> They describe common grace as an indirect benefit to the nonelect that comes about because of Christ's particular atonement for the elect.<sup>73</sup> This explanation, however, does not do justice to the fact that non-salvific grace goes out to the nonelect on the basis of the atonement<sup>74</sup> or to the Holy Spirit's role in common grace.<sup>75</sup> The idea of the universal sufficiency of the atonement in particular redemption

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<sup>72</sup>Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 470; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 398-99; Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932), 160-61; William Cunningham, *Historical Theology* (1862; reprint, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 2:332-33; A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 358; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 81-84; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 61-62; Nicole, "Definite Atonement," 199; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 100-01.

<sup>73</sup>R. B. Kuiper is representative when he states, "The blessings of common grace, although resulting only indirectly from the atonement, were most surely designed by God to result from the atonement. The design of God in the atoning work of Christ pertained primarily and directly to the redemption of the elect, but indirectly and secondarily it also included the blessings of common grace." Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 83-84.

<sup>74</sup>"Does not the definite relationship between common grace and the atonement link the nonelect to Christ's death? The very admission of limited redemptionists that some benefits extend to the nonelect means they make the design of God twofold, applying some benefits directly to the elect and others indirectly to the nonelect. Thus, there is inconsistency in the limited view when some of Calvary's achievements are made to extend to all men while others are restricted to the elect. Consistency would restrict all the benefits to the ones for whom Christ died; and since in the limited concept Christ only died for the elect, it is illogical to include the nonelect in any sense. If they are included at all, they must be included in it all since it was one sacrifice in which all the effects are grounded." Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, 110.

<sup>75</sup>In the same way that the Spirit's work in the universal gospel call seems to suggest an atonement for all people, so too does the Spirit's work in common grace. If all of the Spirit's work is tied to Christ (and it is), then his universal work is grounded in Christ's work just as his saving work is. Common grace cannot be reduced to an indirect benefit that results from an atonement only for the elect. This would suggest that the

does not allow for common grace, because the universal sufficiency is related to the intrinsic merit of Christ's sacrifice and not to his intention to pay for all sin.<sup>76</sup> Neither does the idea that common grace is an indirect benefit of an atonement meant only for the elect explain all of the different ways that God displays his common grace.<sup>77</sup> Common grace typically includes three elements: God's giving of natural gifts, God's restraining of sin and evil in human affairs, and God's patience in exercising judgment.<sup>78</sup> As will be demonstrated below, each of these elements of common grace is only possible because of Christ's payment for all sin on the cross.

### **God's Giving of Natural Gifts**

God is presented in Scripture as the giver of all good gifts (Jas 1:16-17), and he

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Spirit has no role in common grace, because there would be no grounds for his universal work in the atonement.

<sup>76</sup>Commenting on the sufficient for all/efficient for some formula adopted by the Synod of Dort, Hans Boersma states, "Christ's death is sufficient for the whole world simply because of who Christ is and because of what he suffered. Dort does not add that his death is sufficient for the whole world because it actually extends to the whole world." Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 71.

<sup>77</sup>In what way, for example, would a nonelect person's natural abilities in art or mathematics flow out of an atonement that was only for the elect? How would these good, natural gifts from God indirectly arise from an atonement only for the elect? If common grace is a result of the atonement, then it seems to demand that the atonement was in some way(s) for the nonelect as well as the elect, as the nonelect experience common grace in the same ways that the elect do.

<sup>78</sup>Richard J. Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 9; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 100-01. Herman Kuiper distinguishes six aspects of common grace: promotion of the welfare of mankind in general, advancement of the church and the well-being of the elect, invitation to repentance, rendering the ungodly inexcusable, God's own glory, and the bridling of lusts. Hans Boersma, "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement," *EQ* 64 (1992): 350. These six aspects all fit into the three elements mentioned above.

is also the one who “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt 5:45; cf. Acts 14:17). These gifts of God are referred to as natural gifts because they are not salvific in nature. The Old Testament presents God as the one who all people should look to for their provision. “The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due time. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” (Ps 145:15-16).<sup>79</sup> God is surely abundant in goodness and truth towards all people (Exod 34:6). In the New Testament Jesus is the light that enlightens every person (John 1:9). This statement likely means that Christ allows enlightenment and understanding to come to all people; all people are able to know true things about God and the universe.<sup>80</sup> God gives natural gifts to people that are manifest in the physical world and in human society. These gifts include the amazing feats of intellect, strength, and beauty that human beings are able to accomplish.<sup>81</sup> He

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<sup>79</sup>Common grace is just as evident in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament. It is still only possible, however, on the basis of the atonement. Just as salvation (special grace) in the Old Testament is bestowed by God in anticipation of the cross, so is common grace.

<sup>80</sup>“There is a general illumination of the whole race, and it is the common teaching of the New Testament writers that God has revealed something of himself to all people (Rom 1:20), sufficient at least for them to be blameworthy when they take the wrong way instead of the right way. John attributes this general illumination to the activity of the Word.” Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 84. See also Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, NAC (Nashville: B&H, 1996), 112-13; Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 35-36; John Calvin, *Gospel According to John*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 37-38; and Tenney, *John*, 31.

<sup>81</sup>“God has allowed significant measures of skill in artistic and musical areas, as well as other spheres in which creativity and skill can be expressed, such as athletics, cooking, writing, and so forth. Moreover, God gives to us an ability to appreciate beauty in many areas of life. And in this area as well as in the physical and intellectual realm, the blessings of common grace are sometimes poured out on unbelievers even more abundantly than believers. Yet in all cases it is a result of the grace of God.” Grudem,

does all of this on the basis of the atonement.<sup>82</sup>

That God bestows his good gifts indiscriminately upon humanity because of Christ's atonement is evident because of why and how God bestows common grace. All of the grace that God bestows upon humanity is undeserved because all people have sinned against God and deserve nothing but his righteous judgment (Isa 64:6; Rom 3:9-20; Rom 6:23; Eph 2:1-3). The reason that God forestalls his judgment is because his wrath against humanity has been satisfied in the atonement.<sup>83</sup> Therefore every blessing that a person receives, including life and all of the gifts that come with the sustaining and enrichment of life, is due first and foremost to God's grace displayed in the atonement.<sup>84</sup>

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*Systematic Theology*, 661. See also Vincent Bacote, "Common Grace and 'Spiritual' Stewardship: Guidance for Development?" *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 24 (2003): 90-93; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 100-01.

<sup>82</sup>"The unbelieving and reprobate in this world enjoy numerous benefits that flow from the fact that Christ died and rose again. The mediatorial dominion of Christ is universal. Christ is head over all things and is given all authority in heaven and in earth. It is within this mediatorial dominion that all the blessings that men enjoy are dispensed. But this dominion Christ exercises on the basis and as the reward of his finished work of redemption. . . . Consequently, since all benefits and blessings are within the realm of Christ's dominion and since this dominion rests upon his finished work of atonement, the benefits innumerable which are enjoyed by all men indiscriminately are related to the death of Christ and may be said to accrue from it in one way or another." Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 61-62.

<sup>83</sup>"If it be asked in what sense Christ is the Savior of all men, we reply: that the atonement of Christ secures for all men a delay in the execution of the sentence against sin, and a space for repentance, together with a continuance of the common blessings of life which have been forfeited by transgression." Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), 772.

<sup>84</sup>"All the good things that the unregenerate experience are undeserved and are, therefore, possible only because of the grace of God that derives from Christ's mediatorial work. This includes the general order of nature, which provides for human needs (Job 37:13; Ps 65:19; Matt 5:45; Acts 14:17), and God's sustaining the existence of living things (Ps 36:6; Isa 42:5; Acts 17:28), including provision of what they need for survival, such as food, water and shelter (Gen 27:28; Ps 65:9; 104:14). These generate a measure of gladness, even in the unsaved (Acts 14:17)." Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*,

If the atonement were only for the elect, this could have resulted in a delay of God's judgment to allow for the saving of the elect, but it would not account for the ways in which God has continued to bless the nonelect with his natural gifts throughout history.<sup>85</sup>

### **God's Restraining of Sin and Evil**

God not only shows his love and kindness towards all people with his gifts; God also shows love and kindness towards all by restraining sin and evil in their lives. He did this for Cain (Gen 4:15), the people at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-9), and King Abimelech (Gen 20:6).<sup>86</sup> He does this in the life of unbelievers before he gives them over to their sinful lusts for continually rejecting him (Rom 1:24, 26, 28).<sup>87</sup> He does this through the influence of the church in the world, which is to be continually fighting the forces of hell (Matt 16:18) as it stands up for the truth (1 Tim 3:15). He does this through institutions such as human government, which is "a minister of God to you for good" (Rom 13:4; see also Gen 9:6; Rom 13:1-3; 1 Pet 2:13-14).<sup>88</sup> Also, almost all people, including the non-elect, show kindness to others to one degree or another, and there have

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<sup>85</sup>"The nonelect experience the goodness of God in a profound way (Acts 14:17), sufficient to convince them of their need to repent (Rom 2:4). They have no valid complaint that God has not been good to them. Indeed, God has given them (as to all of us) many more blessings than they deserve." Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 412.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 430-31.

<sup>87</sup>See Everett F. Harrison, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *EBC*, ed. Frank R. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 24-27; and Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 87-94.

<sup>88</sup>"The good may be the good that subjects do; authority may be exercised not so much in the interest of the person as that the person may be led to do the good." Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 463.

been very few, if any, people who have been as evil as they possibly could be.<sup>89</sup>

All of this restraining of sin is due to the influence of the Holy Spirit, who during this present age restrains lawlessness (2 Thess 2:7).<sup>90</sup> As Charles Hodge states, “To the general influence of the Spirit (or to common grace), we owe – (1) All the decorum, order, refinement, and virtue existing among men. Mere fear of future punishment, the natural sense of right, and the restraints of human laws, would prove feeble barriers to evil, were it not for the repressing power of the Spirit, which, like the pressure of the atmosphere, is universal and powerful, though unfelt. (2) To the same divine agent is due specially that general fear of God, and that religious feeling which prevails among men, and which secures for the rites and services of religion in all its forms, the decorous or more serious attention which they receive.”<sup>91</sup> It is because this restraining of sin and evil is a work of the Holy Spirit that it results from the atonement, as all that the Holy Spirit does to restrain sin is based upon the Son’s atoning death.<sup>92</sup> In the same way that God’s natural gifts for the nonelect are a result of the atonement that includes the nonelect, the Holy Spirit’s restraining work among the nonelect is only possible because of the atonement for the nonelect.

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<sup>89</sup>“Common grace hinders wickedness from being as destructive as it might otherwise be individually and corporately.” Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 76. Also, “God always sets a limit to what sinners can do.” Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 431.

<sup>90</sup>There are a number of competing interpretations of this verse centering on the identification of “the one who restrains.” For a defense of the interpretation that this is the Holy Spirit, see Robert L. Thomas, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 324-35. See also Walvoord, *Holy Spirit*, 114-16.

<sup>91</sup>Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:671. See also Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 76.

<sup>92</sup>See n. 74 on p. 186 of this dissertation.

### God's Patience in Judgment

God is also gracious toward all people in that he does not instantly judge their sin. God did not instantly damn the human race when Adam and Eve fell into sin, but instead postponed his judgment on the basis of Christ's atonement.<sup>93</sup> Romans 3:23-25 states, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed." These verses state that all people have sinned against God (v. 23) and can only be justified on the basis of Christ's redemption and propitiation, or the atonement, through faith (v. 24-25a).<sup>94</sup> Christ's atonement, and the justification of sinners on the basis of it, demonstrates God's justice in showing patience toward sinners (v. 25b).<sup>95</sup> It is because of the atonement that God can justly forbear from punishing sin for as long as he desires,

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<sup>93</sup>As Robert Duncan Culver remarks, "This 'reconciliation,' [Christ's atonement for the world in 2 Cor 5:19] in part, affects God's treatment of the sons of Adam from Eden onward. If God had 'imputed' (KJV) 'their trespasses against them' fully the full execution of death would have put an end to the human race. Now, since Calvary, it is clear why. The reconciliation in promise only (Gen 3:15, the *protoevangelion*) became fulfillment at Calvary." Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2005), 585.

<sup>94</sup>Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 182.

<sup>95</sup>"The saving act did many things, one being that it showed that God is just. The point is that God is a forbearing God. He does not hurry to punish every sinner, and the sins committed before hand unpunished (cf. Acts 17:30) present a problem for the person who has a firm grasp on the truth God is just. When God does not punish the sinner, that might well show him to be merciful or loving. But just? It would mean that God condones evil. Justice demands that the guilty be punished just as it demands that the innocent go free. So God might be accused of being unjust. Not any more, says Paul. The cross shows us God's inflexible righteousness in the very means whereby sin is forgiven." *Ibid.*, 182-83.

because sin has been punished in Christ.<sup>96</sup> Therefore all people are allowed to live this life, even though they are sinners who deserve nothing but damnation, because of Christ's atonement. As Augustus Strong states, "If strict justice had been executed, the race would have been cut off at the first sin. That man lives after sinning, is due wholly to the Cross."<sup>97</sup>

One of the primary reasons that God is kind, forbearing, and patient in judgment is so that people might repent and enter into a relationship with him (Rom 2:4).<sup>98</sup> Second Peter 3:9 declares that "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (cf. 2 Pet 3:15). In its context, this verse states that God lovingly delays his judgment because there are people still yet to be saved.<sup>99</sup> "Now we learn that God's decision to wait [in judgment] is not arbitrary, nor is it mainly in the interest of creating a more interesting story. Rather, it is a function of God's love and grace. . . . So

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<sup>96</sup>"So, although in his forbearance he temporarily left sins unpunished, now in justice he has punished them by condemning them in Christ. He has thus demonstrated his justice by executing it. And he has done it publicly (which some think is the emphasis of the verb 'presented'), in order not only to be just but also to be seen to be just. Because of his past appearance of injustice in not punishing sins, he has given a present and visible proof of justice in bearing the punishment himself in Christ." Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 206-07.

<sup>97</sup>Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 772.

<sup>98</sup>Michael S. Horton, "Providence and Common Grace," *Modern Reformation* 11 (2002): 18.

<sup>99</sup>"The divine 'longsuffering' was naturally associated with the opportunity for repentance (e.g. Joel 2:12-13; Jonah 4:2, cf. 3:10; Rom 2:4; Herm. *Sim.* 8:11:1; *Clem. Hom.* 11:7:2; cf. Wis 11:23), and also with eschatology; only God's patience with sinners can account for the fact that he does not immediately intervene with eschatological judgment." Richard Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, WBC, vol. 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 312.

his decree to lengthen the temporal sequence genuinely reflects his knowledge of, and love for, those he intends to create.”<sup>100</sup> God’s patience in judgment is bound up with his desire that all people be saved and that all people hear about his salvation in the universal gospel call.<sup>101</sup> It is one of the aspects of grace and love that God demonstrates toward the nonelect in the atonement.

All people, elect and nonelect, are able to enjoy the blessings and benefits of this life and have an opportunity to repent of their sins and experience the blessings of salvation because God’s delays his judgment upon sin. He did this in the time of the Old Testament, overlooking human ignorance before the coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 17:30),<sup>102</sup> and he does it in the present time as well. This patience of God in judgment demonstrates his goodness, mercy, justice, glory, love, and grace (Ps 145:9; Ezek 33:11; Rom 2:5; Eph 1:4-6). It also demonstrates that God has intentions in the atonement for all people, and therefore that the atonement was for all people. God’s patience in

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<sup>100</sup>Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 432. Also, Grudem remarks, God chose “to allow sinful humans to live for some time, so that they might have an opportunity to repent, and also so that they would bear children and enable subsequent generations to live and then hear the gospel and repent.” Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 664.

<sup>101</sup>“However one decides the effect of repentance on the final judgment, it is clear that, according to 2 Peter, if God had his way no one would come under condemnation in that judgment. . . . What he wants is ‘everyone’/‘all’ to come to repentance. It looks as if 2 Peter is saying that God does not wish even the ‘scoffers’ to perish (although our author does not have any expectation that they will repent) but rather wants even them to repent. God’s will may not be done, but it will not be for lack of trying on his part.” Davids, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 281.

<sup>102</sup>“All that idolatrous ignorance [of the Old Testament] was overlooked by God in the past (cf. 14:16; Rom 3:25) because God has always been more interested in repentance than judgment (cf. Wisd Sol 11:23: ‘But you have mercy on all men, because you have power to do all things, and you overlook the sins of men to the end that they may repent’).” Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in *EBC*, vol. 9, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 477.

judgment, which is only possible because of the atonement, allows for all people to experience and receive God's good gifts of common grace.

### **The Supreme Revelation of God's Character**

God not only intended to provide salvation and grace for all and to secure salvation for the elect in the atonement, but he also intended for the atonement to be the supreme revelation of his character.<sup>103</sup> John's Gospel describes the atonement as the glorification of Jesus Christ, and it was through Christ's glorification in the atonement that the Father would be glorified as well (John 12:20-28; 13:30-32; 17:1).<sup>104</sup> The reason that Christ's atonement for sin on the cross is at the same time the glorification of God is because the atonement most fully demonstrates all of God's moral attributes.<sup>105</sup> In

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<sup>103</sup>The revelation of God's character in the atonement has most often been associated with the "moral influence" theory of the atonement, which was first put forth by Peter Abelard in the twelfth century and popularized by Hastings Rashdall in the early twentieth century. This view of the atonement is completely subjective. The atonement saves people by moving them to love others in the same way that Christ loved humanity on the cross. God saves people because they repent and believe in him as they are moved by Christ's sacrifice. The truth of this view is that God does demonstrate his love for humanity in the atonement and expects people to be moved by it and subsequently live by his example (Eph 5:1-2; Phil 2:3-8; 1 Pet 2:21; Heb 12:2). The theory falters, however, in not taking sin seriously and therefore in denying the objective penal substitutionary atonement of Christ. Christ's atonement is only a revelation of God's love (and justice) because it objectively deals with sin, and because it makes salvation available to sinners who do not deserve it. The multi-intentioned view recognizes the revelatory aspects of the cross, but also asserts that these aspects are only meaningful in light of Christ's objective payment for sin. See H. D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation, and History* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 174-80; and Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 212-19.

<sup>104</sup>“What is notable about all three passages is first that each is introduced by either ‘now’ or ‘the time has come,’ making the reference to the cross indisputable, and second that the glorification will be of the Father and the Son together.” Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 201-02.

<sup>105</sup>There are many ways to categorize God's attributes. One of the most common ways to do this is to distinguish between God's incommunicable and

particular, the atonement demonstrates the love and justice of God.<sup>106</sup> God's love and justice can be seen in the multiple intentions of the atonement, such as the universal gospel call, common grace, the reconciliation of all things, and the salvation of the elect. It is ultimately seen, however, in the atonement of Jesus Christ itself.<sup>107</sup> Christ's payment for the sin of all people was necessary in order to fully display God's love and justice before his creation.

### **The Love of God**

Scripture makes it clear that the supreme expression of God's love toward people is the atonement. First John 4:9-10 states, "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The way that God, who is himself love (1 John 4:8), reveals his love towards humanity is through sending his Son to be the

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communicable attributes. The communicable attributes can be further broken down into intellectual and moral attributes. The moral attributes of God include his goodness, love, grace, holiness, and justice (or righteousness). All of these attributes can be put into two categories, love or justice. See Bavinck, *God and Creation*, 191-228.

<sup>106</sup>The Bible also states that the atonement demonstrates the wisdom and power of God (Rom 11:33-36; 1 Cor 1:17-2:5). God's wisdom is seen, however, in perfectly demonstrating both his love and his justice in the atonement at the same time; while his power is demonstrated in saving people in a just and loving way. Therefore there is no need to treat these attributes separately. See Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 219-22.

<sup>107</sup>"In the person of Christ, God's love and justice join. Because of his presence in history and his perfect righteousness, God continues to show his common grace to men in daily blessings, his patience and compassion in delaying judgment, his grace and forgiveness, and his holy love in the salvation of sinners. Because of Jesus' obedience in life and death, 'God is good to all in some ways and to some in all ways.'" Paul Wells, *Cross Words: The Biblical Doctrine of the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006), 65.

propitiation for the sins of the world (cf. John 3:16; 1 John 2:2).<sup>108</sup> After explaining this, John then uses God's love in the atonement as the basis of his ethical exhortations to his readers; since God loved us in this way, we ought to love one another (1 John 4:11-5:3; cf. 3:16).<sup>109</sup> John makes it clear that it is only through God's gift of his Son on the cross that the world is able to know what true love is.<sup>110</sup>

Paul expresses the same idea about God's love in the atonement as John. Romans 5:8 states, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This verse expresses three truths about God's love.<sup>111</sup> First, it was Jesus Christ, God's Son (cf. Rom 5:10), whom God the Father gave to bear the sins of sinners. One of the wonders of the cross is that the Triune God himself

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<sup>108</sup>“The combined effect of verses 9-10, then, is that the expression ‘God is love’ is to be understood, not as an ontological statement about God’s essential being, but in terms of the love of God expressed historically in the sending of his one and only Son into the world as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 160.

<sup>109</sup>“The author’s purpose in explaining the nature of God’s love expressed in the sending of his one and only Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins (4:9-10) is very practical, and is related to the central purpose of the letter, that is, to reassure his readers that they are in the truth, and to furnish them with criteria by which to evaluate the false claims of the secessionists. The author is not giving a lesson about the love of God for its own sake, but to show that God’s love for us must cause us to love one another.” *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>110</sup>“He [John] dares to say that, apart from Christ and his cross, the world would never have known what true love is. Of course all human beings have experienced some degree and quality of love. But John is saying that only one act of pure love, unsullied by any taint of ulterior motive, has ever been performed in the history of the world, namely the self-giving of God in Christ on the cross for undeserving sinners. That is why, if we are looking for a definition of love, we should look not in a dictionary but at Calvary.” Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 208.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, 209-11.

gave himself in the atonement, which is the supreme example of love.<sup>112</sup> Second, God's love manifests itself in Christ's death. It was not merely the incarnation or Jesus' teaching that supremely demonstrated God's love for humanity, but the death of Jesus on the cross.<sup>113</sup> Third, God's love is for sinners. As John Stott states, "But God in giving his Son gave himself to die for his enemies. He gave everything for those who deserved nothing from him."<sup>114</sup> The highest demonstration of God's love is Christ's atoning death for sinners because in it God completely gives of himself for the benefit of others.<sup>115</sup>

That the atonement is the supreme expression of God's love seems to suggest that the atonement is for all people, because God's love is for all people.<sup>116</sup> There are

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<sup>112</sup>“Unless there is a sense in which the Father and Christ are one, it is not the love of God that the cross shows. But because Christ is one with God, Paul can speak of the cross as a demonstration of the love of God. There is no opposition between the Father and the Son in the means of our salvation.” Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 224. See also Steve Jeffrey, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 279-85.

<sup>113</sup>Concerning Rom 5:8, McDonald states, “Only in the cross both the love of God and the love of Christ have demonstration, reality, and saving significance.” McDonald, *Atonement of the Death of Christ*, 87.

<sup>114</sup>Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 210.

<sup>115</sup>“It is a matter of undisputed history that God is love (*agape*) came new to the world with Christianity, and it should be a matter of undisputed theology that what this means is only known through the atonement. For *agape* is well defined as a purpose of making the loved one great, and the measure of it is how much one is prepared to do, give and suffer as the means to that end.” J. I. Packer, “The Atonement in the Life of a Christian,” in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III (Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 424.

<sup>116</sup>This has already been seen in the universal gospel call (see p. 163). As Douty states, “That God loves the entire race in its fallen state with the love of compassion is, I submit, the message of the gospel; and that he should be thought to hate any human being is a fearful reflection on him. This love of compassion has been shown in the Cross, where the incarnate Son suffered for all the members of Adam's

different ways that the Bible speaks of love, however, indicating that God displays his love toward different people in different ways through the atonement. D. A. Carson distinguishes five different ways that the Bible speaks of God's love: God inter-trinitarian love (the love of the Father for the Son and vice-versa), God's providential love for everything he has made, God's salvific love for the fallen world, God's particular love for his elect, and God's relational love that is in some way conditioned upon obedience.<sup>117</sup>

Neither particular redemption nor unlimited atonement is able to adequately account for the full biblical nature of God's love. Unlimited atonement rightly stresses the universal love of God,<sup>118</sup> but does so to the detriment of God's particular love, for how can there be particular love in an act that is exactly the same for everyone? Conversely, particular redemption rightly stresses the particular nature of God's love,<sup>119</sup> but does so to the

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family." Douty, *The Death of Christ*, 12-13.

<sup>117</sup>Carson, *Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*, 16-21.

<sup>118</sup>Almost all proponents of unlimited atonement make the universal nature of God's love one of the central arguments for their view. For example, see Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, vol. 4 of *Christian Foundations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 167-70; Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 189-93; Dave Hunt, *What Love is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God* (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2004), 293-96; 515-17; Guy, "The Universality of God's Love," 31-49; Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, 111-14; I. Howard Marshall, "Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 51; Miethe, "Universal Power," 71-72; Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 221-25; Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 716-17; and Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 50-55.

<sup>119</sup>Almost all proponents of particular redemption appeal to the particular, special love that God has for the elect as one of the central arguments for their view. For example, see Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 392-99; Loraine Boettner, *Studies in Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 320; Charles E. Hill, "Atonement in the Apocalypse of John," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 191-94; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 234-36; Long, *Definite Atonement*, 9-13; Roger Nicole, "Particular Redemption," in *Our*

detriment of God's universal love, for how can there be universal love in an act that is only for a certain number of people?

The multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement overcomes this dilemma, for it recognizes both the particular and the universal love of God in the atonement by asserting that God accomplished multiple purposes on the cross. Jesus Christ died for all people, but he died for some people with different intentions. This corresponds with how the Scriptures describe God's diverse and varied love.<sup>120</sup> God loves all people in some ways, but he loves some people (the elect) in all ways.<sup>121</sup> The supreme revelation of God's love, therefore, can only be made in an atonement that is for both the elect and the nonelect. God's manifestation of his love is a general intention in

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*Savior God: Studies on Man, Christ, and the Atonement*, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 178; Owen, *The Death of Death*, 115-20; Packer, "Introductory Essay," 12-16; Arthur Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 56-67; and Wells, *Cross Words*, 233-46.

<sup>120</sup>D. A. Carson argues for a similar view of the extent of the atonement based on God's love, "Both Arminians and Calvinists should rightly affirm that Christ died for all, in the sense that Christ's death was sufficient for all and that Scripture portrays God as inviting, commanding, and desiring the salvation of all, *out of love* (in the third sense developed in the first chapter). Further, all Christians ought to confess that, in a slightly different sense, Christ Jesus, in the intent of God, died effectively for the elect alone, *in line with the way the Bible speaks of God's special selecting love for the elect* (in the fourth sense developed in the first chapter)." Carson, *Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*, 77, emphasis the author's.

<sup>121</sup>"So it appears, first, that God loves all in some ways (everyone whom he creates, sinners though they are, receives many undeserved gifts in daily providence), and second, that he loves some in all ways (that is, in addition to the gifts of daily providence he brings them to faith, to new life, and to glory according to his predestinating purpose). This is the clear witness of the entire Bible." J. I. Packer, "The Love of God: Universal and Particular," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 283-84. For a philosophical defense of the view that God loves different people in different ways, see Paul Helm, "Can God Love the World?" in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer

the atonement because God wants all people, elect and nonelect, to know of his salvific love toward them.<sup>122</sup>

### **The Justice of God**

The atonement not only reveals God's love for the world. It is also the supreme manifestation of God's holy justice toward all people. The Bible often points towards the judgment of God in the eschaton as the vindication of his justice, especially in light of the injustices of this life (e.g., Ps 73; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:3-9). The Bible also states, however, that God's justice has already been demonstrated in the atonement, where the decisive judgment against sin took place.<sup>123</sup> Paul brings forth this truth in Romans 3:23-26. The atonement, in which Jesus Christ suffered the punishment due to humanity for their sin, vindicated God's justice in light of his delay in judging sin (v. 25).<sup>124</sup> God's justice is also demonstrated in the atonement, however, because he is "the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (v. 26b). Not only is God seen to be just in delaying his punishment for sin (so that people might repent, 2 Pet 3:9), he is seen to be just in saving those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>125</sup>

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(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 168-85.

<sup>122</sup>God also desires for the elect to know of his special love towards them in the atonement (e.g., Eph 5:22-33). This theme will be explored in the following chapter on the particular intentions in the atonement.

<sup>123</sup>Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 203-04.

<sup>124</sup>See pp. 192-95 of this dissertation.

<sup>125</sup>"In short, Romans 3:25-26 makes a glorious contribution to Christian understanding of the 'internal' mechanism of the atonement. It explains the need for Christ's propitiating sacrifice in terms of the just requirements of God's holy character." D. A. Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 138.

The reason that the justice of God is demonstrated in the salvation of sinners who put their faith in Jesus Christ is the same reason his justice is demonstrated in his delay of punishing sin; it is because of Christ's redemption and propitiation for sin in the atonement (Rom 3:24-25a).<sup>126</sup> All who hear the gospel have the opportunity to be justified freely through God's grace in Jesus Christ because of his sacrifice on the cross (Rom 3:24), even though all people have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Rom 3:23).<sup>127</sup> Because of the atonement, God's righteous justice can potentially be seen by all people, the elect and the nonelect. All people who repent of their sin and trust in the truth of the gospel are justified by God, and this act of salvation demonstrates God's justice because their sin has been paid for by Christ.<sup>128</sup> God is just to forgive them because Christ has earned their forgiveness.

This demonstration of God's justice is based upon the fact that Christ's atonement was for all sin, the sin of the elect and the nonelect. The righteousness of the gospel is available to all who believe (Rom 3:22), even though all people are sinners. In order for the gospel to be genuinely offered to all sinners, the atonement must have paid

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<sup>126</sup>Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 183-84.

<sup>127</sup>"God finds no reason, no basis, in the sinner for declaring him righteous. He must find the cause in himself. This truth goes naturally with the observation that justification is offered by God's grace. . . . If 'freely' is the manner in which justification operates, and grace is its basis, 'the redemption that came by Christ Jesus' is the means a gracious God employed to achieve this boon for mankind." Harrison, *Romans*, 42.

<sup>128</sup>"How could God declare sinners to be righteous? Is it not a perversion of justice to clear the guilty? Is that not, indeed, a violation of his own name (Ex 34:7). But the perfect sacrifice of Jesus is the basis of our righteousness, and when God clears our guilt for Jesus' sake, he is acting justly. Through Christ, God is able both to justify the ungodly (us) and to defend himself against any charge of injustice." Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 457. See also Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 207.

for all sin.<sup>129</sup> God is just to render it possible for the gospel to be legitimately offered to all people and to save all who accept the truth of the gospel because of Christ's payment for all sin.<sup>130</sup> It is in paying for all sin in the atonement, and not for the sin of the elect only, that God can completely demonstrate his righteousness and justice before the entire creation. God intended for the atonement of Jesus Christ to be the supreme manifestation of his justice and his love, and it is so only because it is an atonement that has paid for all sin.<sup>131</sup>

### **The Cosmic Triumph over All Sin**

The final general intention that God had in the atonement was Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin, or the reconciliation of all things in Jesus Christ. When sin entered the world, it not only marred the relationship between God and humanity, but it disturbed the relationship of all of creation with God, as the creation itself looks forward to its

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<sup>129</sup>If Christ did not pay for the sins of the non-elect, then it is impossible to genuinely offer salvation to the non-elect, since there is no salvation available to offer them. In a sense, when offered the gospel, the non-elect would be offered something that was never there for them to receive in the first place. There must be a genuine payment for all people, who can, if they so choose, receive it. As Douthett states, "It is irrational to hold that God offers salvation to all if He has not provided salvation for all, because the two ideas are basically at variance. They constitute not a seeming contradiction, but a real one." Douthett, *The Death of Christ*, 49. See also pp. 174-78 of this dissertation.

<sup>130</sup>Marshall, "For All," 345-46; and William S. Sailer, "The Nature and Extent of the Atonement: A Wesleyan View," *BETS* 10 (1964): 195.

<sup>131</sup>"According to the Bible, Christ came to reveal the Father in all his fullness to the entire world. 'No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him' (John 1:18). Christ is here seen as the great and final Revealer of the Father to men. The Son exposed the Father to the world. And he made him known fully and to the entire world, not just to the elect." Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 114.

freedom from sin's bondage (Rom 8:19-23).<sup>132</sup> Sin negatively affected everything in God's created universe, necessitating the reconciliation of all things in creation.<sup>133</sup> In order to accomplish this restoration of all creation, God reconciled all things to himself through the atonement of Jesus Christ.<sup>134</sup> This is the teaching of Colossians 1:19-20, which states, "For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven." The reconciliation of "all things" by the blood of Christ in this passage is coextensive with the creation of "all things" by Christ mentioned earlier in Colossians 1:15-16.<sup>135</sup> The phrase "all things" is also as broad as it possibly can be, as it is described as "things on earth or

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<sup>132</sup>Commenting on Rom 8:21, Morris states, "Paul looks forward to a time when the total effect of sin will be done away and creation will stand forth in all its glory as God intends it to be. It will be set free from 'the slavery of corruption' which is so characteristic of the physical world: 'Change and decay in all around I see.' But Paul does not regard this as permanent. Creation will in due course be freed from the bondage to decay. It will share in some extent in 'the liberty of the glory of God's children.'" Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 322.

<sup>133</sup>"It is clearly stated after all, that God reconciled all things (*τα παντα*), that is, not only people or angels, but all created things, the whole creation, the world, the universe, more fully described as 'all things either on earth or in heaven,' that God reconciled the whole creation by Christ, not to itself, but to himself, bring all things together and into unity in him. . . . Now this creation as a whole, conceived organically, was brought by sin into a position of hostility against God, and internally torn apart and devastated. Implied here is not that the good angels, personally and individually, needed reconciliation, nor that Christ had to suffer and die for irrational creatures. Basic to these passages [Eph 1:10; Col 1:20], however, is the premise that sin modified and disturbed the relation of all creatures to God and to one another." Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 472.

<sup>134</sup>"Since the liberty of the children of God is procured by the redemptive work of Christ, the release of creation from its bondage to decay is assured by that same redemptive work." F. F. Bruce, "The 'Christ Hymn' of Colossians 1:15-20," *BibSac* 141 (1984): 109.

<sup>135</sup>*Ibid.* See also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 74.

things in heaven.” This means that the work of reconciliation is as broad as it can be, it is on the widest possible scale; all things everywhere are reconciled to God by the atonement.<sup>136</sup>

The reconciliation of all things to God through Christ’s atonement is only possible if Christ’s atonement was for all sin, and not just for the sin of the elect. This truth is contested by advocates of particular redemption, who agree that Christ’s atonement accomplished God’s cosmic triumph over sin, but who do not believe that this triumph required a universal payment for sin.<sup>137</sup> It is difficult to understand, however, how Christ could reconcile all things to himself and triumph over all sin if he did not pay for all sin on the cross.<sup>138</sup> If Christ only paid for the sins of the elect in the atonement,

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<sup>136</sup>“‘Things on earth . . . things in heaven’ thus denotes everything in God’s universe.” Curtis Vaughan, *Colossians*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 186. See also Bruce, “Christ Hymn,” 109; and Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC, vol. 44 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 56-59.

<sup>137</sup>R. B. Kuiper is representative when he states, “Sin disturbed and distorted the relationship of all created things both to God to one another. But in Christ, specifically because of His death which vanquished sin, this consequence of sin will be removed. God will reconcile all things to Himself and bring them into perfect harmony with each other. This is the cosmic significance of the cross of Christ, and it, too, is a significant element in the divine design of the atonement.” Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 98. See also Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 470-75; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 398-99; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 246; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 61-62; Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 100; and B. B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 100-06.

<sup>138</sup>There are two typical arguments advanced by advocates of particular redemption that attempt to hold together a universal reconciliation and an atonement that is only for the elect. The first is that the “world” at the end of time will consist only of the elect, so that when all things are reconciled, it means that only the elect are reconciled. See Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 474-75; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 95-100; and Warfield, *Plan of Salvation*, 100-06. While it is certainly true that the elect are reconciled, it is difficult to understand the basis for the reconciliation of creation in this argument. This argument is also unable to explain what it means to say that the nonelect are reconciled, as Col 1:20 does. The second argument is that Christ’s

then it would seem that there would be sin that would be outside of his atoning work, and thus there would be sin outside of His cosmic triumph.<sup>139</sup> That Christ's cosmic triumph over sin is only made possible by his payment for all sin is seen in four ways. First, it is seen in the nature of Christ's victory on the cross over all sin, or in what is often called the *Christus Victor* aspect of the atonement. Second, it is seen in the nature of the reconciliation wrought by the cross, as the elect, the nonelect, and the creation are all reconciled to God, albeit in different ways. Third, it is seen in the resurrection of all people, the elect and the nonelect. Finally, it is seen in Christ's role as King, which is based upon his priestly work in the atonement as a sacrifice for all sin.

### **Christ's Victory over All Sin in the Atonement**

Christ's atonement not only made salvation possible for all people; it also

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reconciliation of all things is a result of the infinite worth and sufficiency of the atonement. See Letham, *Work of Christ*, 246; and Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 100. The notion of sufficiency, however, either means that Christ's atonement is sufficient for all people because he paid for the sins of all people (which contradicts particular redemption), or that it is sufficient for all people if God had actually wanted it to be for all people, because Christ's sacrifice considered in and of itself is intrinsically of infinite worth. This second notion of sufficiency (which is what advocates of particular redemption believe) cannot ground Christ's reconciliation of all things, however, because it results in an atonement that still only paid for the sins of the elect. As I. Howard Marshall states, "But to say that the atonement is sufficient for all people but has not been made for all is meaningless. How can the atonement be sufficient for people for who it has not been made? This is sheer unconvincing casuistry." Marshall, "For All," 345.

<sup>139</sup>“Were Christ to die for the sin of the elect only (or for any partial amount of the totality of sin), this would leave sin that stands outside of his atoning work and hence outside of his victorious triumph over sin. Since sin is not only a penalty that must be paid (which payment is only efficacious by faith) but also a power that rebels against God's rightful authority and reign, sin's penalty must be paid (for the elect to be saved) but its power must be defeated that *all might be conquered and laid at the feet of the Father.*” Ware, “Extent of the Atonement,” 4, emphasis the author's.

conquered the powers of evil, sin, and death by defeating Satan and the powers of darkness. This aspect of the atonement is referred to as the *Christus Victor* aspect, in that Christ through the cross has gained victory over Satan and his demons. Christ's defeat of Satan was predicted from the beginning of Scripture (Gen 3:15), looked forward to by Jesus in his earthly ministry (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11), and decisively achieved at the cross.<sup>140</sup> Satan's defeat at the cross is necessary for the reconciliation of all things to take place.<sup>141</sup> The reconciliation of all things includes the complete conquering of all of the enemies of the cross.<sup>142</sup> Christ's reconciliation of all things is cosmic in scope, and though it is grounded in the atonement it will ultimately take place at the end of time, when Christ delivers up His kingdom to his Father (1 Cor 15:24-28; Eph 1:9-10).<sup>143</sup> The

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<sup>140</sup>Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 227-28.

<sup>141</sup>While Satan was defeated by Christ at the cross, he is still at work today. This is apart of the already/not yet aspect of eschatology. As Letham states, "Christ's victory over Satan is decisive but, in the context of biblical eschatology, its manifestation awaits his return. Therefore, we still see much damage done by Satan. It is essentially the same with the problem of sin. Christ redeemed us from the bondage of sin and bought us for God. Nevertheless, we still sin and will not be free from sin in a final sense until Christ returns and our salvation is brought to its consummation. The victory is a present reality but not yet manifested fully." Letham, *Work of Christ*, 151.

<sup>142</sup>"Everything in the universe has been subjected to Christ even as everything was created for him. By his reconciling work 'the host of the high ones on high' and sinful human beings on earth have been decisively subdued to the will of God and ultimately they can but subserve his purpose, whether they please or not." Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 76.

<sup>143</sup>"The evil principalities and powers, together with their leader Satan, face a definite point in history when their tyranny will be brought to an end. They now function like vicious dogs on a long leash. When Christ returns, he will tighten the leash to such an extent that they will not be able to cause any harm or instill any fear whatsoever. They will be completely pacified. Paul saw the consummation of history in Christ's act of handing over his kingdom to the Father." Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 163.

way that Christ achieved his cosmic victory over all sin and evil and reconciled all things to himself was by paying for all sin in his penal substitutionary atonement.<sup>144</sup> Each Scripture that highlights the *Christus Victor* aspect of the atonement indicates that Christ's payment for sin is the foundation of his victory over Satan.

Colossians 2:13-15 perhaps is the clearest passage in this regard. It states, "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." In the context of this passage, Christ's payment for sin is established before his victory over Satan is described. The Colossian believers, despite their sin natures that leave them spiritually dead, are able to experience forgiveness and eternal life with Christ because Christ has cancelled the "certificate of debt" that stood

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<sup>144</sup>There are some theologians who believe that the *Christus Victor* aspect of the atonement is the primary aspect of the atonement. See for example Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1931); and Gregory A. Boyd, "Christus Victor View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 23-49; and idem, *God At War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997). As will be shown throughout this section, however, the *Christus Victor* aspect of the atonement is a result of Christ's payment for all sin in his penal substitutionary atonement. Satan is defeated because Christ has paid for sin. For a defense of this view, see Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, 100-09; Henri Blocher, "Agnus Victor: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment," in *What Does it Mean to Be Saved?*, ed. John G. Stackhouse (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 67-91; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 139-42; Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 226-34; and Bruce A. Ware, "The *SBJT* Forum: The Atonement under Fire," *SBJT* 11 (2007): 110-12.

against humanity.<sup>145</sup> It was in this act of canceling out the Colossians' sins that Christ disarmed the demonic rulers and authorities, publicly shaming them and triumphing over them.<sup>146</sup> Satan and the demonic powers are no longer able to hold people in bondage, because people can now experience forgiveness of their sins through the atoning work of the cross.<sup>147</sup>

Several other Scriptures reiterate this truth. In 1 John 3:4-10, Jesus' mission

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<sup>145</sup>“He [Paul] illustrates the freeness and graciousness of God's forgiveness (*charizomai*) from the ancient custom of canceling debts. ‘The written code, with its regulations, that was against us’ can hardly be reference to the law itself, since Paul regarded it as ‘holy, righteous and good’ (Rom 7:12); it must rather refer to the broken law, which on that account was ‘against us and stood opposed to us’ with its judgment. . . . The apostle then employs three verbs to describe how God has dealt with our debts. He ‘canceled’ the bond by ‘wiping’ it clean (as *exaleipho* literally means) and then ‘took it away, nailing it to the cross.’ . . . In any case, God frees us from our bankruptcy only by paying our debts on Christ's cross.” Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 229.

<sup>146</sup>“In Col 2:13-14 we are told that in Christ we have been forgiven of all our trespasses in that by the very death of Christ on the cross, he cancelled the record of debt that stood against us and set it aside, nailing it to the cross. The thrust in vv. 13-14, then, is on expiation: the liability we owe before a holy God to suffer the penalty for trespassing his law is now removed (‘forgiven’ in 2:13; ‘cancelled’ and ‘set aside’ in 2:14) as Christ took upon himself our record of debt and nailed it to the cross. The substitutionary death Christ died, in which he cancelled out the debt of sinners, then, is the backdrop for the next glorious truth found in 2:15, where he disarmed the rulers and authorities, putting them to shame and triumphing over them. The death by which Satan is disarmed and put to shame, then, is a death that cancels our sin. These are not accidentally linked concepts but theologically and necessarily linked. The only way in which Satan could be defeated is as sin, which gave him the basis for his hold over sinners, was itself paid for and forgiven. Christ's forgiveness through penal substitution then, is the means by which Christ conquered Satan's power.” Ware, “*SBJT Forum*,” 110-11.

<sup>147</sup>“How did Christ's death and resurrection accomplish this disarming? Precisely because the powers could not deter Christ from making a satisfaction for sin. By offering his life and spilling his blood, Christ could extend forgiveness of sin to his people. The powers thus lost their chief mechanism for holding people in bondage.” Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, 104-05.

was to destroy the devil's work (v. 8). He did this by taking away sins (v. 5).<sup>148</sup>

Destroying the devil's work means eradicating sin and lawlessness and freeing people to live righteously through salvation.<sup>149</sup> Jesus defeats the devil because he takes away sin by paying its penalty in his substitutionary atonement. Similarly, the "brothers" of Revelation 12 are able to overcome Satan's accusations against them by the blood of the Lamb (v. 11). Satan no longer has any power to accuse believers of their sin because their sin has been paid for and their guilt has been taken away by the atonement.<sup>150</sup>

Hebrews 2:14 also states that Christ, through his death, rendered Satan powerless, so that people might be freed from the fear of death (v. 15). In order to render Satan powerless, however, Christ had to become incarnate so that he could be a faithful and merciful high priest before God, and he was a faithful high priest by making propitiation for the sins of the people (v. 17).<sup>151</sup>

Scripture repeatedly makes it clear that Christ's atonement not only paid for

<sup>148</sup>“The argument of 1 John 3:4-10 would suggest that only as Christ appears ‘to take away sin’ does he, in so doing, take away the very sinful works that mark the devil ‘from the beginning’ (3:8b). *Christus Victor*, then, occurs only as the very works that Satan carries out are themselves destroyed. What works are these? They are works of sin (3:8a). So, as Christ comes to take away sin (3:5), he destroys the sins that are the works of the devil (3:8b). Penal substitution, then, forms the basis by which *Christus Victor* is accomplished and secured.” Ware, “*SBJT Forum*,” 111.

<sup>149</sup>“Thus Jesus’ mission to ‘destroy the devil’s work’ (v. 8) is concerned both with the eradication of sin and the reinstatement of righteousness and justice. Jesus destroys the work of the devil in believers by liberating them to live for righteousness and justice (cf. 1 Pet 2:24).” Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 141.

<sup>150</sup>“How have the brothers overcome the devil and his host? Not by superior might but ‘by the blood of the lamb’ (Rev 12:11). Satan was the Accuser, and he prevailed as long as he could point to their sins. But the blood of the Lamb was the price paid for the cancellation of their debt. The blood of the Lamb wiped out the guilt of their sins forever, and the devil was disarmed.” Blocher, “*Agnus Victor*,” 87.

<sup>151</sup>Ware, “*SBJT Forum*,” 111.

sin, but defeated sin in the person of the devil. Christ's payment for sin, his penal substitutionary atonement, is inseparably related to his victory over all of the powers of sin.<sup>152</sup> This relationship strongly suggests that the atonement was for the sin of all people, elect and nonelect. It is the entire race of humanity that fell into sin due to Satan's temptation (Rom 5:12). It is the sin of humanity that holds the creation in bondage (Rom 8:19-23) and that has marred all relationships between God and every aspect of his creation. It is the sin of humanity that needs to be overcome in order for the devil and his demons to be defeated. If only the sin of the elect is paid for, then how does Christ gain victory over all sin? How is Christ's victory over Satan and the demonic powers in the atonement through canceling out sins (Col 2:13-15) and taking away sins (1 John 3:4-10) possible if only a portion of sins were cancelled out and taken away? Since Christ's payment for sin is the foundation of his victory over all sin, then it seems that his payment had to be for all sin in order for his victory over Satan to be complete and his reconciliation to be total.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>“Thus the defeat of the powers of darkness in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus means that the ancient serpent is indeed defeated, but this defeat comes through reversing human slavery to sin and death (John 8:31-47; 12:31-33; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 2:14-15) by bearing the punishment due to a humanity justly accused by the satanic powers (Col 2:14-15; Rev 12:10-12), and thereby restoring humanity as king of the cosmos in the person of the Second Adam (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:21-28; Heb 2:5-18).” Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 114-15.

<sup>153</sup>“If Christ had not borne the sins of the whole world, He would not have completely eliminated within the divine economy the hostile elements, and as a consequence could not be considered as Lord over all things.” Strehle, “Theological Systems,” 71.

### The Nature of the Reconciliation of All Things

It is not only the *Christus Victor* aspect of Christ's cosmic triumph over sin that points toward an unlimited extent of the atonement. The nature of Christ's eschatological reconciliation is also based upon his complete payment for and victory over sin, because this reconciliation encompasses all things (Eph 1:10; Col 1:20).<sup>154</sup> Christ's payment for the sins of all people was necessary for his cosmic triumph over sin because it allowed for the elect, the nonelect, and the creation to be reconciled to God.<sup>155</sup> That the elect are not the only ones reconciled through Christ's atonement means that the atonement was not only for the elect. God intended, in a non-salvific way, to reconcile the nonelect and the creation in the atonement just as he intended to reconcile the elect salvifically. Reconciliation cannot be the same for the elect and the nonelect because the Bible clearly rules out universal salvation.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup>It is not only Col 1:20 that teaches the reconciliation of all things in Christ, but Eph 1:10 does as well. Commenting on Eph 1:10, Andrew Lincoln states, "Christ is the one in whom God chooses to sum up the universe, in whom he restores the harmony of the cosmos. Earlier, 'in Christ' has functioned to indicate Christ's being the elect representative in whom believers are included, but now it can be seen that God's comprehensive purpose goes beyond simply humanity to embrace the whole created order. This part of the *berakah* helps believers to recognize that to be incorporated into God's gracious decision about Christ is also to be caught up in God's gracious purpose for a universe centered and reunited in Christ." Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 34.

<sup>155</sup>That God's work of reconciliation in the cross is primarily an objective work directed beyond just the elect, and that this work must be subjectively appropriated in order to experience it has been argued for in chap. 3 of this dissertation. See pp. 125-31.

<sup>156</sup>"Jesus does indeed triumph over all things, making peace through the blood of his cross (Col 1:20), but this peace does not mean the redemption of every individual. Instead, Jesus triumphs over his enemies – as they are consigned to damnation beneath the feet of his sovereign lordship." Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 899-900. See also pp. 151-59 of this dissertation.

The elect are salvifically reconciled to God when they accept his objective reconciliation through faith, resulting in salvation. This truth is expressed in Romans 5:10, which states, “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” This verse mentions both aspects of reconciliation, objective and subjective. First, human beings as sinners, the enemies of God, were reconciled through Christ’s death. Second, those who have been reconciled, those justified by faith (Rom 5:1) will be saved by his life.<sup>157</sup> As George Ladd states, “Until God’s offer of objective reconciliation has been received in an attitude of glad surrender, no person is in fact reconciled to God; she or he is still a sinner and in the last day will suffer the full and awful outpouring of the wrath of a holy God. The content of reconciliation, therefore, while first of all the objective act of God, is also the affirmative reaction of people to the proffer of reconciliation. Only then does reconciliation become effective for the sinner; only then is he or she reconciled to God.”<sup>158</sup>

Colossians 1:21-23 also highlights the difference between salvific reconciliation and cosmic reconciliation. This passage states, “And although you were

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<sup>157</sup>“It would seem that the verb [reconcile] is again used in two senses, first in verse 10a of God reconciling men to himself (passive, of men), and second in verse 10b of men who have actually entered into the state of reconciliation. The contrast is the same as that between ‘Christ died for us’ and ‘being now justified.’ No doubt the slight shift in meaning is awkward, but it is by no means intolerable. It is supported by the use of ‘we have received the reconciliation’ in verse 11, which suggests an existing gift to be received by us.” I. Howard Marshall, “The Meaning of Reconciliation,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd*, ed. Robert A. Guelich (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 125.

<sup>158</sup>George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 496. See also John Walvoord, “Reconciliation,” *BibSac* 120 (1963): 4.

formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.” Paul has just proclaimed that Christ reconciled all things through his cross, and he now explains how the Colossians themselves were reconciled as believers.<sup>159</sup> Though the Colossians were sinners apart from God (v. 21), they were reconciled through Christ’s atonement so that they could be presented holy before God (v. 22), and this reconciliation took place because of the Colossians’ faith in the gospel that Paul preached (v. 23).<sup>160</sup> There is clearly a difference between the reconciliation accomplished by Christ in Colossians 1:20 and the reconciliation of the Colossians in 1:21-23. For the elect, the reconciliation that comes with faith in the gospel results in peace with God (Rom 5:1)<sup>161</sup> and peace with one another in the church as all barriers to fellowship are

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<sup>159</sup>Commenting on Col 1:21, Bruce states, “The central purpose of Christ’s peacemaking work, however, is seen most clearly in those men and women who have heard the message of reconciliation and willingly rendered their submission, gratefully accepting the amnesty which the message holds out. This indeed is the prior aspect of reconciliation in Paul’s thinking. The introduction of the Christ-hymn before this point means that here personal reconciliation must be mentioned after cosmic reconciliation, which is celebrated in the final strophe of the hymn, but it is far more likely that, for Paul, cosmic reconciliation was a corollary of personal reconciliation.” Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 76-77.

<sup>160</sup>“In verse 23 Paul implicitly states the terms on which reconciliation becomes a reality: it depends upon faith and the acceptance of the gospel preached by Paul. If the Colossians are urged to continue in faith and hope, the implication is clearly that their reconciliation began with their act of faith and hope.” Marshall, “Meaning of Reconciliation,” 126.

<sup>161</sup>“The peace that is here indicated [in Rom 5:1] is not a subjective experience

broken down in Christ (Eph 2:14-16).<sup>162</sup>

The reconciliation of the nonelect is vastly different from the reconciliation of the elect. While the elect are subjectively reconciled to God during this life at the moment of their salvation, the nonelect never experience this aspect of reconciliation. At the eschaton the nonelect will be reconciled as God restores cosmic peace to his creation. While the peace wrought by the atonement is freely accepted by the elect and results in eternal life with God, this peace is imposed upon the nonelect by God. For this reason, F. Bruce calls this aspect of reconciliation “pacification.”<sup>163</sup> There is no glad surrender of the nonelect, who are suffering in hell as the just punishment for their sin, to the will of God, even though they now realize that they ought to worship God and were wrong to sin against him. Instead, God’s reconciliation of the nonelect means that they have been decisively subdued to the will of God and can do nothing but serve his purposes.<sup>164</sup> As Philippians 2:9-11 teaches, all things in heaven and earth and below the earth will bow

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of peace; it is rather the obverse of the enmity or hostility discussed above. The justified person has been reconciled and therefore has peace with God. God’s wrath no longer threatens that individual; she or he is accepted in Christ. We have peace with God in that God is now at peace with us; his wrath is removed. Peace here refers not to a state of mind but to a relationship with God.” Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament*, 497.

<sup>162</sup>“The reconciliation which is afforded the believer in Christ not only reconciled Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ, but reconciled both unto God in the one body referring to the church as a living organism. Reconciliation, therefore, is effective between men as well as between man and God.” Walvoord, “Reconciliation,” 7-8.

<sup>163</sup>“The peace effected by the death of Christ may be freely accepted, or it may be imposed. The reconciliation of the universe spoken of here includes what would now be distinguished as pacification.” Bruce, “Christ Hymn,” 109.

<sup>164</sup>“Everything in the universe has been made subject to Christ even as everything was created for Him. By His reconciling work ‘the host of the high ones on high’ and sinful human beings on earth have been decisively subdued to the will of God and must subserve his purpose.” *Ibid.*, 109-10.

before Jesus Christ and acknowledge him as Lord.<sup>165</sup> The nonelect in hell will be reconciled in that they are no longer able to rebel against God and because they will acknowledge Jesus for who He is.<sup>166</sup> After their judgment the nonelect will be consigned to the lake of fire with Satan, where they no longer will be able to rebel against God (Rev 20:11-15).<sup>167</sup> There will be peace even between God and the nonelect as a result of the atonement.

The creation also experiences reconciliation with God. The evil personal elements of creation, Satan and his demons, are reconciled in much the same way as the nonelect are. They too will bow down before Jesus and confess his Lordship to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:9-11).<sup>168</sup> At the end of the Millennium, after Satan has

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<sup>165</sup>“Although all things will *finally* unite to bow in the name of Jesus and to acknowledge his as Lord (Phil 2:10, 11), it is not to be assumed that this will be done gladly by all.” O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 57, emphasis the author’s. See also Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 76; and Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” 900.

<sup>166</sup>Homer A. Kent, Jr., *Philippians*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 125. See also Ware, “Extent of the Atonement,” 4.

<sup>167</sup>The reconciliation of all things does not entail annihilationism. The biblical evidence is clear that hell is eternal. See Edward William Fudge and Robert A Peterson, *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 117-81. While the nonelect are no longer able to thwart God’s purposes or rebel against him in hell, neither will they ever long for a relationship with him or repent from their sins. See Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” 900-01.

<sup>168</sup>“The purpose of Christ’s exaltation is that all beings might bow in acknowledgement of the name that belongs to Jesus (v. 10), and confess that Jesus is Lord (v. 11). Because of what the name of Jesus represents, a time is coming when every knee shall bow before him in recognition of his sovereignty. The statement is built on the wording of Isaiah 45:23, a verse quoted by Paul in Romans 14:11 also (cf. Rev 5:13). This universal acknowledgement will include angels and departed saints in heaven, people still living on earth, and the satanic hosts and lost humanity in hell.” Kent, *Philippians*, 125. See also Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, 164-65; Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 76; Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” 900; and O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 57.

attempted one final rebellion against God (Rev 20:7-9), he will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10), where he will no longer be a threat to God's harmony and peace in creation.<sup>169</sup> Angels will also experience reconciliation with God, as they are a part of the creation that was estranged from God because of humanity's sin (Rom 8:19-23).<sup>170</sup> The entire creation will be renewed and cleansed from sin.<sup>171</sup> The elect will dwell in a new heavens and new earth (Rev 21-22) as Christ fulfills the cultural mandate and hands over his kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor 15:24-28).<sup>172</sup> All of this will take place because all sin has been paid for, conquered, and vanquished by Christ's atonement.

### **The Resurrection of the Elect and the Nonelect**

Christ's reconciliation of all things to the Father through the atonement also includes the future resurrection of all people, the elect and the nonelect. John 5:26-28 states, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of

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<sup>169</sup>“The comprehensive scope of Christ's reign is strongly in view here [Eph 1:10]; there is no part of the creation that will continue to work in open rebellion against Christ. His reign especially includes all principalities and powers.” Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*, 164.

<sup>170</sup>Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 471-73; and Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 399.

<sup>171</sup>“With the fall of angels and humans, heaven and earth themselves sank to a level below that of their original state. The whole creation has been groaning and is experiencing the pains of childbirth. . . . Accordingly, as in the old covenant, the tabernacle and all its liturgical implements were sprinkled with blood (Exod 24:3-8; Heb 9:21), so Christ by his cross reconciled all things and acquired a new heaven and a new earth. The whole creation as one day it will stand perfect – without spot or wrinkle – in God's presence is the work of Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Heb 12:22-28).” Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation*, 473.

<sup>172</sup>Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” 912-16.

Man. Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.” Christ stated that all people would experience the resurrection; those who had done good things (as a result of their saving faith) would experience the resurrection of life and those that had done evil things (as a result of their sin nature) would experience the resurrection of judgment, or damnation (cf. Rev 20:5-7).<sup>173</sup> Christ possesses the power over the resurrection and the authority to judge people because the Father has given Him those things.<sup>174</sup> Not only does Christ have power over the resurrection of the elect, but he also has power over the resurrection of the nonelect.<sup>175</sup> All people can only experience the resurrection because of Christ.

Christ’s power over the resurrection is a result of his own resurrection (1 Cor 15:13), which is a result of his atonement.<sup>176</sup> People only experience the resurrection

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<sup>173</sup>For defense of the view that these verses are referring to the resurrection of believers and unbelievers, see Carson, *Gospel of John*, 258-59.

<sup>174</sup>Commenting on John 5:23, F. F. Bruce remarks, “As the Son has claimed authority to raise the dead, so now he claims authority to execute final judgment; indeed, he states that the Father has placed this authority within the Son’s sole jurisdiction and does not exercise it himself.” Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 130.

<sup>175</sup>“A major role of the Son in the eschatology of humanity is his issuance of this decisive call (*phone*), which summons the dead from the tombs (5:28) to one of two destinies.” Borchert, *John 1-11*, 241. See also George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 77; Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 133; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 258-59; and Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 284-85.

<sup>176</sup>For Paul, Christ’s death and resurrection are always inseparable from one another. See Richard Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 142; McDonald, *Atonement of the Death of Christ*, 32-41; and Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 232-33.

because Christ paid for sin in his atoning work on the cross and therefore gained authority over death.<sup>177</sup> First Corinthians 15:21-22 describes how Christ reversed the order of death that Adam instituted after he sinned.<sup>178</sup> Although the context of these verses is concerned with the resurrection of believers, the same way that Christ procured the power over the resurrection of the elect to life (dying on the cross as a payment for sin and being raised from the dead) is the same way He did so for the resurrection of the nonelect to judgment. Furthermore, if Christ has the power over the resurrection of judgment just as he has power over the resurrection of life, and if he only has this power as the last Adam who defeated death through his payment for all sin, then it seems that not only the elect but also the nonelect are raised from the dead on the basis of Christ's work on the cross.<sup>179</sup> Robert Lightner clarifies this truth: "As the last Adam (1 Cor 15:45), Christ defeated the power of death incurred by the first Adam; and since the penalty of death extended to all men, Christ's victory over death, proved by his own resurrection, must also be the basis for the future resurrection of all men."<sup>180</sup> Because the

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<sup>177</sup>Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 233.

<sup>178</sup>First Cor 15:21-22 states, "For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." Commenting on these verses, Mare remarks, "The man who brought death is Adam, and the one who will bring about the resurrection of the dead is Christ." Mare, *1 Corinthians*, 285.

<sup>179</sup>As Arthur C. Custance states, "In this aspect of his Atonement there are no limitations placed upon it since all men equally will be raised from the dead, freed forever from their present physical defect, and will therefore face judgment in bodes no longer subject to death. . . . The ransoming of all men's bodies from the grave is one of the universal effects of the Lord's sacrifice, one real sense in which he died for the world, that is, for all men indiscriminately." Arthur C. Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 171.

<sup>180</sup>Lightner, *Death Christ Died*, 144.

nonelect will be raised from the dead by the power of Christ's resurrection just as the elect will, it seems that they must have been included in Christ's atonement just as the elect were.<sup>181</sup>

### **Jesus Christ as King**

The final way in which Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin is seen to be a result of his atonement for all sin is Christ's work and role as king. Jesus is king because of his atonement and resurrection. He spoke of his crucifixion as something that he had to go through in order to receive his kingdom (Matt 3:11-12; Mark 10:35-40; Luke 12:49-50).<sup>182</sup> It is the "Lamb who was slain" who is worthy to receive power and glory on the throne (Rev 5:11-14).<sup>183</sup> His resurrection and subsequent ascension marked the onset of his kingly rule.<sup>184</sup> Christ presently sits at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33) and is the "ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rev 1:5). As Christ rules from his throne at the Father's right hand, however, he awaits the time when he will return and consummate his

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<sup>181</sup>"The wicked dead are just as much a part of the resurrection program as are the righteous dead. And both will be raised by the power of Christ's resurrection. This being true, it must be admitted that even the nonelect were included in the Savior's death since it is on the basis of His death that they shall one day be resurrected to live a conscious existence forever." Ibid., 145.

<sup>182</sup>Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 866.

<sup>183</sup>"The sacrificial death of the Lamb of God is clearly the basis for his worthiness, and in the book as a whole it entails the actual victory over Satan. It alludes back to 4:11, where God is 'worthy' of praise; now the Lamb is also 'worthy.' The reasons for that worthiness are not spelled out here (as in vv. 4, 9), however, but summed up in the basic work of Christ, his sacrifice." Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 262.

<sup>184</sup>Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 255-57; and Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 864-69.

kingdom (Matt 25:31-46).<sup>185</sup> It is at Christ's return that his kingdom will be visibly established over the entire earth (Rev 19:11-20:6), and sin and Satan will be conquered once and for all (1 Cor 15:24-28; Rev 20:7-15). Christ's atonement is inseparable from his rule and reign as king.

The inseparable relationship between Christ's atonement and his rule is also seen in how all things are reconciled to him. Jesus Christ reconciles all things because of his priestly work in the atonement (Col 1:20), but all things are reconciled to Christ as he rules over them. This truth is made clear in Philippians 2:8-11, which states that it is because of Christ's death on the cross (v. 8) that God has highly exalted Jesus (v. 9).<sup>186</sup> This exaltation consists of all creatures bowing before Jesus (v. 10) and confessing his Lordship to the glory of God the Father (v. 11).<sup>187</sup> This truth is also seen in the basis of Christ's authority to judge the nonelect. Christ raises the nonelect for judgment because of his atonement.<sup>188</sup> He is worthy to open the book with the seven seals (a work of

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<sup>185</sup>“Jesus believed that as the Messiah, He Himself would come in glory, judge the nations of humankind, and assert his own political rule over them (Matt 25:31-46).” Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 236.

<sup>186</sup>On the basis of Christ's humiliation, which climaxed in his atonement, God gave him the name of “Lord.” This name means that Christ is now the sovereign ruler over the entire universe. See Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 220-23; Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, WBC, vol. 43, rev. Ralph P. Martin, rev. ed (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 123-26; Kent, *Philippians*, 124-25; and Richard R. Melick, Jr., *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, NAC, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 105-06.

<sup>187</sup>“The exaltation has to do with cosmic authority before which all demonic powers bow and to which they submit. Christ is installed and acknowledged as Lord of the universe, not as head of the church.” Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 128.

<sup>188</sup>See pp. 217-20 of this dissertation.

judgment)<sup>189</sup> because of his atoning work (Rev 5:9). This judgment is apart of his kingly activity as he works to bring peace to the creation, and it is inseparable from his atonement.

As king, Christ not only saves and rules over his elect, but he will one day rule over all creation, first in the millennial kingdom (Rev 20:1-10), and then in eternity (Rev 21-22).<sup>190</sup> As king, Christ has the right to raise the elect and the nonelect from the dead and to judge them. As king, Christ triumphs over and defeats Satan, sin, and death. All of this kingly work is universal; Christ is the ruler of all creation. This kingly work is also based upon the atonement, which defeated Satan, conquered death, and reconciled all things. All of these things are possible only because Christ has paid for all sin, which means that Christ's rule and reign over all things is only possible because he has paid for all sin. Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin and consequent rule as king depends upon his payment for all sin in the atonement.

### Conclusion

God had several intentions in the atonement that go beyond the elect. In order

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<sup>189</sup>“It was the death of Christ that anchored God's redemptive plan, and the rest of Revelation describes the events that will bring that plan to completion. The judgment of the nations (as in ‘the words of lament and mourning and woe’ written on the scroll in Ezek 2:10) in the seals, trumpets, and bowls is part of that plan, especially when we see how the judgments present a final opportunity to the nations for repentance (9:20, 21; 15:4; 16:9, 11). Moreover, the redemptive plan was necessitated by the effects of sin, and judgment is necessary to purify God's creation and to purge it from ‘its bondage to decay’ (Rom 8:19-22).” Osborne, *Revelation*, 249.

<sup>190</sup>“Christ's victory does not seek merely to save individuals or an aggregate of individuals, it seeks to establish a new people, to establish a new history and a new creation (see Rev 21:1ff.). Christ's victory both reveals and inaugurates this reign, making clear the world's reorientation to its original end.” Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 160.

to accomplish these intentions, he sent his Son to the cross not only to die for the sins of the elect, but also to die for the sins of all people. God intended for Jesus' general payment for all sin to accomplish five things. First of all, Jesus' death made the universal gospel call possible. This is seen in the way that the Bible describes the universal gospel call's basis, content and motivation. It is also seen in the Holy Spirit's role in the universal gospel call, and in what is necessary for a genuine universal gospel call. Second, Christ's atonement procured an additional basis of condemnation for those who explicitly reject the gospel. It is because Christ died for the nonelect that they are so culpable for rejecting his death. Third, Christ's atonement made it possible for God to show common grace toward the nonelect. God graciously bestows his good gifts upon the nonelect, restrains sin and evil in their lives, and exercises patience in judging them because of Christ's atonement for all sin. Fourth, the atonement is the supreme example of God's character because it is an atonement that is for all sin. Finally, Christ's general atonement accomplished God's cosmic triumph over all sin. This is seen in the basis for Christ's victory over Satan, the nature of the reconciliation of all things, the resurrection of the nonelect, and Christ' rule as King.

These five general intentions, based upon Christ's general payment for all sin, make up the general intentions of the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement. Christ's general payment for sin was for specific purposes; it was not merely to make salvation available to all people. Particular redemption is unable to adequately account for these general intentions because it denies that Christ paid for all sin.

Unlimited atonement is able to account for these intentions, but it is unable to account for *multiple* purposes in the atonement. The atonement was not only a general payment for

sin. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the Bible also teaches that God intended for the atonement to specially benefit the elect, namely by securing their salvation.

CHAPTER 5  
THE PARTICULAR INTENTIONS  
OF THE ATONEMENT

**Introduction**

Jesus Christ's atonement did not only accomplish God's general intentions for his creation, including the elect and the nonelect, but it also accomplished God's intentions for the elect alone. This is why the atonement has multiple intentions, because God intends for it to affect the elect and the nonelect in different ways. Some of the intentions of the atonement are for all people, such as the universal gospel call, common grace, the reconciliation of all to God, and the resurrection of the elect and the nonelect. Other intentions of the atonement are only for the nonelect, such as the additional basis of condemnation for those who reject the gospel and the pacification of the nonelect in Christ's eschatological triumph over all sin. And yet other intentions of the atonement are only for the elect. Specifically, the atonement secured the sure and certain salvation of the elect alone, those who are saved by faith through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The purpose of this chapter is to exegetically and theologically establish God's particular intention in the atonement: the securing of the salvation of the elect.<sup>1</sup> In order

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<sup>1</sup>The use of the word "securing" is important here, as it preserves the difference between the accomplishment of salvation at the cross and the application of salvation by the Holy Spirit, or the objective and subjective aspects of the atonement. The atonement secured and made certain the salvation of the elect, but it did not technically "save" the elect because no one is saved until he or she puts his or her faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ (an action wrought by the Holy Spirit). See pp. 151-59 of this

to accomplish this, it will first be necessary to demonstrate that God intended for Jesus to secure the salvation of the elect in the atonement. This will be done by presenting the Bible's teaching on God's sovereignty throughout salvation (particularly in his unconditional election of the elect), God's special love for the elect, and the Father and the Son's unity in salvation. This chapter will then biblically and theologically establish how Christ secured the salvation of the elect. Christ secured the salvation of the elect in the atonement by dying for their sin in order then to send the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to the elect. On the basis of the atonement, the Spirit applies salvation to the elect through effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, indwelling the believer, baptism in the Spirit, sanctification, preservation and perseverance, and glorification. Throughout the chapter, special care will be taken to respond to the arguments of unlimited atonement against particularity in the atonement, and to explain how the particular aspects of the atonement do not contradict the universal aspects. This chapter, along with the two previous chapters, establishes the biblical and theological validity of the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement.

### **Securing the Salvation of the Elect**

The doctrine of election has to do with God's plan to save sinners,<sup>2</sup> and it refers to his pre-creation choice of some people to be saved.<sup>3</sup> When the Bible speaks of

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dissertation.

<sup>2</sup>God's salvation plan is for fallen sinners. This means that election is infralapsarian, or after the fall, as opposed to supralapsarian, or before the fall. For a defense of this notion, see Bruce A. Ware, "Divine Election to Salvation: Unconditional, Individual, and Infralapsarian," in *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 47-58.

<sup>3</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan,

salvation as based upon God's purpose and plan (e.g., Rom 8:28-29; 9:11; Eph 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9), it is usually referring to his work of election, or the "divine initiative in human salvation."<sup>4</sup> The Bible does refer to election in contexts that are not salvific, as when it speaks of God's election in a corporate sense of the nation of Israel (Deut 7:6-8; 1 Kgs 3:8; Ps 132:13) and also of the church (1 Pet 2:9). The Bible also speaks of God's electing certain individuals for service, such as Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), Moses (Num 16:5-7), and Jeremiah (Jer 1:5). Jesus Christ is sometimes described as God's "elect one" (Isa 42:1).<sup>5</sup> The primary emphasis of election in the Bible, however, particularly in the New Testament, is on sinners' individual election to salvation, as 2 Thessalonians 2:13 illustrates, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."<sup>6</sup>

There are two primary views of individual election.<sup>7</sup> The Calvinist view is

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2000), 669.

<sup>4</sup>Robert W. Yarbrough, "Divine Election in the Gospel of John," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 47.

<sup>5</sup>For an explanation of the corporate and service aspects of election in the Bible, see Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 118-24.

<sup>6</sup>"It is especially clear in the New Testament that the individual aspect of election becomes prominent, and it is largely in terms of individual election that the doctrine has been discussed by theologians." Paul K. Jewett, *Election and Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 48.

<sup>7</sup>There are some Arminians who deny any idea of individual election in Scripture, and see election as entirely corporate, but this is a minority view within evangelicalism. See William W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); and Clark H. Pinnock, "Divine Election as Corporate, Open, and Vocational," in *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, ed. Chad

unconditional election, which can be defined as “that eternal act of God, by which in his sovereign pleasure, and on account of no foreseen merit in them, he chooses certain out of the number of sinful men to be the recipients of the special grace of his Spirit, and so to be made voluntary partakers of Christ’s salvation.”<sup>8</sup> The typical Arminian view is conditional election, which can be defined as “the view that before the world ever existed God conditionally predestined some specific individuals to eternal life and the rest to eternal condemnation, based on his foreknowledge of their freewill responses to his law and to his grace.”<sup>9</sup> The main difference between the two views is God’s basis for election. Calvinists believe that the basis for election is God’s sovereign will, while Arminians believe that the basis is the human response to God’s salvation in Christ.

The doctrine of election is closely related to the doctrine of the extent of the atonement, as the former refers to God’s plan to save some sinners and the latter refers to the enactment of God’s plan to save sinners through Jesus Christ. This has led many theologians to assume that one’s doctrine of election largely determines the extent of the atonement, and vice versa. A common argument for particular redemption is that it is only consistent with unconditional election,<sup>10</sup> while a common argument for unlimited

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Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 276-314.

<sup>8</sup>Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1907), 779.

<sup>9</sup>Jack W. Cottrell, “The Classical Arminian View of Election,” in *Perspectives on Election: Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 72.

<sup>10</sup>Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932), 151, 157-60; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner’s, 1872-73; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), 2:547-49; R. B. Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die? A Study of the Divine Design of the Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 67-68; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, Contours of

atonement (from an Arminian perspective) is that it is only consistent with conditional election.<sup>11</sup> There is some truth in this way of thinking, as an atonement that is only particular entails unconditional election, and an atonement that is only universal entails conditional election, although it isn't necessary for one's doctrine of election to determine one's doctrine of the extent of the atonement.<sup>12</sup> The multi-intentioned view,

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Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 234-35; Gary D. Long, *Definite Atonement*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2006), 21-24; Roger Nicole, "Particular Redemption," in *Our Savior God: Studies on Man, Christ, and the Atonement*, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 172; John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 45-62; J. I. Packer, "Introductory Essay," in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* by John Owen (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1959), 4-8; Terrance L. Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved? Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 98-99; and B. B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000), 96-97.

<sup>11</sup>Dave Hunt, *What Love is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God* (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2004), 298-300; Donald Lake, "He Died for All: The Universal Dimensions of the Atonement," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 41-45; I. Howard Marshall, "Universal Grace and Atonement in the Pastoral Epistles," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 64-69; Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 63-67; Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will: Contrasting Views of Salvation: Calvinism and Arminianism* (Nashville: Randall House, 2002), 90, 105-06; and H. Orton Wiley, *Christian Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1952), 2:295-97.

<sup>12</sup>Millard Erickson states that one cannot deduce particular redemption from unconditional election because it cannot be proved that the decision to elect only some is prior to the decision to send Christ. Erickson argues that sublapsarianism is logically possible, and is able to account for holding unconditional election and unlimited atonement together. God chose to send Christ to provide salvation for all, and then chose to only save some. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 852. Erickson's view of sublapsarianism is correct, and it is certainly possible. By itself, however, this argument does not solve the problem of holding together unlimited atonement and unconditional election. If the Son provided salvation for all, but the Father only intended to save some, then this introduces disjunction into the Godhead, as this implies that the Father and Son have different salvific goals. Most four-point Calvinists are open to this charge, and it is a common one among advocates of particular redemption. See Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 159-60;

for example, holds together the doctrines of unconditional election and an unlimited extent of the atonement.

The multi-intentioned view is able to hold consistently to both unconditional election and an atonement that paid for the sins of all people by recognizing multiple intentions in the atonement. That God only intends to save some sinners does not mean that he has no purposes for the nonelect, and it does not require that the atonement only be for the elect if the Bible teaches otherwise.<sup>13</sup> God had general purposes in the atonement that go beyond the elect, which necessitated Christ's general payment for all sin. God also has particular, salvific purposes in the atonement that are only for the elect, and these purposes are consistent with the truth of unconditional election. That God intended for the atonement to secure the salvation of the elect alone differentiates the multi-intentioned view from unlimited atonement, which is unable to account for any particularity in the atonement.<sup>14</sup> The truth of God's securing the salvation of the elect in

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Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 595; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 64-70; Nicole, "Particular Redemption," 172; Owen, *The Death of Death*, 51; Packer, "Introductory Essay," 4-6; Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*, 98-99; and Warfield, *Plan of Salvation*, 96-97.

The multi-intentioned view avoids this charge by asserting that God the Father had multiple intentions for the atonement. The atonement not only accomplishes his elective purposes, but his purposes for the creation and the nonelect as well. The Holy Spirit then works among the nonelect and the elect on the basis of the atonement, fulfilling the Father and the Son's intentions. Each person of the Trinity has general and particular intentions for creation. The unity of the Trinity is therefore upheld by the multi-intentioned view. Unconditional election has to do with God's particular purposes, which are accomplished in the atonement, but these particular purposes do not rule out his general purposes, which are also accomplished in the atonement. See also the following paragraph.

<sup>13</sup>That the Bible does teach otherwise is the finding of chap. 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>14</sup>Unlimited atonement is unable to recognize any particularity in the

the atonement can be seen in what the Bible teaches about God's sovereignty in salvation, God's special love for the elect, and the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation.

### **God's Sovereignty in Salvation**

The Bible consistently presents God as completely sovereign over all things, including salvation. Perhaps the clearest verse in Scripture affirming this truth is Ephesians 1:11, which states, "also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." This verse speaks of the believer's inheritance in Christ (Eph 1:10); an inheritance that believers only have because God has predestined them to have it, according to his purpose. God's "purpose" here is his ultimate plan and design for all things.<sup>15</sup> Predestination to salvation is based upon God's purpose and design; it is not based upon foreseen decisions of faith.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the one who "predestined according to his

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atonement because it understands the atonement to be a general payment for all sin that only provides salvation for all. The particular, saving acts of God are then found in the Father's election and the Spirit's saving work, but not the atonement. See pp. 3-11 of this dissertation.

<sup>15</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 263-64; John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 680; and Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 36.

<sup>16</sup>"'Purpose' (*prothesin*) refers to the goal God intends to accomplish; it is his ultimate design. Paul says that our predestination to salvation was done according to that design or aim. This means that our election wasn't based on what God foresaw about how we would respond when told the gospel. If Paul had meant that, he could have easily said that. Saying that we were predestined according to God's purpose suggests that his decision was based solely on his desires, i.e., it was unconditional." Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 680.

purpose” is also the one who “works all things after the counsel of his will.” This means that God’s election is apart of God sovereign plan for all things in his creation.<sup>17</sup> This phrase echoes Ephesians 1:5, which states that “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.”<sup>18</sup> The Bible makes it clear that the basis of salvation is God’s sovereign will and pleasure and not any human decision, and that therefore election is unconditional.

God’s sovereign decision to elect unconditionally some to salvation is absolutely necessary if any are to be saved. This is because all people, as a result of the fall, are dead in their sins (Eph 2:1), blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:4), and unable to do anything pleasing to God.<sup>19</sup> Apart from a work of God in their lives, people are incapable of doing anything to restore their relationship with God (Rom 3:9-20). This includes putting their faith in the gospel.<sup>20</sup> People must be regenerated, or born again, in order to

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<sup>17</sup>“Predestination to salvation, for Paul, is one central element within the larger sovereign work of God, a work that encompasses absolutely everything that happens in all of time and space. Because God is sovereign, God controls all that occurs. Within his sovereign control, says Paul, stands our predestination to salvation. A strong understanding of divine sovereignty, then, requires the doctrine of unconditional election.” Ware, “Divine Election,” 23.

<sup>18</sup>“With the use of two prepositional phrases beginning with *κατὰ* and a genitive construction linking two synonymous nouns, this clause heavily underlines that believers’ appointment in Christ to their destiny is part of God’s sovereign purpose. It repeats the earlier emphasis on predestination and the divine will (cf. v. 5).” Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 36.

<sup>19</sup>Ware, “Divine Election,” 19.

<sup>20</sup>Arminians agree that apart from a work of God it is impossible for anyone to put their faith in the gospel. They believe, however, that this work of God is prevenient grace. Prevenient grace is grace that enables all human beings to respond freely to the gospel message, and it includes calling, convicting, illuminating, and enabling. See Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 158-61. Prevenient grace is understood as flowing from Christ’s unlimited atonement, and Scriptural support for the doctrine is given from John 1:9; 12:32; and Titus 2:11. See H. Ray Dunning, *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A*

believe the gospel.<sup>21</sup> This means that it is impossible for election to be based upon a person's future decision to believe in the gospel. Without God's sovereign work of grace in salvation, beginning with election, no one would ever make the decision to believe in the gospel.<sup>22</sup> It is those who are "appointed to eternal life" who believe, and not vice versa (Acts 13:48).<sup>23</sup>

God's sovereignty in salvation is also seen in his decision to elect believers

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*Wesleyan Systematic Theology* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1988), 338-39; Vernon C. Grounds, "God's Universal Salvific Grace," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 21-30; Wiley, *Christian Theology*, 2:353; and A. Skevington Wood, "The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace," in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 215-20. While there is grounding in the atonement for common grace, there is no biblical warrant for prevenient grace flowing from the atonement. None of the texts used by Arminians in this regard support the doctrine. For a refutation of prevenient grace, see William W. Combs, "Does the Bible Teach Prevenient Grace?" *DBSJ* 10 (2005): 3-17; and Thomas R. Schreiner, "Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 229-46.

<sup>21</sup>"The unconverted need to be made entirely new in order to know, love, and serve the Creator and their fellow human beings. . . . Apart from regenerating grace, sinners are incapable of changing their hearts and dispositions (Jer 13:23). We can no more will spiritual birth by a volitional act than we can cause our physical birth." Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 292. The traditional Calvinist position has been that regeneration precedes faith, although some moderate Calvinists believe that faith does precede regeneration. They still believe that God's special grace is necessary to accept the gospel call; however, they believe this is the work of the effectual call. Either way Calvinists believe that a sovereign work of God upon a person is necessary for that person to put his or her faith in the gospel. For this discussion see Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 285-91.

<sup>22</sup>"It simply cannot be the case that God looks ahead in time and sees those who will believe in Christ and so elects them based on his advanced knowledge of their faith. For apart from regeneration, God would see only unbelief as he looked down the corridors of history." Ware, "Divine Election," 21.

<sup>23</sup>"Those here referred to showed by their faith that they had been so enrolled, in contrast to the unbelievers of v. 46." F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 315.

“before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4; cf. 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 1:2).

God’s decision to choose some people to be saved is made before people are even born, indicating that election is unconditional.<sup>24</sup> This is the point of Romans 9:10-16. In Romans 9 Paul is concerned with why there were so many Jews who were not saved (vv. 1-5).<sup>25</sup> God’s promise to the Jews had not failed, however, because God continued to save those who are the “children of promise (vv. 6-9).<sup>26</sup> Paul then uses the illustration of Jacob and Esau to describe God’s saving purposes (vv. 10-13). Just as God chose Jacob to be the inheritor of the promise over Esau before the two of them were born, solely on the basis of his sovereign will, so does he have mercy on (saves) those upon whom he wills to have mercy.<sup>27</sup> God’s prerogative as God is to save whomever he wishes to save, depending only upon his own purposes and desires.<sup>28</sup> This truth can also be seen in the

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<sup>24</sup>“Because no one existed when God’s election took place, God’s election of those whom he would save simply could not have to do with something about them. Rather, God’s election has to do with what God chooses. In short, these time markers are in these verses precisely to instruct us that God’s election to salvation is unconditional.” Ware, “Divine Election,” 15.

<sup>25</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, “Does Romans 9 Teach Individual Election unto Salvation?” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 91.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 91-92.

<sup>27</sup>Arminians typically deny that Rom 9 concerns salvation, let alone unconditional election to salvation. They instead interpret Rom 9 as teaching election to service. For example, see Cottrell, “Classic Arminian View of Election,” 122-33; William G. MacDonald, “The Biblical Doctrine of Election,” in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 217; and James D. Strauss, “God’s Promise and Universal History,” in *Grace Unlimited*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1975), 190-208. This understanding, however, contradicts the language and context of the text. See Schreiner, “Romans 9,” 89-106; and Ware, “Divine Election,” 9-12.

<sup>28</sup>“God wishes to establish his rightful place and authority as God by being the

fact that God foreknows, or foreordains, who will believe.<sup>29</sup>

The fact that God has unconditionally elected before the foundation of the world those who will be saved requires particularity in the atonement. Christ's atonement must have done something for the elect that it did not do for the nonelect if anyone is to be saved. If God had only general intentions in the atonement, then the atonement provides an objective salvation for all, but it does not enable people to subjectively experience salvation. Arminians put forth the doctrine of prevenient grace in order to solve this problem, but the Arminian view of prevenient grace challenges God's sovereignty in salvation and lacks Scriptural warrant.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the Bible asserts that election is "in Christ" (Eph 1:3-5). This means that God the Father, when he elected believers, did so by purposing to save them through the person and work of his Son, Jesus

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one who – by rights of his deity – elects one but not another. This is God's prerogative as God, and to deny of God that he elects people unconditionally is to deny something that God here (and elsewhere) establishes about the very godness of his being God." Ware, *Divine Election*," 10.

<sup>29</sup>Rom 8:29 and 1 Pet 1:1-2 both assert that God's election is based upon his foreknowledge. Arminians understand these verses to teach that election is based upon God's knowledge of how each person will respond to the gospel. Therefore election is conditioned upon one's faith in the gospel, and is not unconditional. See, for example, Cottrell, "Classic Arminian View of Election," 84-93. There are several problems, however, with this understanding of foreknowledge and election. First, it is not found in these verses, but must be read into them. See Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, 70-72. Second, this view contradicts several other passages of Scripture that base God's election upon his own sovereign will, and not the choices of human beings. *Ibid.*, 72-73. Finally, this view misunderstands the meaning of foreknowledge, which normally refers to God's personal decision to relate with someone, and is better translated as "foreordain." See Samuel M. Baugh, "The Meaning of Foreknowledge," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 183-200; and Ware, "Divine Election," 26-29. Therefore, God's foreknowledge in election reiterates his sovereign grace and makes it clear that election is completely unconditional.

<sup>30</sup>See n. 20 on p. 232.

Christ.<sup>31</sup> Christ's atonement is what saves the elect, and it does so because it secured the salvation of the elect according to the Father's sovereign will.

### **God's Special Love for the Elect**

Not only does God's sovereignty in salvation indicate that Christ's atonement had special reference to the elect, but God's special love for the elect indicates this as well. God does love all people (John 3:16), but he loves his elect in a special way that is different from the way he loves the nonelect. This can be seen in the Old Testament, which consistently speaks of God's particular love for his chosen people, Israel (Deut 4:37; 7:7-8; 10:14-15; 33:3; Hos 11:1-4; Mal 1:2-3).<sup>32</sup> God's particular love is especially demonstrated in his redemption of Israel (Deut 4:37-38; 7:7-9; Ps 89:1-4; Isa 43:3-4).<sup>33</sup> This theme is continued in the New Testament, where God's love is especially directed towards his chosen people, the elect. It is the "beloved by God" whom the Father has chosen for salvation by the Spirit unto the glory of Jesus Christ (1 Thess 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13-14), and it is "in love" that he predestines the elect for salvation through Jesus Christ

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<sup>31</sup>Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 133; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 56-57; Jewett, *Election and Predestination*, 73; and Ware, "Divine Election," 52-54. Arminians understand election "in Christ" as corporate, in that Christ elected the church, but not individuals in the church; as God's goal for all people; or as the quality of believers when they put their faith in Christ. See Cottrell, "Classic Arminian View of Election," 81-83; and MacDonald, "Biblical Doctrine of Election," 219-26.

<sup>32</sup>"The striking thing about these passages is that when Israel is contrasted with the universe or with other nations, the distinguishing feature has nothing of personal or national merit; it is nothing other than the love of God. In the very nature of the case, then, God's love is directed toward Israel in these passages in a way in which it is not directed toward other nations." D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 18.

<sup>33</sup>John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 421.

(Eph 1:4-5).<sup>34</sup> The New Testament also makes it clear that God's particular love is especially demonstrated in the redemption of the elect secured by Christ's atonement (Eph 5:25-27).

Christ's atonement not only demonstrates God's love for the world of humanity (John 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10), but it also demonstrates his particular, saving love for the elect, because Christ died to secure the salvation of the elect alone. The very name "Jesus" reflects the truth that the Son of God came to this earth to save "his people from their sins" (Matt 1:21).<sup>35</sup> Jesus is the "Good Shepherd" who lays down his life for his "sheep" (John 10:11, 14-15).<sup>36</sup> John 15:12-14 states, "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you." In these verses, Jesus exhorts his disciples to love one another (v. 12), and explains what the standard of love is: to lay down one's life for his friends.

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<sup>34</sup>The basis for election is not only God's sovereignty, but also his love. See Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 423; and Robert A. Peterson, *Election and Free Will: God's Gracious Choice and Our Responsibility*, Explorations in Biblical Theology (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 104-05.

<sup>35</sup>"Jesus" is the Greek form of "Joshua," which means "Yahweh saves." Jesus' people include all Jews and Gentiles who put their faith in him and therefore receive salvation from their sins. See D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 76.

<sup>36</sup>The relationship between Jesus and his sheep in this passage is analogous to the relationship between the Father and the Son, indicating an intimate knowledge and love between Jesus and his sheep. As D. A. Carson states, "However clearly this Gospel portrays Jesus as the Savior of the world (4:42), the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (1:29, 36), it insists no less emphatically that Jesus has a peculiar relationship with those the Father has given him (John 6:37ff.), with those he has chosen out of the world (15:16, 19). So here: Jesus' death is peculiarly for his sheep, just as we elsewhere read that 'Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her' (Eph 5:25)." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel of John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 387.

Implicitly this verse points toward Jesus' atoning death,<sup>37</sup> and this death was for Jesus' friends, who are his followers (v. 14).<sup>38</sup> Jesus shows no greater love than dying for the elect, his friends.

Paul expounds on Jesus' special love for the elect in two passages of Scripture. The first of these is Romans 8:31-39. After explaining how God works all things out for the good of those who love him because all whom God has predestined will be glorified (Rom 8:28-30), Paul bursts into praise for God's redeeming love. This is a passage that only has reference to believers, as it speaks of the impossibility of anyone bringing a charge against God's elect (31-34) or anything separating the elect from the love of Christ (35-39).<sup>39</sup> God is the one who gave his own Son for the elect, and therefore will give the elect all the blessings that come with salvation (Rom 8:32).<sup>40</sup> God so loves the

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<sup>37</sup>F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 311; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 521-22; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 598-99; and Merrill C. Tenney, *John*, in vol. 9 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 153.

<sup>38</sup>“Jesus makes it clear that the members of the apostolic band are his friends (cf. Luke 12:4). But friendship depends upon common aims and outlook and thus Jesus qualifies ‘You are my friends’ by ‘if you do what I command.’ Once again obedience is the test of discipleship. The friends of Jesus are those who habitually obey him.” Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 599; see also Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 311; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 522-23; and Tenney, *John*, 153.

<sup>39</sup>Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 334.

<sup>40</sup>The “all” in the phrase “but delivered Him over for us all” (Rom 8:32) refers to all of God's believers, the elect, as the context of the verse demands. As Thomas R. Schreiner states, “How do believers know that God is for them and that nothing will defeat them? Believers have this confidence because God did not spare his Son, Jesus Christ, but instead handed him over to death for their sake. Since he has done the greatest thing imaginable – sacrificing his Son to death for their sake – then it surely follows that the Father in his grace will grant them everything along with his Son.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 458. Rom 8:32

elect through Jesus Christ that absolutely nothing can ever separate the believer from God (Rom 8:35, 38-39).<sup>41</sup> God's love through Christ enables believers to overcome any adversity that might threaten their salvation.<sup>42</sup> The love presented in this passage comes to believers through Christ's atonement, and is clearly only for believers.

The second passage in which Paul speaks of Christ's particular love for the elect is Ephesians 5:22-33. In this passage Paul is explaining how submission (Eph 5:21) works out in marriage, and he uses the analogy of the relationship between Christ and the church. Wives are to submit to their husbands just as they submit to Christ, for just as Christ is the head of the church and the church is subject to Christ, the husband is the head of the wife (vv. 22-24).<sup>43</sup> Husbands, on the other hand, are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loved the church (v. 25). Christ loved the church by giving himself

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does not require particular redemption, however, as some claim. See Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 395; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 595; Kuiper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, 68-69; and John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 66-67. Paul is only referring to believers in this passage, and he has no reason to mention the atonement's intentions for unbelievers. As Norman F. Douty states, "To read him [Paul] as meaning that God delivered Christ for all of us who believe *and for none else*, is injecting into the words what is not there." Norman F. Douty, *The Death of Christ: Did Christ Die Only For the Elect?* (Irving, TX: William & Watrous, 1978), 92, emphasis the author's.

<sup>41</sup>This includes everything in the created order and believers themselves. See Morris, *Epistle to the Romans*, 338-42; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 464-67.

<sup>42</sup>"Instead of believers being separated from Christ's love through afflictions, the afflictions become the means by which believers 'more than conquer' (ὑπερνικῶμεν). The triumph is not ascribed to the will power and strength of believers but to the love of Christ." Schreiner, *Romans*, 464.

<sup>43</sup>For a defense of the meaning of "head" as authority and the need for wives to submit to their husbands in the same way that the church submits to Christ, see Wayne Grudem, "The Meaning of *Kephalē* ('Head'): A Response to Recent Studies," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 425-68.

up for her on the cross (v. 25, cf. Eph 5:2; Acts 20:28),<sup>44</sup> in order that he might sanctify her with his Word (v. 26). This sanctification was so that Christ could one day present the entire church to himself at the eschaton as completely holy and blameless (v. 27). Husbands therefore should love their wives in the same way that they love their own bodies (v. 28), because this is the same way that Christ loves his church (vv. 29-30). What is significant regarding Christ's love in this passage is that Christ's sacrificial love for the church is compared to a husband's love for his wife. This indicates that Christ's love in redeeming his church through his atonement is a particular love. Just as husbands are to love their wives over all other women, Christ loves his church, his elect people, above all others.<sup>45</sup> Christ's particular love results in his securing the sanctification (v. 26)

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<sup>44</sup>The phrase "gave himself for her" refers to Christ's sacrificial atonement, as is clear from Eph 5:2, which states "and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." As Lincoln states, "The combination of verbs in the assertion that Christ loved believers and gave himself up for them occurs later in 5:25, had been employed by Paul in Gal 2:20 and may have links with formulations in the earliest community about Christ giving himself up. . . . The formulation states that Christ gave himself up ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, 'for us,' on behalf of believers. He did this as their representative and sometimes the notion of representation involves that of substitution (cf. also Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:14, 21). Certainly the sacrificial nature of Christ's death becomes explicit in the liturgical turns of phrase that now feature in this writer's effusive style." Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 312. Acts 20:28 also affirms that Paul is here referring to Christ's atonement. Speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul states that God purchased the church with his own blood. It is clear that Paul is here describing Jesus Christ's sacrificial atonement for the church. See Darrell Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 630-31; and Bruce, *Acts of the Apostles*, 434.

<sup>45</sup>"Because Christ's love here is likened to a husband's love for his wife, Christ's love, then, is a particular, selective, and discriminate love. That is, Paul tells us that husbands are to love *their wives* as Christ loved *the church*. Without question, a husband's love for his own wife is a selective and particular love; it is a love that seeks the nurture, well-being, protection, provision, joy, and blessing of this *one woman* over all others. . . . If a husband's love for his wife is not particular, selective, and discriminate, then it is not really husbandly love." Ware, "Divine Election," 30-31, emphasis the author's.

and the glorification (v. 27) of his church, and these are things that only the elect experience.<sup>46</sup>

The Bible repeatedly indicates that God shows his saving love toward the elect by securing their salvation through the atonement, as Christ died to save his people, his sheep, his friends, and his church. Paul even specifically states that Christ loved him and gave himself up for him (Gal 2:20).<sup>47</sup> Advocates of unlimited atonement are correct when they state that these kinds of passages do not demand particular redemption, because verses that limit the extent of the atonement to a particular group can easily be reconciled with verses that speak of Christ's atonement for all people.<sup>48</sup> These passages

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<sup>46</sup>“This love, by definition and necessity, then, is a love for his own bride that is different in kind and content from the general love God (or Christ) has for the world. This love, as we see from verses 26-27, leads Christ to save and purify the church. This love impels Christ to make the church ‘holy and blameless,’ fulfilling what the Father had in election chosen for the church to become in his Son (note: Eph 1:4 and 5:27 use the same phrase, ‘holy and blameless’). In short, this richest of all the demonstrations of God’s love among human beings is, by necessity, a selective, particular, and discriminate love for just some.” Ibid., 31.

<sup>47</sup>This phrase describes Paul’s personal appropriation of Christ’s atoning sacrifice. It was because Paul was saved that he could so confidently and personally affirm Christ’s love and atonement for himself. This indicates that Christ’s particular, saving love is in view in this verse. See F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 145-46; and Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC, vol. 41 (Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 94.

<sup>48</sup>For example, Erickson states, “To be sure, there are also those texts that speak of Christ’s dying for his sheep and for the church. These texts, however, present no problem if we regard the universal passages as normative or determinative. Certainly if Christ died for the whole, there is no problem in asserting that he died for a specific part of the whole. To insist that those passages which focus on his dying for his people require the understanding that he died only for them and not for any others contradicts the universal passages. We conclude that the hypothesis of universal atonement is able to account for a larger segment of the biblical witness with less distortion than is the hypothesis of limited atonement.” Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 851. See also Douty, *The Death of Christ*, 132-35; Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 95-96; I. Howard

do demand some kind of special reference to the elect, however, because they indicate that Christ's love resulted in the salvation of the elect.<sup>49</sup> The multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement is able to account for all of the different ways that the Bible describes God's love, because it recognizes both general and particular intentions in the atonement.<sup>50</sup>

### **The Unity of the Father and the Son in Salvation**

In addition to God's sovereignty in salvation and God's special love for the elect, the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation indicates that the atonement secured the salvation of the elect. In Matthew 11:25-27 (cf. Luke 10:21-22), Jesus praises the

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Marshall, "For All, For All My Savior Died," in *Semper Reformandum: Studies in Honor of Clark H. Pinnock*, ed. Stanley P. Porter and Anthony Ricross (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2003), 333-36; Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will*, 90-92; and William S. Sailer, "The Nature and Extent of the Atonement: A Wesleyan View," *BETS* 10 (1964): 190-91.

<sup>49</sup>As Roger Nicole states, "The Scripture emphasizes the definite relation of the mission of Christ, and specifically of His death to those whom He actually redeems. . . . These expressions need not be construed as exclusive of others not mentioned – (this is quite manifest in the case of Gal 2:20) – but the specific reference in all these passages certainly indicates that the relationship of the work of Christ to those who are saved is different from that which it bears to those who are lost." "The Case for Definite Atonement," *BETS* 10 (1967): 201.

<sup>50</sup>The multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement recognizes both the particular and the universal love of God in the atonement by asserting that God accomplished multiple purposes on the cross. Jesus Christ died for all people, but he died for some people with a different intention; he died for all, but in different ways. This corresponds exactly with how the Scriptures describe God's diverse and varied love. God loves all people in some ways, but he loves some people (the elect) in all ways. It is difficult to understand how the cross can be the preeminent action and display of God's love if one kind of God's love is not present in the atonement, as unlimited atonement or particular redemption assert. The multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement is able to explain how the atonement displays both the universal and the particular love of God, because God had both universal and particular intentions in the atonement. See pp.

Father because he has hidden “these things” from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to infants; this was the Father’s good pleasure. Jesus then goes on to say that all things have been handed over to him by the Father, that no one knows the Son except the Father, and that no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal the Father. These verses state that the Father, the Sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth (v. 25), both reveals and conceals the good news of the kingdom (“these things”) to people as he wills.<sup>51</sup> Jesus delights in the Father’s revealing and concealing (v. 26), because, as D. A. Carson states, “Whatever pleases the Father pleases him.”<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Jesus only reveals the knowledge of the Father as he wills, according to the Father’s authorization (v. 27).<sup>53</sup> Jesus not only praises the Father’s sovereign grace in salvation, but he participates in it. The Father and the Son are of one mind in revealing the truth of the gospel to the elect and concealing it from the nonelect.<sup>54</sup>

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196-201 of this dissertation.

<sup>51</sup>“God is sovereign, free to conceal or reveal as he wills. God has revealed ‘these things’ – the significance of Jesus’ miracles (cf. vv. 20-24), the Messianic Age unfolding largely unnoticed, the content of Jesus’ teaching – to *nepiois* (‘little children,’ ‘childlike disciples,’ ‘simple ones’). Carson, *Matthew*, 274.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>53</sup>“‘All things’ refers to ‘these things’ in verse 25, namely, to the entire content of the divine revelation. God, the Lord of heaven and earth, has imparted to the Son the exercise of authority in revelation; it involves the act of entrusting the truth to Christ for communication to others. The ground of this impartation is Jesus’ sonship.” George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed., ed. Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 165.

<sup>54</sup>This truth in no way rules out the universal invitation to receive Christ in the gospel call. Clear evidence of this truth is that Matt 11:28-30 issues a universal invitation to come to Jesus. At the very least, the Bible considers these two truths to be non-contradictory. As Demarest states concerning Matt 11:25-27, “Although Matt 11:28-30

The unity of the Father and the Son in salvation is particularly seen in the Gospel of John. In John 5:19-21, Jesus states that he can do nothing of himself, unless it something that he sees the Father doing; because the Son does what the Father does (v. 19). For the Father loves the Son and shows him all the things that he does (v. 20), and just as the Father gives life to the dead, so does the Son give life to whomever he wishes (v. 21). The analogy in verse 21 is that just as corpses depend upon God's voice to resurrect them, so too do people depend upon the Son's good pleasure to receive salvation.<sup>55</sup> Since the Son only does what the Father does, and since he has received his power from the Father (cf. 5:22, 26, 30), it is clear that Jesus only saves those whom the Father desires for him to save, the elect.<sup>56</sup>

This truth is emphasized even more clearly in John 6:37-40. This passage states: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My

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likely was spoken at another time in Jesus' ministry, a universal invitation to receive Jesus (v. 28) is not inconsistent with God's purpose to reveal himself to some. This is so because (1) Christ's provision on the cross was universal. And (2) all who respond positively to the invitation will be saved (John 11:26; Acts 10:43; Rom 10:11, 13); but tragically for themselves, depraved sinners are unresponsive to spiritual impulses – hence the need for a supernatural initiative." Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 125.

<sup>55</sup>Yarbrough, "Divine Election," 50.

<sup>56</sup>"Although the Son 'can do nothing of himself' (v. 19), his will, his pleasure, his choices are so completely at one with the Father that it is no less true to say that the crucial decisions are his. Unlike Elijah, Jesus is no mere instrument of divine power. . . . Just as he chose one man out of the crowd of ill people by Bethesda (v. 6), so he chooses those to whom he gives life." Carson, *Gospel of John*, 253. See also Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 276-79.

Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” All that come to Jesus and believe in him will receive salvation (John 6:35), but the Galileans Jesus was speaking to did not believe in Jesus (John 6:36), despite his miracles (John 6:26-27). This does not mean, however, that Jesus’ mission was frustrated or that it failed. This is because “all” whom the Father had given him would come to him, and Jesus would receive everyone who comes to him from the Father (v. 37).<sup>57</sup> John 6:37 explains why some people did not believe in Jesus; they did not believe because the Father is completely sovereign over salvation.<sup>58</sup> Jesus goes on to affirm his complete submission to the Father’s saving will (v. 38).<sup>59</sup> He then

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<sup>57</sup>The “all” at the beginning of v. 37 refers to all believers, while the second part of the verse affirms that each individual believer who comes to Jesus will be received by Jesus. The verse proclaims both that the whole of the elect (all believers) and all individual believers as being elect (the one who comes to me), will be saved. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 154. See also Ware, “Divine Election,” 42-43.

<sup>58</sup>Grant R. Osborne points out that the Galileans are responsible for their unbelief, because they refuse to believe in Jesus (6:36), and that God’s sovereignty in salvation must not be allowed to trump man’s responsibility. Grant R. Osborne, “Soteriology in the Gospel of John,” in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 248. It is certainly true that all unbelievers are responsible for their unbelief, but this does not undermine God’s sovereignty in salvation. Everyone whom the Father desires to come to the Son will come to him, as verse 37 asserts. As Morris states, “The words [of v. 37] stress the sovereignty of God. People do not come to Christ because it seems a good idea to them. It never does seem a good idea to sinful people. Apart from a divine work in their souls (cf. 16:8), people remain more or less contentedly in their sins. Before they can come to Christ it is necessary that the Father give them to him. This is the explanation of the disconcerting fact that those who followed Jesus to hear him, and who at the beginning wanted to make him a king, were nevertheless not his followers in the true sense. They did not belong to the people of God. They were not among those whom God gave him.” Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 325.

<sup>59</sup>“In this whole work of salvation Jesus is in the most perfect harmony with the Father. He came down from heaven specifically to do the will of the Father. . . . The perfect unity with the Father ensures that Christ will accept all that the Father gives. It underlines the certainty of the process of the previous verse [v. 37].” Morris, *Gospel*

explains that the Father's saving will was that Jesus would not lose any of the ones that the Father gives him, but raise them up at the last day (v. 39). Finally, Jesus reaffirms his complete submission to the Father's will as he just explained it in verse 38. Again, the Father's will is that all who believe in Jesus have eternal life, and Jesus in turn will raise them up at the last day, ensuring that they do receive eternal life (v. 40).<sup>60</sup> These verses emphasize the Father's sovereignty in salvation (unconditional election), and the Son's obedience to this sovereignty by ensuring that the Father's sovereign salvific will is fulfilled. The Father and the Son are of one mind and will when it comes to the salvation of the elect, with the Father choosing some for salvation and the Son accomplishing the salvation of the ones the Father has chosen.<sup>61</sup>

The unity of the Father and the Son in the salvation of the elect is also evident in John 10:26-30. Just as in John 6:37-40, Jesus explains to the Jews he was speaking with why they do not believe in him (John 10:24-25). They do not believe in him

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*According to John*, 325. See also Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 153-54; and Carson, *Gospel of John*, 290-91.

<sup>60</sup>“The obedience of the Son (v. 38), a theme extrapolated from 5:19ff., stands behind the assurance that those whom the Father has given to the Son will be preserved to the end, and will be resurrected on the last day. In other words, if any of them failed to achieve this goal, it would be the Son's everlasting shame: it would mean either that he was incapable of performing what the Father willed him to do, or that he was flagrantly disobedient to his Father. Both alternatives are unthinkable, not because he never experienced the temptation to disobey, but because succumbing to the temptation, however acute that temptation might be, was unthinkable to him.” Carson, *Gospel of John*, 291.

<sup>61</sup>“In the work of salvation the Father and the Son are completely at one, the Father giving the believing community to the Son, the Son receiving and guarding those who come to him, because he is utterly devoted to the Father's will.” Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 153.

because they are not his sheep (v. 26; cf. John 10:11-18).<sup>62</sup> Jesus' sheep hear his voice and follow him, indicating that they are believers (v. 27).<sup>63</sup> Jesus knows his sheep and gives them eternal life; they will never perish because no one will ever snatch them out of his hand (v. 28). Furthermore, no one will ever snatch them out of the Father's hand, and the Father is the one who has given the sheep to Jesus (v. 29).<sup>64</sup> Jesus ends his explanation by asserting his unity with the Father: "I and the Father are one" (v. 30).<sup>65</sup> Once again Jesus asserts that the elect, his sheep, are given to him by the Father, and

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<sup>62</sup>Osborne maintains that the Jews were not Jesus' sheep because they did not believe in him, which seems to reverse the thought of this verse. He bases his interpretation on the larger context of the book and on the succeeding dialogue in 10:31-39 where Jesus invites the Jews to believe. Osborne, "Soteriology," 250-52. See also I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (London: Epworth, 1969), 175-78. Osborne is correct to note that John 10:31-39 is a valid offer of faith, but this does not invalidate God's sovereignty in salvation. All people have the responsibility to accept Christ through faith (the universal gospel call), but all people can only come to Christ in faith if they have been elected to do so. Both of these truths are biblical and consistently presented by Scripture as compatible. As Carson states, "Neither Jesus nor John means to reduce the moral responsibility of the opponents in the slightest. That they are not Jesus' sheep does not excuse them; it indicts them. But the predestinarian note ensures that even their massive unbelief is not surprising: it is to be expected, and falls under the umbrella of God's sovereignty." Carson, *Gospel of John*, 393. See also Peterson, *Election and Free Will*, 60-63; and Yarbrough, "Divine Election," 51-52, 56-60.

<sup>63</sup>Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 231-32; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 393; Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 463; and Tenney, *John*, 112.

<sup>64</sup>"The ultimate security of Jesus' sheep rests with the good shepherd. Like everything that Jesus does, however, even this preserving action is not independent of the Father. All that Jesus says and does is merely the embodiment of the Father's will; this activity is explicitly so (6:37-40)." Carson, *Gospel of John*, 393. See also Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 160.

<sup>65</sup>This oneness of the Father and the Son refers to their unity in action, will, mind, and purpose, and presupposes their oneness of nature, but does not obliterate the differences between their persons (cf. John 1:1). This verse serves to reinforce the unassailable unity of the Father and Son in saving the sheep. See George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, WBC, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 174; Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 232-33; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 394-95; and Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 464-65.

neither Jesus nor the Father will ever let the sheep go. This is because Jesus and the Father are one in saving the sheep.<sup>66</sup>

Jesus also expresses the unity of his salvific will with the Father's in his high priestly prayer of John 17. At the beginning of this prayer Jesus states, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life" (John 17:1-2). As Jesus prays for his glorification he states that the Father has given him authority over all people so that he may give eternal life to those whom the Father has given him. The Father has given Jesus authority over all people so that he might give eternal life to some, and those people are the ones that the Father has unconditionally elected.<sup>67</sup> The Son glorifies the Father by giving eternal life to those whom the Father has elected, demonstrating the perfect unity of the Father and the Son in salvation. As Jesus continues to pray, he notes that he has manifested the Father's name to those whom the Father has given him out of the world, his disciples, (John 17:6), and he prays specifically for them that the Father would preserve them in their salvation (John 17:9-12).<sup>68</sup> He later states, however, that he also prays this prayer for all future believers (John

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<sup>66</sup>"So responsive is the Son to the Father that he is one in mind, one in purpose, one in action with him. Where the eternal wellbeing of true believers is concerned, the Son's determination and pledge to guard them from harm is endorsed by the Father's word and confirmed by the Father's all-powerful act." Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 233.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 328-29; Carson, *Gospel of John*, 554-55; Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 335-37; Peterson, *Election and Free Will*, 64; and Ware, "Divine Election," 6.

<sup>68</sup>Osborne asserts that apostasy is a valid possibility for believers because Judas, as one of the disciples, was lost (John 17:12). Therefore human action determines salvation just as much as God's sovereignty. Osborne, "Soteriology," 254. This misses the point, however, that Jesus' high priestly prayer for the disciples does not include Judas. As Carson states, "It [v. 12] establishes that Jesus has been utterly faithful to the

17:20), who again are the ones the Father has given him (John 17:24).<sup>69</sup> Throughout this prayer Jesus consistently ties his redemptive work with the Father's redemptive will. Jesus only saves those whom the Father has elected for salvation.

Paul emphasizes the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation just as strongly as John does. This is apparent in Ephesians 1:3-14.<sup>70</sup> God the Father is the source of all spiritual blessings in Christ (v. 3). The Father chose believers in Christ (v. 4), and he predestined believers to adoption through Jesus Christ (v. 5). It is in Christ that believers "have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (v. 7). It is in Christ that all things are summed up, "things in heaven and earth" (v. 10). Believers have obtained their inheritance in Christ, according to the Father's predestinating purpose (v. 11). These verses demonstrate that all the Father does to save his people he does through Christ, and all that Christ does to save his people he does according to the will of the Father.<sup>71</sup>

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task assigned him, *viz.* to keep and protect those that the Father has given him (cf. notes on 6:37-38). Jesus' prayer for his disciples, in this context, therefore *excludes* Judas Iscariot, for otherwise one would have to conclude that Jesus failed in the responsibility that had been assigned him." Carson, *Gospel of John*, 563, emphasis the author's.

<sup>69</sup>"Just as the disciples become the disciples because the Father gives these ones to Jesus, so also all future believers come to believe in Christ through the message of the disciples because God has given these to his Son. Belief is necessary, to be sure, But those who believe are those given to Christ by the Father. The unconditional election of the Father, then, accounts for the subsequent faith and salvation of those to whom the Son grants eternal life." Ware, "Divine Election," 7.

<sup>70</sup>As P. T. O'Brien states, "The divine saving purposes from eternity to eternity which are celebrated in Ephesians 1:3-14 are clearly set forth as the work of the triune God." P. T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 91.

<sup>71</sup>As Bruce states concerning Jesus Christ, "He is foundation, origin, and executor: all that is involved in election and its fruits depends on him." Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 254-55. See also O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 91-92.

God's sovereignty in election, his special love for the elect, and the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation all indicate that Jesus Christ died on the cross to secure the salvation of the elect. Just as Christ died on the cross to accomplish the Father's general intentions in the atonement, so did he die on the cross to accomplish the Father's particular, saving purposes in the atonement. In accomplishing the Father's particular intention, Christ sent forth the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to the elect. The Holy Spirit only applies the salvation that Christ accomplished through the atonement to the elect, and he does this only according to the will of the Father and the Son. As the following section will establish, Christ's particular intention for the elect in the atonement is not only confirmed by his fulfillment of the Father's electing will, but also by the Holy Spirit's saving work.

### **Sending the Holy Spirit to Save the Elect**

Jesus Christ, in fulfilling the Father's intentions for his atonement, accomplished several objective realities that only the elect subjectively experience. As the substitute for sinners (Isa 53:4-6; Col 2:14-15), he was a perfect sacrifice for sin (Eph 5:2; Heb 7:26-27; 9:11-15).<sup>72</sup> In this sacrifice Christ redeemed sinners to God, paying the full price for sin (Acts 20:28; Gal 3:13; Titus 2:14; 2 Pet 2:1; Rev 5:9), and he achieved reconciliation between sinners and God, making peace where there once was enmity (Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18-21; 1 Pet 3:18). He was the propitiation for sin (Rom 3:25; Heb

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<sup>72</sup>For a detailed explanation of Christ's sacrificial work on the cross, see Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 132-39; Thomas R. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 82-93; Robert Sherman, *King, Priest, and Prophet: A Trinitarian Theology of Atonement* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 169-81; and John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 133-62.

2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10), satisfying the just and holy wrath of God against the sin of humanity by being made sin himself so that sinners could be made righteous (2 Cor 5:21).<sup>73</sup> While God intended for these objective realities to accomplish his general purposes in the atonement, he also intended for them to be subjectively applied to the elect, and only for the elect, in order to accomplish his particular purpose in the atonement. In order to fulfill this purpose, Jesus, on the basis of his atonement, sent the Holy Spirit to apply salvation to the elect.

Just as the Holy Spirit's work in the universal gospel call and common grace is evidence of God's general intentions in the atonement,<sup>74</sup> so is his work in applying salvation only to the elect evidence of God's particular intention in the atonement.<sup>75</sup> This is because all that the Holy Spirit does in salvation he does according to the Father's will and on the basis of Christ's atonement.<sup>76</sup> Ephesians 1:3-14 not only presents the unity of

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<sup>73</sup>For a further explanation of the objective realities of the atonement, and the difference between the objective and subjective accomplishments of the atonement, see chap. 3 of this dissertation.

<sup>74</sup>See pp. 171-74, 183-87, 190-91 of this dissertation.

<sup>75</sup>The Holy Spirit will be referred to using masculine pronouns, as has been traditionally done. For a defense of the Spirit's masculinity, see Donald G. Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit: Works and Gifts*, vol. 5 of *Christian Foundations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 60-62; and Graham A. Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, *Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 79-83.

<sup>76</sup>This assertion is contrary to the work of many contemporary theologians, who attempt to separate the Spirit's mission from that of Christ's in order to argue for a more inclusive salvation, or a salvation wrought by the Spirit without the gospel of Christ. For representatives of this approach, see Clark H. Pinnock, *The Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); idem, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002); Todd R. Magnum, "Is There a Reformed Way to Get the Benefits of the Atonement to

the Father and the Son in salvation, but it also presents the Holy Spirit's saving work in unity with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the one who determines the character of the blessings that the Father bestows through Christ (v. 3).<sup>77</sup> He seals those whom the Father has chosen and the Son has redeemed (v. 13).<sup>78</sup> In sealing believers the Holy Spirit serves as a "pledge of our inheritance" (v. 14), guaranteeing Christians' eternal life in Christ.<sup>79</sup> These verses present the Holy Spirit as the one who applies the salvation that the Father planned and the Son accomplished.<sup>80</sup>

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'Those Who Have Never Heard?'" *JETS* 47 (2004): 125-34; John Sanders, *No Other Name: An Inquiry into the Destiny of the Unevangelized* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?*; and Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005). As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, the Spirit's saving work is inseparable from Christ's atonement and the good news of this atonement in the gospel. See Todd Leroy Miles, "Severing the Spirit from the Son: Theological Revisionism in Contemporary Theologies of Salvation" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006); Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds., *Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008); Gary L. Shultz, Jr., "The Necessity of the Gospel in the Holy Spirit's Saving Work," *JBTM* forthcoming; and Stephen J. Wellum, "An Evaluation of the Son-Spirit Relation in Clark Pinnock's Inclusivism: An Exercise in Trinitarian Reflection," *SBJT* 10 (2006): 4-23. See also pp. 165, 171-74 of this dissertation.

<sup>77</sup>"Everything that Christians have received through God's saving act in Christ is comprehensively summarized in the expression *every spiritual blessing*. Here the adjective *spiritual* means 'pertaining to or belonging to the Spirit,' and thus 'spiritual blessings' signify those which 'properly pertain to the life of the Spirit.'" O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 95.

<sup>78</sup>"The sealing is a reference to the actual reception of the Spirit by the readers. The Pauline connection between hearing the gospel, believing, and receiving the Spirit is made, and these are important elements of conversion initiation." *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>79</sup>"The gift of the Spirit, then, is the guarantee of coming immortality." Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 266.

<sup>80</sup>As Boris Bobrinskoy states, "God's action is always Trinitarian. . . . The Father ordains, the Son accomplished, the Spirit vivifies and sanctifies." Boris Bobrinskoy, "The Holy Spirit – in the Bible and the Church," *Ecumenical Review* 41 (1989): 357.

The rest of the New Testament also clearly presents the unity of the Spirit with the Father and the Son's saving work. The Holy Spirit's mission, as he is sent by both the Father (John 14:26) and the Son (John 15:26), is to work out salvation in light of the Father's intentions and the Son's accomplishments.<sup>81</sup> The Holy Spirit freely submits himself to carry out the will of the Father and the will of the Son, which are identical (John 6:38).<sup>82</sup> The Spirit is described throughout the New Testament as the Spirit of the Father (Matt 10:20; Luke 11:13; 1 John 4:2) and the Spirit of the Son (Gal 4:6), or the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9; Phil 1:19; 1 Pet 1:11).<sup>83</sup> Just as the Father's plan of salvation

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<sup>81</sup>At the very least, John 14:26 and 15:26 indicate that the Father and the Son sent forth the Holy Spirit economically. This likely means that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son eternally as well. This is an affirmation of the *Filioque*. As Sinclair Ferguson states, "The double procession doctrine appears to provide a two-fold theological advantage. It underlines the principle that God is in his very being what he reveals himself to be, so that the economic Trinity is a true, however accommodated, reflection of the ontological Trinity. It also indicates a relationship between the Son and the Spirit which is more than economical." Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 75-76. For a further discussion of the *Filioque* and its implications, see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 201-20. It should be noted, however, that one's opinion on the *Filioque* does not necessarily determine the relationship between the Son and the Spirit. Rejecting the *Filioque* does not entail the separation of the Son and the Spirit's saving work. There are other biblical and theological reasons grounds for the Son and the Spirit's unity. See Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 199-202.

<sup>82</sup>"As the Son is always obedient to the Father, so the Spirit is always obedient to the Father and the Son. This must not be taken to imply any inferiority of the Holy Spirit as to His person, but rather a willing subordination in keeping with His person and the unity of purpose of the Godhead. This subordination of the Holy Spirit is essential to all His ministry and characterizes all that is revealed. As it behooved Christ to be obedient even unto death, so it is harmonious with all that we know of God and His work that the Holy Spirit should be the unseen obedient servant of God, speaking of Christ rather than Himself, glorifying the father rather than his own person directly." John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1954), 31.

<sup>83</sup>As the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit's saving work is to unite the believer with Christ and everything that Christ secured for the believer in the atonement. "To be in

culminates in Christ and is accomplished through Christ, so the Holy Spirit's application of salvation is inseparably tied to the work and mission of Christ.<sup>84</sup> It is only after and because of Christ's death and resurrection that the Spirit now works in the world the way that he does (John 16:7; Acts 2:33).<sup>85</sup>

That Christ's particular intention in the atonement was to secure and make certain the salvation of the elect is seen in the Holy Spirit's saving work. All that Christ accomplished in the atonement for the elect the Spirit now works to apply.<sup>86</sup> The Holy Spirit "applies, makes effective, and preserves the redemption Christ bought to those who

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Christ and to be in the Spirit, therefore, are not two different things but the same thing." Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 29.

<sup>84</sup>As Wellum states, "In the canon, the work of the Spirit, as it is progressively disclosed, is never divorced from the work of the Son." Wellum, "An Evaluation of the Son-Spirit Relation," 17. Similarly, "Scripture tells us that the Spirit of God does many works and that these works are indissolubly related not only to each other but also to the work and mission of the Son of God." Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit*, 285.

<sup>85</sup>For an explanation of John 16:7 and its connection of the Son's work and the Spirit's work, see pp. 171-74 of this dissertation. Acts 2:33 states, "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." In this verse Peter is referring to Pentecost, and Jesus' role in sending forth the Spirit. As Bruce Ware states, "Peter could simply have said that the Father poured forth the Spirit as he had long ago promised, and this would have been accurate. But he states with greater precision and nuance just how Jesus also figures into the sending of the Spirit. The Spirit comes as the Father sends him, to be sure. But the Spirit comes as the Father *first* gives the Spirit to the Son, and *then* as the Son 'has poured out this [i.e., the Spirit] that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.'" Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 97. Jesus, because he died for the sins of humanity on the cross and rose from the dead, now sits at the right hand of the Father, and therefore he pours forth the Holy Spirit so that the Spirit can do his saving work.

<sup>86</sup>The Spirit does not make much of himself, rather "the Spirit's presence and work are known as he makes much of the Lord Jesus Christ." *Ibid.*, 108.

believe.”<sup>87</sup> On the basis of the atonement, the Spirit applies salvation to the elect through effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, indwelling the believer, baptism in the Spirit, sanctification, preservation and perseverance, and glorification. These actions are all a part of the Holy Spirit’s particular application of the Son’s atonement, which is ultimately all that is involved in soteriology. All believers, God’s elect, are saved by the work of the Holy Spirit, through the work of Christ, and on account of the Father’s initiative.

### **Effectual Calling**

The Holy Spirit begins to apply Christ’s atonement to the elect by effectually calling them to believe in the gospel. Effectual calling is the Spirit’s work that causes an unbeliever who is dead in his sin (1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1) to understand the true meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This call can be defined as “the Spirit’s call to sinners to hear and to believe the gospel, rendered effectual by his supernatural enlivening work, or as the Spirit’s provision of grace resulting in saving faith, rendered irresistible against all blindness, hardness, and unbelief.”<sup>88</sup> It is always issued through the proclamation of the gospel (2 Thess 2:14), but it is distinct from the general invitation of the gospel (e.g., Isa 45:22; Matt 11:28), which goes out to all people, precisely because it always results in salvation.<sup>89</sup> Effectual calling is therefore a work of the Holy Spirit that is specifically for

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<sup>87</sup>Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 44.

<sup>88</sup>Bruce A. Ware, “Effectual Calling and Grace,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 204.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, 210-11. For an explanation of the universal gospel call, see pp. 162-78 of this dissertation.

the elect.<sup>90</sup>

This call is articulated perhaps most clearly in Romans 8:28-30, although it is present in a myriad of Scriptures (Luke 14:23; John 6:44; Rom 1:7; 11:29; 1 Cor 1:9, 22-24; Eph 1:18; Phil 3:14; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:10).

Romans 8:28 states, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:30 expounds upon the idea of calling in this verse by making it clear that the called are the same ones who are predestined, justified, and glorified. Thomas Schreiner comments on the meaning of “calling” in this passage:

“Calling” (*kletos*), must be understood as effectual. It is not merely an invitation that human beings can reject, but it is a summons that overcomes human resistance and effectually persuades them to say yes to God. This definition of “calling” is evident from Rom. 8:30, for there Paul says that “those whom he called (*ekalesen*) he also justified.” That text does not say that “some” of those called were justified. It fuses the called and justified together so that those who have experienced calling have also inevitably received the blessing of justification. Now if all those who are called are also justified, then calling must be effectual and must create faith, for “all” those who are called are justified and justification cannot occur without faith (3:21-22, 28; 5:1).<sup>91</sup>

The inseparable relationship between effectual calling, predestination, justification, and the atonement is strengthened when one realizes that the Holy Spirit only effectually calls those whom the Father has given to the Son (John 6:37, 39; 17:2, 6, 9, 12, 24), and that these alone are the ones who believe and receive eternal life (John

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<sup>90</sup>Cole helpfully points out that there is little exegetical evidence for the Spirit’s role in effectual calling. There is a strong theological argument to be made, however, that the work of effectual calling is appropriately attributed to the Spirit as he is the one who works through all stages of salvation to apply that salvation. Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 215. There is good reason, therefore, to begin the description of the Holy Spirit’s application of Christ atonement in salvation with the work of effectual calling.

<sup>91</sup>Schreiner, *Romans*, 450-51.

6:40).<sup>92</sup> Only these called ones will be with Jesus forever in glory (John 17:24).<sup>93</sup>

Effectual calling is only possible because Christ, in securing the salvation of the elect in the atonement, sent the Holy Spirit to apply salvation only to those whom the Father had given him. In fulfilling this directive the Holy Spirit awakens a person's faith so that she can be united with Christ and experience the full scope and breadth of salvation.

Apart from the Spirit's work of effectual calling sinners would be unable to put their faith and trust in the gospel and the Son's accomplishment of salvation in the atonement would never come to fruition in the lives of believers.<sup>94</sup>

### **Regeneration, Conversion, and Justification**

While there are some theologians who understand effectual calling and regeneration as synonymous, they can logically, if not chronologically, be considered as two aspects of the Holy Spirit's saving work.<sup>95</sup> Regeneration is "that work of the Spirit at conversion that renews the heart and life (the inner self), thus restoring the person's intellectual, volitional, moral, emotional, and relational capacities to know, love, and serve God."<sup>96</sup> Regeneration is transformational (2 Cor 5:17), it is solely a work of God

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<sup>92</sup>Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 229.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>As Bruce states, "None can come to Christ in faith but those who are persuaded and enabled to do so by the Spirit; but all these will come, drawn by the irresistible grace of heavenly love, and none who comes is rejected." Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 164. Similarly, "Only through the Spirit can we become one with Christ and can Christ live in our hearts." Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 54.

<sup>95</sup>For examples of theologians who see regeneration and effectual calling as synonymous, see Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 106; and Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 793.

<sup>96</sup>Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 293.

(Titus 3:5), and it takes place in a person's union with Christ.<sup>97</sup> In the seminal passage in Scripture on regeneration Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of the Spirit in order to see the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-8).<sup>98</sup> Titus 3:5 also makes it clear that God regenerates believers through the Holy Spirit.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, Titus 3:6 states, "whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior," describing the Holy Spirit. The basis of the Holy Spirit's regenerating work is Jesus Christ's work as Savior, or the atonement.<sup>100</sup> The Holy Spirit only regenerates believers because Christ has secured their salvation through his death on the cross.

Regeneration always takes place simultaneously with conversion, which is "the human being's response to God's offer of salvation and approach to the human."<sup>101</sup>

Conversion is made up of repentance and faith, or turning away from sin and turning

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<sup>97</sup>"It is at the moment of regeneration that the dead sinner becomes spiritually alive, that resistance to God is changed to nonresistance, and that hatred for God is changed to love. Regeneration means that the person who was outside of Christ is now in Christ. Hence this is a radical, not just a superficial change." Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 103.

<sup>98</sup>For a defense of the view that Jesus is referring to regeneration in John 3:3-8, see Carson, *The Gospel of John*, 187-98.

<sup>99</sup>Titus 3:5 states, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." As D. Edmond Hiebert states, "This process of renewal in the believer is the work of the Holy Spirit. He alone can produce a new nature that finds active expression in an entirely new manner of life." D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 446.

<sup>100</sup>"Through Jesus Christ our Savior' states the channel through which the Spirit's renewing presence was bestowed. That bestowal was based on the finished work of Christ as Savior (John 7:38, 29; 15:26; Acts 2:33)." *Ibid.*, 446.

<sup>101</sup>Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 955.

toward God.<sup>102</sup> Although conversion is a responsible human decision in response to the gospel, it too is presented in Scripture as a work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>103</sup> This is because conversion first cannot take place without effectual calling, and second because it always takes place with regeneration. It is only God who can open blind eyes and awaken dead hearts to repent of sin and put faith in the gospel of Christ (2 Cor 4:4-6).<sup>104</sup> As Bruce Ware states, “Our regeneration and conversion, moving us to repent of sin and trust in Christ, is the work of the Spirit. The Spirit must awaken our hearts to see the beauty of Christ, fall before him, and put our hope and trust in him. God gets all the glory in our conversion. And how is Jesus glorified in this? The Spirit awakens our dead hearts and opens our blind eyes to see Jesus!”<sup>105</sup> Saving faith is a gift from God to the believer, enabling him to believe in Christ, which Christ procured in the atonement only for the elect.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>“It [conversion] involves a twofold turning: away from sin and toward the service of God.” Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 113.

<sup>103</sup>“To tell the story of the making of God’s people requires two tracks: the divine one of what God has done for us in Christ and in us by the Spirit; as well as the human one of how the Spirit is intimately involved in facilitating our very human, but nonmeritorious, responses of repentance and faith.” Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 216.

<sup>104</sup>“Paul likens the revelation of the glory of God in Christ to the creative act of God whereby the darkness of the primeval world was banished by the light. Thus the darkness of ignorance in which people are held by the god of this world is banished when, by a new creative act, God shines into their hearts the light of the gospel.” Colin Kruse, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 105.

<sup>105</sup>Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 121-22.

<sup>106</sup>There are several verses in Scripture that point in this direction. First John 5:1a states, “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” The verb translated “is born of God” (*gegennetai*) is a perfect passive indicative, indicating a past action that continues into the present. This indicates that the one who has been regenerated believes, or that faith is a result of regeneration. John 1:12-13 teaches the

Besides conversion, justification is also a result of the faith that the Holy Spirit gives the believer (Rom 3:26, 28; 5:1; Gal 2:16). It occurs in conjunction with regeneration and conversion in that, having received new life, the believer is now declared righteous in God's sight, his sin being forgiven.<sup>107</sup> Justification is also intimately related to effectual calling, as Romans 8:30 makes clear.<sup>108</sup> While justification is stressed throughout Scripture as something that Christ accomplished and as something

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same truth. Acts 13:48 bases faith upon election. John 6:65 states that people can only come to God as the Father enables them. Heb 12:2 describes Jesus as the "author," or originator, of our faith. Phil 1:29 states that it is has been given to believers to believe on Christ. Eph 2:8 indicates that the entire act of salvation, including faith, is the gift of God. Because the Holy Spirit only bestows faith upon the elect, faith must have been secured for the believer by the atonement just as all the other saving works of the Holy Spirit were secured by the atonement. See Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 395; Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 262-63; Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 143-46; and Ware, "Divine Election," 19-22. It should be noted, however, that the reality of faith as a gift of God procured in the atonement does not demand particular redemption, as many advocates of particular redemption assert. See pp. 154-56 of this dissertation.

Many evangelicals deny that faith is a gift of God for the elect, and insist that all people are capable of believing the gospel, otherwise the universal gospel call is misleading. They argue that if faith is a gift, then people cannot be held responsible for believing or not believing the gospel. These arguments fail to understand the seriousness of sin and a person's responsibility for their own sin. They also fail to recognize God's sovereignty in salvation and the biblical evidence for faith as a gift. See Roy L. Aldrich, "The Gift of God," *BibSac* 122 (1965): 248-53; Norman Geisler, *Chosen But Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2001), 188-99; René A. López, "Is Faith a Gift from God or a Human Exercise?" *BibSac* 164 (2007): 259-76; and Terry L. Miethe, "The Universal Power of the Atonement," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 76-77.

<sup>107</sup>"The gospel call invited us to trust in Christ for forgiveness of sins. Regeneration made it possible for us to respond to that invitation. In conversion we did respond, trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Now the next step in the process of applying redemption is that God must respond to our faith and do what he promised, that is, actually declare our sins to be forgiven. This must be a *legal declaration* concerning our relationship to God's laws, stating that we are completely forgiven and no longer liable to punishment." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 722.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*, 722; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 450-51.

that is only done on the basis of Christ's atonement (Rom 3:21-30), the Holy Spirit is the one who energizes the faith by which Christians are justified. First Corinthians 6:11 makes this clear: "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."<sup>109</sup> The Spirit's work in justification is to give believers their justifying faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he does this because Christ secured their salvation in his atonement.<sup>110</sup>

### **Indwelling and Filling**

As the Holy Spirit regenerates, converts, and justifies a person, he also indwells him. Although the Holy Spirit's indwelling actually takes place at the same time as his other saving work, it is a distinct ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer (Rom 8:9, 11; 1 Cor 6:19-29; 2 Cor 5:5; Gal 4:6; 1 John 4:13).<sup>111</sup> The purpose of the Spirit's indwelling is to denote the Holy Spirit's abiding presence with the believer. The Spirit's indwelling is not necessarily experiential, but is meant to result in the filling of the Holy Spirit, and therefore in sanctification.<sup>112</sup> The indwelling of the Spirit in this

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<sup>109</sup>While the NASB here has "in the Spirit of our God," it is possible that the preposition "in" (*en*) could be better translated as "by." This would indicate that the Spirit is also the agent of justification, and would create an even stronger relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and justification. See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 455.

<sup>110</sup>"Since we are justified by faith, the fact that faith is a gift of the Spirit, as was shown above, clearly links this blessing with the Third person of the Trinity. . . . Our justification, therefore, is inseparable from the work of the Holy Spirit." Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 30.

<sup>111</sup>Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 155.

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, 155-56. See also Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 4,

present age is a result of Christ's atonement. John 7:39 makes this clear when it states, "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (cf. John 14:17; 16:7).<sup>113</sup> It is only as a result of Christ's glorification in the atonement and the resurrection that the Holy Spirit now indwells believers.<sup>114</sup> The Spirit's indwelling, just like effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, and justification, is based upon Christ's particular intention in the atonement for the elect.

The Holy Spirit's filling the believer is a result of his indwelling the believer.<sup>115</sup> Being filled with the Spirit does not take place once and for all, but is something that can and should be repeated.<sup>116</sup> There are several references to believers being filled with the Spirit throughout the book of Acts (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 6:3; 7:55; 11:24;

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*Pneumatology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 122-24.

<sup>113</sup>Old Testament saints were not indwelt by the Spirit, because the Spirit does this work only in the New Testament age. James Hamilton summarizes the teaching of John 7:37-39 concerning the Spirit's indwelling. "First, the Old Testament promises that in the last days a Spirit-anointed Messiah will come, and also that in the last days the people of God will receive the Spirit. Second, John argues that Jesus is the Spirit-anointed Messiah who ushers in the last days. Third, John adds to the Old Testament expectation of the reception of the Spirit that Jesus must be glorified before believers receive the Spirit. Therefore, believers who lived prior to the glorification of Jesus were not indwelt by the Spirit." James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: B&H, 2006), 120.

<sup>114</sup>Carson, *Gospel of John*, 329.

<sup>115</sup>Certain Old Testament saints were periodically filled by the Holy Spirit for specific purposes (Gen 41:38; Exod 28:3; 31:3; 35:30-35; Num 11:17, 25; 27:18; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 1 Sam 10:9-10; 16:13; Dan 4:8; 5:11-14; 6:3), but all New Testament believers are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit and then continually filled by the Holy Spirit on the basis of that indwelling. See Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 155-56.

<sup>116</sup>Filling should therefore be distinguished from indwelling and baptism in the Spirit, which are one-time events. *Ibid.*, 189.

13:9, 52). Paul also commands believers to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18, at least implying that some believers are not filled with the Holy Spirit at points in their lives.<sup>117</sup> The Holy Spirit's filling is "the source of all vital experience in the life of the Christian," and is therefore essential for the believer's sanctification and his empowerment for witness and service.<sup>118</sup> Being filled with the Spirit presupposes knowledge of Christ and his work, as evidence of this filling is seen within the church in "making melody to the Lord," "giving thanks for all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and being subject to one another "in the fear of Christ" (Eph 5:18-21). The Holy Spirit's filling for empowerment also requires knowledge of the gospel, as it often results in the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 13:9-10).<sup>119</sup> As a result of the Spirit's indwelling and as a part of the Spirit's work of sanctification, being filled with the Spirit is also a result of Christ's particular intentions in the atonement.

### **Baptism into the Body of Christ**

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is concurrent with all of the other activities of the Spirit at the moment of salvation. This assertion is disputed within evangelicalism, though, due to the different ways that people interpret their experience in light of biblical

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<sup>117</sup>James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 2:175-76. There are some who see the command in Eph 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit as referring to the congregation and not to the individual. Therefore this passage is not about sanctification or empowerment, but rather about ecclesiology. See Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 243-44; and Andreas J. Köstenberger, "What Does It Mean to Be Filled with the Holy Spirit? A Biblical Investigation." *JETS* 40 (1997): 233-34.

<sup>118</sup>Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 189.

<sup>119</sup>Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 218.

concepts.<sup>120</sup> When Holy Spirit baptism is seen in light of New Testament teaching, however, it seems to be limited to one particular experience, which every believer experiences at the moment of his or her salvation. There are seven verses in the New Testament that mention Spirit baptism. Five of these verses (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5) refer to a time in the future when Jesus is going to baptize with the Holy Spirit, with Acts 1:5 indicating a time only a few days away.<sup>121</sup> In Acts 11:16, Peter uses the phrase “baptized with the Holy Spirit” to explain Cornelius’ conversion, referring to something that had already taken place.<sup>122</sup> The one event that fits the reference of all these verses is clearly Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples (Acts 2:4).<sup>123</sup> Acts 2:33 indicates that Jesus received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father as a result of his exaltation, and therefore he “poured out” the Holy Spirit upon the church at Pentecost.<sup>124</sup> The seventh reference is 1 Corinthians 12:13, where Paul refers to a past event that all of his readers, who were believers, had experienced.<sup>125</sup> Paul is referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit that marks every

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<sup>120</sup>For example, see the five different perspectives on Spirit baptism in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004) or the work on Spirit baptism by Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

<sup>121</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit as the Promise of the Father: A Reformed Perspective,” in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views*, ed. Chad Owen Brand (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004), 19-20.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, 20-21. See also John R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 19-31, 38.

<sup>124</sup>See n. 85 on p. 254 of this dissertation.

<sup>125</sup>“What is immediately striking about this verse is the emphatic repetition of the word ‘all’ (‘all baptized’, ‘all . . . made to drink’) and the similarly emphatic repetition

believer's entry into the body of Christ.<sup>126</sup> At the time of their conversion, believers subjectively experience what objectively took place once and for all at Pentecost due to the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ: the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>127</sup>

Jesus Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit in order to bring them into his body,<sup>128</sup> and the Holy Spirit, as he is poured out on believers, brings believers into Christ's body by uniting them with Christ.<sup>129</sup> Union with Christ is an over-arching soteriological concept. It is the concept under which John Calvin discusses the whole of his soteriology, and he describes it as the work of the Holy Spirit based upon what Christ has accomplished on the cross.<sup>130</sup> Union with Christ denotes the truth that all believers

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of the word 'one' ('by one Spirit', 'into one body', 'of one Spirit') with which it is deliberately contrasted. This is in keeping with the context. What the apostle is doing in 1 Corinthians 12 is to emphasize at the beginning of the chapter the *unity* of the Spirit, the giver of the spiritual gifts, before he goes on in the second half of the chapter to unfold the *diversity* of the gifts themselves. He is underlining our common experience as Christian believers of the Holy Spirit." Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 39, emphasis the author's.

<sup>126</sup>“It is safe to surmise that Christ is the unnamed baptizer. The Spirit is the element. Incorporation into the body of the risen Christ is the goal.” Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 214.

<sup>127</sup>“The Lord Jesus, mediator of the new covenant and the bestower of its blessings, gives both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who enter his covenant.” Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 43.

<sup>128</sup>This understanding implies a consistent rendering of the preposition *en* in the seven previously noted verses as “in” or “with,” not “by.” See Kaiser, “A Reformed Perspective,” 21; and Stott, *Baptism and Fullness*, 38-43.

<sup>129</sup>“Baptism with or in the Spirit is about entry into the new life and the new community of Christ's body. If so, Paul is arguing that the risen Christ unites members to himself through the agency of the Spirit [in 1 Cor 12:13].” Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 217.

<sup>130</sup>“To sum up, the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself.” John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC, vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 3.1.1. See also

are in Christ (John 15:4; 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 5:17; 12:2; Gal 3:28; Eph 1:4; Phil 3:9; 1 Thess 4:16; 1 John 4:13) and that Christ is in all believers (Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 13:5; Eph 3:17; Gal 2:20; Col 1:27). As John Murray remarks, “We need to appreciate far more than we have been wont to the close interdependence of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the operations of saving grace. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord and Christ is the Lord of the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Pet 1:11). Christ dwells in us if his Spirit dwells in us, and he dwells in us by the Spirit”<sup>131</sup> It is only through being united with Christ by the Holy Spirit that believers can then experience regeneration, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification.<sup>132</sup> As with all of these other saving works, baptism in the Holy Spirit and one’s subsequent union with Christ is only possible because of Christ’s work in securing the salvation of the elect in his atonement.

### **Sanctification, Preservation, and Perseverance**

Sanctification only takes place as the Holy Spirit unites believers with Christ.

It is “that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our reasonable participation, by which he delivers us from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the

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Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 54-67. For an explanation of the importance of Calvin’s concept of union with Christ in his understanding of the atonement and its application, see Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin*, Studies in Biblical Literature (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

<sup>131</sup>Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 166.

<sup>132</sup>“Union with Christ is, in fact, the foundation of all the blessings of salvation. Justification, sanctification, adoption, and glorification are all received through our being united to Christ. This is the basis of what Paul says in Ephesians 1:3-14 when he outlines salvation from election to heaven.” Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 80. See also

image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to him.”<sup>133</sup> There are two aspects to sanctification, definite (or positional) and progressive. Definite sanctification takes place at the moment of a believer’s salvation (simultaneously with regeneration, justification, etc.), and is the believer’s “being set aside for God’s possession and declared holy by faith in Christ’s justifying work.”<sup>134</sup> It is seen in 1 Corinthians 1:2, where Paul addresses believers in Corinth as those who were already sanctified in Christ Jesus, and in 1 Corinthians 6:11, where Paul describes sanctification as a completed act akin to justification, done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.<sup>135</sup>

It is in progressive sanctification that the Holy Spirit makes the redemption that Christ secured on the cross for the elect effective in their lives.<sup>136</sup> He does this by conforming believers to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).<sup>137</sup> Although sanctification is in Christ, it is a work that Scripture repeatedly attributes to the Holy Spirit. God chose believers for salvation “through the sanctification of the Spirit” (2 Thess 2:13). Believers

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Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 141-42.

<sup>133</sup>Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 192.

<sup>134</sup>Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 407.

<sup>135</sup>Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 203.

<sup>136</sup>“The role of God the Son, Jesus Christ, in sanctification is, first, that he *earned* our sanctification for us. . . . But it is specifically God the Holy Spirit who works within us to change us and sanctify us, giving us greater holiness of life.” Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 753-54, emphasis the author’s.

<sup>137</sup>“The Holy Spirit works in regeneration in order to unite us to Christ through faith. The goal of his activity is transformation into the likeness of Christ (Rom 8:29). In a word, for the New Testament, sanctification, or holiness, is Christlikeness or, as various theologians throughout the history of the church have described it, ‘Christiformity.’ Set within the context of justification it is the growth of the seed of regeneration and the outworking of union with Jesus Christ.” Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 139.

only become acceptable to God through the sanctification of the Spirit (Rom 15:16).<sup>138</sup> In order to be holy, believers are commanded to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25). The Spirit continually works to produce his fruit, the characteristics of Christ, in those whom he indwells and who walk in him (Gal 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit continually fills believers in order that they might be equipped for service (Eph 5:18), giving them spiritual gifts to accomplish the tasks involved with ministering to others (1 Cor 12-14). The Spirit is the one who leads believers to live for God and to grow in righteousness (Phil 2:12-13).<sup>139</sup> Most often, the Spirit sanctifies believers through Scripture, as he inspired the Scriptures for the salvation and edification of believers (2 Tim 3:16-17), and he presently illuminates Scripture to believers so that they can understand and apply them to their contemporary situation (1 Cor 2:10-16).<sup>140</sup> As an outgrowth of redemption and regeneration, the Holy Spirit's sanctifying work is only possible because Christ secured the salvation of the elect in the atonement.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup>“The acceptability of the Gentiles to God comes not only from their reception of the gospel of Christ but also from the ministry of the Holy Spirit that sets them apart to God as the people of his possession (cf. 1 Cor 6:11). This initial sanctification makes possible the progressive spiritual development that spans the two great foci of justification and final redemption (1 Cor 1:30). This setting apart by the Spirit is a natural consequence of the new birth by the Spirit and is closely connected with it.” Everett F. Harrison, *Romans*, in vol. 10 of *EBC*, ed. Frank R. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 156.

<sup>139</sup>“The ‘doing of salvation’ for Paul therefore lies in the ‘willing,’ which means the radical transformation of life by the Spirit.” Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 238.

<sup>140</sup>The Holy Spirit's work of inspiring and illuminating Scripture is also inseparably related to the person and work of Jesus Christ, for Jesus Christ is the Word (John 1:1) whose person and work is the central message of Scripture. See Cole, *He Who Gives Life*, 259-77.

<sup>141</sup>As John Murray states, “It is as the Spirit of Christ and as the Spirit of him who raised up Christ from the dead that the Holy Spirit sanctifies. We may not think of

As the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers, leading them to grow in righteousness, he also preserves them in faith, causing them to persevere and endure in Christ until the end of their lives.<sup>142</sup> The Spirit does this in a number of ways.<sup>143</sup> First, the Holy Spirit seals all believers unto the day of redemption, guaranteeing their inheritance with Christ (Eph 1:13; 4:30).<sup>144</sup> The Holy Spirit is also the believer's *arrabon* (pledge) of future blessing with God (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14).<sup>145</sup> As Wayne Grudem states, "When God gave us the Holy Spirit within, he committed himself to give all the future blessing of eternal life and a great reward in heaven with him. . . . All who have the Holy Spirit within them, all who are truly born again, have God's unchanging promise and guarantee

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the Spirit as operative in us apart from the risen and glorified Christ. The sanctifying process is not only dependent upon the death and resurrection of Christ in its initiation; it is also dependent upon the death and resurrection of Christ in its continuance. It is by the efficacy and virtue which proceed from the exalted Lord that sanctification is carried on, and such virtue belongs to the exalted Lord by reason of his death and resurrection. It is by the Spirit that this virtue is communicated." Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 147-48.

<sup>142</sup>“The doctrine of perseverance is the doctrine that believers persevere; it cannot be too strongly stressed that it is the *perseverance* of the saints. And that means that the saints, those united to Christ by the effectual call of the Father and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, will persevere unto the end.” Ibid., 154, emphasis the author's.

<sup>143</sup>“The Spirit works in a multitude of ways to keep true believers in the path of faith, godliness, and security.” Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 448.

<sup>144</sup>“In the light of New Testament teaching, to be sealed with the Spirit means to be eternally secure. Just as no one can ever snatch us out of the hand of Christ or out of the hand of the Father, so no one can ever break the seal of the Spirit.” Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 241.

<sup>145</sup>“The Spirit is an *arrabon* (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14), a Semitic loan-word for a pledge or down-payment, a guarantee that the final installment of salvation and glory is assured. In this sense his indwelling is provisional, but belongs to the same order of reality as the consummation.” Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, 177.

that the inheritance of eternal life in heaven will certainly be theirs.”<sup>146</sup>

Besides sealing believers, the Holy Spirit also causes believers to persevere by having them consciously reflect on Christ’s atoning work on the cross. The Bible uses the sacrificial atonement of Christ as an example to the believer of how she ought to live the Christian life. In Ephesians 5:2 Paul instructs believers to walk in love just as Christ loved them, and the way that Christ loved them was by giving himself up to God on the cross.<sup>147</sup> Hebrews 12:1-3 encourages believers to persevere, to “run the race,” by setting their eyes upon Jesus. What is pointed out about Jesus in these verses, however, is the way in which he endured the cross and the hostility of sinners against him.<sup>148</sup> First Peter 2:21-25 is another passage where the Bible instructs believers to endure in their walk with God by contemplating the way in which Christ suffered his atoning death.<sup>149</sup> Christ’s atonement not only secured the salvation of the elect, but it serves as a concrete example of how believers should love and obey God.

A final way the Holy Spirit causes believers to persevere is by assuring them of their right standing before God in Christ. The Holy Spirit does this as believers live in

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<sup>146</sup>Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 791.

<sup>147</sup>“The model of love is Christ himself. It is because he laid down his life for us that we are to love others to the point of sacrifice.” A. Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 66.

<sup>148</sup>Jesus did this as the “perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2), which indicates that just as he gives the elect faith (he is also the ‘author’ of faith, v. 2), he brings it to completion. Part of the way that he does this is by serving as the believer’s example of perseverance in his atoning death. See Leon Morris, *Hebrews*, in vol. 12 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 134.

<sup>149</sup>Edwin A. Blum, *1 Peter*, in vol. 12 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 235.

him, resisting the flesh, obeying God, and advancing in righteousness (Rom 8:5-11).<sup>150</sup> He also does this by bearing witness with believers that they are the children of God. Romans 8:16 states that “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God.” This is a subjective and internal witness of the Spirit whereby he convinces believers of their right standing before God, that God is their Father.<sup>151</sup> The Holy Spirit continually works to make certain that all whom Christ secured salvation for on the cross are never lost, and that they are brought to glorification (cf. Rom 8:28-30).

### **Glorification**

The present life of the Christian in salvation is but a foretaste of the glory to come. Those who are called, regenerated, converted, justified, indwelt, filled, baptized in the Spirit, united to Christ, sanctified, adopted, and preserved through perseverance will one day be glorified, as the unbreakable chain of Romans 8:28-30 indicates. This is the hope of all Christians (Rom 5:2; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Pet 5:4). The Holy Spirit guarantees the future glorification of all believers. He ensures that Jesus will never lose any of the ones whom the Father has given to him (John 6:37-40; 10:28-29). As Bruce Demarest states, “Our pilgrimage will issue in a marvelous consummation in which the vestiges of the old self are eradicated and the new self is perfectly realized. Glorification is the bringing to a triumphant conclusion our redemption in Christ. It is the final realization of our

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<sup>150</sup>See D. A. Carson, “Reflections on Assurance,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 258-59.

<sup>151</sup>Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Witness of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 49-57.

unfolding salvation in Christ (Rom 13:11: 1 Pet 1:5).”<sup>152</sup>

One of the primary aspects of believers’ glorification is their resurrection. Believers only experience the resurrection because of what Christ did on the cross.<sup>153</sup> First Corinthians 15:21-22 describes how Christ reversed the order of death that Adam instituted after he sinned.<sup>154</sup> The resurrection and transformation of believers’ bodies is a consequence of Christ’s exaltation (1 Cor 15:35-50).<sup>155</sup> First Corinthians 15:51 makes it clear that all who are in Christ will be changed, meaning that they will receive a new body.<sup>156</sup> All who receive a new body in Christ, however, do so in the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers will be raised by the Spirit (Rom 8:11) and will receive a Spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44), after the likeness of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2).<sup>157</sup> Even now, the Holy Spirit causes believers to long for their resurrection bodies (Rom 8:23).

Glorification is a realization of all of the blessings of salvation that were accomplished once and for all in the atonement. All who have the Spirit and who are therefore in Christ can look forward to the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23), and to

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<sup>152</sup>Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 468.

<sup>153</sup>For an explanation of the relationship between Christ’s atonement and the resurrection of all people, see pp. 217-20 of this dissertation.

<sup>154</sup>“The man who brought death is Adam, and the one who will bring about the resurrection of the dead is Christ.” W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 285.

<sup>155</sup>Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 475.

<sup>156</sup>Leon Morris, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 227-28.

<sup>157</sup>A spiritual body is one that is “consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit . . . completely subject to the will of the Holy Spirit and responsive to the Holy Spirit’s guidance.” Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 832.

their inheritance that will never fade away or perish (1 Pet 1:3-5). The glorification of the believer includes her ultimate vindication before God at the last judgment, the future manifestation of an already accomplished justification (Rom 5:9-10). It includes a fullness of knowledge that comes with seeing Christ face to face (1 Cor 13:12; 1 John 3:2). Glorified believers will reign with Christ in his eternal kingdom (1 Cor 6:2; Rev 22:3). They will eternally worship God the Father and the Lamb of God (Rev 21:22; 22:3). In glorification the believer is spiritually and morally perfected; freed from sin, both in experience and in nature (Col 1:11; 1 Thess 3:13; Jude 24). Ultimately, all believers will be fully conformed to the image of their Savior, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29).<sup>158</sup> Being glorified, all believers will dwell together with God in the new heavens and new earth forever (John 14:2-3; Rev 3:12).<sup>159</sup> Glorification is the culmination of the Father's particular, salvific intentions for the elect, in which the Spirit saves all whom the Son sent him to save on the basis of his atonement.<sup>160</sup>

### Conclusion

The particular intention of the atonement is to secure the salvation of the elect. This intention can be seen from what the Bible states about God's sovereignty throughout

<sup>158</sup>Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 473-74; and Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1010-11.

<sup>159</sup>For the corporate dimension of glorification, see Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 479; and Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 174-78.

<sup>160</sup>“God's goal for his people involves a perfecting of the redemption begun in those who believe (Heb 11:40; 12:23). We saw in chap. 10 that Christians in the present age attain various degrees of spiritual maturity, but not absolute moral and spiritual perfection (Eph 4:13; Phil 3:15; Col 1:28). The claims of some relative to attaining a high state of perfection in this life reflect a low view of sin. But in the age-to-come the varying degrees of maturity Christians now possess will give way to the fullness of perfection in Christ.” Demarest, *Cross and Salvation*, 472-73.

salvation, God's special love for the elect, and the unity of the Father and the Son in purposing to save the elect. The Bible clearly presents both the Father's love and the Son's love toward the elect as unique and particular, resulting in their salvation. Out of this particular love the Father unconditionally elects certain people to be saved before the foundation of the world, based only on his sovereign pleasure. The Father's act of unconditional election is absolutely necessary if anyone is to be saved, because all people are unable to do anything to save themselves. The Father sent the Son to accomplish salvation through his atonement for the sins of the world. In doing so, the Father intended for the Son to not only accomplish salvation by paying for all sin, but to secure the salvation of the elect. The Son did this in his atonement because his saving will is completely in line with the Father's saving will.

The Son secured the salvation of the elect by sending forth the Holy Spirit to apply the salvific benefits of the atonement only to the elect. The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, only saves those whom Christ intends for him to save, and those are the same people whom the Father elected. The Holy Spirit applies Christ's atonement through effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, indwelling the believer, baptism in the Spirit, sanctification, preservation and perseverance, and glorification. These benefits of the atonement were intended only for the elect, and the elect are the only ones who experience them. Everything related to salvation has been planned by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied (or will be applied) by the Spirit.

This particular intention of the atonement makes up the particular aspect of the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement. Christ's payment for sin did not only accomplish God's general intentions in the atonement, but it also accomplished

God's particular intentions. The Holy Spirit not only goes forth to accomplish God's general intentions in the atonement, but he also goes forth to save the elect. Unlimited atonement is unable to account for the particular intention of the atonement because it denies that Christ's atonement had any special reference for the elect. Particular redemption is able to account for God's salvific intentions in the atonement, but it is unable to account for the general intentions of the atonement. The atonement was not exclusively general or exclusively particular; it was both. God's plan, as it is described in the overarching biblical narrative, not only encompasses the elect, but it also encompasses all of his creation.<sup>161</sup> Only the multi-intentioned view is able to account for both God's general and particular intentions for the atonement. These intentions are not contradictory, but are apart of God's one plan to fully display his glory before all that he has created.

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<sup>161</sup>For a defense of basing one's view of the extent of the atonement on God's plan for all of his creation as it is described in the biblical narrative, see David P. Nelson, "The Design, Nature, and Extent of the Atonement," in *A Southern Baptist Dialogue: Calvinism*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen and Brad J. Waggoner (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 118-20.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

#### **The Theological Validity of the Multi-Intentioned View**

This dissertation has attempted to demonstrate the theological validity of the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement. It has done so by establishing the coherence, comprehensiveness, consistency, and adequacy of the multi-intentioned view.<sup>1</sup> The multi-intentioned view holds that God the Father, in sending his Son to die on the cross, had both particular and general intentions for the atonement. In accordance with the Father's will, the Son then paid for the sin of all people in the atonement in order to fulfill these multiple intentions. Based upon the Son's atoning death on the cross, the Spirit then works to apply the atonement in both particular and in general ways. By recognizing multiple intentions in the atonement, the multi-intentioned view makes better sense of Scripture than either particular redemption or unlimited atonement, which only recognize one intention in the atonement.

Chapters 3-5 established the coherency of the multi-intentioned view by explaining how the view accurately portrays the Bible's teaching on the extent of the atonement. Chapter 3 laid the foundation for the multi-intentioned view by

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<sup>1</sup>These four criteria help ascertain how accurate a theological assertion is in light of the Bible's teaching. They also form the basis for this dissertation's methodology of research. See pp. 13-18 of this dissertation. See also Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 310-11.

demonstrating the biblical and theological basis for understanding the atonement as a penal substitutionary payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect. All of the Scriptures that express this truth were examined and explained. Isaiah 53:4-6; John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:46-47; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 18-21; 1 Timothy 2:4-6, 4:10; Titus 2:11; Hebrews 2:9; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2; and 4:14 were all found to teach that Christ died for the sins of all people. Interpretations of these verses that deny this truth were found to be wanting, either for linguistic, contextual, or theological reasons. These verses teach that Christ's atoning death on the cross was an objective sacrifice for all sin. Christ suffered for the sins of all people, he reconciled all people, he redeemed all people, and he propitiated the wrath of God against all people. This does not mean, however, that all people are saved. The Bible differentiates between the objective nature of Christ's atonement for all people and the subjective appropriation of Christ's atonement by those who believe. It is only the latter group of people, the elect, who experience salvation on the basis of Christ's atonement and by the Holy Spirit's particular saving work in their lives.

The Bible teaches that Christ's general payment for the sin of all people was not for the intention of securing the salvation of all people, but that it was for different intentions. Chapter 4 established the biblical and theological basis for the general intentions of the atonement. The general intentions of the atonement were to make the universal gospel call possible, to make common grace (and not only salvific grace) possible, to provide additional condemnation to those who reject the gospel, to serve as the supreme revelation of God's character, and to make Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin possible. The Scriptures make it clear that each one of these intentions is

accomplished only on the basis of the atonement. Furthermore, chapter 4 established that each one of these intentions is only accomplished on the basis of an atonement that paid for all sin, strengthening the findings of chapter 3.

The Bible not only teaches that God's general intentions are accomplished through the atonement, however, but it also teaches that God's particular, saving intentions for the elect are accomplished through the atonement. Chapter 5 established the biblical and theological basis for the particular intention of the atonement, which was the securing of the salvation of the elect. That the atonement actually secured the salvation of the elect is seen in what the Bible teaches about individual election to salvation, God's sovereignty throughout salvation, the special love that God has only for the elect, and the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation. The way that Christ secured the salvation of the elect was by sending the Spirit to only apply salvation to the elect. This truth is seen in how the Bible consistently presents every saving work of the Spirit, from effectual calling through glorification, as done only on the basis of Christ's atonement. The multi-intentioned view coheres with Scripture in recognizing Christ's payment for the sin of all people as well as the general and particular intentions behind this payment for sin.

Chapters 3-5 also established the comprehensiveness of the multi-intentioned view by demonstrating how it takes into account everything that the Bible teaches about the extent of the atonement. Advocates of particular redemption and unlimited atonement both typically focus on one set of verses that seems to support their position

and then attempt to make the other set of verses fit their view.<sup>2</sup> Those who hold to particular redemption appeal to the verses that seem to restrict Christ's atonement to the elect (e.g., Matt 1:21; John 6:37-40; 10:11, 15; Acts 20:28; Rom 8:31-39; 2 Cor 5:15; Eph 5:25; and Titus 2:14) while supporters of unlimited atonement emphasize the verses of Scripture that seem to present an unlimited scope to Christ's atonement (e.g., Isa 53:6; John 3:16; Rom 5:6-8; 2 Cor 5:14-15, 19; 1 Tim 2:4-6; 4:10; 2 Pet 2:1; 3:9; 1 John 2:2; and 4:14).<sup>3</sup> The multi-intentioned view, on the other hand, attempts to give equal weight to both sets of passages. According to the multi-intentioned view, not only is the atonement seen to be a general payment for all sin with general intentions for the elect and the nonelect (chaps. 3-4), but it is also seen to have special reference to elect and to actually secure their salvation (chap. 5). In this way, the multi-intentioned view is comprehensive because it is able to account for all of what the Bible says about the extent of the atonement.

In addition to establishing the coherency and the comprehensiveness of the multi-intentioned view, chapters 3-5 also established its consistency. The multi-

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<sup>2</sup>This practice is not necessarily wrong. One of the cardinal rules of evangelical hermeneutics is the "analogy of faith" or the "analogy of Scripture." That is, Scripture is consistent and therefore doctrines fit with other doctrines. One ambiguous verse or obscure passage of Scripture cannot be allowed to overturn a clear teaching of Scripture. See Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 11. This rule, however, is not a license to accept unlikely interpretations of texts because they fit better with one's theological system. When it comes to the extent of the atonement, it seems that many theologians (on both sides of the issue) are so convinced of the truth of their view that they accept unlikely or even implausible interpretations of certain passages of Scripture for the sake of theological consistency (as has been demonstrated throughout this dissertation). The multi-intentioned view is an attempt to give both set of passages equal weight while maintaining theological consistency. If successful, this would make the multi-intentioned view more comprehensive than the alternative views, and therefore would make it a more attractive theological option. See also pp.14-15 of this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup>See pp. 1-4 of this dissertation for examples of this practice.

intentioned view is first of all internally consistent. The particular and general intentions of God in the atonement do not contradict one another because they are both a part of God's one plan for his creation. God's plan concerns not only the elect, but also the nonelect, angels and demons, and the creation as a whole. The Bible presents the atonement as accomplishing different things for different people. It is only when people understand the atonement as having one intention that inconsistency between God's universal and general purposes is present.

The multi-intentioned view is also externally consistent, in that it is consistent with other biblical doctrines. This is especially seen in the areas of Christology, soteriology, theology proper, trinitarian theology, and eschatology. The multi-intentioned view fits with the nature of the atonement as primarily penal substitution, but also recognizes the *Christus Victor* and revelatory aspects of the atonement. The multi-intentioned view coheres with the Bible's teaching about salvation, as it recognizes that God has made it possible for all people, in principle, to have an opportunity to be saved, but that not all people will be saved. The view is fully consistent with the universal gospel call, the difference between salvific and common grace, unconditional election, and effectual calling. The unity and diversity of the Trinity is preserved in the multi-intentioned view, as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit all work together in their distinct ways to fulfill their general and particular intentions for creation. The multi-intentioned view fits with the unity of Christ's work as prophet, priest, and king, because the atonement accomplished God's prophetic, priestly, and kingly intentions. God's character is fully consistent with the multi-intentioned view, as all the aspects of God's love, justice, wisdom, and grace are present. Finally, the multi-

intentioned view is consistent with biblical eschatology, as it recognizes God's final intentions for all facets of his creation.

This dissertation has not only established the coherence, comprehensiveness, and consistency of the multi-intentioned view, but it has also established its adequacy. The multi-intentioned view is a better description of what the Bible teaches about the extent of the atonement than other competing views. Chapter 2 provided an overview of the history of the doctrine of the extent of the atonement. The primary positions throughout church history have been particular redemption and unlimited atonement. While explanations of particular redemption have been relatively similar throughout church history, explanations of unlimited atonement have varied according to other theological commitments, such as a Calvinist or Arminian soteriology. Theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, John Davenant, Jacob Arminius, Moïse Amyraut, Richard Baxter, John Wesley, and Lewis Sperry Chafer have all offered their own variations of unlimited atonement. Evangelicals continue to disagree over the extent of the atonement, continuing a doctrinal debate that began in Augustine's time and that has been a significant issue within the church since the ninth century. The multi-intentioned view hopes to advance the debate by demonstrating how the extent of the atonement is both universal and particular at the same time, while avoiding some of the inconsistencies that have plagued other similar attempts.

Chapters 3-5 established how the multi-intentioned view was more coherent and comprehensive concerning the Bible's teaching on the extent of the atonement than either particular redemption or unlimited atonement. The multi-intentioned view asserts that Christ paid for the sins of all people, and that the atonement has general intentions

for people beyond the elect. In this way the multi-intentioned view agrees with unlimited atonement and disagrees with particular redemption. The multi-intentioned view also asserts, however, that Christ secured the salvation of the elect in the atonement, and that the atonement has particular intentions for the elect alone. In this way the multi-intentioned view agrees with particular redemption but disagrees with unlimited atonement. Therefore the multi-intentioned view is able to recognize the truth of both particular redemption and unlimited atonement in one coherent view. The multi-intentioned view is able to emphasize all of what the Bible teaches about the extent of the atonement in a way that competing views are not. This is why the multi-intentioned view is an adequate theological model of the extent of the atonement. The coherency, comprehensiveness, consistency, and adequacy of the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement ensure that the view is a viable biblical and theological alternative to both particular redemption and unlimited atonement.

### **The Practicality of the Multi-Intentioned View**

Theological doctrines should not only be biblically coherent, consistent, comprehensive, and adequate, but they should also be practical.<sup>4</sup> Paul told Timothy that the purpose of doctrinal instruction is love, a good conscience, and sincere faith (1 Tim 1:5). Paul also states that the Scriptures are profitable for all right thinking and behavior (2 Tim 3:16-17). If the multi-intentioned view makes better sense of biblical, Christian practices than its alternatives, then this helps to establish its theological validity, and it

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<sup>4</sup>“Application to life is a necessary part of the proper pursuit of systematic theology. Thus a doctrine under consideration is seen in terms of its practical value for living the Christian life. Nowhere in Scripture do we find doctrine studied for its own sake or in isolation from life.” Wayne E. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 23.

therefore helps to establish the findings of this dissertation. While there are several practical implications of the multi-intentioned view that could be explored,<sup>5</sup> this section will briefly examine the relationship between the multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement and the preaching of the Word. This examination is especially appropriate because preaching is at the heart of evangelical Christianity (Rom 10:14-17; Col 1:25-29),<sup>6</sup> the atonement is the ground of New Testament preaching,<sup>7</sup> and because God uses preaching to apply the accomplishments of the atonement.<sup>8</sup>

The multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement makes better sense of the biblical purposes for the preaching of the Word than either particular redemption or

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<sup>5</sup>One's view of the extent of the atonement has implications for worship, prayer, missions, evangelization, the relationship between believers and unbelievers, and how God relates to the world. The relationship between the multi-intentioned view and any of these areas could be fruitfully investigated.

<sup>6</sup>Preaching is the public "explanation and application of the Word in the assembled congregation of Christ." Peter Adam, *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1996), 61. As such, it is the primary ministry of the Word in the church.

<sup>7</sup>As John Piper states, "What God achieved in the cross of Christ is the warrant or ground of preaching. Preaching would not be valid without the cross." John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 32.

<sup>8</sup>As John Stott states, "It is by preaching that God makes past history a present reality. The cross was, and will always remain, a unique historical event of the past. And there it will remain, in the past, in the books, unless God himself makes it real and relevant to men today. It is by preaching, in which He makes his appeal to men through men, that God accomplishes this miracle." John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 53. Robert Mounce makes a similar statement. "Preaching is that timeless link between God's great redemptive Act and man's apprehension of it. It is the medium through which God contemporizes His historic Self-disclosure and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith." Robert Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 153.

unlimited atonement.<sup>9</sup> This is because God has both particular and general purposes for preaching, and these purposes correspond with his particular and general intentions for the atonement. God's particular purposes for preaching are the saving, sanctifying, and glorifying of the elect. These purposes correspond to his intention to secure the salvation of the elect in the atonement. The Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the gospel to call people to salvation (Rom 10:14-17; 1 Cor 1:21; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 1 Pet 2:22-25).<sup>10</sup> He then uses the preaching of the Word to sanctify believers (2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:2).<sup>11</sup> Finally, the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the Word to lead believers to the consummation of their salvation in glorification (Col 1:23-28).<sup>12</sup> God has purposed to save the elect through the preaching of the Word, and this is only possible because he has secured the salvation of the elect in the atonement.

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<sup>9</sup>I have defended this thesis in much more detail in Gary L. Shultz, Jr., "God's Purposes in Preaching and the Extent of the Atonement" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA, 15 November 2007). The following paragraphs are a brief summarization of that paper.

<sup>10</sup>As Bruce Demarest states, "The Spirit does not customarily accomplish his drawing work in a vacuum apart from means. Rather, by divine design he usually woos and draws sinners to the Savior through the powerful Word of the Scriptures. God ordinarily gives the internal call to salvation by means of the external call through the written or proclaimed Word." Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 232.

<sup>11</sup>The Spirit's inspiration of the Scriptures is the basis for Paul's exhortation to Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Tim 4:2). See Adam, *Speaking God's Words*, 90. As James Boice states, "'Preaching is important as a means of grace not merely because it is used of God to bring about conversions, but also because it is used for our sanctification, that is, our growth in holiness once we are born again.'" James Montgomery Boice, "The Foolishness of Preaching," in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002), 43.

<sup>12</sup>Col 1:28 states that the goal of preaching is to "present every man complete in Christ." This refers to the believer's glorification. See F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 87-88; and Curtis Vaughan, *Colossians*, in vol. 11 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 193.

God not only has particular purposes for preaching, however, but he also has general purposes for preaching. These general purposes for preaching correspond to God's general intentions in the atonement. God desires for all people to hear the good news of what he has done for humanity through Christ. This is evident from the universal gospel call that is meant for all of creation (Mark 16:15; cf. Matt 28:18-20; Luke 24:47; John 20:23; Acts 1:8). This purpose for preaching corresponds to God's purpose in the atonement to make the universal gospel call possible. The universal gospel call also results in an additional basis of condemnation for those who reject it, which again is based upon Christ's payment for the sin of all people. God also uses preaching to extend his common grace and to show forth his character to all people. The faithful preaching of God's Word demonstrates his patience in judgment, showing forth God's love and justice (2 Pet 3:9).<sup>13</sup> It also results in God's restraining of sin and evil in his creation.<sup>14</sup> Finally, preaching plays an important role in Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin, as God uses it to combat the evil of Satan and his demons (Acts 26:18; Eph 6:12-

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<sup>13</sup>God is patient in his judgment so that preaching might have an opportunity to do its work. Even preaching that never results in salvation is used by God to delay the full display of his righteous judgment against sin.

<sup>14</sup>The church is the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim 3:15) because it is the body of people who are responsible for the truth, the Word of God that is Scripture (cf. Eccl 12:10; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Heb 4:12). As the body of people responsible for the truth of God in Scripture, one of the primary ways that the church stands up for the truth is through the preaching of the Word. In standing up for the truth by preaching the Word, churches affect the world around them. They do this by living out the truth of the Word as it is preached to them, changing societies and cultures for the better. Churches also make a difference through the consistent preaching of the Word because unbelievers, who hear the Word, even when they refuse to accept the truth of the gospel, are often affected by it and acknowledge some of God's truth in their lives. See Edmund Clowney, *The Church*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 176.

17).<sup>15</sup>

That God has both general and particular purposes in preaching, and that these purposes correspond to his multiple purposes in the atonement, demonstrates the practical validity of the multi-intentioned view. The multi-intentioned view provides a better theological foundation for biblical preaching than either particular redemption or unlimited atonement. Particular redemption is able to account for the particular purposes of preaching, but is forced to see the general purposes as superfluous, or at best secondary. One concrete illustration of this is the problem that advocates of particular redemption have always had with incorporating the clear truth of the universal gospel call into their theological system.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, if unlimited atonement was the correct understanding of Scripture, then one could expect Scripture to only present general purposes for the preaching of the Word. Unlimited atonement is able to account for the Bible's general purposes of preaching, but has no grounding for the particular purposes. One concrete example of this can be seen by the dismissal of God's particular purposes in preaching by almost all of those who hold to an unlimited atonement. Preaching is

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<sup>15</sup>As people are saved through the preaching of the Word and rescued from Satan's clutches, a blow is dealt to Satan's kingdom (Acts 26:18), notching one small victory for God as he works toward the subjection of all things in heaven and in earth (1 Cor 15:28), which will take place when all things are reconciled to him (Col 1:20; Phil 2:9-11). The spoken Word of God is also the offensive weapon of the believer that is used in the power of the Holy Spirit to fight Satan and his demons (Eph 6:17). See Bruce, *Epistles to the Colossians*, 409-10; and P. T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 481-82.

<sup>16</sup>For evidence of this, see the discussion of several of the Reformers and how they attempted to reconcile particular redemption with the universal gospel call in G. Michael Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus (1536-1675)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 1997), 41-123, 224-44. See also pp. 162-78 of this dissertation.

understood as presenting the opportunity for one to be saved or sanctified, not actually accomplishing salvation or sanctification.<sup>17</sup> The multi-intentioned view, however, is able to account for both the particular and the general purposes of preaching because it recognizes multiple intentions in the atonement. The practicality of the multi-intentioned view as it is seen in relation to preaching helps to strengthen the findings of this dissertation concerning the multi-intentioned view's theological validity.

### Further Areas of Study

While this dissertation has attempted to offer a definitive biblical and theological explanation of the multi-intentioned view, there are still several areas of research related to the multi-intentioned view that would be beneficial. The first further area of study that would be beneficial is historical. Chapter 2 described the major explanations of the extent of the atonement throughout church history, including four-point Calvinist explanations, and their differences from the multi-intentioned view. It would be profitable, however, to do an in-depth comparison and contrast of the multi-intentioned view with all of the previous significant explanations of four-point Calvinism. This is because the multi-intentioned view is yet another attempt to reconcile a general payment for all sin with a Calvinistic soteriology. A detailed explanation of why previous attempts to do this do not completely succeed, and how the multi-intentioned view does succeed, would complement the findings of this dissertation.

Another further area of study that would complement the findings of this

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<sup>17</sup>This is seen especially in the Arminian understanding of unlimited atonement. For example, in Dave Hunt, *What Love is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God* (Bend, OR: Berean Call, 2004), 443-44; and Terry L. Miethe, "The Universal Power of the Atonement," in *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), 83-85.

dissertation and the debate over the extent of the atonement in general would be a detailed examination of the practical ramifications of one's view of the extent of the atonement. Many descriptions of both particular redemption and unlimited atonement allude to the practical implications of their view. This is particularly evident when it comes to the nature of the gospel call and evangelization, which have been at the forefront of much of the evangelical debate over the extent of the atonement.<sup>18</sup> It would be beneficial, however, to see a study outlining and comparing the practical ramifications of one's view of the extent of the atonement on issues such as evangelization, preaching, assurance of salvation, prayer, and missions. This study could be approached practically, with an examination of the correlation between Christians' beliefs on the extent of the atonement and their practice, and theologically, with an examination of how biblically sound or consistent one's practices are with one's belief on the extent of the atonement. Such a study could help avoid much of the unwarranted attacks on the opposing position concerning such issues, and it would help to clearly distinguish the practical strengths and weaknesses of each view.

There are also other areas of research in theology that would complement this dissertation. A biblical theology of atonement in general, as it relates to believers and unbelievers, would be profitable, especially from the Old Testament. A biblical theology that explicitly traces God's multiple intentions in the atonement throughout the biblical narrative would also be worthwhile. Systematically, further work on the relationship between the multi-intentioned view and the nature of the atonement, the unity of the Trinity, Christ's work as prophet, priest, and king, the attributes of God, and the purposes

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<sup>18</sup>See pp. 162-78 of this dissertation.

of the church would help to strengthen the theological validity of the multi-intentioned view. More work could also be done on issues such as the nature of the reconciliation of all things, the relationship between the atonement and God's common and salvific grace, and the relationship between the atonement and the Holy Spirit's general work in the world.

Finally, it is hoped that the findings of this dissertation will help advocates of both unlimited atonement and particular redemption to recognize the weaknesses of their own position and the strengths of the opposing view. Perhaps this may help foster unity among evangelicals and within denominations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention,<sup>19</sup> that continue to be divided over this issue. This dissertation is certainly not the final word on the subject of the extent of the atonement, and the author is under no illusion that there will be a flood of converts to the multi-intentioned view. The goal of this dissertation has simply been to present the multi-intentioned view as a valid evangelical option in the debate over the extent of the atonement. One does not have to choose between unlimited atonement and particular redemption when it comes to a position on the extent of the atonement. There is a consistent, biblical way to believe in both a general payment for all sin in the atonement and the sovereign grace of God throughout salvation, and that is to realize that God had multiple intentions for the atonement.

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<sup>19</sup>For an example of this recent debate, see the chapters on the extent of the atonement by David P. Nelson and Sam Waldron in Brad J. Waggoner, and E. Ray Clendenen, eds., *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue* (Nashville: B&H, 2008).

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## ABSTRACT

### A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DEFENSE OF A MULTI-INTENTIONED VIEW OF THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

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The purpose of this dissertation is to develop, explain, and defend, both biblically and theologically, a multi-intentioned view of the extent of the atonement. A multi-intentioned view holds that God had general intentions in the atonement that included the nonelect, and particular intentions in the atonement only for the elect. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the evangelical debate concerning the extent of the atonement, explains the need for a multi-intentioned view, and defines the multi-intentioned view.

Chapter 2 is a survey of the historically significant views on the extent of the atonement. The views of Augustine, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, Jacob Arminius, Moïse Amyraut, Richard Baxter, John Owen, and John Wesley, as well as the views of the ninth century, medieval scholasticism, and modern evangelicalism, are explained. This chapter presents the context of the debate and demonstrates the need for a multi-intentioned view.

Chapter 3 establishes the biblical and theological basis for understanding Christ's atonement as a payment for the sins of all people, elect and nonelect, by exegeting the relevant biblical passages. This biblical establishment is followed by an

explanation of why an unlimited payment for sin does not entail universalism.

Chapter 4 provides a biblical and theological explanation of God's general intentions in the atonement. The atonement made the universal gospel call possible, provided an additional basis of condemnation for those who hear the gospel and reject it, provided common grace, provided the supreme example of God's character, and facilitated Christ's cosmic triumph over all sin.

Chapter 5 provides a biblical and theological explanation of God's particular intention in the atonement: securing the salvation of the elect. This intention is evident because of God's sovereignty throughout salvation, his special love for the elect, and the unity of the Father and the Son in salvation. Christ accomplished the securing of the salvation of the elect by sending the Spirit to apply salvation to the elect on the basis of his atonement.

Chapter 6 recapitulates the findings of the dissertation, offers some practical implications, and proposes some further areas of study concerning the multi-intentioned view.

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