

**TULIP – LIMITED ATONEMENT**

*For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given to Him by the Father; that He should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever. – THE CANONS OF DORT, “Second Head of the Death of Christ and the Redemption of Men Thereby,” Article 8.<sup>1</sup>*

We have now arrived at that place within the five-points of Calvinism that is most frequently neglected by those who otherwise profess to be Calvinists – they are identified as being *four-point Calvinists*; however, it is also contended that “all five of these doctrines [the whole TULIP] ‘hang together’ and are impossible to separate from one another.”<sup>2</sup> Clearly, those who claim to be less than five-point Calvinists do not understand its teachings thoroughly enough to recognize the cohesion that exists. I was told by an ardent Calvinist that it all fits together beautifully (which is why he couldn’t understand my refusal to accept it), and its cohesion may well remain intact as long as you do not study the Scriptures carefully. As we have seen so far in our study, a careful examination of the Scriptures that they use to support their doctrines reveals a truth that undermines their profession; it is important that we hold a greater allegiance to the Word of God than to the doctrines of men.

*Atonement*, within the OT, always dealt with the matter of sin; it is most commonly suggested that it means to cover over, but a closer examination of the Hebrew yields the more specific understanding of “to atone by offering a substitute”<sup>3</sup> – within the OT sacrificial system, it was the sacrificed animal (the innocent) whose blood was shed in the place of the sinner (the guilty). *Atone* means to be in harmony, in agreement, and to be *at one*;<sup>4</sup> the shed blood of the sacrifice became a temporary means of reconciling a sinful person with a holy God when it was accompanied by that person’s faith in Him. Jesus, the *Word* made flesh, came to shed His blood so that through faith in His one sacrifice, sinful man could be brought into fellowship (*harmony*) with Him – He became our Substitute (the Atonement, shedding His blood for us) in fulfillment of the OT sacrifices. Within the Mosaic Law, the sacrifices of a sweet savor unto the Lord and those made for the sin of ignorance were carefully prescribed; nevertheless, both offerings were also open and available to *the stranger* who dwelt within Israel (Numbers 15:3-16, 27-29) – the Lord made the same means

<sup>1</sup> <https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Canons-of-Dort-with-Intro.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace4.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace4.html).

<sup>3</sup> *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, #1023, p. 453.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=atone>.

of cleansing available to the foreigner as for the Israelite. Within this light, when we hear of the Calvinists' doctrine of *limited atonement*, it might appear to be a surprise; the Lord made His provision for cleansing available to whoever desired it within the Old Mosaic Covenant, but after Christ has paid the full price for sin (as foreshadowed by the OT sacrifices), why is His cleansing suddenly only open to those individuals whom God has chosen from eternity past? Or, perhaps there is something very wrong with the doctrine of *limited atonement*!

The Westminster Confession expounds very clearly their understanding of this matter: "As God hath appointed the elect [those whom He has individually chosen from eternity past (according to their teachings)] unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. **Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only**" (emphasis added).<sup>5</sup> They are saying that Christ's atoning work on the cross was **only** for those individuals who have been chosen by God.

As we consider this doctrine of Calvinism, we can readily anticipate that the difficulty that arises has less to do with the subject of *atonement* and everything to do with their word *limited* (or *real, actual* or *effective*) as it is applied to Christ's sacrifice for sin.<sup>6</sup> This clarification is made on this matter: "those who believe in limited atonement **do not teach that the power and value of Christ's death is in any way limited. The only thing limited is the number of those for whom Christ died**, and the limitation is not due to any defect in the work or death of Christ but to **God's sovereign decree to save some and not others**" (emphasis added).<sup>7</sup> In other words, they are saying that the atonement for sin that came through Christ's death and resurrection is potentially unlimited, but because God chose some individuals from eternity past for salvation, His *unlimited atonement* is now limited to the elect (the chosen). Therefore, the difficulty with their teaching of *limited atonement* goes back to their doctrine of *unconditional election* (from their own words). It can easily be seen why many within Calvinism struggle with this teaching: they acclaim that Christ's death was sufficient to cover the sins of all of mankind (it is *not limited*) but then immediately limit His work to the *elect* – Christ died for everyone, but God has limited *everyone* to the *elect*. What they consider to be their doctrinal advantage within this teaching is this: "The doctrine of limited atonement teaches that Christ by His death on the cross **actually saves those for whom He died and does not just make salvation a possibility**" (emphasis added).<sup>8</sup> They claim a definite result (a finite number) from Christ's atoning death (the *elect* are saved), whereas those who consider Christ's atonement as being unlimited cannot say that everyone for whom Christ died will be saved. Recognizing that this is a teaching that many even within Calvinism find

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<sup>5</sup> <https://thewestminsterstandard.org/the-westminster-confession/#Chapter%20III>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-356/the-atonement-real-or-potential>.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace4.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace4.html).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

difficult to understand and accept, let's look at some of the Scriptures that they put forward in support of this doctrine.

**Matthew 1:21** – *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* Being the first of their *primary references* in support of this teaching, they provide this explanation for considering this text to be of such importance: “Notice here the emphasis on ‘his people.’ They are the ones Jesus saves and no others. Whoever they may be (and the Scriptures teach us in other places that they are the elect), they are a limited and particular number of persons. But notice also the emphasis on the fact that He *does* save them. He does not merely make salvation available but saves them from their sins entirely. Most important of all is the fact that these are the reasons why He is called JESUS. To deny either of these things is to deny His very name and the meaning of His name.”<sup>9</sup> Let's evaluate this carefully, being aware of the tendency among those who are defending their position (particularly when it is often indefensible) to overstate their case and to make statements without any proof. Their first point is that *his people* is *emphasized*; this is a very poor start, for, in fact, this phrase is **not** emphasized at all; the phrase in Greek is simply *the people of Him*.<sup>10</sup> If there is any emphasis within this text, it would have to be on Jesus: *for He, Himself will save the people of Him*;<sup>11</sup> this emphasizes that He alone is the One Who will bring salvation. Who are *his people*? Yes, they are the people whom Jesus *will* save (future tense) from their sins, they are the only ones whom Jesus will save, and quite obviously the number of those who will be saved is not infinite (therefore, it is limited) – these are not unique understandings to the Calvinists and their doctrine of *limited atonement*. Believing that Jesus died for the sins of all of humanity does not change any of these at all: Jesus said that He will save those who remain faithfully obedient to Him (Matthew 24:13), only those who are believing in Him (and obeying) will be saved (John 3:36), and He made it very clear that only a few would find the Gate to life (Matthew 7:14). What seems to have eluded the Calvinists' attention is that **none** of these things provides one iota of support for their *limited atonement* doctrine; saying that Jesus *does not merely make salvation available but saves them*, is an anemic justification for being able to say that none of Jesus' atoning work was wasted on those who won't be saved. Yet, it was God's great love for **all of humanity** that brought the eternal Word to earth in order to die for their atonement (John 3:16); if Jesus came to die only for the *elect* (as under their thinking), that does **not** demonstrate a very *great love* for humanity. I would suggest that their first reference, upon careful scrutiny, has failed them.

These next “proofs” center around a common theme: does the Bible's use of *many* fall into an inclusive or exclusive application? When we use the word *many*, it is commonly understood that this does not include a *few* – i.e., it is *exclusive* in its function; if we wish to include everyone, then we use the word *all*. Within Hebrew, the word *kol* is defined as *the whole* – if the noun following is plural, then it can be translated as *all*, or if the noun following is singular and without an article then it would be *every*; however, rather than being an inclusive word like our English *all*, it is applied to *the whole* as a unit, and so appears only in the singular, even when it is used in a plural

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace4.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace4.html).

<sup>10</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>11</sup> Friberg Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

sense.<sup>12</sup> The Hebrew word *rab*, as an adjective, means *many, great, large*, etc. but doesn't carry the *exclusive* sense like our English word *many*;<sup>13</sup> in other words, this Hebrew word does not identify that a *few* have been excluded – it doesn't hold a *many-but-not-all* concept: just a *large number*. Therefore, particular care must be taken when interpreting the Hebrews Scriptures where these words are used. Additionally, as with most languages, the precise meaning of a word can also vary depending upon its context. With this in mind, let's keep going.

The first verse that the Calvinists pull to demonstrate from Scripture “that Christ gave His life for a select and limited number of persons and not for every single person” is: **Isaiah 53:11** – *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant **justify many**; for he shall bear their iniquities*. The words in bold are those that are used to defend the Calvinists' doctrine of Christ dying for only some of humanity; however, what is being explained here is that Jesus would be the means whereby *many* would be declared to be righteous (*justify*). Since this word (Hebrew *rab*) does not include the exclusive concept like our word *many*, all that is presented here is that there will be a large number who will be *justified* by the Lord – there is nothing here to create the *limiting* factor that the Calvinists teach. Perhaps their intention was to look to the next verse: “Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and **he bare the sin of many**, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). The same Hebrew word is used here, but this time it is within the context of the Savior bearing the sin of *many*, which would appear to be more fitting for their argument. As John Calvin commented on this verse, he said this: “Yet I approve of the ordinary reading, that he alone bore the punishment of many, because **on him was laid the guilt of the whole world**. It is evident from other passages, and especially from the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that ‘many’ sometimes denotes ‘all’” (emphasis added).<sup>14</sup> There are some who have contended that much of what is modern Calvinism was shaped more by the Synod of Dort than by the pen of John Calvin and, indeed, his thoughts on Isaiah 53:12 would seem to support such a position. Consider Romans 5:15b (from the passage to which Calvin alluded): “For if through the offence of one **many** be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto **many**.” *Many* is from the Greek word *polus*, which under ordinary usage is an exclusive word (like our English *many*); however, context must be brought to bear so that we understand it correctly. Just earlier (v. 12), Paul stated that it was through *one man* (Adam) that sin and death entered into the world, with the full understanding that **all** who are born of Adam (i.e., all of humanity) are born under sin and death; therefore, when he now says that through *one* (Adam) *many* are dead (that means **all**) and God's grace by Christ (*one man*) is extended unto *many*, we must understand that *many*, as it is used here (the parallel structure requires *all* in both cases), means **all of humanity** – this is what John Calvin understood and then applied to Isaiah 53:12! Even though the Greek word *polus* typically means *many* (in the exclusive sense), there are times when the context requires that it be inclusive and mean *all* (as here); so Paul states that even as **all of humanity** died through the offence of one, so the gift of

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<sup>12</sup> *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, “all”; Strong's Dictionary.

<sup>13</sup> *Vine's*, “to be great, heavy.”

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/eng/cal/isaiah-53.html>.

God's grace through One has abounded unto **all of humanity**. This strikes at the very heart of *limited atonement*, and it does so with the blessing of John Calvin who recognized that Jesus bore the sin of the *whole world*.

Let's take a moment to establish this reality from other Scriptures; God has given us His Word so that we are able to compare Scripture with Scripture in order to help us to understand His desire for us. "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Timothy 4:10); *because we hope in the living God Who is the Savior of all men [panton anthropon (both plural!)], especially of the believing*.<sup>15</sup> We saw earlier that God's grace is extended to **all of humanity** through Christ, which clearly makes God *the Savior of all men* – He is the One and only Way to be saved. Jesus stated: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me" (John 14:6); Jesus is the Savior for *all men* because He is the **only** Savior for all of humanity! However, He is *especially* the Savior of those who have placed their trust in Him because they are *believing* – for them He is their known Savior, for the rest of humanity He is their only hope for salvation. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that [here is God's stated purpose for the Son coming to earth] whosoever believeth [*is believing*; present tense participle, active voice] in him should not perish [it is God's *purpose* that the one who *is believing has not come to ruin*], but have [His *purpose* again: *is having*] everlasting life" (John 3:16).<sup>16</sup> We must not miss that it is *whosoever* (*anyone* – it is open to all of humanity, as we have seen) who *is believing* (active voice) and this is an ongoing belief (present tense); when someone is believing, then it is God's **intention** that that person does not come to ruin and that he is having everlasting life – while the *believing* is active, so is the freedom from perishing **and** the holding of life everlasting.<sup>17</sup> Jesus explained that "he that shall endure [*hupomeno* – to remain faithful to the Lord through trials] unto the end [of our time on earth], the same shall [a demonstrative pronoun that says: **this is the one who will** (future tense)] be saved" (Matthew 24:13)<sup>18</sup> – faithfulness is required in order to be saved by the Lord one day.

Having established through a proper understanding of Romans 5:15 that the expression of God's grace through the work of Christ has been extended abundantly unto all of humanity, and having seen other Scriptures that support this truth, we have a solid foundation for evaluating the Calvinists' next "proof" texts: **Matthew 20:28** – *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*; **Matthew 26:28** – *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sin*; **Hebrews 9:28** – *So Christ was once offered to bear the sin of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation*. Each of these wonderful Scriptures provide further evidence that the sacrifice that Christ made was for **all of humanity!** *Many*, in each of these instances, in the light of other Scriptures, can only be understood to mean **all**. "And he [Jesus] is

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<sup>15</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>16</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Strong's Online, <https://onlinebible.net/>.

<sup>18</sup> Strong's Online; Friberg Lexicon.

the propitiation [*means of forgiveness*] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world* [*all of humanity*]” (1 John 2:2).<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps a moment of clarification regarding 1 John 2:2, which speaks of Jesus being the *means of forgiveness* for the sins of the *whole (holos) world (kosmos)*.<sup>20</sup> Some within Calvinism have redefined *kosmos* to refer to “the children of God scattered abroad,” but this is a completely inconsistent definition of *world (kosmos)* that is used in a vain attempt to squeeze this text into the *limited atonement* mold.<sup>21</sup> Jesus said: “The world [*kosmos*] cannot hate you; but **me it hateth**, because I testify of it, that **the works thereof are evil**” (John 7:7); this would then mean that the “children of God scattered abroad” (using their understanding of *kosmos*) hate the Lord Jesus and that their works are evil! John later wrote: “*And we know that we are of God, and the **whole [holos] world [kosmos] lieth in wickedness***” (1 John 5:19) – the “children of God” lie in wickedness?<sup>22</sup> I fear that the author of that article was overly zealous in his determination to force this text to fit into his theology. *World (kosmos)* is most frequently a reference to humanity (sometimes also used to refer to the world system under Satan’s control), and if you consider the texts above in that light, then there is no difficulty with understanding what is actually meant. Unfortunately, redefining terms has become somewhat of a habit among those who try to make the Scriptures conform to their doctrines. When John the Baptist first saw Jesus, he declared: “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world [*kosmos*]” (John 1:29) – again, this word means humanity and not “the children of God scattered abroad.”

The difficulty in which modern-day Calvinists find themselves is due to their reluctance to study the original languages behind the English words of a text, **and** their decision to view God’s Word through the lens of their theology (rather than the other way around). The latter is their greatest failure; they have permitted the theology of Calvinism to be the driving force in how they understand the Scriptures – a particular theology or theologian has become a popular means of identifying what an individual believes, and it saves them the time of actually studying the Scriptures in order to determine *whether those things were so* (Acts 17:11). My wife and I heard recently “I believe what David Jeremiah believes” in matters related to eschatology, but unfortunately, David Jeremiah does not hold the same level of godly inspiration as the Scriptures. One Calvinist became particularly frustrated with me because I would not accept his understanding of some very plain Scriptures; his argument for accepting his Calvinism was that it all *fit together so perfectly*. He was well versed in a theology but remained largely ignorant of the truth of God’s Word; he also loved to speak of *sola Scriptura* (the Scriptures alone) but would always add: *and my Puritan writers so that I can understand the Scriptures correctly* – that is no longer *sola Scriptura* but simply a theology that is used to “interpret” God’s Word. We must be Bereans and weigh all things in the light of the Truth!

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<sup>19</sup> Friberg Lexicon; some Calvinists have taken 1 John 2:2 in parallel with John 11:51-52, and concluded that *the whole world* is to be understood as *the children of God scattered abroad* – a convenient but wild misapplication of Scripture (<https://www.monergism.com/understanding-1-john-22-john-samson-0#>).

<sup>20</sup> Friberg Lexicon; Strong’s Online.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.monergism.com/understanding-1-john-22-john-samson-0>

<sup>22</sup> Strong’s Online.

Let's consider a few other "proofs" that are a little different from what we have looked at to this point.

**John 6:37-39** – *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* Their explanation is this: "This passage also says that Christ actually loses none of those for whom He does His work. It is not as though Christ comes for all and yet loses many who slip away or do not believe. If He had lost even one of those for whom He came, He would not have done the Father's will, and His work would not even have been approved of God. This, by the way, also shows that it was **not even God's will that Christ should die for or make salvation possible for all men**" (emphasis added).<sup>23</sup> They go on: "This passage is also valuable because it gives clear guidance as to how the word 'all' is used in the Scriptures. We must not forget that it is not only used here but further defined as 'all whom the Father giveth me.' The 'all' for whom Christ died, as this passage shows so clearly, **never includes anyone but 'all' the elect**" (emphasis added).<sup>24</sup> Clearly, in their minds this is a very significant passage in supporting their position. Let's begin by looking at a literal translation of verse 37: *Everything that the Father is giving to Me, to Me it will come, and he who is coming to Me I will never leave out.*<sup>25</sup> *All (everything)* is in the neuter case (it does **not** refer to humanity) and singular number, and so *everything* (rather than *all*) is the best translation. *Come* is in the future tense, which tells us that everything that the Father is now giving to the Son will at some time in the future come to Him (He is *heir of all things*, Hebrews 1:2). Ephesians 1:10 tells us that in God's administration of the completion of times, He will gather together all things in heaven and earth under Christ's authority (see also Ephesians 1:22); the passage then goes on to speak of the predetermined inheritance that we have in Christ, which tells us that the *all things* in heaven and earth is not a specific reference to the permanent new heaven and earth that will be the inheritance of the faithful. Verse 10 refers, firstly, to the Millennium when the will of Christ will be done on earth (He will rule over everything and everyone during this time) even as it is being done in heaven (Matthew 6:10), and then, secondarily, to the new heaven and earth where there will be no corruption of created things. Therefore, John 6:37a is **not** referring to people who have been given to the Son by the Father, but rather to that time when all *things* (that are now being given to Jesus) will be under His governance and control.

The rest of John 6:37 says this: "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." *Him* is an article (*the*) that is in the masculine/singular form, used as a pronoun, and is correctly understood to be *he* (or, *him*).<sup>26</sup> *Cometh* is in the middle voice (and masculine/singular), present tense and tells us that this action is being taken by *he* or *him*; being in the middle voice, *cometh* is a verb that describes an action undertaken **by** *him* of which *he* **is** also the recipient or beneficiary

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<sup>23</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace4.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace4.html).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>26</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

of the action.<sup>27</sup> The rest of the verse tells us that this one who is coming, Jesus will absolutely never leave out – this is the benefit that *he* will reap from *his* action. Therefore, when speaking of the one who is coming to the Lord, this latter portion tells us: 1) the one who is coming is performing the action – he is not being irresistibly drawn (looking ahead to the “I” of TULIP, which would require a passive construction), and 2) he who is coming will find open acceptance in the Lord.

In the following verse (v. 38), Jesus goes on to say that He did not come from heaven in order to do His own will but the will of the Father Who had sent Him. The next two verses provide an explanation as to the *will* of the Father Who did send the Son into this world (although their quote stops with verse 39, the following verse needs to be included to complete the thought). The first (verse 39) parallels verse 37a as to content: “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:39). It is the Father’s will that the Son should lose nothing of what He has been given (*all* is again neuter and singular), and the Son will raise it up on the last day (there is no *again* in the Greek) – firstly, a restoration during the Millennium, and then that day when a fresh creation will be free of the taint of sin in the new heaven and earth (Romans 8:21 – even creation awaits deliverance from the present corruption).

As already noted, the next verse needs to be included in order to complete this passage: “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:40). The content of this not only parallels the second part of verse 37, but its form also matches the previous verse. The Greek word translated as *all* (*everything*) in verse 39, is here in its masculine/singular form and is correctly translated as *everyone*, and therefore, the subject of this verse relates to humanity (just like verse 37b). The actions that are taken **by** *everyone* are: 1) *seeth* (*theoreo*, which includes understanding or knowing; present tense, describing a continuous action; active voice, clarifying that it is *everyone* who is performing this action), 2) *believeth* (*pisteuo*, meaning a life-changing persuasion; once again, present tense and active voice), and 3) *may have everlasting life* (more literally: *is having life everlasting*; *have*, bearing the subjunctive mood within a purpose clause, describes the Father’s will regarding the one who is knowing the Son and whose life is changed by believing on Him).<sup>28</sup> Unless *knowing* and *believing* the Son are presently active in the life of *everyone*, the *having life everlasting* is not there; the everlasting life is contingent upon the *knowing* and *believing* remaining a present reality. Jesus said that if we desire to be saved, then we must remain faithful to Him to the very end of our time on earth (Matthew 24:13);<sup>29</sup> this is a required faithfulness in the midst of a time of great deception from many false prophets (from the context). In John 6:40, Jesus is saying that for the one who remains in Him (*knowing* and *believing*), He will raise him up on the last day – that great day of full salvation!

I don’t believe that the *last day* is the same for *everything* as it is for *everyone*. *Everything* will be made new when the old heaven and earth vanish (Revelation 20:11) and the new, eternal heaven

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<sup>27</sup> Strong’s Online; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/verbs1.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/verbs1.htm)

<sup>28</sup> Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

<sup>29</sup> Strong’s Online.

and earth are established (Revelation 21:1) – that will be the final *last day* for the old creation and the time when the new will *rise* to replace it forever. For *everyone*, the *last day* will differ depending upon his stand with the Lord. If he has lived faithfully for the Lord to the end of his lifetime (in obedience to His commands), then he will be raised to be with the Lord forever when He comes in the clouds to have His angels harvest the earth of those who are His – the faithful (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). For those who do not end their time on earth in faithfulness to the Lord, they will be raised to stand before God at the time when He will judge all of the dead (those who died with the removal of the old heaven and earth, and the unrighteous dead from Hades) – this will take place after the close of the Millennium (Revelation 20:11-15). How we will be *raised up* is dependent upon what we have done with the Lord Jesus during our time on earth; what our final rising will be, is established when we leave this earth – it is then unchangeable.

**John 10:14-15** – *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.* They explain how they view this as supportive of their doctrine: “This passage not only teaches limited atonement by its emphasis on the sheep as the ones for whom Christ died, but it teaches very plainly what we have previously called ‘particular’ atonement [which they define as: ‘Christ died only for particular persons and not for all people’] in that it tells us that Christ knows His sheep in the same way that the Father knows Him and He knows the Father, i.e., personally and by name. If this is true and if He laid down His life for those whom He knows personally, then **He cannot have died merely so that anyone and everyone might have a chance at salvation**” (emphasis added).<sup>30</sup> Once again, they have neglected the context of their choice text. Immediately before this, Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep” (John 10:11-13). Don’t miss the obvious: **the sheep already belong to the shepherd!** Jesus is explaining the level of protection that the shepherd gives to his sheep – he will risk his life (*giveth his life*) for the sake of his sheep; yes, Jesus gave His life to buy us out of sin, but that is not the context for this! This is not dealing with what it takes to become a *sheep* of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, it is expressing the protection that the Lord provides for those who are His – this is **not about salvation**, it is about the Lord’s care for those who are already His! Jesus elaborated on this a little later: “My sheep hear [*are hearing*] my voice, and I know [*am knowing*] them, and they follow [*are following*] me: And I give [*am giving*] unto them eternal life; and they shall never [absolutely cannot; the Greek negatives *ou* and *me*, along with an aorist/subjunctive verb make this a very strong negative<sup>31</sup>] perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:27-28). These are *sheep* (they already belong to the Shepherd) who are given two conditional promises; the **conditions** that apply are that they must be in a present, obedient relationship with the Shepherd (*hearing* and *following* Him), and the **promises** are: 1) they will **never be brought to ruin** (*perish*), and 2) they are **forever safe from any outside force** that might try to snatch them out of His hand. We must

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<sup>30</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace4.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace4.html).

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-negation.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-negation.htm).

understand this second promise clearly: this is **neither** the Evangelical doctrine of eternal security, nor the Calvinists' doctrine of the perseverance (or preservation) of the saints. Steadfastness of faith is both urged and commended among the saints (1 Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 2:5), and warnings are issued against failing: "Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief [unfaithfulness], in departing [becoming apostate] from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12).<sup>32</sup> The Shepherd will do everything to protect His sheep (those who are His own), but He will not disregard His image that all of mankind still bear (including His *sheep*) – the ability to think, reason, and choose.

*Titus 2:13-14* – Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of all good works. Their choice of this passage "is especially significant because it not only speaks of Christ giving Himself for us but shows that those for whom He gave Himself are surely and completely saved – redeemed, purified, and zealous of good works."<sup>33</sup> Again, we must consider the context in order to arrive at a proper understanding of this passage. Just a little earlier Paul wrote: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11); the literal is this: *for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men*.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps there is a reason that they did not consider the context; if they had, they would have found God's Word runs contrary to their doctrine that they are desperately trying to shore-up. Of course Jesus *gave Himself for us*, but that does not restrict His gift to *us* – Paul had just stated that He brought salvation *to all men!* However, for those who have accepted His gift of salvation, He has much more in store: *having set us free from all lawlessness and having cleansed to Himself a unique possession zealous of good works*.<sup>35</sup> The grace of God extends His gift of salvation unto *all men*, but once it is accepted, then the Spirit of God begins to work "teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12). There is nothing within this passage to support the doctrine of *limited atonement*.

Those who advocate for a *limited atonement* will frequently claim that those who believe that Jesus died for the *sin of the world* (as John the Baptist declared) are either Universalists (everyone will be saved) or hold to the sovereignty of man. It's interesting that they identify these two as being the only options that are available besides their Calvinism; because their doctrines fit together so wonderfully, they simply cannot be wrong – at least in their minds. It is inconceivable to them that anyone could study the Scriptures and not arrive at their particular doctrines; they exude great confidence, but as we have seen, they do not carry out a careful exegesis of the Scriptures, nor do they pay close attention to the context. If they would examine their doctrines in the light of Scripture, with a heart that is open to seeing the truth of God, they would come away with a very different understanding of His Word.

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<sup>32</sup> Gingrich Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace4.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace4.html).

<sup>34</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*.