

Why DEFINITE ATONEMENT (Particular Redemption) Must Be True

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

The doctrine of definite atonement or particular redemption refers to the biblical truth that Jesus died on the cross only for His elect and actually procured their eternal salvation at Calvary. All that the Father gave to the Son are those for whom the Son died. And all that the Spirit regenerates are those that the Son redeemed. This is contrasted with what is sometimes called unlimited atonement or universal redemption (Jesus died for everyone). The atonement of Christ is limited in scope, not in extent. All that Christ died for are fully and everlastingly redeemed by Christ since He 'accomplished redemption' at Calvary. ***What follows are nine reasons why definite atonement must be true.***

1. Because of the UNITY OF THE TRINITY

The Lord Jesus prayed in John 17 and repeatedly referred to those people that the Father had given Him. From eternity past, the glorious Father gave a particular, a special, a peculiar people to the Son. These are particular souls. These are divinely chosen ones. The Son came in human flesh to live for & die for these particular ones that the Father gave Him. All that the Father gave to the Son were fully pardoned at Calvary. The Spirit of God grants life to all who are elect. He gives life to them. The Father and the Son give life to a particular group of individuals. And thus, the Son came to redeem *them*. To pit the Son of God against the Father and the Spirit would make the members of the Triune Godhead to be at odds with each other. And this cannot be. The Godhead always works in glorious concert, beauty, happiness, and harmony together.

2. Because of the INTENTION OF CHRIST'S REDEMPTION

Jesus often made mention of mission statements, or life-ministry statements. He said: The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). If he died for everyone, then everyone is either saved or Christ's crosswork did not *actually* save anyone but merely made people savable. Elsewhere Jesus said the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many. He came and delivered Himself up to ransom (to purchase, to buy, to possess) a certain group of people. Thus, Christ's intention was to actually save sinners, not to make all men savable. The intent of the atonement defines the extent. His intent was to save, to redeem, to atone, to ransom. By this intent to save, Christ actually saved them.

3. Because of the TESTIMONY OF BIBLICAL REVELATION

The Word of God says that Jesus died for His Bride and gave Himself up for her to make her holy (Eph 5:25-26). Elsewhere Jesus said that He came to give Himself as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). The prophet Isaiah said that the Servant of Jehovah would justify the many (Isa 53:11). Indeed, this Suffering Servant also "bore the sin of many and interceded for the transgressors" (Isa 53:12). The teaching of the Bible claims that Jesus came to suffer and die for only His elect people and live on their behalf.

4. Because of the ACTUALITY OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

What did Jesus actually accomplish at the cross? Did Jesus really save people or did Jesus make people savable by dying for them? What did the atonement achieve? The many words that comprise the theological range that describes what Jesus did on the cross all underscore that Jesus perfectly saved people by dying for them. He was made sin on our behalf (2 Cor 5:21). Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law having become a Curse for us (Gal 3:13). Christ loved me and gave Himself up for me (Eph 2:20). In Him we have redemption through His blood (Eph 1:7). Christ took the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us, and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross (Col 2:14). These verses clearly affirm that Jesus *actually atoned*, indeed, in *definitely saved*, moreover, he *everlastingly procured* salvation for His own.

5. Because of the REALITY OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

Something supernaturally mysterious took place at Calvary. It is unfathomably deep and ineffably sublime, namely, that the God-Man would bear the infinite & holy wrath of God the Father in the stead of sinners. The nails and crown of thorns didn't redeem or save sinners. The whips and mockings didn't save rebels. What saves sinners is that the Father's righteous and holy wrath was poured out *not* on the sinner who deserves it but on the sinless Substitute, the Lord Jesus, *by grace*, in their stead. This

everlasting, divine wrath of God was satisfied and appeased by virtue of Christ's substitutionary death. Jesus did not bear this for every person alive. Jesus bore the eternal punishment *only* for His people. All those who do not repent and believe will bear their own penalty that they justly and rightly deserve in everlasting punishments in hell. Because Christ took the divine curse for them, He must have died *only* for His own otherwise everyone's penalty would be paid and there would be none in hell (but the Bible thoroughly charges 'universalism' as heresy and as a damning gospel. Praise God for His sovereign, securing & saving love!

6. Because of the INABILITY OF MAN'S NATURE

There are those who teach that Jesus died for all but the benefits of Christ's crosswork only apply to those who place their saving faith in Christ and, then, the privileges and benefits of the cross save them -- by virtue of their faith. But, there is a great biblical problem with this. The Bible declares that all men are sinners and thus are born 'dead in sin' (Eph 2:1, 5). Dead sinners don't put their faith in Christ. They can't. They are *not able* to do so. Man is so unable to come to God because He is wholly full of sin and entirely pervaded with the poison of corruption in his nature, his being, his words, and his actions. Thus, for someone to say that Christ died for all but the saving benefits are given to those who put their faith in Christ assumes that an unregenerate man *could* in fact do such a thing. But this is entirely impossible and emphatically something that could never be done. Thus, because of man's deadness in sin and inability to believe, Christ died *only* for His people and the Spirit gives life to the dead souls for whom Christ died.

7. Because of the SOVEREIGNTY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible says that it is the Spirit who gives life. God saves. Man does not save himself by believing upon Christ. Man cannot cause the crosswork benefits to be applied to himself through his faith. Rather, God the Spirit mercifully, sovereignly, irresistibly, and particularly grants new life (the new birth) to those whom the Father has chosen. The Spirit does not give life to everyone. Nor does the Spirit give life to those who first chose Him. Rather, it is the Spirit, the blessed and glorious third member of the Triune God-head, who imparts instantaneous, supernatural, everlasting life into the souls of the dead sinners that the Father gave the Son and for whom the Son purchased.

8. Because of the VERY MEANING OF 'ATONEMENT'

The biblical meaning of the word 'atonement' carries with it the connotation of blood sacrifice, substitute, appeasing of anger and the pacifying of wrath. It means that something (an innocent one) died *in the place of* guilty ones. It means that the sins are covered because the penalty has been paid and poured out on another. For Jesus to die and *atone* for His people, it means that the life of the flesh had to be given and this is what made atonement for the souls of God's people. This must intimate that Christ *actually atoned* for His people or else the blood sacrifice, the substitute, the appeasing of divine anger would have actually pacified the wrath of God for *everyone*. But the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ atoned in full for all the sins of all God's people alone.

9. Because of GLORY DUE CHRIST JESUS

The cross of the divine Savior accomplished something else as well. If Jesus did not actually procure and perfect salvation for His people at Calvary then the crosswork is nothing more than a 'good try.' Since then it remains up to sinners to put their faith in Christ and then *finish the deal*. But rather, Christ Himself is worthy to receive all glory and honor and praise for the Lamb of God, even in heaven, is praised for His being slain and *purchasing* for God with His blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev 5:9). Thus, the very fact that Christ died and really saved, perfectly pardoned, everlastingly placated God's fury, and expiated all the sins of His elect produces infinite reasons to praise the God-Man for His wonderful work of love for His people. The love of God, the mercy of Christ, the divinity of Christ, the propitiation of Christ, the regeneration of the Spirit, and the grace of God perfectly harmonize together to produce a well-deserved and everlastingly-happy song of praise to Jesus Christ, the Lord, who is the Lamb slain when He offered up Himself for His people (Heb 7:27).