



Atonement, Unlimited

Unlimited atonement is the substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross for the entire human race. The sacrifice was His spiritual death, not His physical death. That sacrifice was for every sin ever committed or that ever will be committed by the human race. Unlimited atonement results from the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world being judged by God the Father. God the Father's absolute righteousness (+R) and justice were satisfied (propitiated) with Jesus Christ's sacrifice. Unlimited atonement frees every unbeliever to believe in Christ for salvation by faith alone in Christ's work alone. Eph. 2:8-9; 1 John 2:2.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB)

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)

Jesus Christ paid for the sins of all members of the human race, not just for the redeemed ones who accept Him as their Savior. "Denying the Master who bought them" are the false prophets and false teachers throughout human history. 2 Peter 2:1.

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves." (2 Peter 2:1, NASB)

Jesus Christ died spiritually for all. 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; Titus 2:11; 2 Cor. 5:19; Ezek. 18:4.

"who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:6, NASB)

"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:9, NASB)

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11, NASB)

"namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19, NASB)

"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die." (Ezekiel 18:4, NASB)

Unlimited Atonement Portrayed in The Old Testament

Unlimited atonement was taught in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 44:22-23, Jacob's name was changed at salvation to Israel.

"I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you." Shout for joy, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; For the LORD has redeemed Jacob And in Israel He shows forth His glory." (Isaiah 44:22-23, NASB)

Atonement in the Old Testament refers to animal sacrifices used to portray the saving work of Christ on the Cross. Atonement in the New Testament refers to the actual saving work of Christ on the Cross. Blood is used to indicate the entire saving work of Christ and to identify it with the Old Testament



illustration when an animal was sacrificed.

The Hebrew word for “atonement” in Exodus 31:7 and Leviticus 14:18 and many other passages is כָּפַר (kaphar) and means to make an atonement, to make reconciliation, to cover, or pass over, to atone by offering a substitute, the place of atonement or the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies. The blood of the animal sacrifice covered the Mercy Seat satisfying God, thus portraying atonement. Animal sacrifices and their blood was used to cover for sin and the communication of the saving work of Christ before it actually occurred. These were the shadows pointing to the Cross in the future. By these observances, the Jews knew that atonement applied to all members of the human race.

"the tent of meeting, and the ark of testimony, and the mercy seat upon it, and all the furniture of the tent," (Exodus 31:7, NASB)

"while the rest of the oil that is in the priest's palm, he shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed. So the priest shall make atonement on his behalf before the LORD." (Leviticus 14:18, NASB)

Once a year on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), an animal sacrifice was made at the brazen altar outside of the Temple in the court of the Temple. The brazen altar represented the Cross. Then the high priest took the blood of the animal in a basin and carried it into the Holy of Holies where atonement was accomplished by sprinkling the blood over the top of the Mercy Seat. God forgave where sin was covered by the blood of animal sacrifices. This did not ever remove the penalty for sin, nor did it really atone for sin. This covering of the mercy seat with the blood of a sacrificed animal was a shadow of the perfect and unlimited atonement to come via the substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. The mercy seat represented Jesus Christ whose saving work atoned once and for all sins of all members of the human race who ever lived or will live. Rom. 3:23-26.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:23-26, NASB)

Over the Ark of the Covenant or the Tabernacle was a throne, with two golden cherubs located on either side representing the holiness of God. One cherub represented the righteousness of God and the other the justice of God. The two cherubs were looking down on the Mercy Seat and depicted the doctrine of propitiation or how God the Father was satisfied with the perfect work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Unlimited atonement is the means of reconciliation whereby the barrier between God and man was removed and is the basis for divine propitiation.

The Tabernacle or the Ark of the Covenant contained three objects that illustrate salvation or unlimited atonement. They were the tables of the Law, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The Ark was made of acacia wood covered with gold. The acacia wood represented the perfect and sinless humanity of Christ whereas the gold represented the deity of Christ.

All three objects speak of different categories of sin. The Law reveals that sin is a violation of God's perfect righteous standards. The pot of manna represents sin as a failure to use God's sustaining grace blessing whereby God keeps us alive on this earth so we will all have a chance to believe in the work of Jesus Christ. Failure here is rejecting Christ as Savior. Aaron's rod that budded illustrates that sin is a rejection of authority.



Animal blood in the Old Testament animal sacrifices was a “type” or shadow of the saving work of Jesus Christ to come. Animal sacrifices in the temple communicated the principle of God’s judgment for every sin of every member of the human race through Jesus Christ as the true and only atonement for all sin.

The burnt offering of the Old Testament was accepted to make an atonement. Lev. 1:4. However, no animal sacrifice ever saved anyone. Heb. 10:4.

"He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf." (Leviticus 1:4, NASB)

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." (Hebrews 10:4, NASB)

Only the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ saved all who believe in Him. Heb. 9:26; Heb. 10:5-10.

"Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Hebrews 9:26, NASB)

"Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'" After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:5-10, NASB)

Unlimited atonement includes the substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, the resultant redemption or removal of the barrier between God and mankind, and propitiation or God the Father’s complete satisfaction with the payment provided by our Lord on the Cross. 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21.

"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24, NASB)

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

Therefore, unlimited atonement and propitiation removed the barrier between God and man so that every person in the human race can have eternal salvation only through faith alone in Christ alone. 1 John 2:2; Rom. 3:21-28.

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)

"But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" (Romans 3:21-24, NASB)

"Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For



we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law." (Romans 3:27-28, NASB)

Why We All Need Atonement

Every member of the human race, with the except Jesus Christ, requires atonement because they are all born spiritually dead and because they all have committed personal sin in their lives. Eph. 2:1; Rom. 3:23.

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins," (Ephesians 2:1, NASB)

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, NASB)

Spiritual death occurs for all of us at the moment of birth when God the Father creates soul-life and imputes or conveys it to us. Prior to this imputation of soul life, newborns have only biological life as they first come into this world and before they take their first breath. The simultaneous imputations at birth of human life and Adam's original sin result, therefore, in all mankind being born physically alive and spiritually dead. Once born and breathing, we are physically alive, but spiritually dead and in need of atonement. This condemnation is the necessity for atonement. The work of Christ is necessary to make atonement for our spiritual death.

It would not be fair of God to condemn everyone without providing a solution to that condemnation in the form of the offer of salvation. This imputation of human life at birth demonstrates the wisdom and justice of God because our condemnation must precede our salvation.

For those who are thinking about all of the babies that are born and never live to be old enough to understand the issue of salvation, all who die before reaching the age of accountability are automatically saved as a part of the doctrine of unlimited atonement. They go to be with the Lord because they were never given the chance to exercise faith in Christ. Jesus Christ died spiritually for all of mankind's sins, thus providing an atonement that was not limited by our belief in Jesus Christ, but absolutely unlimited.

Personal sins, even those of all who have ever lived, were never imputed to man, but to Christ on the cross. 2 Cor. 5:18-19.

"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19, NASB)

Mankind has never been nor will ever be judged for personal sins. Jesus Christ was the only Savior. 1 Peter 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:21.

"and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1 Peter 2:24, NASB)

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

Mankind has been given free will (volition) which makes each of us responsible for our decisions. Galatians 6:7 refers to the results of bad decisions.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7, NASB)

The doctrine of unlimited atonement is a reminder that the humanity of Jesus Christ (not His deity)



received the imputation and judgment of our sins. Our sins could only be judged in His human body (not His soul) with Him freely accepting the judgement without sinning in any way. Jesus Christ's deity (God the Son) can never have any contact with sins because He possesses perfect righteousness. Because Jesus Christ is the unique God-man possessing both perfect and sinless humanity and undiminished deity in one person (the Hypostatic Union), His humanity became spiritually dead for us without compromising His perfect and absolute deity.

Jesus Christ's Work of Atonement Was Unlimited

Unlimited atonement means that eternal salvation is available to the entire human race since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all sin, not just the sins of a select few. Limited atonement wrongly contends that Christ only died for the elect. Christ was judged for all. Salvation is available and offered to all the human race in unlimited atonement. God is not willing for "any" to perish, but for "everyone" to change their mind about Christ. This is unlimited atonement. God wants every member of the human race to completely change their minds about the Gospel without coercion of any kind. 2 Peter 3:9.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)

Faith in Christ cannot be expressed unless there is first a change of mind or attitude in that one must first understand that they need to be saved. Then, having learned of the Savior's salvation work through Gospel hearing, positive faith belief in Christ can be expressed. The result is eternal salvation. In 2 Peter 3:9, the Greek verb *χωρέω* (*chōreō*) means to come, to go forward, to advance, to go on. The Greek noun *μετάνοια* (*metanoia*) means repentance or a complete change of mind about something.

Unlimited atonement is clearly stated numerous times in the Scripture. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 states that Jesus Christ died as a substitute for all - not just those who believe in Jesus Christ.

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, NASB)

God has unconditional love toward all of mankind even when He knew in eternity past that they would all sin. John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB)

God wants every member of the human race to freely believe in Jesus Christ's work on the Cross. Faith alone in Christ alone is all that is needed to accept that free gift of salvation and be with Him for eternity. John 6:40.

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40, NASB)

God's grace provision is shown in salvation as a free gift to all who believe. Titus 2:11.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11, NASB)

Salvation is a free gift to all who exercise their free will or volition to believe in the substitutionary spiritual death of Jesus Christ on the Cross for each and every one of us - not just for those who believe. This is the pastor-teacher's motivation. 1 Tim. 4:10.

"For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the



Savior of all men, especially of believers." (1 Timothy 4:10, NASB)

Salvation is for everyone. The penalty for all sins of every member of the human race was paid for in full by Jesus Christ on the Cross. He died spiritually so that all could live in Him and with Him forever. 1 John 2:2; Heb. 2:9.

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)

"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:9, NASB)

Why Unlimited Atonement is Compatible with God's Perfect Essence

God's provision of unlimited atonement for all of mankind must be compatible with His perfect essence. God's sovereignty desires that each and every one will accept His free gift of salvation and be eternally with Him. God imputed human life to every member of the human race at the point of physical birth from the womb. He wanted the best for each of them and is willing that all should be saved. Some people don't understand that free will means that some are allowed to turn away from God and not accept salvation. This is proof that God's decision in eternity past to allow His perfect sovereignty to be subject to the free will of every member of the human race. Just because some turn away in negative volition doesn't mean that God desires this. God desires that all be saved through their uncoerced positive decision at Gospel hearing and live with Him forever.

Unlimited atonement provides potential salvation for the entire human race, but restricts actual salvation to those who believe in Christ. This is because the free will of man is always the most important issue. Man is free to express his or her volition in indifference to the Gospel, outright rejection of Christ, or in any form of good works as an erroneous means of obtaining eternal salvation. All are wrong and are incompatible with God's perfect essence and results in nothing happening regarding their eternal future. Without positive faith belief in Jesus Christ - plus nothing, they fail to accept the unlimited atonement already paid for them and instead choose their own way for their eternal future. That eternal future has only one certain outcome. When they depart this earth, they will remain eternal separate from God and sharing the fate of Satan and his fallen angels - the Lake of Fire.

The Unbeliever's Indictment at the Last Judgment

Jesus Christ salvation work on the Cross means that He was judged for all sins of the human race. Therefore, the unbeliever will be judged by Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment in the future following the Millennium on the basis of their good works or human good because these were not judged at the Cross. Only the penalty for sins were paid in full by Jesus Christ's saving work. This is why personal sins will never be mentioned. Rev. 20:12-15.

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:12-15, NASB)

The principles of Unlimited Atonement mean that unbelievers will be indicted at the Last Judgment. The



unbeliever is indicted because they have rejected Christ as Savior during their lifetime purely because of their negative volition even though having been given the opportunity to do so by God. It is important to understand that all of the sins of mankind were imputed to Christ on the Cross and, therefore, are not the issue at salvation. Since all sins have already been judged at the Cross, under the law of double jeopardy, they cannot be mentioned at the Last Judgement. The issue is always belief in Jesus Christ's work on the Cross.

The doctrine of unlimited atonement condemns the entire unbeliever segment of the human race because of their unbelief. Eternal life is only gained as a grace gift from God through faith belief. John 3:18; John 3:36.

""He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18, NASB)

""He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."" (John 3:36, NASB)

Unlimited atonement provides salvation for all who believe. The necessity of faith alone in Christ alone limits the possession of eternal salvation to those who believe. Salvation is a potential for all mankind, but becomes a reality only for those who believe in Christ.

Conclusions

Jesus Christ died for all. Why? Because all have sinned and are born spiritually dead. Further, we all inherit the old sin nature genetically, so when we are born, God the Father imputes Adam's Original Sin to our genetically formed old sin nature. All sinned when Adam sinned. All were counted guilty because Adam was counted guilty. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all of mankind's sins on the Cross. Rom. 3:23-24; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;" (Romans 3:23-24, NASB)

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, NASB)

The volition of man is the issue for salvation. Will man choose for Christ or against Christ? If man chooses against Christ, he stands on his own good works against the perfect work of Christ on the Cross.

The issue for all unbelievers at the last judgment or the Great White Throne Judgment will be whether or not they accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and thereby gained the imputation of God's very own absolute righteousness. They will not be condemned for their sins because Christ paid the penalty for them all. Their works will count for nothing as they are all relative righteousness and are unacceptable to God's absolute righteousness.