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**A0425 -- June 20, 2004 -- 1 John 2:2 -- Extent of Atonement-Part 3**

We're taking a four-week excurses in 1 John 2:2 to study the "extent of the atonement" because 1 John 2:2 is the center of the controversy. The controversial question we are trying to answer is "For whom did Christ die?" Did Christ die for all men or did Christ die for only the elect? This is a very complex question so you have to pay close attention and you have to review this material to learn it. To answer this question required us to answer some other questions. First of all, "Who was responsible for Christ's death?" This was the recent question surrounding Mel Gibson's "The Passion". The tendency is to shift the blame from one group to another, namely the Jews or the Romans. However, these people fail to read the Bible or more probably, they reject it as a source of accurate historical information.

**BIBLE: A HISTORICAL BOOK**

The Bible is a historical book. The biblical authors deliberately tie doctrine to historical events so that our faith is grounded in history. Our faith is not just based on pretty ideas as Neo-Orthodox theologians teach. See, for us to know anything about the past we have to have reliable information. We send our children to secular or even Christian schools and there they take history classes. In this indoctrination process our children have been and are being taught a certain universal history, a history of how things came to be where they are today. This is the doctrine of evolution as applied to every discipline; sociology, anthropology, psychology, even reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are taught that various wars took place, various kings ruled, various processes took place, various discoveries took place, and who did what and when. There is a problem with this. First of all, education today is presented as a pile of disconnected facts. These things apparently have nothing to do with God and math would be math whether God existed or not. This creates in our minds a very satanic way of thinking. Most people don't even know they are doing it. They teach art for example; we have colors, brush strokes, depth, perspective, and all these details, but how often is art taught with an emphasis on God's design and creation of the colors, physical laws that we paint within, eyes to see and perceive. How often do we think of art as a reflection of God's art; the creation of the universe? How often do we

think of God as the infinite artist, the one who is unique in imagination and creativity? Look at all the creatures this planet alone has, the various kinds and designs. How often do we think of art that way and carefully connect God to that area of life? When the Christian community fails to make these connections, we are teaching our children how to think improperly, or more accurately, how not to think at all. We are not preparing them for the gospel, but we are fitting their souls for destruction. Second problem regards history in particular; what of those who wrote this history we are taught in school? Are they reliable sources of information concerning the past? See, the fallacy is to believe that these authors or sources of information are neutral; that is, they don't have any agendas, certainly not an anti-Christian slant. These people are what we call Religious Humanists. They like to merely think of themselves as Humanists, but they are religious and they do have an agenda. They re-write history to make people think a certain way about everything in their lives. Every despotic ruler knows that if you want to influence people then you give them a history. The history, the information that is passed on is a history that they have revised because they want to create in you and your children a way of thinking that brings you under their power and way of thinking. This is why the Bible is a necessity if we are to know anything of history. See, the Bible even gives examples of people doing this in the history it records. The Bible is trying to teach us that the natural man is at enmity with God. He is not able to receive the truth. So, what happens is that when they write history, they distort the parts that are offensive to the natural man. Anything having to do with God and human responsibility or sin is suppressed. This is where myth came from. All the Greek mythologies are distortions of the truth. Example, what about the Achilles Heel? What truth is that a distortion of? (Gen. 3:15). How about Pandora's Box? What truth is that a distortion of? (The Fall). See, man wants to create for himself a universe where it is safe to sin. A large part of that involves re-writing history and discounting the Bible as a source of accurate historical information. So, we as a Christian culture, living today, are responsible to pass on reliable information as given in the Bible and use Biblical principles to interpret and understand history post-NT times. That's one reason I am giving you this history. You need to be grounded in biblical history and in church history. You need to know and pass on why we are where we are today.

So, "who was responsible for Christ's death?" The Bible, the accurate source of historical information assigns responsibility to three realms—divine, angelic, and human. One key passage assigning responsibility is **Acts 2:23** *"this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death"*. This verse assigns responsibility to God and the Jews through the Romans. Flip over to Acts 4:27-28. *"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius*

*Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, <sup>28</sup> to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.*” (also see Rev. 13:8). So, three parties are always held responsible—God, angelic, and human.

Second, to discover the extent of the atonement we first have to discover the nature of the atonement. Once we discover the nature of the atonement, we will know who Christ died for. As Boettner put it, ““The nature of the atonement settles its extent.”<sup>21</sup> Too often people misunderstand the issue. They think it is a choice between Arminianism and Calvinism. Unless one is ready to defend every tenet and detail of these two systems of theology it seems much better to say one follows this or that tenet because they find it taught in the Bible, rather than to embrace an entire system of theology. Too often it is thought that if one accepts unlimited atonement, he is therefore an Arminian or that if he rejects unlimited atonement, he is a Calvinist. But there are deeper and more important issues than this sole issue that are needed to make such a determination. An increasing number of people hold to 3 or 4 points of Calvinism. These people are called Moderate Calvinists. Their views are less systematic and developed but more textual. S. Lewis Johnson, a 5-Point Calvinist himself says, “the primary difference between 4 and 5-Point Calvinists is that 5-Point Calvinists are more systematic and 4-Point Calvinists are more concerned with certain passages.” This is an honest perspective. Our attempt here is to be biblical above all else, not to fit into a school of theology. So, last week we looked at the three answers to the question of “Why did Christ die?” I set these answers in their historical context so you could see the difficulty of developing doctrine. You should not take your salvation or these doctrines lightly. They took thousands of years to crisply define and much blood was spilt to preserve and protect the sacredness of these truths. There were 4 stages in the development of the doctrine of the atonement. You ought to be interested in seeing how the Holy Spirit has worked in church history. If you learn how the Holy Spirit has worked in other believer’s lives you will get an ideal of how to detect the Holy Spirit’s work in your own life. Our individual experience is very limited. You are limited in space; you can’t be everywhere at the same time; you can only be in one place at a time. And you are limited in time; you can’t be in every age of history; you are limited to your 70-80-90 years of time. To enlarge your range of experience requires the study of history. The wisest men are not always the oldest men, but those who, by study and reflection on the lives and experiences of other historical figures and human nature, learn to broaden their experience far beyond their own short times. This comes by the careful study of history, particularly in the Bible. We have very few Christians who realize this principle today. Most operate totally out of their own limited experience and base decisions on what they have previously experienced. This is very foolish. So, I’m giving you the lives and work of other men in other times. Believers just like you and I. These are men that you will share your life and

time with in eternity and they will share what their lives and times were like with you. We have a lot to learn about what God has done in history through men and angels when we get to heaven. And all this is to bring glory to God. Ever wondered why God created a history? Every single instant of time in history is designed to bring glory to God. Only Christianity has such a magnificent purpose for history.

## SUMMARY OF THE 4 STAGES

*First*, Anselm hammered out that the Atonement was Substitutionary (Him for you). The Reformers basically followed Anselm's substitutionary atonement and expressed it even more clearly. Statements of Luther (German Reformer) favor Unlimited Atonement and statements of Calvin go both ways. \*Here's a good example of the importance of history. If it wasn't for Calvin, Luther, and the other Reformers you wouldn't be sitting in that pew. You wouldn't have a Bible in English if it wasn't for William Tyndale. Tyndale brings us to a prime example of secular Humanists re-writing history. It is taught in every major English textbook today that Geoffrey Chaucer was the Father of the English Language. This is the biggest load of bull. This is secular humanism's writing William Tyndale out of education. This is writing out the Christian influence in the founding of the English Language. The actual Father of the English Language was William Tyndale who translated the entire NT from the original Greek into English and almost all of the OT. His translation makes up 86% of the KJV which was done in 1611. The translators under King James used Tyndale's work 86% of the time. Shakespeare quoted the English translation of William Tyndale more than 5,000 times.\* *Second*, in 1610, the followers of Arminius put together five articles called "The Remonstrance" as a response to some Calvinist documents. Here they argued that Christ *obtained* salvation for all men and that *sufficient grace* was given to all men to cooperate with God in salvation, if they will. This took too much from God in the plan of salvation. What the Arminians were saying was that there are actually two steering wheels guiding history. God had a steering wheel and man had a second steering wheel and that's how history is developed. They said that history was a joint product. This flies in the face of Scripture at every point. History is not a joint product; it is God's product alone. There are not two steering wheels to history, there is only one steering wheel. Man cannot thwart God's purposes. *Third*, the Strict Calvinists, seeing the unbiblical nature of the Arminian view, responded with five points of their own at the Synod of Dordt in 1619. However, this was also problematic because in their attacking another system they went overkill, teaching that the cross *secured* and *applied* its own benefits to the elect, so the cross had no relationship to the non-elect, and the necessity of faith was removed. *Finally*, Moise Amyraut, a Calvinist, seeing these two extremes, wrote his treatise to correct Limited Atonement as expressed by Dordt. He basically taught that

the cross was *provided* for all but applied only to those who believe, that is, the elect. Moderate Calvinists maintained that the cross was related to the non-elect as a means of condemnation because they refused to believe (John 3:17-18).

So, there are basically three views: 1) Christ *obtained* salvation for all (Arminianism), 2) Christ *secured* salvation for the elect (Strict Calvinism), and 3) Christ *provided* salvation for all (Moderate Calvinism). Those are the three key words; *obtained*, *secured*, and *provided*. They all mean something entirely different.

Let's elaborate on Moderate Calvinism and in doing so we will uncover some additional problems with Strict Calvinism.

Isaac Watts, a hymn writer of some of our favorite hymns (e.g., Joy to the World, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, etc.) was also a theologian. In fact, everyone is a theologian. As Charles Ryrie said, "theology is for everyone. Indeed, everyone needs to be a theologian. In reality, everyone is a theologian—of one sort or another. And therein lies the problem. There is nothing wrong with being an amateur theologian or a professional theologian, but there is everything wrong about being an ignorant or a sloppy theologian. Therefore, every Christian should read theology."<sup>ii</sup> The old hymn writers knew theology as a pre-requisite to writing doctrinal hymns. Watts, the old Hymn writer knew doctrine. He knew everything I'm teaching you in this four-week study as you'll see from this quote. You may not have heard this before but that shouldn't stop you from digging in and learning these truths. It's my responsibility to teach you the truth in its historical context. What you do with the truth is your responsibility! As Dr. Dobson says, "Don't check your brains at the door!" We don't come in here to just veg out. We come in here to engage in learning. And I'm working very hard to bring you the truth; to teach you how to live in the world as a Christian. You are in a hostile environment. The world would love to silence the Christian right and they are doing a pretty good job of stamping out Christianity and all its influence. The reason they are having such success is because Christians don't know enough Bible doctrine and/or they don't care enough. What I mean is that Christians today don't really love God. They love themselves and if that isn't the most obvious thing in Christianity today then you must be blind. Well, what did Watts say about the atonement? He clearly stated the conflict between Arminian Unlimited Atonement and Strict Calvinism Limited Atonement when he said: "When the Remonstrants assert that Christ died for all mankind merely to purchase conditional salvation for them; and when those who profess to be the strictest Calvinists assert [that] Christ died only to procure absolute and effectual salvation for the elect; it is not because the whole Scripture asserts the particular sentiments of either of these sects with an exclusion of the other. But the reason of these different

assertions of men is this, that the holy writers in different texts pursuing different subjects, and speaking to different persons, sometimes seem to favor each of these two opinions; and men, being at a loss to reconcile them by any medium, run into different extremes, and entirely follow one of these tracks of thought and neglect the other.”<sup>iii</sup>

As intimated last week the Moderate Calvinist recognizes the fact that the Scriptures broaden the design of the atonement to include all men in a provisional way. The benefits of Calvary are realized and applied only to those who believe, but the provision reaches to every member of the human race. This is the clear testimony of Scripture and especially, Romans 5:12-21 (unlimited redemption); 2 Cor. 5:17-21 (unlimited reconciliation); 2 Peter 2:1 (unlimited redemption); and 1 John 2:2 (unlimited propitiation). It is not by accident that the Scriptures teach the unlimited provision of every aspect of the atonement. Moderate Calvinists are in between the two extremes of Arminianism and Strict Calvinism. We believe that the Scripture certainly teaches that Christ died to secure the salvation of all who believe (the elect) but also that Christ died to provide a basis of salvation for all men. For those who are elect and therefore believe in Christ, the benefits of the cross are applied by God at the moment of belief. For those who refuse to believe, the provision exists to form a basis of condemnation. The eternal destiny of men is not determined by whether one is in Adam, but whether he has believed in Jesus Christ or not (John 3:18).

We reject the idea that Christ *obtained* salvation for all men and provided every man with *sufficient grace* to cooperate with God. We also reject the idea that Christ died to *secure* the salvation of the elect only. If that be true then the cross cannot be a basis of condemnation of those who don't believe (John 3:18). The teaching of Scripture, and that which we believe to be true is that Christ died to *provide* salvation for all and to *make certain* salvation for those who believe.

Both Arminianism and Strict Calvinism are stuck with a difficult time trying to harmonize their views with Scripture. The facts of Scripture teach that man is totally depraved and unable to make a single move toward God. There is no *sufficient grace* imparted to man that nullifies man's depraved condition. Arminianism also rejects the imputation of the sin of the human race to Christ. The Strict Calvinist view insists that the cross applies itself to the elect is equally unbiblical because it fails to account for the necessity of "faith". It makes "faith" virtually unnecessary. Strict Calvinism rejects the biblical teaching that the sin of the non-elect was imputed to Christ. In their view only the sin of the elect was imputed to Christ on the cross. Both groups fear that it will result in Universalism (that all will be saved). The fact is that the Bible does teach that the sin of Adam was imputed to the human race (Rom. 5:12-21) and that the sin of the human race was imputed to Christ

(2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24, 25, et. al.) and that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the individual who believes (Rom. 3:21-22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 10:14).

The biblical teaching is that man is totally depraved unable to make a move toward God but also that the nature of the atonement was provisional for all and the sole condition for salvation is faith.

It is abundantly clear that a man must believe to be saved. All men, elect included, are lost until they exercise faith in Christ as their Savior. There is simply no text in the Bible that distinguishes between elect and non-elect while unregenerate.

“Faith” is said to be the sole condition for salvation over 150 times in the New Testament. What this means is that the benefits of the completed work of Christ on the cross are withheld until personal faith is exercised. All men, including the false teachers of 2 Pet. 2:1, were “bought”, but this does not imply that all men are “released”. The “release” takes place at the moment a person believes. So, the cross work of Christ must be *appropriated by faith* in order to be enjoyed by anyone. Every elect individual lives in spiritual death and condemnation and may live in open rebellion against God. It is readily apparent that the death of Christ did not *automatically save* the elect, but that God applied the finished work of Christ to those who believe at the moment they believe.

However, the Strict Calvinist, while he downplays the necessity of faith, does not altogether rule out the necessity of faith. How he accounts for the Bible’s constant insistence that faith is the condition of salvation is to claim that the cross work of Christ purchased faith for the elect, then God gives that faith to them as a gift, which the elect are to give back to God at the point of salvation. This, of course, cannot be proved from Scripture. Wild attempts are made to salvage a few verses to prove that faith is a gift. Usually they begin with Eph. 2:8-9. However, Eph. 2:8-9 is not teaching that faith is a gift but that the whole “salvation by grace through faith” package is the gift. This is affirmed by the Greek text which has “this” in the neuter and “faith” in the feminine. The neuter “this” therefore refers to the entire salvation (masculine) by grace (feminine) through faith (feminine) package. Faith is not the gift, faith is instrumental, it is the instrument through which God determined, by His grace, to impart salvation. The fact that faith is the instrumental means by which salvation is imparted by God is part of the gift.<sup>iv</sup> But not faith itself; that is a human responsibility! Other passages like Acts 5:31; 11:18; Phil. 1:29; 3:9; Rom. 12:3; 2 Pet. 1:1, 2; 2 Tim. 2:25 and John 6:44-45 are also used to support this false teaching. I don’t have the time to look at each of these passages. If you are interested, I can make a copy of a very valuable and short article published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* Journal in

1965 that addresses each verse. The conclusion of this paper is that “Many passages, and whole books of the New Testament, are written to prove salvation is a gift of God and not the reward of good works. But where are the passages to prove saving faith is the gift of God? Is not this theory a deduction from the doctrine of election rather than an induction from the teaching of the Word?”<sup>v</sup> Strict Calvinists believe this so strongly that they arrive at a very logical conclusion, namely they teach that *regeneration precedes faith*. They say that, since man is totally depraved, man is unable to believe unless first regenerated. This results in a strange plan of salvation. J.I Packer says, “how am I to go about believing on Christ and repenting, if I have no natural ability to do these things?”<sup>vi</sup> His answer has several components.

1. look to Christ, speak to Christ, cry to Christ, just as you are
2. confess your sin, your impenitence, your unbelief, and cast yourself on His mercy
3. ask Him to give you a new heart, working in you true repentance and firm faith
4. ask Him to take away your evil heart of unbelief and to write His law within you, that you may never henceforth stray from Him
5. Turn to Him and trust Him as best you can, and pray for grace to turn and trust more thoroughly
6. use the means of grace expectantly, looking to Christ to draw near to you as you seek to draw near to Him
7. watch, pray, read and hear God’s Word, worship and commune with God’s people,

As Roy Aldrich so aptly put it, “The extreme Calvinist deals with a rather lively spiritual corpse after all. If the corpse has enough vitality to read the Word, and heed the message, and pray for conviction, perhaps it can also believe.”<sup>vii</sup> To me there is no need to even state that this is a far cry from the biblical plan of salvation. The Bible nowhere says that a man must be saved before he can believe. The Bible says that you must believe before you can be saved. That is, the Bible conditions salvation on belief. The Strict Calvinist conditions salvation on election, so that we might expect to find the Bible saying “if you are elect you will be saved”. But the Bible never says “if you are elect you will be saved” but rather, “if you believe you will be saved”. Doubtless the two groups are the same, those who believe are the elect and the elect are those who will believe, but election is not ever made the condition of salvation, nor is salvation ever said to precede faith (cf. **Acts 16:31** “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.*”)! These are false conclusions and real problems for Strict Calvinism. The Bible does not teach that faith is a gift but that salvation is a gift conditioned upon faith. Lightner adds, “All too often this problem of the relationship of God’s requirement of faith for salvation with His electing purposes has been approached by assuming either the Arminian or Calvinistic view and



then forcing the scriptural teaching into the mold.”<sup>viii</sup> Regardless of the issue, we must allow the Bible to speak for itself even if it does teach something besides our previously conceived ideas.

## **6 BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF THE CROSS AND SALVATION**

### **TOTAL DEPRAVITY**

*First*, all men are born spiritually lost and unable to do anything pleasing to God (Rom. 3:10, 23). No distinction is ever made between the spiritually lost who are elect and the spiritually lost who are not elect. Elect and non-elect are both equally depraved. Because all men are sinners this brought forth the wrath of God. It was not just His wrath against the elect that made Christ’s death necessary but the wrath of God against the whole human race. It therefore follows that the death was for the whole human race and not just for the elect. The price paid to bring satisfaction must be as extensive of the wrath of God against the sinfulness of humanity.

### **“FAITH” IS THE SOLE CONDITION OF SALVATION**

*Second*, the Bible makes clear that the sole condition of salvation is “faith” and that “appropriation by faith” results in the application of the Cross’ benefits to the individual. All men, elect and non-elect, must exercise faith in order to be saved (Acts 16:31). Men are condemned for not believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18). This is true for those who have heard the gospel and those who, living in distant lands, have not heard the gospel. They are condemned, without distinction for not believing. There is “no difference between those who have heard and rejected and those who have not heard of Christ but have rejected the knowledge God gave to all men of Himself in nature and the conscience”<sup>ix</sup> (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20). To reject the revelation of God in creation and conscience is to reject the saving revelation of God in Christ. God commands all men to believe indiscriminately (Acts 17:30).

### **THE CALL TO BELIEVE DOES NOT MEAN WE ARE ABLE TO BELIEVE**

*Third*, just because all men are called to believe does not mean all men are not totally depraved and unable to make a single move toward God. Scripture clearly teaches that all men are dead and in need of divine life (Eph. 2:1-2) but it never teaches that a man must therefore be regenerated before he can believe. Strict Calvinists rarely if ever explain how it is possible that a regenerate person can have divine life before he exercises faith and yet not be saved until he exercises faith. So, all men are in desperate need of eternal life and that eternal life is conditioned on believe even though they are totally depraved and unable

to make a move toward God (that is, they are unable to believe even though that is the requirement). How does God's word reconcile this problem?

#### NO ONE WILL BELIEVE UNLESS THE FATHER DRAWS HIM

*Fourth*, the answer is that no one sinner, even though commanded to believe for salvation will believe unless the Father draws him. The Lord makes this very clear in John 6:37, 44, 65. This is the Scriptural solution to the dilemma. First of all, ***John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."*** The one who "comes" is the one who "believes" (John 6:35). "Coming" is equivalent to "believing" in this context (cf. the one who comes "will not hunger", "will not thirst", "will not be cast out", "has eternal life", and "will be raised up on the last day"). All that the Father has given to the Son will believe. Not one more, not one less. Further, each one who believes will certainly not be cast out. The next question is "how does one come?" Since we are totally depraved then how can we ever believe? This is answered in ***John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."*** So, the sinner must believe/come, but no one can believe/come in Christ unless the Father "***draws him***". The word for "***can***" is *dunamai*, from which we get the word "dynamite". What John is saying is that no one has the power to believe in the Son unless the Father who sent the Son draws him. The word for "***draw***" is *helko*. *helko* means "to tug, to drag or to draw". When used of persons it may mean "to compel".<sup>x</sup> It is used of a magnet metaphorically in classical Greek literature. Plato used *helko* in the sense "of the inner influencing of the will."<sup>xi</sup> The word is used 8 times in the Greek NT (Jn. 6:44 (no one can come to Christ unless the Father who sent Christ draws him); 12:32 (I will draw all men to Myself); 18:10 (Peter drawing His sword) 21:6, 11(Peter drawing the net of fish to land) Acts 16:19 (Paul and Silas dragged into the marketplace before the authorities); 21:30 (Paul was dragged out of the temple in Jerusalem); Jas. 2:6 (it is the rich who personally drag you into court). This *dragging* or *tugging* takes place through "hearing and learning" (John 6:45). "Both the hearing and the learning refer to an inward spiritual process. The outward teaching of Scripture and of Christ Himself was enjoyed by all the people He was addressing; but they did not come to Him. It is therefore an inward and individual illumination by the special operation of God that enables men to come to Christ."<sup>xii</sup> Without this particular act on the individual no one can come to Christ. Only certain one's "hear and learn" and therefore certainly "believe". The Father's inward illumination by the special operation of God uses His word as the instrument to bring one to faith. The gospel is the power of God for salvation according to Rom. 1:16. The Father works internally in an individual's soul such that they are enabled to come to Christ. Men do not have the power in and of themselves; but it is the power of God impressing itself upon the human will in such a way that it ensures that the person will certainly, of their

own volition, believe. Luther says of John 6:44, “The drawing is not like that of the executioner, who draws the thief up the ladder to the gallows; but is a gracious allurements, such as that of the man whom everybody loves, and to whom everybody willingly goes.”<sup>xiii</sup>

**As mysterious as it may seem to us, the fact remains that men must believe in order to be saved, and yet they do not have the power or ability to believe unless they are drawn by God to do so.** The natural man simply does not have the ability to receive the things of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them (1 Cor. 2). Therefore, for a man to ever come to Christ, the Father must draw him, show him his sin and need for God’s righteousness in Christ, enabling him to certainly have faith in Christ as his Savior. The *common grace* of God in providing rain and food for mankind and restraining sin coupled with the *Spirit’s general conviction of the world* reveals only man’s need of salvation. It is not enough to result in actual salvation of a person. The depraved man must have the special grace of the inward teaching operation of God that enables him to believe in Christ at the precise time God has decided. Walvoord says, “If one accepts the Biblical revelation of man’s state of spiritual death and total inability, he must accept the doctrine of efficacious grace as the solution to the problem....The Scriptures, however, give adequate witness both to the fact of the effectual call and to the human responsibility to believe in Christ....While in the experience of the individual, faith in Christ is a result of choice, an act of the human will, it is nevertheless a work of efficacious grace. Efficacious grace never operates in a heart that is still rebellious, and no one is ever saved against his will.”<sup>xiv</sup>

#### FAITH ADDS NOTHING TO SALVATION AND DOES NOT SAVE

*Fifth*, the faith exercised by the individual never adds anything to the completed redemption of Christ. Faith does not save; Christ saves and Christ alone. Faith must be viewed as the means through which salvation is imparted. Salvation is not improved upon or altered upon appropriation by faith.

#### FAITH IS NOT A WORK

*Sixth*, Scripture declares clearly that faith is not a work. ***Romans 4:5 “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,”*** Faith is never said to be God’s or to come from God but it is always associated with man. Strict Calvinists seek to make faith a gift because they think of faith as *active* rather than *passive*. They think that it is something we do! If this were true, that faith is something we do, then man is cooperating with God in salvation. However, faith in the Scriptures is always presented not as doing something but as receiving something. Faith is passive reception of the gift of salvation.

## CONCLUSION

There have been three answers to the question “Why did Christ die?” The Arminian said that Christ died to *obtain* salvation for all men, thus giving to all men sufficient grace to cooperate with God in salvation, if they will. This is rejected for two reasons; 1) The Bible never says that God imparts to all sufficient grace to believe if they will and 2) the view denies the scriptural doctrine of total depravity and total inability. The Strict Calvinist answered that Christ died to *secure* salvation for the elect, including the securing of the faith necessary for elect sinners. Strict Calvinists claim that the cross applies its own benefits—the cross saves. This seems to minimize the necessity of faith since salvation is not potential at the moment one believes but is actual for the elect. This means that the sin of all men was not imputed to Christ but only the sin of the elect. Moderate Calvinists, in keeping close to the text of Scripture avoid both of these extremes. In answer to the question “Why did Christ die” he answers that Christ died to provide salvation for all men but it is applied only to those who believe. The cross does not apply its own benefits but God has conditioned salvation on human faith. Human faith does not improve, add, or detract anything from salvation which is wholly from God. Faith is simply the means by which God designed to apply the benefits of the cross in His all-wise plan. However, the only way a man can exercise human faith is by the drawing of the Father. All the Father gives to the Son will believe and only the one’s the Father draws are enabled to believe. The cross therefore is the basis upon which all men are either saved or condemned. For those who believe the cross is the basis for *salvation* unto eternal life, for those who reject it is a basis for *condemnation* until he does believe (John 3:18).

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<sup>i</sup> Boettner, Loraine, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1965), 152.

<sup>ii</sup> Ryrie, Charles, *Basic Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>iii</sup> Isaac Watts, *Works*, VI, pp. 286-287, cited by Jonathan Edwards and others, *The Atonement* (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1859), pp. 251-252.

<sup>iv</sup> For a great evaluation of every passage cited by Calvinists to the effect that “faith is a gift” see Roy Aldrich, *The Gift of God* (Bibliotheca Sacra, v. 122, July-Sept, 1965), 249. Highly recommended.

<sup>v</sup> Roy Aldrich, *The Gift of God* (Bibliotheca Sacra, v. 122, July-Sept, 1965), 253.

<sup>vi</sup> Owen, John, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ: Introductory Essay* by J.I. Packer, 21. For more of the same see Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Cleveland: Cleveland Bible Truth Depot, 1930), 198-199.

<sup>vii</sup> Roy Aldrich, *The Gift of God* (Bibliotheca Sacra, v. 122, July-Sept, 1965), 248.

<sup>viii</sup> Lightner, Robert P., *The Death Christ Died* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998), 51.

<sup>ix</sup> Lightner, Robert P., *The Death Christ Died* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998), 52.

<sup>x</sup> Kittel, Gerhard, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Vol. II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 503.

<sup>xi</sup> Kittel, Gerhard, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Vol. II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), 503.

<sup>xii</sup> Nicoll, W. Robertson, *The Expositors Greek Testament: Volume One* (Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 756.

<sup>xiii</sup> Vincent, M.R., *Word Studied in the New Testament* (Florida: MacDonald Publishing House), 442.

<sup>xiv</sup> Walvoord, John F., *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 123-124.

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