

For Whom Did Christ Die?

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The question is often asked, ‘Did the Lord Jesus Christ die for all men, or did He die only for a certain chosen number?’ ‘Did Christ die for all, or only for God’s elect?’

Most religious people and most preachers, teachers, and theologians assert, and assert with furious dogmatism, that whether a person is actually saved or not depends not upon what Christ has done, but upon whether that person receives Jesus as his Saviour. Such doctrine undermines the power of our Lord’s work at the cross. It asserts that Christ sought to do something that He failed to accomplish. It teaches that all Christ did at the cross was to remove obstacles to salvation and make men saveable.

Then, there are those who speak of the general, universal sufficiency, but limited efficiency, of the atonement. While Christ’s death is sufficient to save everybody, they say, it is only efficient for those who believe, making man’s act of faith and not Christ’s atonement, the effectual power of redemption, grace, and salvation.

Still others rationalise that Christ died for the Adamic sin of all men, but for the personal sins of only those who believe. All such doctrine, any doctrine that suggests in any way that there is a sense in which Christ died to redeem and save sinners who perish at last under the wrath of God, is utterly without basis in Holy Scripture. You can’t find one bit of Scripture to support it.

Every text of Holy Scripture, every chapter, every verse, every statement, every type and picture of redemption and atonement given in the Book of God, Old Testament and New, limits the atonement to a specific people. In every place where our blessed Saviour’s sin-atonement work upon the cursed tree is spoken of and explained, it is limited to a specific people, His elect, His church, and His sheep, those who are actually saved by His blood. There are no exceptions.

- Christ died for the transgressions of His people (Isaiah 53:8).
- The Lord Jesus came into this world in human flesh to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).
- The Good Shepherd laid down His life for His sheep (John 10:11).

- Christ loved the church and gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25).
- The Son of God laid hold on the seed of Abraham to save them (Hebrews 2:16).

These are plain, clear, unmistakable declarations of limited atonement, given to us in the Word of God by God the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ died with a specific people in view, a people who had been set apart by the Triune Jehovah for salvation before the foundation of the world. Christ did not merely render them saveable; but He effectually redeemed them, obtained eternal redemption for them and guaranteed that they would all be saved by God's omnipotent mercy and grace at His appointed time of love (Ezekiel 16:8).

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