

# Limited Atonement

## Jesus' Mission Statement

*Matthew 1:21*

All of Scripture can be summarized by the words of *Matthew 1:21*. All of Scripture lays out the preparation and the completion of God's plan to save his people from their sins.

## Locus Classicus for the Meaning of the Cross

*Hebrews*

### Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek

*Hebrews 7:1-4,11-28*

- The purpose of a priest is to represent people to God and to offer a sacrifice on their behalf to secure something from God for them.
- The priesthood of the Old Covenant era offered sacrifices but these sacrifices could not pay for sins.
- A different type of priest was needed in order for there to be an offered sacrifice that would really pay for sins. Jesus Christ, the God-man, is that priest.

### Jesus is the Priest of the New Covenant

*Hebrews 8:1-10:18*

- The saving work of Jesus Christ accomplished by his death on the cross is described under the heading of the New Covenant. *Luke 22:20*
- The Old Covenant produced Israel, the unbelieving picture of the people of God.
- The death of Jesus Christ, the New Covenant, produced a believing people of God who had their sins forgiven and a changed life.
- Jesus actually purchased something by his death on the cross. As the high priest of those who were to believe Jesus offered his life as a sacrifice and the Father accepted it and as a result there would be a believing people of God who had their sins forgiven and were incurable God-lovers.

## Jesus, the Good Shepherd

*John 10*

- The good shepherd knows his sheep.
- The good shepherd dies for his sheep.
- The good shepherd loses none of his sheep.

## Old Covenant Pictures of the Atonement of Jesus Christ

### Day of Atonement

*Leviticus 16*

- The high priest is the only person who can offer this once a year sacrifice for the sins of the nation of Israel.
- The high priest must first offer sacrifice for his own sins before he can perform the sacrifice for the sins of the nation of Israel. This showed the inferior nature of the priests of the Old Covenant. The priest of the New Covenant was a lamb without blemish, an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of all the elect.
- This sacrifice is only for the nation of Israel. It is not for the whole world.
- Two goats are used, one for sacrifice and one as a scapegoat. The use of two goats pictures different aspects of what was accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, the satisfying of the wrath of God and the putting away of everything that keeps us from God.

### Suffering Servant

*Isaiah 53*

- It is stated that the suffering servant died for the people of Israel.

- In the fulfillment of the new covenant the people of God are the church, those for whom Jesus died of which Israel was a picture.

# Limited Atonement

## The Use of ALL

“All “ is used in Scripture just as we would use it in our everyday speech.. Seldom does all mean all without exception. It is the context in which it is used that determines the extent of the “all.”

### Examples

*Mark 1:5*

- Would the entire Roman garrison be included in this “all”?
- This would seem to be an overstatement that is meant to communicate that a large number of folks were baptized by John the Baptist.

*Romans 5:18*

- The context of *Romans 5:19* is the method that God uses to save his people.
- *Romans 5:18* states that all those represented by Jesus Christ will get what he accomplished.
- *1 Corinthians 15:20-22* gives a commentary on who the all are in *Romans 5:18*.

*John 12:32*

- All men will not be believers for Judas is in hell. *John 6:44*
- All assumes a context.
- All the elect are what is meant by the verse.

## Problem Passages

*1 John 2:2*

- Literal rendering is a problem for everyone.
- *Whole world* has a new covenant emphasis.

*2 Peter 3:9*

- Is it the moral will or sovereign will?
- The context would seem to indicate the free offer of the gospel.

*John 1:29*

New Covenant emphasis rather than an Old Covenant emphasis, Israel vs world.

*John 3:16*

- Emphasis on the motive for sending the son.
- The free offer of the gospel is put forth for all to receive.
- The world vs Israel is the shift of emphasis in the new covenant era.

*2 Corinthians 5:19*

New Covenant emphasis on the world rather than the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant.

*1 Timothy 2:4-6*

- All may refer to all sorts of men as well as the moral will of God with reference to salvation.
- Once again the world-wide scope of the New Covenant era does seem to be emphasized.

Hebrews 2:9

- The death of Jesus Christ on the cross always has reference to the payment for sins.
- Can the phrase *sufficient for all, efficient for some* apply to this verse?

## Amyraldianism

### *Hypothetical Redemption*

#### **Definition**

A simplistic definition would state that Amyraldianism is a view of the atonement that states that Jesus died for all men, yet only the elect receive the gift of faith.

#### **Historical Setting**

*AMYRALDIANISM. This word is derived from the Latin form of the name of Moise Amyraut (1596-1664), perhaps the most eminent and influential professor of the French Protestant Academy of Saumur. This was established in 1598 by a decision of the national synod of the French Reformed Churches. It enjoyed the special favor of the Philippe Duplessis-Mornay (1549-1623), governor of Saumur and one the noblest and most influential Protestant leaders at the turn of the century. Achieving wide acclaim in France and in foreign countries for the brilliance of its faculty, it attracted a very considerable number of students until it was abolished by order of King Louis XIV at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.*

*(New Dictionary of Theology, article on Amyraldianism by Roger Nicole, page 16.)*

*In his "Traite de la Predestination" (1634) he claimed that God, moved by his love for mankind, had appointed all human beings to salvation provided they repent and believe. He sent his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of all mankind in order to implement this purpose. However, since human beings would not on their own initiative repent and believe, God then chose to bestow a special measure of his Spirit to some only, who are the elect. Grace thus is seen as universal in the provision for salvation but as particular in the application of it. In reviewing matters in this fashion, Amyraut thought that he could continue to adhere to the Canons of Dort and at the same time provide a picture of God's benevolence that would be more faithful to Scripture and indeed to Calvin than the thoroughly particularistic approach in the second quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

*(New Dictionary of Theology, article on Amyraldianism by Roger Nicole, page 17.)*

## Understanding Amyraldianism

#### **Decrees of God**

- The decree of universal salvation on the condition of faith. This was a conditional decree.
- The decree of particular and efficacious grace. This decree was unconditional.
- The order of decrees was as follows:
  - Universal grace
  - Universal atonement for all
  - Particular election
  - Particular efficacious grace (to apply the atonement to the elect alone)

#### **Hypothetical Universalism**

*Thus, said Amyraut, the provision for salvation was universal but the application was particular. He considered this the true meaning of the old formula, "Christ died sufficiently for all but efficiently only for the elect." Amyraldianism taught an ideal universalism and a real particularism. This universalism was only hypothetical, not actual. Only the elect will be saved, because election is particular and not based on foreseen faith. Amyraut also taught the doctrine of reprobation.*

*(The History and Theology of Calvinism, by Curt Daniel, page 74.)*

### **Common Grace**

- The Amyraldian argument is that common grace must be purchased by Jesus Christ on the cross.
- Jesus Christ did not purchase the universal limited love of God for all mankind on the cross.  
*Matthew 5:43-48, Acts 14:16-17*

### **Stay of Execution**

- The Amyraldian argument is that you cannot have a stay of execution without that having been purchased by Jesus on the cross.
- Jesus did not purchase a stay of execution for all those whom he has not chosen to save. There is no place in Scripture that mentions this idea.
- Reprobates have a part to play in God's plan to save his people. When that part is played the reprobates will begin their eternal punishment. *Romans 9:22-23*
- Those who are chosen to be saved are not saved right away but await the appropriate moment to be given saving faith. Therefore it could be said that the believer's salvation is delayed.
- Both salvation and damnation are fixed for all men in eternity past, but the reception of them awaits God's perfect timing in his unfolding plan of salvation.

### **Free Offer of the Gospel**

- The Amyraldian argument is that you cannot have a sincere free offer of the gospel without in some sense Jesus dying for all men.
- The death of Jesus Christ was a perfect death that could have been for all men if the Father had intended to accomplish this.
- The problem of man being obligated to do something that he cannot do does not only apply to the offer of the gospel, it also applies to the depravity of man. If every man not only cannot come to Christ, but does not want to come to Christ, then how can any offer of the gospel be a sincere offer? Even for the believer this dilemma is felt. The believer is called to obey God's law perfectly, yet we are clearly told that no believer will be able to obey perfectly. The Scriptural answer is that is not like us. God does determine all things and man is responsible for his eternal destiny.  
*1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 9:19, Galatians 5:17*

### **Faith as a Gift of God**

- The Amyraldian argument is that saving faith was not purchased by Jesus Christ on the cross.
- Faith is a gift of God. *Ephesians 2:8-9*
- Jesus Christ purchased both forgiveness of sins and a work of the Spirit or a new heart on the cross.  
*Hebrews 10:14-18*
- You cannot receive salvation without saving faith; therefore Jesus Christ must have purchased faith on the cross.
- Even a holy God cannot just give faith, for that would be the same as giving salvation and that must be purchased for God's justice must be satisfied for man to be accepted. *Romans 5:1*

### **A False Argument Against Faith Purchased on the Cross**

*Now, it does, indeed, seem reasonable to hold that since all of the benefits received through faith have been purchased by the blood of Christ, faith itself should be deemed as purchased also. Shall the fruits be purchased, but not the root? However, if faith was purchased, it is the only purchased benefit not received through believing, for, obviously, we do not get faith through faith. No, in this case, we get the root without faith, and its fruits through faith. Faith is ours simply by a gracious sovereign bestowment, and not by purchase.*

*(Death of Christ, by Douty, pages 58-60.)*

