

“Basic Truth” series, #8 (cont.)

Understanding the Death of Christ (Part 2)¹

By Daryl Wingerd

A Finished Work

As we learned in the last issue of *Basic Truth*, Jesus did not come to merely make men *savable*. He came to “save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). As Jesus said of Himself, “the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10, cf. Ezek. 34:11-15).

It is necessary here to distinguish between **secured** salvation and **applied** salvation. On the cross, Jesus *secured* the salvation that is *applied* to God’s elect by the Holy Spirit *during their lives* (i.e. through regeneration which enables and inclines them to believe). Keeping the distinction between *secured* salvation and *applied* salvation in mind, please take the time to read several passages that speak of the **effectiveness** of Christ’s death. When Jesus died, He secured:

Reconciliation

For if when we were enemies we were *reconciled to God through the death of His Son*, much more, *having been reconciled*, we shall be saved by His life (Rom. 5:10).

And you, who were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now *He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death*, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight (Col. 1:21-22).

Justification

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, *Christ died for us*. Much more then, *having now been justified by His blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through Him (Rom. 5:8-9).

Redemption

He entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of His own blood, *thus securing an eternal redemption* (Heb. 9:12, ESV).

Sanctification

By that will [i.e. the Father’s will] *we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ* once for all (Heb. 10:10).

Therefore Jesus also, *that he might sanctify the people with His own blood*, suffered outside the gate (Heb. 13:12).

It is futile to attempt to prove that Jesus secured these benefits *for all people*. The fact is, if a person is never justified, his justification was never *secured* by Christ. If a person is never reconciled to God, his reconciliation was never *secured* by Christ. And something that has been only *potentially secured has not been secured* at all.

Jesus Christ Purchased Men for God

In Revelation 5:9 we are told that Jesus “purchased men for God,” with His blood, “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” These people were bought (redeemed) by Christ when He died. And clearly, not all of humanity was purchased. As the verse says, those who would be praising Christ for eternity were purchased “**out of**” the mass of fallen humanity. Paul spoke of this same purchase of men in Acts 20:28 when he told the Ephesian elders to “shepherd *the church of God which He purchased with His own blood*” (emphasis added).

If I came home from the grocery store and said, “I purchased a few apples,” would any reasonable person think I had purchased every apple in the store? By telling you that I *did* purchase *some* apples, I was just as clearly saying that I *did not* purchase the rest. So when the Bible tells us what Christ *did* purchase by His death—that is, the church—what right do we have to expand God’s meaning to include all of mankind?

The truth is, Christ died for those He came to save—God’s elect. As the beloved hymn, *O The Deep, Deep Love of Jesus*, says, He “died to call them all His own.” For them, and for them only, Jesus shed His blood in order to secure their “eternal redemption.” Nevertheless, many insist that Jesus died for all men, trying to save everyone. Those who so insist are denying that God has any *particular* objects of saving love. But consider Charles Spurgeon’s comment about such unbiblical beliefs:

[Many theologians] believe in an atonement made for everybody; but then their atonement is just this: They believe that Judas was atoned for just as much as Peter; they believe that the damned in hell were as much an object of Jesus Christ’s satisfaction as the saved in heaven; and though they do not say it in proper words, yet they must mean it, for it is a fair inference, that in the case of multitudes, Christ died in vain. For He died for them all, they say, and yet so ineffectual was His dying for them, that though He died for them they are damned afterward. Now, such an atonement I despise—I reject it. . . . I would rather believe a limited atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than a universal atonement that is not efficacious for anybody, except the will of men be joined with it.”²

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² Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Sermons*, Vol. 4, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 218-219.