

## ***Background***

### **I. Background - Introduction**

- A. We should approach these questions with patience and humility.
- B. Using John 1:29 to set the stage for what we are discussing.
- C. The *basic* understanding of the phrase *who takes away the sin of the world* is clear.
- D. However, this phrase of John's is being used by universalists.
- E. How should we understand the "universalistic" expressions in the Gospel of John?
- F. This discussion has been called, "the *extent* of the atonement - for whom did Christ die?"

### **II. Four different views regarding the extent of the atonement and four 4 questions.**

- A. See the table
- B. Is some type of limitation necessary? Yes, if we are not to become universalists.
- C. View 1 needs to be understood to properly interpret the New Testament.
- D. The subject is divided into six major sections:
  - 1. The Exegetical Argument for Particular Redemption
  - 2. The Priestly Argument for Particular Redemption
  - 3. The Covenantal Argument for Particular Redemption
  - 4. The Efficacy Of Christ's Death - an Argument for Particular Redemption
  - 5. The Father's Purpose - an Argument for Particular Redemption
  - 6. Other Universalistic Texts considered

## *The Exegetical Argument for Particular Redemption*

### **I. Introduction**

- A. Does the Scripture make direct statements that answer the question, “for whom did Christ die?” Yes, Some of these statements refer to believers.
- B. However, other statements have a *universalistic emphasis*.

### **II. Statements which emphasize particularism**

- A. John 10:11 - The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.
- B. John 10:15 - The Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- C. Acts 20:28 - The church of God was purchased with God’s own blood.
- D. Rom 8:32 - The *us all* of verse 32 for whom the Son was delivered up refers to verse 29.
- E. Eph. 5:25 - Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her.
- F. Rom. 5:1, 8,9,10 - The “us” of verse 8 is referring to believers in this passage.
- G. Gal. 1:2,4 - The same interpretation above for Romans 5:8 applies.
- H. Gal. 3:13 - The same interpretation above for Romans 5:8 applies.
- I. Other texts could be put forth of the nature of Romans 5:8, Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:13-14, 21-22.

### **III. Universalistic statements**

- A. John 1:29 - The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world.
- B. John 3:16 - God so loved the world that He gave His son as an atoning sacrifice.
- C. John 4:42 - Jesus is the Saviour of the world.
- D. John 6:33, 51 - The Lamb gives His flesh for the life of the world.
- E. 1 John 2:2 - He was the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the whole world.
- F. 2 Cor. 5:19 - God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.
- G. 1 Tim. 2:6 - He gave himself a ransom for all.
- H. Heb. 2:9 - Christ tasted death for everyone.

### **IV. Differences in understanding**

- A. Notice how each side in this controversy is understanding these statements.
- B. See the table

### **V. Understanding the historical context of the NT letters is crucial.**

- A. Six of the universalistic statements are from John’s writings.
- B. John wanted to ensure that his readers would not limit the scope of the Christ’s death.
- C. What was the smaller scope that many of John’s readers may have tended to limit Christ’s death to?

- D. Thus John's intention was to expand the scope of the death of Christ in the minds of his readers. Thus his repeated use of the term world.
- E. However, we should also ask, when John used the term world, what *type* of expansion in thought did he intend? "every person who has ever lived, *past and future*" or "individuals from *every non-Jewish nation on the earth*"?
- F. Notice Romans 11:12, 15 - this is the use of world in John.
- G. John 3:14-17 - What did the term *world* in verse 17 refer to in *this* conversation?
- H. But, do John's writings also limit the scope of this expansion? Yes
- I. John 11:48-52 - Children of God scattered abroad
- J. John 10:11 & 10:26 - The unbelievers are not part of His sheep
- K. John 13:1 - He loves His own who are in the world
- L. John 17:1-10 - Jesus prays not for the world, but those given Him out of the world.

#### **VI. Early Jewish Christians believed in an overly limited atonement - view 1 (see table)**

- A. A failure to realize that the NT's universalistic statements were addressed to a Jewish mind set has led to much misunderstanding.
- B. John 7:34-35 - they can't imagine the gospel would go to the Greeks
- C. Acts 10:24-48 - the apostles were slow to understand the expansion
- D. Acts 11:19-20 - very few, if any, of the early Christian Jews understood the expansion
- E. The "problem" the NT is addressing *is not* "how is it that God does not save everyone". The early Jewish Christian church had no struggle with an unconditional election and a limited atonement.

#### **VII.A summary of the exegetical argument presented thus far:**

- A. The historic situation addressed by the NT was one in which most Jewish believers unconsciously held to an overly "limited atonement".
- B. The universalistic statements of the NT are designed to correct this problem. When Jewish Christians heard the world or nations referred to, they did not think, every individual irrespective of race. *They thought, all the other, non Jewish, races.*
- C. That John did not intend his readers to understand his universalistic statements in the "every individual who has ever lived" sense is clear from other statements he recorded.
- D. Acts 10:45, 11:1, 18, 14:27, 15:3,7 - John's use the term world in John 3:14-17 and 1:29 is similar to the use of the term Gentile in these passages in Acts. No one would expect that *every* Gentile is being referred to in these passages.
- E. Rev. 5:8-10 - The particularistic statements, that state for whom Christ died, should be taken at face value. Jesus died for the sheep. However the flock is made up of sheep called from all the nations of the world.