

*Redemption
Accomplished
and Applied*

by John Murray

Sixth Lecture

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Review

- We have covered:
 - The necessity of the atonement
 - The nature of the atonement
 - The perfection of the atonement
- Now we are ready to address the extent of the atonement
- The question is; For whom did Christ die?
- The answer to this question is controversial, but Biblically clear and of central importance to our faith

For Whom Did Christ Die?

- We must first make clear what the statement means; what exactly does it mean to say that Christ died for someone?
- From our study of the nature and perfection of the atonement, we can say it refers to:
 - The historic, final, unique and efficacious sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation and redemption accomplished by Jesus' vicarious active and passive obedience
 - It does *not* mean that Christ only served as an example or that he made it possible to be saved

Christ Died for Us

- Murray writes,

When Paul says that Christ “died for us” (1 Thess. 5:10) or that “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3) ... He is thinking of the stupendous truth that Christ loved [us] and gave himself up for [us] (Gal. 2:20), that Christ died in [our] room and stead, and that therefore we have redemption through the blood of Christ. ...

What does redemption mean? It does not mean redeemability, that we are placed in a redeemable position. It means that Christ purchased and procured redemption. This is the triumphal note of the New Testament whenever it plays on the redemptive chord.

Christ Died for Us

- Jesus said,

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:37-40

- The Father gave the Son a particular people

Secure in Christ

- The Old Testament frequently refers to God's people as his inheritance and, in Psalm 2:8, they are specifically called Christ's inheritance
- We are the Father's gift to the Son and *none* of those whom God has chosen will be lost
- Murray says,
Security inheres in Christ's redemptive accomplishment. And this means that, in respect of the persons contemplated, design and accomplishment and final realization have all the same extent. RA&A, pg 64

God's Purpose is Accomplished

- Our security is based on the faithful love and sovereignty of God, he will complete what he has begun (Phil 1:6)
- What God decrees is always accomplished

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:10-11

Limited Atonement

- We are discussing the Reformed doctrine called Limited Atonement; the L in TULIP
 - Total depravity
 - Unconditional election
 - Limited atonement
 - Irresistible grace
 - Perseverance of the saints
- But, limited atonement may not be the best term to use as we will see, so it is also referred to as definite atonement, particular atonement or particular redemption

Limited Atonement

- Murray writes,

Whether the expression “limited atonement” is good or not we must reckon with the fact that unless we believe in the final restoration of all men we cannot have an unlimited atonement. If we universalize the extent we limit the efficacy. If some of those for whom atonement was made and redemption wrought perish eternally, then the atonement is not itself efficacious. It is this alternative that the proponents of universal atonement must face. They have a “limited” atonement and limited in respect of that which impinges upon its essential character.

Limited Atonement

- We will begin by examining the Biblical basis for this view and will then move on to look at opposing views and their interpretations of the relevant texts
- Murray adduces only two of the Biblical arguments one can make for this doctrine
 - Romans 8:31-39 shows that Christ only died for those who enjoy the blessings of redemption, which is clearly not true of everyone
 - All those for whom Christ died will live a new life, which is also clearly not true of everyone

Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? (continued)

Romans 8:31-39

As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Who is Us?

- In 8:31 Paul asks, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”*
- Who is “us” in this verse?
- It must be those Paul speaks of in verses 28-30, *we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*
- In other words, it must be those who are ultimately saved

What Does “All” Mean?

- Then, in 8:32, Paul writes, “*He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all*”
- Adding the word “all” here cannot make the “us” all of a sudden universal, Murray rightly says this would be absurd and goes on to say,

it is well to be reminded that the giving up of the Son is correlative with the free bestowal of all good gifts. We may not extend the scope of the sacrifice of the Son beyond the scope of all the other free gifts ... “how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”

RA&A, pg 67

Romans 8:31-39 Continued

- In 8:33-34 Paul says,

Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns?

- Murray writes,

The thought moves strictly within the orbit defined by election and justification, and the reference to election and justification harks back to verses 28-30 where predestination and justification are shown to be coextensive.

RA&A, pg 67

Romans 8:31-39 Continued

- Now look at the rest of verse 34; Paul again refers to the death of Christ,
Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
- Note, Christ died, was raised, and is also interceding for “us” – those chosen by God; it would be ridiculous to give Christ’s death a wider application than his intercession, which is clearly only for those who are saved

Romans 8:31-39 Continued

- Finally, Paul concludes with the wonderful passage (vv 35-39),

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- The love shown by God's giving his Son (v 32) cannot have a wider application than the love that guarantees a believer's eternal security, so "we" and "us" refers to those who are saved

Murray's 2nd Argument: New Life

- Paul wrote,

we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

2 Corinthians 5:14

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 6:4

- Christ died for us, but because of our union with him, the Bible also says that we died with him and will, therefore, be raised to live a new life

Living a New Life

- Paul explains what this new life is,
he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2 Corinthians 5:15

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ... Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust ... You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. ... you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self Colossians 3:3-10

Living a New Life

- Murray concludes from these Scriptures,
We have, therefore, the following sequence of propositions, established by the explicit utterances of the apostle. All for whom Christ died also died in Christ. All who died in Christ rose again with Christ. This rising again with Christ is a rising to newness of life ... those for whom Christ died are those and those only who die to sin and live to righteousness. Now it is a plain fact that not all die to sin and live in newness of life. Hence ... we [cannot] say that Christ died for all men. ... If we cannot say that Christ died for all men, neither can we say that the atonement is universal ...

What is the Alternative?

- We may reasonably ask what the alternative is to the doctrine of limited atonement
- If we agree with Murray on the efficacious, once-for-all nature of the atonement, the only alternatives are that either no one is saved, or everyone is saved; both of which are clear violations of Biblical teaching; e.g., *“they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”* (Matt 25:46)

Also see Matt 8:11, Lk 12:5, 16:23, Rev 20:10,15

The Atonement Must be Limited

- Therefore, those who argue in favor of a universal atonement do have a “limited” atonement; it must be limited in its efficacy
- We quoted Murray previously:
If we universalize the extent we limit the efficacy.
- The only other option is to believe that in spite of the Biblical teaching to the contrary, everyone will be saved; we will address this next time because there are many now who believe in universal salvation

Objections to Particular Atonement

- What are the arguments against particular atonement? Opponents claim that if the doctrine of particular atonement is true, then:
 - The offer of the gospel is not genuine
 - There is no reason to evangelize anyone
 - Human free will is not real

Is the Gospel Offer Genuine?

- Opponents of the doctrine of particular atonement argue that it does not allow us to make a true offer of the gospel to everyone
- There are three forms of this argument:
 - The atonement is a payment for a debt, and it would be unjust for God to punish sinners for a debt already paid, therefore it can't be sufficient for all and the offer is not, therefore, genuine
 - If the value of the atonement was sufficient, but not intended to satisfy the debts of all, then
 - It isn't a genuine offer because it wasn't so intended
 - Justice demands the offer be limited to those intended

adapted from Hodge, Syst. Theol., Vol. II, pp 554-558

Is the Gospel Offer Genuine?

- The first argument – that of a double payment being unjust – confuses a pecuniary debt with a judicial satisfaction
 - If I owe a bank \$1000 and that amount is paid on my behalf, the debt is taken care of; the bank cannot justly ask for another \$1000 from me
 - But there is no direct correspondence between the debt incurred by our sin and the payment made by Christ, it was a judicial satisfaction; e.g., there is no one-to-one correspondence between armed robbery and time spent in prison
- So, Christ's payment was sufficient for all and there was no double payment

Is the Gospel Offer Genuine?

- Hodge answers the second argument – that the payment was not intended for all and therefore cannot be genuinely offered to all:

Every man is required to satisfy the demands of the law. No man is required to do either more or less. If those demands are satisfied by a representative or substitute, his work is equally available for all. The secret purpose of God in providing such a substitute for man, has nothing to do with the nature of his work, or with its appropriateness. The righteousness of Christ being of infinite value or merit, and being in its nature precisely what all men need, may be offered to all men. It is thus offered to the elect and to the non-elect; and it is offered to both classes conditionally. That condition is a cordial acceptance of it as the only ground of justification.

Is the Gospel Offer Genuine?

- The third argument – that justice demands the offer be limited to those for whom it was intended – again confuses a pecuniary and a judicial satisfaction

- Hodge explains,

There is no grace in accepting a pecuniary satisfaction. It cannot be refused. It ipso facto [by the very fact] liberates. The moment the debt is paid the debtor is free; and that without any condition. Nothing of this is true in the case of judicial satisfaction. If a substitute be provided and accepted it is a matter of grace. ... (continued)

It [the judicial satisfaction] may accrue to the benefit of those for whom it is made at once or at a remote period; completely or gradually; on conditions or unconditionally; or it may never benefit them at all unless the condition on which its application is suspended be performed. ... Those for whom it was specially rendered are not justified from eternity; they are not born in a justified state; they are by nature, or birth, the children of wrath even as others. To be the children of wrath is to be justly exposed to divine wrath. They remain in this state of exposure until they believe

- Our faith is the condition on which we receive the benefit, it does not make it efficacious

No Reason to Evangelize?

- No matter what the truth is about the extent of the atonement, the Bible clearly:
 - Commands us to evangelize (Matt 28:19-20, Mark 16:15, Rom 10:14)
 - Tells us that no one who comes to Jesus in faith will be turned away (Rom 1:16, 10:8-13, Rev 3:20)

No Reason to Evangelize?

- In addition:
 - The fact that there is some mystery involved in how God uses secondary agents to carry out his saving work is no excuse for us to not obey his command to evangelize
 - Knowing that no one will be damned because of our failure is a great comfort (but not an excuse)!
 - A true Christian cannot keep quiet!

Application

- Are you one for whom Christ died?
- Strive to make your calling and election sure:

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ... Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: ... you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self

Colossians 3:3-10

- If this is true of you, then walk in confidence, remembering what Paul wrote ...

Application

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:35-39

Prepare for Next Session

- You should read Chapter Five, the brief conclusion to *Redemption Accomplished*, to prepare for our next session