

Title: **LIMITED ATONEMENT**

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PRECIOUS REDEMPTION

Text: Psalm 49:8

Subject: *The Gospel Doctrine of Redemption*

Introduction:

I believe in limited atonement. In this house of worship, the sweet, soul-cheering, gospel doctrine of limited atonement is like salt and pepper and bread and butter — It's always on the table. We never have a meal at our house without salt and pepper and bread and butter. And in the house of God we never have a gospel "*feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined*" without the gospel doctrine of limited atonement on the table. I don't flavor my sermons with it now and then. I don't preach it once in awhile. If you walk through those doors you can expect to hear me preach limited atonement. If I preach here or anywhere else I preach limited atonement.

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The title of my message is **LIMITED ATONEMENT** — *or* — **PRECIOUS REDEMPTION**. You will find my text in the 49th Psalm.

DEFINITION

While you are turning to Psalm 49, let me tell you exactly what I mean when I use the term “limited atonement.” — We believe, according to the plainest possible statements of God the Holy Ghost in Holy Scripture, that the Lord Jesus Christ died for, made atonement for, and effectually redeemed God’s elect, that all for whom the Son of God suffered and died at Calvary shall be saved by the power of his grace in time.

Everyone who believes anything about the atonement believes in limited atonement.

- **We limited, as the Scriptures everywhere teach,** that our Lord’s intention, his design, his

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object in his sin-atonement sacrifice at Calvary was the everlasting salvation of God's elect, his sheep, those he came to save, those for whom he made intercession, his people. — The atonement and its benefits are, by God's eternal decree, limited to his elect, those who are actually saved by it.

- The will-worship Arminian cries, "Not so! I believe in John 3:16. I believe that God loves everybody and Jesus died for everybody." The babbling will-worshippers prefer to limit the merit of Christ's blood, the worth of his sacrifice, and the power of his grace. **They blasphemously assert that multitudes go to hell because the blood of Christ poured out at Calvary** — did not actually satisfy divine justice! — did not actually put away anyone's sins! — did not actually redeem anyone! — did not actually secure anyone's salvation!

Now, let's look at our text, Psalm 49:8.

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Psalm 49:8 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever.)

A PARABLE

Back up to verse 3. Let's read our text in its context. The Psalmist tells us that he is about to declare something of great wisdom and understanding in a parable.

Psalm 49:3-4 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding. ⁴ I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

He opens the dark sayings of his parable by raising a question (v. 5).

Psalm 49:5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall

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compass me about?

For the believer (like the Psalmist), for one who trusts Christ, there is nothing to fear in death, not even when the sins he has committed all the days of his life gather around his heels. — Christ is my righteousness! — He took my sins away!

For the unbeliever death is another story. How fearful death is to the wicked! Without Christ, poor, fallen sinners have no hope. For them, death is the king of terrors; and the thing that makes death so terrifying is the gathering of your iniquity around your conscience. So the wicked do everything they can to bribe death and rob the grave.

But here God the Holy Ghost tells us that those who trust in their riches (their earthly wealth, skill, power, exercise, dietary discipline, etc.) to keep them out of the grave are fools. You will not bribe death. You

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cannot rob the grave. You cannot stretch out your appointed time on this earth (vv. 6-7).

Psalm 49:6-7 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
⁷ None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

Read this fact at the heading of every funeral announcement: — Death will not be bribed! — The grave will not be robbed! — “*Prepare to meet thy God!*”

No man can stop the progress of death for himself or do anything to redeem his brother. But this very statement about the inability of man to redeem his brother seems to be designed of God to point us to One who became a Man that he might be a Brother able to Redeem. That Brother who is able to redeem is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior.

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Now, read verse 8 again. Notice that this verse is placed in parentheses by our translators. The parenthesis is there to indicate that is explanatory. Here the Holy Spirit seems to be saying, “There is a Brother Able to Redeem. His redemption is a finished redemption. All who are redeemed by him live forever, and shall not see corruption!”

Psalm 49:8-9 (For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) ⁹ That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

“The redemption of their soul is precious.” — No sinner can redeem himself, and none can redeem his brother, because we have nothing with which to pay the ransom price. — “*For the redemption of their soul is precious!*” The only ransom price by which the souls of men could be redeemed is “*the precious blood of Christ.*”

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“For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever.” — Dear and precious is the redemption of the soul. It cannot be bought with corruptible things like silver and gold. But the precious blood of Christ is a ransom price of infinite worth.

1 Peter 1:18-20 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; ¹⁹ But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

The redemption of our souls is precious because it is a redemption obtained by precious blood, “the

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precious blood of Christ!” The Savior’s blood is called precious blood because...

- It’s his blood!
- It’s sin-atonement blood!
- It’s accepted blood!
- It’s eternal blood!
- It’s effectual blood!

Sinners ransomed by the sacrifice of Christ are dearly purchased, so dearly purchased that once the ransom price was paid redemption ceased forever. Those purchased cannot be lost. — *“It ceaseth forever!”* This is God’s work!

- **Nothing can be added to it!** — Not Good Works! — Not Baptism! — Not Even Faith!
- **Nothing can be taken from it.** — Not one of the redeemed can become unredeemed! — Not one debt cancelled can be uncanceled! — Not one sin removed can be brought back!

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No man is so foolish as to pay a ransom for unspecified people. Neither did our Savior.

- *“For the transgression was he stricken!”*
- *“The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep!”*
- *“I pray for them...I pray not for the world!”*

How we rejoice in the sweet gospel doctrine of limited atonement! God’s elect, being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, are effectually redeemed forever! What mercy is here! Oh, precious Lamb of God, all thanks and praise we give to you for your great, tender compassion toward us, *“for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation!”*

JUST REDEMPTION

Redemption is as much an act of divine justice as it is a matter of divine mercy. It is God’s greatest act of

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love and mercy that he gave his Son to die in the place of sinners. But it is also the clearest display of his justice. The precious blood of Christ was shed as a ransom price, paid into the hands of justice. It was the price required by the law. It is now clear that God is inflexibly just, for when his own darling Son was made sin for us he was slain according to the strict requirement of the law. And now that the law has been fully satisfied justice will not allow one soul to perish for whom Christ died.

Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.

Justice will not allow a double payment for sin. **The justice of God pleads as strongly as his mercy for the eternal salvation of his elect.** The price of redemption for them was paid at Calvary. At the cross, *“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”*

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Because Christ died and rose again, “*He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.*”

- Sovereign mercy purposed it.
- And satisfied justice demands it.

EFFECTUAL REDEMPTION

A just redemption is and must be a particular and effectual redemption. The foolish notion of universal redemption (the doctrine that Christ died for everyone) is as blasphemous as it is foolish.

We rejoice to hear God say of our Redeemer, “**He shall not fail!**”

- The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ shall never be discovered a miscarriage.
- Every sinner for whom the Lord Jesus died shall live forever with him.
- Each ransomed soul shall be born again at God’s appointed time by the omnipotent operations of his grace.

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- Because the redemption of our souls was accomplished by the precious blood of Christ, The Lord God declares, regarding every redeemed sinner, “*He shall live forever, and not see corruption*” (Psalm 49:9).

Thanks, eternal thanks and praise, everlasting praise, we give to you, O God, our Savior, for the redemption of our souls!

FOUR WORDS

“*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree*” (Galatians 3:13). — Redemption is our Savior’s finished work; and it is precious!

When the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hung upon the cursed tree, because he was made sin for us, he was made a curse, an object of divine wrath and

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judgment, so that we who believe might never endure the curse of God's wrath. Being made a curse for us, "*Christ hath redeemed us!*"

He did not simply make it possible for us to be redeemed. He did not simply make us redeemable. The text says, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law!*" This redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ is the central theme of Holy Scripture, the foundation of our faith, and the only hope we have of eternal salvation. This is the good news we proclaim in the gospel. We say to every sinner in all the world who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, "*Christ hath redeemed us!*" The work is accomplished! Redemption is finished.

Let me wrap this message up by giving you four words to remember when you think about redemption. Here are four words which set forth and define the redemptive work of our Lord. I believe these four words will both instruct and comfort your

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souls and inspire your hearts with thanksgiving and praise to the Lord Jesus Christ for his great and precious redemption.

SOVEREIGNTY

The *first* word is “sovereignty.” Our Lord's work of redemption was an act of his own divine sovereignty. “*He laid down his life for us.*” There was nothing in us which compelled him, or moved him to redeem us. He voluntarily laid down his life for us, because it was the free and sovereign pleasure of his love to do so. **The Lord Jesus Christ was in absolute, sovereign control over all things, even in his death.**

He displayed his sovereignty as God in Gethsemane’s garden, before Pilate, and upon the cross. **Yes, Christ, the sovereign God, determined everything about his death.** He determined that he would die, who his murderers would be, when he

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would die, where he would die, how he would die, for whom he would die, and what the results of his death would be.

SUCCESS

The *second* word is “success.” Because our Redeemer is the eternal, sovereign God, we are assured that his death and his redemptive work is a success, and not a failure. The prophecy has been fulfilled — “*He shall not fail!*” In stating that the Lord Jesus Christ is a successful Savior, **I am simply proclaiming that which must be a self-evident truth: — Whatever the Lord Jesus Christ intended to accomplish at Calvary, he has accomplished.**

He is God. His purpose and will in redemption must, of a certainty, be fulfilled (Isaiah 46:9-10). When Paul describes that which Christ has done in redemption, he describes our Lord as One who has

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successfully completed his mission (Hebrews 10:11-14). He has successfully put away sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and redeemed a people unto himself (Ephesians 1:7).

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Hebrews 10:9-14 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. ¹⁰ By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. ¹¹ And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: ¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ¹³ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering he hath perfected for ever

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them that are sanctified.

SUBSTITUTION

The *third* word is “substitution.” The Lord Jesus Christ died as a Substitute for a particular people; and those people for whom Christ died as a substitute at Calvary, bearing their sins and enduring the wrath of God in their place, shall never perish. They are redeemed. Their sins have been put away. He who was made sin for us has made us the righteousness of God in himself (Daniel 9:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:12, 26).

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.¹⁸ And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the

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world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. ²¹ For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

SATISFACTION

The *fourth* word is “satisfaction.” Our blessed Savior's one, substitutionary sacrifice for our sins has completely and perfectly satisfied the wrath and justice of God against us. His sacrifice was infinitely meritorious, so that every sinner who believes on Christ is freely justified and fully pardoned. God, looking on the merits of his Son, pardons every sinner who looks on his Son in faith. Through the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which the law and justice of God are satisfied, God is

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both just and the justifier of all who believe (Romans 3:24-26). — *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus!”* By the merit and efficacy of Christ’s precious blood...

- The Purpose of God is satisfied.
- The law of God is satisfied.
- The Son of God shall be satisfied.
- Every ransomed soul is satisfied.

Limited atonement is precious redemption. — *“For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth forever.”*

Amen.

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¹ Danville — Sunday Morning – June 16, 2013
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Reading: *Psalm 49:1-20*