

"The Atonement"

*A study to discover more of the true nature of
the cross work of the Lord Jesus Christ in its fullness and joy.*

In-Depth Studies Canada
Fall Seminar – 2005



Striving to Advance the joy and faith of others
through the teaching of the Word of God.

Introduction

Presupposition One – Scripture is God’s Word and it is truth.

Thus, the Word of God is the authority here. We must bow our thoughts, views, and opinions to the revealed will and word of God. Humility is needed. Allow the Bible to sit in judgment on your assumptions. Allow the Bible to impose its views on you, instead of imposing your views on it.

Presupposition Two – God is glorious, all-wise, sovereign, and created all things for His glory.

God, to bring glory to His name, purposed and planned a creation and a history in which He might show the exceeding riches of His grace throughout the ages. Therefore, God was not merely a spectator in the creation, the fall, the onward march of time and history of mankind. We see this in particular that day on the cross when the Lamb, purposed to be slain before the foundation of the world, was crucified and put to death (see Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27-28). This day when the “chief cornerstone” was rejected, was the day that the Lord had made (Ps. 118:22-24). The Lamb of God, for the joy set before Him, magnified the God of incredible grace and wonder in the salvation of a people who would know and experience the wonder and grace of God; and be forever to the praise of the glory of His grace!

Our Prayerful Hope is that –

- Each heart here might be ravished with the God of grace and understand more fully the nature and accomplishment of the atoning work of Christ and the so-great salvation found in Him alone.
- The truth of the atonement would cause us to see:
 - The nature and depth of the sin out of which we have been redeemed. and
 - The amazing love and power of God that accomplished our salvation.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

A Price for a People: The Meaning of Christ's Death by Tom Wells

Limited Atonement by John G. Reisinger

Definite Atonement by Gary Long

“The Atonement”

Intro – The Cross of Christ

The central theme and message of both the OT Scriptures and the NT Scriptures is the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. His atoning, or sacrificial, death on the cross is the watershed of all history (cf. Luke 24:25-27; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Corinthians 2:2). The central concern and singular purpose of the mission of the Son of God was the work of Atonement (cf. Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:11; 19:10; Matt 20:28; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 John 4:14). It is safe to say that we will understand the Word of God only to the degree that we understand the person and work of Christ. To be ignorant about the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be ignorant about salvation by grace.

The cross is the centerpiece of Paul's theology. It wasn't merely one of Paul's messages; it was **the** message! Everything He taught was derived from and related to the foundational reality that Jesus Christ died so that sinners would be reconciled to God and forgiven by God. (1 Cor. 2:2; Gal. 6:14; Rom. 3:24-26) This is the heart of the gospel; the heart of the new covenant. No cross = no good news for sinners; no salvation; no hope; no new covenant basis for us to relate to God – we would still be in our sins and we would die in our sins.

The message of the cross is the Christian's hope, confidence, assurance – our life. We marvel at the work of Christ., the God-Man who suffered in the place of sinners.

Atonement is a term used broadly to include redemption, remission (forgiveness), reconciliation, propitiation, and all else accomplished by Christ on the cross.

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Part 1 – The Need for an Atonement

Man’s sin:

- A) A Debt. Mankind owes a debt to God, who acts as a creditor.
 - God as our Creator has the right to spell out obligations. He is worthy of all our love, obedience, adoration, and worship.
 - When we fail, our debts are infinite because He is.
- B) An Expression of Enmity. Mankind is at enmity with God. He is the offended party, and Jesus Christ acts as a Mediator.
 - We are enemies and haters of God, openly defiant to His infinite majesty. We follow after our father, the devil.
 - God is the injured party. We have severed the relationship not Him. He has never violated us, nor acted wrongly towards us. God is “sorely displeased.
- C) A Crime against the Law of God. Mankind has committed a crime against God. God is our Governor and Judge, and Christ becomes a Priest and Victim.
 - We have transgressed against God’s law.
 - God is the Judge. We are judged using His holiness as the standard.

God hates sin:

“Not all the vials of judgment that have or shall be poured out upon the wicked world, nor the flaming furnace of a sinner’s conscience, nor the irreversible sentence pronounced against rebellious demons, nor the groans of the damned creatures give such a demonstration of God’s hatred of sin, as the wrath of God let loose upon His Son.” (The Attributes of God, by Stephen Charnock)

“The god which the vast majority of professing Christians love, is looked upon very much like an indulgent old man, who himself has no relish for folly, but leniently winks at the indiscretions of youth. But the Word says, ‘Thou hatest the workers of iniquity’ (Ps. 5:5). And again, ‘God is angry with the wicked every day’ (Ps. 7:11). But men refuse to believe in this God, and gnash their teeth when His hatred of sin is faithfully pressed upon their attention.” (The Attributes of God, by A.W. Pink)

Our sin (debts, enmities, and crimes) require satisfaction if we are to stand face-to-face with God. Debt requires payment. Offenses demand punishment. We are under God’s judgment and wrath.

Once God decided to save sinners, there was but one way of bringing about this purpose which would be in harmony with God's own character, the law of God, the nature of sin, and the needs of man; and this one way was the substitutionary blood atonement of the Incarnate Son of God.

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Part 2 – Atonement Accomplished

The first thing we must remember is that salvation is the work of a triune God. When we say, "The Lord saved me," we do not mean the Lord Jesus Christ saved us. We mean that the Lord God the Father saved us in electing grace; the Lord God the Son saved us by his atoning death; and the Lord God the Holy Spirit saved us by regenerating us and enabling us to believe.

Christ's death was *vicarious*. The word vicarious means "acting on behalf of or as representing another," or "something performed or suffered by one person with the results accruing to the benefit or advantage of another."

To say that Christ died a vicarious death in the place of all sinners but not all of those sinners will be saved is a contradiction in terms. (See Rom. 5:8; 1 Peter 3:18; Matt. 20:28; Isa. 53:5-6)

There are four primary words used in the NT Scriptures that show the true vicarious nature of the sufferings of Christ. When these four shades of meaning are put together, we see clearly that Christ's atonement was totally effectual in the salvation of all for whom that atonement was made. The biblical meaning of these four words, *ransom*, *substitute*, *reconciliation*, and *propitiation* must be bled of their true meaning before it is possible to believe in universal atonement. Let us examine these four words.

(a) Ransom or Redeem

The first word is *ransom* or *redeem*. (Read Mark 10:45). The Greek word is *Lutron* (loo-tron) and means "something to loose with." This word describes a person who is all "tied up in debt" and needs cash to get "free." The key truth in the word redeem is that freedom *must* follow the price being paid or there is no real ransom. (See Matt 20:28 and 1 Pet 1:18, 19). The blood of Christ did not make us merely redeemable but it actually redeemed us.

Four Greek words:

1. The first word is found in Romans 3:24. It is *apolutwsis* (*apolutron*) and means "delivering." (See also Eph. 1:7; Heb. 11:35 translates the same word differently "...*deliverance*...") These women could have been "redeemed," or delivered, but they were not willing to pay the redemption price which was to deny their faith in Christ. They choose death over redemption.

The root from which this word comes is *lutron* (*Lutron*) (Matt. 20:28; Luke 24:21; 1 Pet. 1:18,19). This word means we are delivered from the wrath of God because we have been loosed from our sins and the punishment those sins deserve. The blood of Christ is always the ransom price that is paid to deliver, or redeem us. This is why the child of God can never "come into judgment." (See John 5:24).

2. The second Greek word is agorazw (agoradzo) and it means to "go to market" or "buy." (See Mark 6:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; Rev. 5:9). This word means more than just to set free. It is setting free by paying a necessary ransom price.

3. The third Greek word is a very interesting word. It is periousios (per ee os see os) and means "to acquire, by purchase, something that is very special and valuable to you." The idea is to both buy and preserve something you dearly love. The word is translated in some English Bibles with the word *peculiar*. God Himself has purchased a people to be His own personal possession.

4. The fourth word is the same as the second word except it has an *ek* in front of it. The word *ek* means "out of" or exit. (See Gal. 3:13; Gal. 4:5). This word does not just mean purchased *at* the market, but purchased *out of* the market.

A classic illustration of the truth of redemption is found in Hosea 3:1-3.

(b) Substitute

The second word is *substitute*, and the Greek is anti (an-tee) and means for, or instead of (cf. 1 Cor. 15:3; Luke 11:11; 1 Pet. 2:22-25; 3:18; Isa. 53:5-6). All of these texts show that Christ suffered in our place as a substitute. Something happened to Him so that the same thing would not happen to us. That is the force of the statement "for us." Christ died "instead of" or "in the place of" His people. "Christ died for (instead of) us" (or in our place)(Rom. 5:8). This is what is meant when we speak of Christ's substitutionary death.

(c) Reconciliation

The third word is *reconciliation*. This is when you have enmity, hostility, and estrangement – God's wrath directed towards sinners – but brought into friendship – such close friendship that we are made members of His family! (See Rom. 5:10-11; Col. 1:20-22; Eph. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-19).

(d) Propitiation

Propitiation is a sacrifice that satisfies, or absorbs, the wrath of God against sinners and thus makes God favorable to them. (See Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 9:5 [translated "mercy-seat"]; 1 John 2:2; 4:10 for all of the places this word is used in the NT Scriptures).

(e) Expiation

Another word – EXPIATION - is the removal of our sin and guilt. (See John 1:29; 1 Peter 3:24; Hebrews 9:26; Heb. 1:3). Christ canceled our sins by His death! Praise God!

What comfort is there in an atonement that does not redeem; a propitiation that does not propitiate; and a reconciliation that does not reconcile? Contrast that to an atonement that infallibly secures the salvation of each and everyone for whom it was designed; namely "the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John 11:52).

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Part 3 – The Extent of the Atonement

Matt. 1:21 – This is the fulfillment of God’s purpose that those whom the Father elected would be saved from their sins through the Savior, Jesus Christ.

John 10:11 – Because His death was in their place and for their sin, they will go free. They are punished in Him, their substitute. At Calvary, Christ died for His sheep. There He saved them. This was His purpose. Had there been no elect, Christ would not have come. He came to redeem those His Father had given Him (John 6:37-40), and in His second coming, He will gather His elect from the four winds; from one end of heaven to the other (Matt. 24:31). To be sure, the value of Christ’s person and work is infinite. His death was therefore entirely sufficient to atone for all the sins of all men who ever lived, but it was not designed to do that. We know this because not all are saved. (see also Eph. 5:25) On the way to the cross, Jesus prayed ... read John 17:1-2, 6,9. He came on a mission to save those whom the Father had chosen – and it is with this intention that He offered Himself for sin.

(See also Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:2-3; Titus 2:13-14; Gal. 1:3-4; 1 Peter 2:24-25; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Eph. 1:14).

Heb. 9:12 (notice: “having obtained” and v. 15 – this redemption is for the called. Jesus did not attempt to save us, He obtained redemption for us. Here we see the INTENT of Christ’s death. IT was not just to die. It was certainly not just to make salvation possible for everyone equally. Christ’s very intent was to secure and accomplish the salvation of His people. He died to save His people from their sins and He finished the job! ... and sat down! He shall see the labor of His soul and be satisfied.

Rom. 8:32 – for “us all” – who is the :us all”? (Trace the us in Rom. 8 in v. 4, 5 [as opposed to the they], 15-16 “we” v. 18 “us” v. 26, v. 31, v. 34, v. 37, v. 39 and then v. 32 – us; the people of God. Things are going pretty well for “**us!**”

Paul’s argument in Rom. 8:32 - - - if He has given the greatest gift – His Son – He most certainly will give you everything that goes with it. (i.e. If I need repentance to be saved and if He died for me – He’s sure to give me repentance ... Not, I’ll give you My Son, but I won’t give you faith or endurance or glorification (see Rom. 8:28-30)). [See also 2 Peter 1:1-3; 2 Peter 3:9 ... (notice ch. 2:21-22 – “them”; 3:5 - “they”; 3:7 – “ungodly men”; 3:8 “But Beloved!”; v. 9 – “toward us ... not willing that any (i.e. of us) . Contrast with v. 7 where God is willing to have them perish!

If Christ died for each and every individual who ever lived and thus atoned for all their sins, then there are only two possible outcomes. Either (1) all men will be saved by Christ’s death or (2) Christ redeemed and reconciled and turned the wrath of God away from men who nevertheless will be lost forever. In other words, His redemption will not redeem them; His reconciliation will not reconcile them to God; and His propitiation will not turn God’s wrath away from them. Those are the only two possibilities.

All Christians believe in limited atonement. The fact there is a hell proves that statement. Everyone believes that the ultimate benefits of the atonement are limited to those who believe in Christ. The lost man does not share in the benefits of the death of Christ. The real question is NOT "Is the atonement limited," but rather the question is, "WHO does the limiting, God or man?"

C.H. Spurgeon was often accused of preaching a very 'narrow' atonement. His opponents said their atonement, or bridge to heaven, was as wide as the whole world and his was not. Spurgeon responded by saying, "I grant that my atonement, or bridge to heaven, is more narrow than yours. However, yours only goes half way across the chasm and mine goes all the way. In your scheme, the sinner's will must furnish the other half."

"Christ Jesus came into the world to **save** sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). (Not make them able to save themselves).

Successful Redemption opens for us the wonderful benefits of an accurate understanding of Christ's death. First, as we come to hold to the truths of successful redemption, we can now more properly exalt Christ. For rejoice that He was perfectly successful! Everybody that He died for will be saved! He didn't simply make us saveable, He actually saved us! Praise Him deeply for this!

Second, understand that your faith is a fruit of Christ's death. Christ secured your salvation by His death, and therefore He bought everything that was necessary to make sure it was applied to you. Therefore, Christ didn't die for you because you believe. You believe because Christ died for you.

Because of this, we can recognize the true place where your salvation is completely founded-- Christ's death, not your own act of faith. It is true that God applies the work of Christ to the elect through their faith, and apart from faith in Christ no one will be saved. But when we recognize that even our faith is a fruit of His death, we have greater security and can give Christ greater thanks. On the other hand, if we deny successful atonement, then redemption does not ultimately rest on Christ or His cross, but on our own act of faith which we generate as our own independent act.

Third, this truth gives deep consolation and comfort to believers. Our salvation has a solid rock--the death of Christ. Christ's death was successful and thus it secured our salvation. To know that my salvation does not ultimately rest upon myself, but on Christ, is great consolation and comfort. Rom. 8:32! (If Christ did the greatest thing – the supreme act of love in dying for them, He most certainly would save them – and give them faith and grant them repentance – would most certainly pray for them (John 17:9) ... i.e. the all things of the golden chain in v. 29 ff – to be justified you must be given faith!) [Look at Phil. 1:29 to see that faith in Christ is a gift; see also Eph. 2:8-9.]

Every last person for whom Christ died will enjoy its benefits. None for whom Jesus died can ever be condemned (Read Rom. 8:34) because Christ has died in their place. Justice demands their acquittal. That is why the Scripture proclaims that God is JUST to forgive our sins – because Jesus, as our substitute, paid for our sins.

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Part 4 – Problem verses

Didn't Christ die for the world? Yes. But just what does that mean? What is the normal Bible use of terms like “all” and “world”?

Acts 2:17 “all flesh” – does this include birds and animals? Or do we limit the “all”? Does the all flesh mean all people who ever lived, are living, and ever will live? What does it mean? It means some men and women, or “all kinds of people.” People from many countries and cultures – not just “Jews.”

1 Tim. 6:10 “root of all evil” – Is it not saying “all manner of” or “all kinds of” as opposed to all without exception?

John 16:13 “all truth” – omniscience? No, all the truth they needed to know. (i.e some truth).

Words like “all” or “world” are very general – limited by their usage – context. We do this all the time. “I want everyone to leave the room.” “I want all the hats up here.” “Everyone must pay \$5 for lunch.” “I love Canada.” “I love Americans.” “I love the world.” (I am not talking on an individual level at all in these contexts.)

John 12:19 [certainly not every individual who ever existed ... in fact, certainly not even every individual at that time.] If we continue to follow the Spirit's line of thought, we see in v. 20 it now speaks of Greeks seeking Jesus. (i.e. not just Jews but also the Greeks). It cannot mean every individual who ever lived without exception. The same “all” in John 6:37,39.

Read Rom. 1:8 “the whole world” – Here we have the word “world” qualified as the whole world. How does God use that phrase?

Acts 13:46-48a - to the ends of the earth – the Gentiles (lit. nations) ... when they heard they were glad. Was every individual glad? Or those appointed? See v. 48b! The nations were glad; or we could say, the world was glad! (The terms are virtually synonymous ... see Rom. 11:11 ... to the Gentiles ... every individual? See v. 12 – world = Gentiles).

John 1:29 – removes sin – not men without exception but all men without distinction – both Jew and Gentile! The sacrificial work of Christ extends beyond the borders of national Israel and reaches across all borders, all tribes, all tongues, all nations, all peoples, all times.

In talking to Nicodemus – a ruler of the Jews – who believed in salvation for racial Israel; he saw acceptance with God as being a physical son of Abraham – of Jacob. He is told by Christ, he must be born again and READ 3:15 “whoever” and v. 16 – anyone from any nation (the world) ... faith in Christ not the nationality is the issue. Immediately following this episode with Nicodemus, where does Jesus go? To the Samaritans ... read John 4:42 ... Did they mean every individual who ever lived or the world, including sinful Samaritans?

John 17:9 – Does the term world mean every individual who ever existed? Every individual then living? Or the unbelievers of the world – the non-elect world?

One thing you will see if you carefully look at the biblical use of the word world or the phrase “whole world” is: the normal use of the word is NOT every individual without exception – not even living at that time.

1 John 2:2 Now either you have to change propitiation to a propitiation that does not really propitiate (which is never done in Scripture) [propitiation – an atonement that turns God’s wrath into favour – it bears God’s wrath to its full extent – where God is fully satisfied and His wrath is removed] Or make the whole world not mean every individual which seems pretty consistent with the rest of Scripture.

2 Cor. 5:19 – same world as “them” – Compare Rom. 11:15 – parallel phrase where it refers to Gentiles (v. 11-13).

1 Tim. 2:4 – the all men is the same as in 2:1 (Are you to pray for every single individual that ever lived – i.e. those dead and in hell? Thus you are already limiting the all – all manner of men fits). Saved in v. 4 is parallel to come to the knowledge of the truth (that would be a saving knowledge – the knowledge of relationship – not just know about. When you compare with Matt. 11:25-26 and 13:10-15; the interpretation of every single individual contradicts other passages. This is a key hermeneutical principle. Scripture does not contradict Scripture.) Also Christ is Mediator – not for everyone but for His people – for those whom He ransomed (v. 6) ... the same “all”. This is all He gave His life for! Not just Jews but from all nations. See Heb. 8:6 – a Mediator for His covenant people (see Heb. 7:25 intercede for His people ... compare John 17:9). As a Priest He represents His people – and intercedes for them and sacrifices for them. See Heb. 9:11-12, 15; 10:14; 12:24.

Did Jesus redeem or ransom and free all those already in hell when He went to the cross? If so, why are they still there?

2 Peter 2:1 – Remember our hermeneutical principle – interpret single unclear verses in light of the clear majority. Even if I could never reconcile this verse in my mind, I would never re-interpret the 100’s of clear verses on particular redemption in light of this one very unclear verse.

Secondly, is this a passage that is teaching redemption or the atonement as its main focus? No, this is a passage about false teachers. Those who claim to know Christ, but do not ... wells without water; clouds carried by a tempest for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

As we take note of the word “Lord,” we see it is not the usual word for Lord – it is “despoton” or absolute ruler or absolute sovereign who has absolute ownership and power (John 17:2). Additionally, the word bought when used of salvation always goes together with the technical term “price”. The word means to acquire or obtain (thus, when referring to spiritual salvation it always adds with a price and that price is identified as the precious blood of Christ. In this passage of 2 Peter 2:1 the phrase “with a price” is not mentioned.

Another thing to note is that 2 Peter 2 has a parallel passage ... Jude. Compare 2 Peter 2:12-17; with Jude 10-12. And Jude 4 parallels 2 Peter 2:1.

In what sense did the Lord “buy” or “acquire” or “obtain” these ungodly men who were long ago marked out or ordained for this condemnation? These men claim a Savior but deny His Lordship over them. (It doesn’t seem to be very consistent that Jesus would substitute for them on the cross to free them from condemnation – the very condemnation they were marked out for.)

Could it mean, they deny the Lord they CLAIM they are owned by (bought by) like Titus 1:16?

Also, look at 2 Peter 2:20-22 and Jude 5 ... the reference in 2 Peter 2:1 is from Deut. 32:5-6. Here we see Father in a Creative sense – God owns them as a Sovereign. How are they “bought” ... by being “made” and “established.” Though God has established them into the church (for His own purposes) though they are owned by the Sovereign God – in Him they live and move and have their being – all that they are has been established by the Sovereign Ruler of the universe – yet they deny Him. They will not bow to Him (not yet anyway!). They will not submit to Him.

Whatever this phrase means, I would not hold to a universal redemption or atonement – based on this phrase alone - -- for then I’d have to re-interpret all the rest of the clear verses in Scripture and make this phrase my corner stone.

The overwhelming majority of texts speak of Christ actually accomplishing something in His death. It is impossible to give words like (ransom, substitute, reconcile, and propitiate) their biblical meaning and still hold to universal atonement without also accepting universal salvation. We are forced to either give these words a hypothetical sense, and thus deny their biblical content, or else we must believe in universal salvation.

I know that people keep complaining that "election and particular atonement" is narrow and unfair. We would ask, "Unfair to whom?" To whom does God owe anything other than condemnation? How can He possibly be unfair to sinners who deserve nothing but wrath? Granted, He gives grace to some who do not deserve it, but the Holy Spirit has already stopped the mouth of all who would say that was unfair. See Matthew 20:10-16 and Romans 9:13-21.

A problem for universalists is that Christ's office of Shepherd becomes a failure. Free will Arminianism would have us believe that some of those for whom Christ suffered and died will nonetheless still perish. If He 'loses' some of the sheep for whom He was made responsible then He fails in His job as the Shepherd. The verses that reveal Christ's work as the Shepherd of the sheep, would have to be rewritten if universal atonement were true.

Implications of a limited or definite atonement on evangelism:

How can we invite all men to come to Christ when we are not sure Christ died for them? Recognize that the limit of the atonement is not placed on its power or sufficiency, but to its intent and design. Jesus finished a perfect work sufficient for any infinite number of sinners – for whom He would substitute. The question for the preacher to ask is not for whom did Christ die (any more than we have to figure out who are the elect), but rather, “Can I tell any and every sinner that if he comes to God through Jesus Christ, he shall be pardoned?”

It is great encouragement for evangelism, because we have a complete gospel and all-sufficient Savior to set before sinners.

Some have said, "I now understand that in order to be saved, I must not just believe that Christ died for sinners, but that He died for ME." This is dangerous – for many a person can be persuaded that Jesus died for them personally and not truly be saved. (for Jesus may not have died for them!) It is not that a person is to believe "that Christ died for ME" but rather to repent of their sins and trust in Christ and the perfect atonement He has made for all sinners who come to Him. (It is possible to be persuaded that "Jesus died for ME" and not be saved at all.)

In evangelistic preaching, it is not for the evangelist to tell unbelieving sinners that they must believe Jesus died for them, for that is something neither one of them can know. What he can tell them and ought to tell them is that Christ's atonement is gloriously sufficient to blot out the sins of every sinner who comes to Him in repentance and faith; that God has promised that every coming one shall be cleansed in that precious blood.

In evangelism then, the evangelist is not called upon to tell people that Jesus died for them, and that they must believe that in order to be saved, but he is to tell them that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to purge the sins of everyone who will entrust themselves to Him to be saved. Christ died to take away sin. He died for the ungodly. His death made a redemption, a reconciliation, a propitiation for His people. So we invite all sinners to come to Christ in repentance and take His yoke upon them and they will find rest for their souls (Acts 17:30; Isa. 55:1; 45:22; Rev. 22:17)!

CONCLUSION: Read Exodus 28:6–12; 21–29.

Consider the Old Testament Day of Atonement. Aaron wore only the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on his shoulders and breast as he stood before God. The blood shed on the altar and then sprinkled on the mercy seat was not for the heathen nations but only for the nation of Israel – the covenant people. Just as the High Priest carried the names of the tribes on his shoulder and heart as he stood before God on the Day of Atonement, so our High Priest had our names on his shoulders and heart as He endured God's wrath, went into the tomb, and when He ascended into heaven. He breathes our individual names to the Father and pleads His merits on our behalf. He does this for every sinner that comes to Him! He turns no one away that comes! If I am such a sinner, in need of such a Redeemer, I dare believe His atonement, accepted by the Father, is sufficient for even me!

Applications

First, let us admire and worship Christ for what He did. The atonement He made is a truly marvelous thing, and it reflects the excellencies of Christ and the Father's character. Can you see the marvelous wisdom of God displayed in the work of Christ's cross? Praise Him for what He did, and fellowship with God in His great work of salvation.

Second, these truths, if we unite them with faith, will bring us to know and thus love Christ more. As a result of this study, seek to grow in your devotion and love to Christ. Fellowship with Christ in the glories of His successful sacrifice for sins.

Third, these truths should make us grow in our hatred of sin. As Robert Morey writes, "God Himself had [to become man] to die a bloody death at the hands of wicked sinners. To see the awful suffering and to hear the awful cry, 'My God, my God, why have Thou forsaken Me?' reveals how awful sin must be in the sight of God. Don't look at sin so see sin's true nature. Look at what it did to Christ on the cross" (Morey, p. 3). As we grow in our hatred of sin, we will flee from it more and thus grow in holiness.

Fourth, let us feel and see more forcefully how sinful we really are by nature. Robert Morey writes, "to see sin as it really is, contemplate what it cost to remove it. If we had fallen into a deep pit, we could tell how deep we had fallen by the length of the rope let down to save us. In the same way, we can only understand the depths of depravity into which sin has brought us by the lengths to which God must go to redeem us." As we understand our depravity, this should bring us greater humility and dependence upon Christ for righteousness.

Fifth, let the awesome sacrifice Christ made inspire you to follow His example in sacrificially loving others, especially Christians. We are to imitate the love that Christ manifest in dying for us: "...whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Love one another!

Sixth, take great confidence in Christ. He did everything necessary to give you a full and wonderful salvation. You never have to look anywhere other than Him for what you need.

Finally, if you are not yet a believer, don't delay. See the glories of God in the cross of Christ, and come to Him for salvation.

My praise, now and forever, is for God's particular saving love. I do not find joy – and in fact no security – in a vague, general, impersonal love spread out over all men equally. No, my highest joy is this – although I had been choosing hell, He chose me and rescued me by His blood. He loved the church and gave Himself for her. To me that is the grace I find irresistible!

Appendix:

Two Views of the Atonement	
<p>There are two views of the nature of the atoning work of Christ on the cross. The one view is called "universal" atonement and the other is called "particular" atonement. They are also called "limited" and "unlimited" atonement. One is based on the free will of man and the other is based on the free and sovereign grace of God. The real question is this: "What did Christ accomplish in His death on the cross? Did His death make salvation possible for all men or did His death make salvation certain for the elect of God?" Here are the two answers. I have chosen every word with great care.</p>	
<p>Answer of Free Will Religion:</p> <p>Atonement is universal in intention and provisional in character. God has an <i>unlimited purpose</i> (to save all men), but His <i>power is limited</i> (by man's free will). The atonement of Christ, in and of itself, does not assure that anyone will be saved for sure but it does make it possible for all men to be saved by choosing to believe with their free will. 1 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 2:2; John 3:16.</p>	<p>Answer of Free Grace Religion:</p> <p>Atonement is particular in intention and redemptive in character. God has a <i>limited purpose</i> (to save His elect) and He is <i>unlimited in His power.</i> The atonement of Christ, in and of itself, guarantees that some men, all of the elect, will be saved. Repentance and faith are part of the gifts purchased by Christ in His atoning death. Job 23:13; John 10:11; Hebrews 9:28; Eph. 5:25.</p>
<p>Let me point out several clear facts from the above.</p>	
<p>(1) The <i>intention</i> of God in giving His Son up to death is different in the two systems.</p>	
<p>In the one case, God's intention in giving His Son is universal in the sense that He sincerely desires and earnestly tries to save all men without exception.</p>	<p>In the other case, God's intention is particular in the sense that He has purposed to make certain that some specific, or particular, individuals will be saved.</p>
<p>(2) The <i>success</i> or fulfillment of God's intention in giving Christ is different in the two cases.</p>	
<p>In the one case, God's intention to save all men without exception is thwarted and is impossible of attainment because of man's free will.</p>	<p>In the other case, God's decreed intention to save His elect is fully realized because the atonement of Christ purchases the gifts of both repentance and faith.</p>
<p>(3) The <i>power</i> of God is different in both cases.</p>	
<p>In the one instance, God's intention is totally limited by man's free will. God has a limited power that cannot accomplish His unlimited purpose.</p>	<p>In the other instance, God has an unlimited power to accomplish everything His sovereign will desires. It is His purpose that is limited and not His power.</p>
<p>(4) The real issue is the <i>nature</i>, or character, of the atonement.</p>	
<p>In the one case, the sufferings of Christ is "provisional" in character. His death, in and of itself, cannot really redeem anyone. The most that Christ's sacrifice accomplished was the opportunity for men to save themselves by <i>their</i> faith in Christ.</p>	<p>In the other case, the sufferings of Christ were "redemptive" in nature. His death really and fully paid for sin in such a way that it actually redeemed those for whom it was made.</p>
<p>A careful comparison of these two views will show that one has an atonement that really redeems and the other can only make redemption a possibility that is totally dependent on man's free will for its success. We insist that the first view is only a "hypothetical" atonement that does not redeem. In reality, the free will religion has, (1) a <i>redemption</i> that does not redeem but leaves many for whom it was made eternally still in their bondage; (2) it has a <i>reconciliation</i> that still leaves many eternally unreconciled to God and in their sin; (3) a <i>substitutionary</i> death that still leaves the sinner eternally without forgiveness of sins and forever lost in hell; and (4) a <i>propitiation</i> that leaves some for whom it was made still under the wrath of God. One must change the biblical meaning of the above four words and empty them of their biblical content in order to believe in universal atonement.</p>	