



A grace worth saving: Debunking limited atonement

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The Historic Faith
Lecture 8

Christmas Calvinists



Calvinists love to make the arguments that Piper did

Can you summarize the arguments that Piper made?

Calvinists love to jab over this

“The difference between them [Calvinist and Arminian views of atonement] is not primarily one of emphasis, but of content. One proclaims a God who saves; the other speaks of a God who enables man to save himself.” (J.I. Packer)

Many Calvinists say that it's wrong for God to punish twice for sins, so if you believed that Jesus died for everyone, then everyone must be saved.

These views are predicated on a commercial view of the atonement.

A helpful analogy



Three dimensions

Intent: What did God intend? Who did God want to save?

Extent: Who was actually paid for?

Application: Who actually benefits?

Key texts for the question of the atonement

Isa 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

1 Cor 8:9-11

9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?

Key texts for the question of the atonement (cont.)

2 Cor 5:19:

God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself

Col 1:19-20

19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

1 Tim 2:2-6

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in [b]authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and [c]reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

1 Tim 4:10

For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

Robert Picirilli: "That He [Jesus] is savior of all men speaks of provision; that He is savior especially of believers speaks of application."

Key texts for the question of the atonement (cont.)

Heb 2:9

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

2 Peter 2:1

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

1 John 2:2

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Even more tragically, they have to re-interpret these verses

Ezekiel 18:31-32

31 For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!"

1 Tim 2:1-16

2 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in [b]authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and [c]reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Matt 18:14

Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Even more tragically, they have to re-interpret these verses

There are two basic answers to these verses:

1. Try to make them about God's desire to save the elect.
2. Assert that God has two wills.

John Piper: "Yet I also affirm that God has chosen from before the foundation of the world those whom he will save from sin. Since not all people are saved, we must choose whether we believe (with the Arminians) that God's will to save all people is restrained by his commitment to ultimate human self-determination or whether we believe (with the Reformed) that God's will to save all people is restrained by his commitment to the glorification of the full range of his perfections in exalting his sovereign grace (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Rom. 9:22-23)."

Either way, the Calvinists make a fatal error

By asserting that Jesus did not die for all, and somewhat claiming that God does not want all to be saved, they create an unbiblical and unloving God that drives people away from the Father.

The last homework assignment

Read the Schleithem confession (link emailed out to you)

Read John Calvin's rebuttal of the Schleithem confession: just the Introduction and Article I