THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

Soteric or Eschatological Universalism?
A Study in the Universalism of 1 Timothy 2:6

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. __THE PROBLEM__

The subject of the extent of the atonement is a touchy one in most theological quarters these days. Too often however, the *question* is not clearly enough elucidated, so that the arguments brought forth do not really bear on the heart of the problem. The question is not whether the death that Christ died was of sufficient value so that all men could have been saved, for on this point there is a general consensus of agreement. Rather, the question concerns *God's design* in sending Christ to die. Was the purpose of God in the death of Christ to save all men, or only to save some men? It is in terms of these two alternatives that the controversy has crystallized.

The followers of the teaching of Arminius have grabbed at a verse like 1 Timothy 2:6 with delight for in it they see unassailable proof that Christ died on behalf of all men without exception:

> We know not a better formula for the better expression of a universal atonement. [1]

> If God will have all men to be saved, then Christ died for all; but God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth: therefore, Christ died for all men. [2]

Others who restrict the purpose of the death of Christ only to some men, the elect, are sometimes a little hard-pressed to come up with a plausible explanation which arises out of the context. They are however better able to point to other texts which teach definite (or personal) atonement. Thus this paper will make a careful study of the context of the verse under consideration to analyse what was in the mind of the inspired writer when he wrote that Christ "gave Himself as a ransom for all".

There is a definite tension between these two views for both can apparently adduce Scriptural support for their view. The Arminian has no doubt at all that when Scripture uses such terms as "all" and "world", their sense is inclusive, including all men who live or have lived or who will live. While such comprehensiveness might be the natural twentieth century connotation, closer examination shows that there are other possibilities. It is not the purpose of this paper to note in detail the New Testament usage of the word κόσμος, but in relation to the atonement it is John who uses this word (two other occasions are Romans 11:15 and 2 Corinthians 5:19). John's usage has a clear ethical quality (see for example John 15:18ff., 1 John 2:15-17) with a reference to this present world order which is in opposition to God. It is also very noticeable that when the word πᾶς is used in relation to the atonement, it is most characteristic in Paul's writings (see also Hebrews 2:9, 2 Peter 3:9). Each occurrence would have to be studied in detail in its own context, but this paper will seek to show why the "all" in 1 Timothy 2:6 need not be a reference to all men in the sense in which it has been used by the Arminians.

The tension exists in the middle of most students of the Scripture, at least in the minds of those who believe the Bible to be verbally inspired, because there are equally clear texts which make the purpose of the death of Christ something less that the salvation of all men. Christ's death is on behalf of His sheep (John 10:11,15), His people (Matthew 1:21, John 11:50-53, Hebrews 2:17), the many (Matthew 20:28, 26:28, Mark 10:45, Hebrews 9:28), those given to Christ (John 17:9), the church (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25-27), those who are

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[1] Miley, John, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1894), 2:227.
[2] Owen, John, *The Death of Death* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), p. 231, quoting Rem. Act. Synod.

called (Hebrews 9:15) and those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9, 7:9). [3]

At least three separate interpretations have been forwarded which seek to alleviate this tension, at least in the minds of their proponents.

(1) "All" means all without exception, every single individual. Under this interpretation, although Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all men, their salvation was not thus infallibly secured. We refer to this as *soteric universalism*.

> …Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world died for all men and every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer. [4]

(2) "All" refers to all the elect of God. While this is similar to the third view, it has a slightly different emphasis, and is the view most common in Reformed treatments.

> 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 on them alone the gift of justifying grace, thereby the bring them infallibly to salvation. [5]

(3) Finally there is the view that the "all" must be considered in the light of the Biblical teaching on *eschatological universalism*. That is, when God's purposes had been realized in the nation of Israel, Christ's saving activity was to be proffered throughout the whole world. This can have two nuances, the "all" referring to the Gentile as well as the Jew, or to all nations as well as the Jewish nation. In this way the perspective is universally broadened not in individual terms, but in national or racial terms. [6]

There can be no discussion on this subject without reference to the basic hermeneutical principle of 'the analogy of Scripture'. This principle is based on the fact that as the inspired and infallible word of God, the Bible contains no contradiction. By this principle, any interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:6 is in error if it is found to be at variance with other clear passages of Scripture. Berkhof dogmatically asserts that foundational nature of this principle:

> A doctrine that is clearly supported by the analogy of faith cannot be contradicted by a contrary and obscure passage. [7]

This principle can be used to ease the above tension. Either Christ died with the purpose of saving all men, or only some men. Almost all Bible-believing Christians will readily agree that not all men in the end will be saved (that is, they are not Universalists). Which of the opposing set of texts can best be explained in terms of the other set? Which contradicts other clear teaching of Scripture? It is the thesis of this paper that "all" in 1 Timothy 2:6 refers to an eschatological universalism, and that those verses which speak of the atonement in reference to 'all men' or 'the world', can be best explained in terms of the

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[3] See Steele, David N. & Thomas, Curtis C., *The Five points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended and Documented*. (Philipsburg, N.J: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1963).

[4] Article II of the Five Arminian Articles A.D. 1610 in Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom* (Harper & Bros., 1877), 3:546. John 3:16 and 1 John 2:2 were used as proof texts for this formulation.

[5] The Second Head of Doctrine, Art. VIII of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, A.D. 1619 in Schaff, op cit, p. 587.

[6] See the article by Warfield, Benjamin B. in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1970), 23, pp. 167-177. Expounding 1 John 2:2 Warfield gives a similar argument.

[7] Berkhof, Louis, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), p. 166. He cites 1 John 3:6 as a good example.

elect or this eschatological universalism. If however it is explained as referring to all men literally, does this not do injury to the efficacy of the work of Christ and the power of God in accomplishing His purposes? Can any similar objections be made to the interpretation that Christ's death was only limited in its scope to some men? Or must such texts be conveniently ignored? Is the only real point that such soteric universalists have their prejudice against the doctrine that God has elected some to eternal life and consigned others to the hell that all equally deserve? To establish the point, textual and contextual considerations will next be studied.

2. **TEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

(a) Exegesis of the Text

The following is a literal translation of the first part of 1 Timothy 2:6:

<div align="center">

ὁ   δοὺς   ἑαυτὸν   ἀντίλυτρον   ὑπὲρ   πάντων

who   gave   himself   a ransom   for   all

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For the purposes of this paper it is not necessary to go into all the truths taught in the first part of the verse, although from it a Biblical doctrine of the atonement could be formulated. However, the following points should be noted.

(1) ἀντίλυτρον. Lenski notes that in these few words the reality of Christ's death as a substitutionary act is attested in a three-fold way, by the use of the words λύτρον, ἀντί and ὑπὲρ. [8] ἀντίλυτρον literally means a counter-ransom price, [9] distinguished from the simple λύτρον in that the preposition ἀντί makes the idea of an exchange still more emphatic. [10] Morris summarizes it in the following way:

> In meaning it does not seem to differ greatly from the simple λύτρον, but the preposition emphasizes the thought of substitution; it is a substitute-ransom that is signified. [11]

Thus Paul is teaching that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all, substituting Himself in the place of those deserving God's condemnation because of their sins, those already under the sentence of death, that they might be ransomed to God. If, as Paul teaches, Christ actually made a substitution, then those on whose behalf He died must actually be saved. Otherwise the work of Christ loses its efficacy and is meaningless. So Gill is able to make the point that if Christ's death is a vicarious ransom for all men, then Paul is teaching universal salvation, a conclusion which Arminians would be loathe to reach. [12] John Owen poses the following dilemma for such universalists:

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[8] Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), p. 558.

[9] Simpson, E. K., *The Pastoral Epistles* (Eerdmans, 1954), pp. 43-44.

[10] Huther, J., *Timothy and Titus* (Funk & Wagnalls: New York, 1885), p. 98.

[11] Morris, Leon, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Tyndale, 1965), p. 51.

[12] Gill, John, *The Cause of God and Truth* (Sovereign Grace, 1971), p. 51 (4). .

> God imposed His wrath due unto, and Christ underwent the pains of hell for, either all the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men, or some sins of all men. If the last, … , then all men have some sins to answer for, and so shall no man be saved… If the second, that is it which we affirm, that Christ in their stead and room suffered for all the sins of all the elect in the world. If the first, why, then, are not all freed from the punishment of their sins? [13]

This word, therefore, carries important implications for the subject of the extent of the atonement. All those for whom Christ gave Himself a ransom, "all", are indeed saved. Thus Paul cannot be referring to each and every single human being, for the Scripture is clear that not all are saved. Revelation refers to those who will be thrown into the lake of fire (for example, 20:15).

(2) ὑπέρ. This preposition intensifies the fact that Christ's death was in the nature of a substitution. There are many texts that refer to Christ's death in this way (e.g. John 10:11, 11:50, Galatians 3:13). Hodge makes the following comments on the Scriptural use of the word ὑπέρ:

> …the idea of substitution is clearly expressed. The argument does not rest on the force of the preposition, but on the nature of the case. The only way in which the death of the victim benefitted the offender, was by substitution. [14]

(3) πᾶς. It is on this small, common word that the whole argument is usually seen to rest. The Arminians seem to think that its presence here places the interpretation beyond doubt. Yet John Owen calls it an ambiguous word:

> That all or all men do not always comprehend all and every man that were, are, or shall be, may be made apparent by near five hundred instances from the Scripture. [15]

The most common Biblical usage is the meaning 'all sorts', as when Christ healed all sorts of sick people (Matthew 4:23-24), the Pharisees tithed all sorts of herbs (Luke 11:42), and when Paul commanded us to pray for all sorts of men (1 Timothy 2:1). [16] The usage of the word, therefore, precludes us from making a specific judgment at this point, for there are many possibilities open. Unless the context specifically determines otherwise, πᾶς can bear the meaning of every man, or all sorts of men. The implications of Christ's death being a ransom on behalf of those for whom He died, definitely indicates the latter interpretation.

(b) Syntactical Connections
1 Timothy 2:6 is not alone in the history of redemption. It depends to a greater or lesser extent on two other passages of Scripture.

(1) Mark 10:45 (Matthew 20:28).

> Mark 10:45   δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον   ἀντὶ πολλῶν
> 1 Timothy 2:6 ὁ δοὺς   ἑαυτὸν   ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων

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[13] Owen, John, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

[14] Hodge, Charles, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), p. 135. This occurs in his discussion of 2 Corinthians 5:14. Note also the discussion in Morris, op cit, as an additional note on the use of ὑπέρ in Galatians 3:13, pp. 63-64.

[15] Owen, John, op. cit., p. 232.

[16] See also Jeremiah 29:1-2.

Kittel cannot agree with Moulton and Milligan that 1 Timothy 2:6 is actually a quotation from Mark 10:45. [17] There are obvious differences in the words used, but the doctrinal connections are clear. It has already been pointed out that λύτρον and ἀντίλυτρον have virtually the same meaning, it being intensified in the latter. In both the classics and the popular language of the papyri ἀντί, ὑπέρ and πρό are used practically interchangeably, so that, "the ὑπέρ of the former must be very nearly identical with the ἀντί of the latter". [18] The really important difference concerns the term used with reference for those for whom Christ gave Himself as a ransom. Other verses in the New Testament also regard the atonement as being on behalf of "many" as in Mark 10:45 (Mark 14:24, Romans 5:19, Hebrews 9:28). Is there any significance in this change from πολλῶν to πάντων by Paul? Was it deliberate on his part? In the history of redemption, the complex of events surrounding the death and resurrection of Christ occurred between the utterance of Christ and the writing of Paul. It will be suggested through contextual study that this is of great significance to the understanding of the change that Paul made in using the thoughts of Mark 10:45.

(2) Isaiah 53:10-11. There is an obvious parallel between the saying of Jesus just considered, and that of the prophet Isaiah, when he sees the Servant of God giving Himself as an offering for sin that many might be justified. Jeremias points out that Mark 10:45b related word for word to Isaiah 53:10f. and to the Hebrew text: [19]

Mark 10:45 διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν

Isaiah 53:10-11

The following points should be noticed in a comparison of these verses.

1. עֶבֶד does not appear as a noun with the 'yod' suffix in the LXX, where it is rendered as a participle (δουλεύοντα, cf. Targum, Peshitta and Symmachus). The Targum even renders it as an infinitive as in Mark 10:45b.

2. Jeremias notes the following correspondence with the word אָשָׁם:

> A close connection between Mk. 10:45 and Is. 53:10 is also suggested by the observation that the further definition of the phrase 'give' or 'take life' by a predicative adjective is only evidenced in Is. 53:10 MT ('asam), IV Macc. 6:29 (ἀντίψυχον) and Mk. 10:45 (λύτρον). [20]

> …in Mk. 10:45b, λύτρον, which in the Septuagint (twenty times) denotes the ransom money for the firstborn, for slaves to be set free, for life forfeited, atonement offering, which 'asam has in Is. 53:10. [21]

3. Isaiah 53:11 agrees with Mark 10:45 in describing the offering of Christ as being in relation to "the many", thus again suggesting the possibility of a deliberate change by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:6 for theological reasons. It is not easy to determine the precise import of the word "many". Kittel seeks to show that it has an inclusive rather than an exclusive reference

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[17] Kittel, Gerhard, ed., trans. & ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1967), , 4:349.

[18] Morris, Leon, op. cit. pp. 62,64.

[19] Jeremias, Joachim, *New Testament Theology* (New York: Chas Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 292, note 3.

[20] ibid.

[21] Op. cit., pp. 292-293.

and that the later Jewish writings saw the text as referring to the atoning work of the Servant of the Lord for the nations. [22] Others have seen here a reflection on the theme of the Remnant, as identified in the pleadings of Abraham for the righteous in Sodom:

> The importance of Abraham's intercession for the development of the remnant motif lies in the aspect of the preserving function of the minority of the righteous remnant for the majority of the wicked. For the sake of the righteous remnant Yahweh would in His צדקה forgive the wicked city. This nothing is widely expanded in the prophetic utterances of the Servant of Yahweh who works salvation for "many". [23]

At this point (in my own thinking) it is not certain what the precise import of the "many" is in the Old Testament. If Kittel's views are correct, it does seem to have an eschatological reference, as it looks forward to the day when the nations also will be incorporated into the people of God. However, as the remnant theme is also developed it is clear that it includes than just members of the Jewish nation (Amos 9:12 and as quoted in Acts 15:16-17); indeed it is all those who from every nation that are elect in Christ.

(c) Possible Eschatological Significance

From the above textual considerations a conclusion may be put forward, which in the next section needs to be confirmed by some contextual study. As Mark 10:45 builds on Isaiah 53:10-11 and 1 Timothy 2:6 on Mark 10:45 the change in wording from "many" to "all" only takes place after the resurrection. Although the Old Testament is by no means unaware of some sort of universalism, it is not until after the resurrection that the preaching of the Gospel unto all nations there promised (cf. Isaiah 66:18-21) is actually carried out. [24] Only in the New Testament age is the reality of the incorporation of the Gentile into the people of God fully realized. Thus the suggestion must be made, now to be expanded, that the "all" of Paul in 1 Timothy 2:6 is eschatological in character referring to the wonder that all peoples, both Jew <u>and</u> Gentile are reconcile to God through the cross.

3. **CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

If the statement of Paul that the death of Christ was a ransom for "all" is eschatological in character then the context will also indicate that Paul is writing this statement in a broadly eschatological context. [25] There are three such considerations –

(a) The General Context

1. One of the purposes for which Paul wrote to Timothy was to counteract various false teachings with which Timothy was coming into contact. The exact nature of the heresies are

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[22] Kittel, op. cit., 6:537,540 in the context of a discussion on the word πολλοί. Note also the following articles, 5:712 on παῖς θεοῦ; and in Vol. 4 the article on λεῖμμα. Morris also deals extensively with the meaning of Mk. 10:45b and shows its relation to Isaiah 53 (op. cit., pp. 29-38, and especially the last page).

[23] Hasel, Gerhard F., *The Remnant* (Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1972), p. 151. Von Rad has espoused similar views; see his commentary on *Genesis*, p. 209, and his *Old Testament Theology*, 1:395.

[24] Are those who are referred to as escaping a reflection on the remnant?

[25] The word Eschatology in this paper is not being used in its normal sense to refer to the things immediately preceding the second coming of Christ, but to the new order of things, the last days, inaugurated with the coming of Christ; see Vos, Geerhardus, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Eerdmans, 1961).

not easy to determine. It was clearly not fully-fledged Gnosticism, but it did contain many Jewish characteristics. [26]

Paul begins by admonishing Timothy to avoid some, who wanting to teach the law, are actually without understanding (1:7). Paul then goes on to explain the correct use of the law (1:8-11).   In relation to the endless genealogies which these people were absorbed in, Guthrie notes:

> The absorbing interest in genealogies gives some indication in view of contemporary Jewish speculations centred mainly around the Pentateuchal genealogies. [27]

Note also the clear references in the Letter to Titus (1:10,14, 3:9), which was written at the same time.

2. In the first four verses of chapter 2 Paul uses πᾶς three times with respect to men, and then again in verse 8 as he returns to the original theme of the opening verses of the chapter. Smeaton makes the following comments on the use of this word in these verses:

> At the commencement of the chapter the apostle mentioned all men, and immediately adds, as an explanation of this use of the expression "kings and all in authority" – a superfluous addition, if we apprehend the terms as denoting universality. When the apostle direct Christians to pray for all men, the allusion is to be understood as pointing out ranks, conditions and classes of men. This is evident, partly because, among men in the wide sense, there are some for whom we are not to pray, viz. those who have sinned unto death (1 John 5:16)… Still further to show the sense in which Paul uses the expression all men, we may notice his mode of describing locality: "I will that men pray everywhere", literally, in every place (v. 8) which clearly means wherever they may be. [28]

3. These considerations clearly indicate that in the immediate context Paul's use of the word "all" is in the sense of all sorts. This fits in well with the more general context of Jewish exclusivism.

(b) <u>The Use of καιρός in 1 Timothy 2:6b</u>

There can be no doubt that for Paul καιρός often has eschatological overtones. The ransom which Christ has obtained for "all" has to be proclaimed unto such.

1. There have been two interpretations of the relationship of this text to the preceding words, that which sees the witness as being the deed of Christ's death itself, and that which considers the witness to be the proclamation of that deed. Because the preaching of the Gospel is referred to in the words of the next verse the latter interpretation seems the most acceptable. Paul refers to his preaching as such a testimony elsewhere (1 Corinthians 1:16, 2:1). So we can agree with Huther:

> Μαρτύριον is not the deed itself, but the attestation, the proclamation of the deed. [29]

2. This proclamation, the testimony, was borne at καιροῖς ἰδίοις, lit. "at its own time", that is, the proper or right time. According to Kittel, the basic sense of καιρός is that of the "decisive or crucial place or point", whether considered spatially, materially or temporally. [30] Although it can have a wide range of meanings, and can be used interchangeably with αἰών,

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[26] Guthrie, Donald, *New Testament Introduction: The Pauline Epistles* (London: Tyndale, 1963, 2nd. ed.), pp. 216-218.

[27] Ibid., p. 216.

[28] Smeaton, George, *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement* (Zondervan, 1957), p. 324. Note also John Owen's treatment in op. cit. p. 234.

[29] Huther, J., op. cit., p. 98 (see also p. 99).

[30] Kittel, Gerhard, op. cit., 3:455. Note the opposite position on καιροῖς ἰδίοις given on p. 461.

and χρόνος, it characteristically means a specific, fixed and appointed time (as in Mark 1:15, Matthew 13:30, 2 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Thessalonians 2:6). This in its absolute sense it has become one of the chief technical terms for the time of consummation, the fulfilment fixed and determined by God; the last, the end time of crisis for the world (as in Luke 21:8, Revelation 1:3, 22:10, Mark 13:33).

3. That this testimony is characteristic of the last days, the ἔσχατον, is further strengthened by the use of the phrase καιροῖς ἰδίοις. The whole context of such a thought is the apocalyptic, the eschatological expectations prophesied in the Old Testament. [31] Elsewhere Paul brings these two ideas in conjunction (Titus 1:2-3) using exactly the same formula as in 1 Timothy 2:6b. Thus the preaching of the Gospel to all the world is the culmination of the plan of God which salvation He had "promised ages ago". Its manifestation at the proper time thus introduces the final age.

(c) <u>The Character of Paul's Apostleship to the Gentiles</u> (verse 7)
Paul regarded his ministry as an eschatological one. His particular mission was to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 22:21, 26:17, Romans 11:13, 15:16, 1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11) and at the same time it fulfilled the promise. In the context of the letter to Timothy Paul seems to have in mind the Jewish exclusivists that are troubling Timothy with false teaching, and so he makes a vigorous affirmation of the breadth of the mission with which he has been entrusted:

> The vehement parenthesis (1 Tim. 2:5-7) is best explained as highlighting Paul's claim to have been assigned the mission to the Gentiles as against the errorists' exclusivists ideas; with their Judaizing tendencies they may well have been critical of evangelizing non-Jews. [32]

Other places where Paul makes the same point about his ministry might be noted. At the beginning of his letter to the Romans Paul refers to the prophetic nature of Old Testament revelation, bringing out its Christological character and then puts his own ministry in the context of the fulfilment of that prophecy (1:1-6). At the end of the same letter he points out that his ministry takes place in the time when the mystery, that which was fixed in God's eternal plan, was realized in history in Jesus Christ (Romans 16:25-26, cf. 1 Peter 1:20, Colossians 1:26f., 2 Corinthians 6:2, 5:17). Thus again, the ransom saying of 1 Timothy 2:6a is seen to be couched in eschatological terms. Paul's ministry was a universal one in that for the first time it included Gentiles as well as Jews. This marked the fact that the last days had come in which God would pour out His Spirit on <u>all</u> flesh (Acts 2:17). Thus Paul is emphasizing the fact that Christ gave Himself as a ransom not just for Jews alone, but for <u>all</u> men, including Gentiles.

It is this contextual argument that clinches the interpretation. If either the Arminian or Reformed position were possible by just considering the words of the saying alone, now the individual sense that Christ dies for every man is definitely ruled out. This interpretation debunks the efficacy of the work of Christ and does injustice to the whole context. The eschatological significance is thus not just a convenient twisting of the words to fit a pre-conceived scheme, but it is the only one that the context allows! The verse therefore teaches that the extent of the atonement which Christ made is to every nation, Gentile as well as Jew.

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[31] Lock, Walter, *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Chas Scribners' Sons, 1924), p. 126. He cites the following other references: Gal. 4:4, Rm. 5:6, Eph. 1:10 and Acts 17:26.
[32] Kelly, J. N. D., *The Pastoral Epistles* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), p. 65.

4. **BIBLICAL UNIVERSALISM**

That the above conclusion is a pervasive theme must now be demonstrated. One of our problems today is that we fail to see the New testament in its own terms and in its Old Testament background, for the dark glasses of the twentieth century concepts have clouded our vision. We live in a culture that thinks individualistically, but the Scripture concentrates on the basic aggregations of life, such as the family, the church, the nations and the elect.

In the Old Testament God's purposes were definitely centred around the Jewish nation whom God chose for His own peculiar possession (Exodus 19:5-6, 14:2, Amos 3:2). This is not to imply that God completely ignored the other nations while He dealt with Israel. She was chosen just so that she might sanctify God's name before the people (Deuteronomy 28:9-10). Israel was to represent God to the nations as priests represent the people to God. Yet Israel's persistent failure to keep the covenant was what was witnessed by the nations instead. The nations are then used as Jehovah's instruments of wrath to bring on Israel the curses of the covenant (Hosea 10:10, Amos 6:14). In this context the true prophets of God address the world through the Israelites. Amos show that God's sovereignty is more than wrath, but will also bring grace to all the nations (9:11-12).

So in the Old Testament there are many wonderful promises which anticipate the ingathering of the Gentiles, so that they will also be numbered amongst the people of God (Psalm 22:27, Isaiah 19:25, 49:6), so that even the ends of the earth will become His peculiar possession (Psalm 2:8). Even at that time the Lord graciously called in some Gentiles to be partakers of the covenant blessing – Rahab, Ruth, Ittai and Naaman. But the full harvest was not begun until the New Testament era, when after His resurrection Christ at last commanded His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel Such a universal ministry was not even begun before the crucifixion, for the ransom to be preached had not yet been given. Thus Christ's general policy was only to preach the good news to the house of Israel (Matthew 15:24, 10:5-6).

Redemptive-historically, the resurrection of Christ is the basis of the proclamation of the good news to all the world. In Paul in particular, there is much emphasis on this fact of the resulting oneness of Jew and Gentile stemming from the work of Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11). In Ephesians, Paul reflects on the mystery which has been made known in history that the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs with the Jews (3:6). He often puts Gentile and Jew side by side to show that God's purposes of grace comprehend both, that is all men (Romans 1:16, 9:24, 10:19, 11:11, cf. Acts 11:18, 15:3, Galatians 3:8, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 5:9, 7:9). So our conclusion is in complete agreement with the main thrust of Paul's redemptive-historical orientation in his teaching and ministry. This is the wonder of Christ's substitutionary work of ransoming His people, that amongst those people whom God calls His own are Gentiles as well as Jews.

Those who believe that Christ gave Himself as a ransom for all men individually, and yet still admit that not all are saved, not only empty the cross of all its efficacy, but make everything depend on man's acceptance of the divinely appointed mediator now in heaven. Warfield shows the error of this view for what it truly is:

> … such a view can only be held at the cost of emptying the concept of propitiating of its properly expiatory content, and shifting the really saving operation of Christ from His atoning death on earth to His intercession in heaven. [33]

God be praised that salvation is all of grace "for by a single offering Christ has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:13)! All for whom Christ dies will assuredly be saved for Christ has ransomed them out of every nation.

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[33] Meeter, John E., ed., *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1970), 23, p. 173.