

# **A DEFENSE OF THE DOCTRINE OF SPECIAL ATONEMENT**

**By: Elders David Pyles and Sonny Pyles**

## **Introduction**

The doctrine of special atonement asserts that the saving benefits of Christ's death were intended only for a people chosen in Christ before the world began. This doctrine further asserts that all persons receiving the benefits of Christ's death will finally be saved. Special atonement stands opposed to the doctrine of universal atonement, which asserts that the saving benefits of Christ's death were intended for all mankind. All advocates of this doctrine, apart from Universalists, maintain that means other than the death of Christ are necessary to secure salvation. Therefore, the position advocates in effect that the death of Christ made salvation possible for all, but secured salvation for none. Obviously, these two doctrines stand very much opposed. The differences separating them have vast implications not only for the atonement itself, but for virtually every other area of theology as well.

The doctrine of special atonement has always been maintained by Primitive Baptists. It was also maintained by the historic Baptists from which Primitive Baptists descended. These historic Baptists are the ancestors of most other modern Baptists; however, very few Baptists advocate special atonement today. Furthermore, universal atonement is by far the more prevalent doctrine in the remainder of the Christian world, and has become increasingly popular in recent decades. This surge has probably been due in part to the increased emphasis upon human rights and equal opportunity in modern society. Indeed, the principal criticism of the doctrine of special atonement is that it portrays God as discriminating and therefore unfair. This criticism so prejudices the minds of most believers that very few have ever given the doctrine serious consideration, nor do they consider the insurmountable problems confronting the concept of universal atonement. As we hope to show, universal atonement is opposed by scriptures, experience and reason.

We begin our defense of special atonement by presenting 12 points which either directly support the doctrine, or which support it indirectly by exposing the unreasonableness of the alternate view. Given that the death of Christ will accomplish salvation for some, these two doctrines represent the only logical alternatives; consequently, refutation of one constitutes valid proof of the other.

The last seven points are of particular interest because they focus upon the magnitude and nature of God's love. The most common objection to the doctrine of special atonement is the claim that it is inconsistent with a God of love. These seven points show the love of God to be among the strongest reasons supporting the doctrine. Accordingly, we show that the degree of love implied by the doctrine of universal atonement falls well beneath the true love of God, as presented by the scriptures, and as implied by the doctrine of special atonement.

Finally, we consider numerous scriptures which are often presented as supporting universal atonement or as militating against special atonement. While the list of considered texts is inexhaustive, it is hoped that examination of these texts will expose most of the errors in principle which have lead to general misuse of scriptures against what we sincerely feel to be the truth regarding the intents and accomplishments of our Lord's death.

### **Scriptural Proof of Special Atonement**

1) Numerous scriptures imply that the work of Christ was intended for a special group of people. Such texts include:

a) Matthew 1:21 - The angel said to Joseph: *...thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.* Advocates of universal atonement claim that Jesus made salvation possible for all, but certain for none. Advocates of special atonement claim that Jesus made salvation certain for some. The present text is consistent only with the latter view because it asserts that Jesus would secure salvation for a special group of people.

b) John 10:11 - Christ said: *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* However, the 26th verse reveals that not all men are regarded as sheep, for here the Lord said to wicked Jews: *But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.*

c) John 11:51 - Concerning the prophesy of Caiaphas, John said: *...he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he also should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.* This text teaches that Christ died for persons who were *children of God* even as of the time of his death. However, the doctrine of universal atonement effectively denies this. Instead, it claims that Christ died for all mankind, thereby giving all opportunity to become children of God. The doctrine of special atonement affirms that Christ indeed died for children of God in that His death was intended for those previously set apart by God to receive its benefits.

d) John 15:13 - Christ said: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

e) John 17:1 - Christ said: *...Father, the hour is now come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* However, the Father did not give all mankind to Christ for the purpose of receiving life, for then all mankind would come to Christ. This follows from the Lord's statement in John 6:37: *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*

f) Romans 8:32,33 - *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.* This text implies that Christ was delivered for the *elect*; however, an elected people cannot possibly include all people.

g) Ephesians 5:25 - *Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*

h) Titus 2:14 - Paul said of Christ: *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*

i) Hebrews 9:15 - Paul said of Christ: *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.* The called of this verse cannot include all mankind under any reasonable definition. Experience teaches that not all will receive the gospel call, while scriptures teach that not all are embraced within the effectual call (Romans 8:29, 9:7, and 9:22-24, I Corinthians 1:22-26).

2) The various sacrifices of the Old Testament are taught in the New Testament to be figures or shadows of the sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 8-10); however, there is not a single instance of an Old Testament sacrifice that was intended for the benefit of all mankind. Moreover, these sacrifices were clearly intended to represent atonement for sin. They did not represent a means which merely made such atonement a possibility.

Old Testament sacrifices were intended either for the nation Israel, or for individuals or groups of individuals within the nation. In no case was a sacrifice offered for the heathen world surrounding this nation. God's special treatment of Israel in this and many other regards clearly shows Him to be a God exercising sovereign election among men. Moreover, Paul teaches us in Romans 9:6-24 that this principle remains relevant to the new covenant.

3) The scriptures teach that the death of Christ was intended to deliver, and will indeed deliver, some men from other men; therefore, it could not be designed to deliver all men.

a) Galatians 1:4 - Paul said of Christ: *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.* Since this present world is evil because of men, a death intended to deliver *from this present evil world* could not possibly be intended for all mankind, since no evil world would remain after universal deliverance.

b) I Peter 3:17-22 - *For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which were sometime disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God...*

These verses exhort believers to endure the persecutions of the wicked by offering the examples of Christ and Noah. Christ endured persecution, but was delivered from it by the resurrection

from the dead; moreover, His deliverance was of such extent that He is now conferred with all honor and authority, being at the right hand of God. Similarly, Noah, who lived in a wicked world and preached unto it by the inspiration of the spirit of Christ (I Peter 1:11, II Peter 2:5), was delivered from the persecutions of this world by water, which destroyed his persecutors and cleansed the ungodly environment in which he lived. Noah entered the ark leaving a world of wickedness, but exited the ark into a world that had been cleansed. Consequently, the ark, like baptism, becomes a figure of the resurrection from the dead, in that the righteous enter the grave leaving a wicked world, but shall exit it into the world to come. Hence, the righteous shall, like Christ and Noah, find salvation from the persecutions of the wicked, which salvation shall be found in that of which the ark and baptism are like figures; namely, the resurrection from the dead.

Now, since the death and resurrection of Christ secured this deliverance, these have also served to deliver some men from other men, and therefore, it becomes unreasonable to propose them as being intended for all men.

c) Revelations 5:9 - It is said of the redeemed in glory: *And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Here the redeemed praise the death of Christ as being the cause of their redemption *out of* the human family, but if His death was of no greater service to these than to those from whom they were redeemed, then the redemption obviously could not be attributed to the death itself.

4) Any position advocating universal atonement, but denying universalism, must invariably hold that Christ's death was not intended to secure salvation for some, but rather, to make salvation possible for all. However, numerous scriptures clearly teach that Christ's death was designed to secure salvation and not merely the possibility of salvation.

a) Matthew 1:21 - The angel said to Joseph: *...thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.* This verse does not say that Christ would attempt to save His people, nor that He would merely make salvation possible for His people; rather, it asserts that He would accomplish their salvation.

b) Luke 19:10 - *For the son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost.* If the position of universal atonement were true, then one would expect this verse to read: "For the son of man is come to *seek to save* that which was lost."

c) John 6:37 - The Lord said: *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.* Therefore, if Christ is to completely satisfy the will of the Father, then He must secure the salvation of all that He came to deliver.

d) John 17:1 - Immediately before His death, the Lord said: *...Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* The last two verses make the salvation

of those given by the Father to Christ an absolute certainty. However, not one text in the Bible asserts nor even suggests that the saving benefits of Christ's death were intended for those excluded from this number. Therefore, the death of Christ accomplished certain salvation unto all for whom the death was intended.

5) Whenever the doctrine of universal atonement is interpreted within the light of scriptures, the doctrine will imply universal salvation; that is, that all mankind will ultimately be saved. Since this is most certainly not the case, the doctrine of universal atonement cannot be true. This difficulty with the doctrine is plainly illustrated by the following scriptures:

a) Romans 8:32 - *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?* This verse teaches that those for whom the Son was delivered will inevitably be the recipients of the greatest degrees of grace. Consequently, if Christ was delivered for all mankind, then all mankind must inevitably be saved.

b) Romans 5:10 - *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* Therefore, all for whom Christ died were reconciled to God as of the time of His death; moreover, all who were reconciled by the death of Christ shall receive salvation by the life of Christ. If Christ died for all mankind, and if Christ is indeed alive, then it follows that all mankind will be saved.

c) II Corinthians 5:14 - *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.* The death experienced here by those for whom Christ died is positional death with Christ. Now Paul says in II Timothy 2:11: *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him.* Therefore, those for whom Christ died also died with Him, and those who died with Him shall invariably live with Him; consequently, if Christ died for all mankind, then all mankind must finally live with Christ.

6) The scriptures abundantly teach that the death of Christ was motivated by the love of God (John 3:16 and 15:13, Romans 5:8 and 8:32, Galatians 2:20, I John 3:16 and 4:9); therefore, if Christ died for all mankind, then God must love all mankind. However, Romans 9:11-13 says of Jacob and Esau: *...(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* Since these verses present a man hated by God, they plainly contradict the assertion that God loves all mankind.

The clear implications of these verses are often evaded, either by claiming that the word *hate* does not have its usual forcefulness, or by claiming that the verses should be allegorized by making Jacob to represent the spiritual nature and Esau to represent the fleshly nature. To these objections it may be replied:

a) If Paul's intent were to use Jacob and Esau allegorically, then why does he not express this intent? Furthermore, Paul obviously felt no necessity to qualify his usage of the word *hate* when describing God's relation to Esau, yet such qualification would be most needful if God indeed loves all mankind.

b) The context reveals that Paul's primary intent was to show that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant were not bestowed as a result of fleshly descent or as a reward for merit seen or foreseen in the recipients. It is true that the blessings of the old covenant were bestowed upon Abraham's seed; however, these blessings were not motivated by fleshly relationship to Abraham. Paul proves this simply by showing that certain of Abraham's seed did not receive the blessings. Instead, the blessings were restricted to Isaac when it was said: *for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*. Nor can it be concluded that the blessings were motivated by fleshly relationship to Isaac, because Paul then shows that of the sons of Isaac, indeed of twin sons, one received the blessings while the other did not. Furthermore, God's choice among these sons could not have been based upon their relative merit, because this choice was made before either had done any good or evil. It must be concluded that the blessings of this covenant were bestowed in accordance with the sovereign will of God, and that the criteria motivating His choice cannot be found in the chosen.

The interpretation which construes Jacob and Esau as allegorical representations of the two natures of man entirely misses the point of these texts. The verses have nothing to do with the relative merits of men or with their natures. Instead, they illustrate that God's choice of men is often independent of such considerations.

c) One can scarcely find a religious group - Christian, Moslem, Hindu, or otherwise - objecting to the claim that God hates the nature of the flesh and loves the nature of the spirit. Furthermore, few religious groups would object to these verses were they allowed to choose a less forceful meaning for the word *hate*. If these interpretations are correct, why does Paul anticipate and answer objections in the following texts? The fact that Paul anticipates and answers the exact objections made against the literal interpretation is convincing evidence that the literal interpretation is the intended interpretation.

d) Paul is referring to Malachi 1:3 when he speaks of God's hatred toward Esau. The Hebrew word from which *hate* is translated is also used to describe God's attitude toward abominations (Deuteronomy 12:31), images (Deuteronomy 16:22), murderers, false witnesses, and sowers of discord (Proverbs 6:16). The primary meaning of the word conveys extreme antipathy. Moreover, this word is used more than once to describe the disposition of God toward wicked men. For example Psalms 5:5 reads: *The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity*. Accordingly, Psalms 11:5 reads: *The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth*.

e) Even if one were to allow a less forceful meaning of *hate*, the conclusions of the text would remain the same. It is true that *hate* can sometimes mean a lesser degree of love in the scriptures. For example in Luke 14:26 the Lord said: *If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*. When the Lord said that one must *hate* father, mother, etc., He certainly did not intend that one should commit wrongs against these individuals or deprive them of time and care lawfully belonging to them. He did however intend that these individuals may be deprived of time and care they would have received had it not been for the Christian commitment of others. Accordingly, when Romans 9:13 speaks of God hating Esau, it is not suggested that God treated Esau with cruelty, nor that God deprived Esau of things lawfully deserved. Rather, it means that

God withheld blessings from Esau that would have been given had God loved Esau as He did Jacob.

Since no man lawfully deserves the blood of Christ, and since this undeserved gift is given under the highest degrees of Divine love, a lesser degree of love could prevent the blessing of the gift. Indeed, it is clear from the subsequent verses that by *hate* Paul intends a disposition of God that will result in the denial of His mercy and in the demonstration of His eternal wrath. Therefore, if *hate* indeed means a lesser degree of love, then the implied degree is sufficiently less than God's love for Jacob to span the distance between heaven and hell.

7) Several scriptures teach that those under the love of God also receive His corrective chastisement. However, the scriptures also teach that not all experience this chastisement; consequently, not all are embraced within His love.

a) Revelations 3:19 - The Lord said: *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.* If God loves all mankind, then why would the qualification, *as many as I love*, be necessary here?

b) Hebrews 12:6-8 - *For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.* Both this and the previous verse assert that all who are loved of God are also chastened of God; however, the present verse allows that some are without this chastisement, and are therefore without the love of God.

c) I Corinthians 11:32 - *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* The previous verses assert that all the beloved of God are also chastened by Him, but in the present verse, those that are chastened by God clearly do not include those in the world who will ultimately be condemned. Since those to be condemned are not chastened of God, then neither are they loved of God.

d) Psalms 93:12,13 - *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.* This verse makes a distinction between the chastened of God and the wicked. Since all who are loved of God are also chastened of God, one is necessarily lead to conclude that the wicked cannot be loved of God.

8) The love of God is repeatedly presented in the scriptures as being a cause producing an effect in those receiving it. However, the effect is never universally observed; therefore, the cause cannot be universally applied.

a) I John 4:19 - *We love him, because he first loved us.* Hence, our love for God is an effect whose cause is God's love for us. It would be logically impossible to honor God's love toward us as the effectual cause of our love toward Him if others receiving the same love have responded by hating God (Numbers 10:35, Psalms 21:8, John 15:25, Romans 1:30).

This text also exposes the error of those who construe the doctrine of special atonement as excluding persons who love God and who seek His mercy and salvation. The verse asserts that any person who loves God is also loved by God and is therefore embraced in the special atonement of God.

b) Titus 3:3-5 - *For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;* The love, kindness and mercy of God are presented here as causes whose effects are the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and a subsequent change in nature. However, it would be logically impossible to honor God's love as producing these effects if others receiving the same love forever failed to respond accordingly.

c) Ephesians 2:4,5 - *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* Hence, God's love is presented as a cause whose effect is deliverance from death in sins to life in Christ. God's love could not be credited as the effectual cause of this deliverance if others under the same love forever remained dead in sins.

9) Any position claiming that the death of Christ was intended for all men, but claiming that not all men will finally be saved, must concede that other action is necessary to appropriate the benefits of this death. This is indeed the claim of all doctrines advocating universal atonement. However, upon examining the proposed means of appropriation, it will be found that God has not seen fit to make any of these means available on a universal scale. If the death of Christ was intended to be of saving benefit to all, then one should expect the appropriating means of these benefits to be available to all.

If the Lord loved a people to the degree that He would die for them, then such love would also be sufficient to provide the means of securing the benefits of His death. The Lord taught that His submission to crucifixion was motivated by the greatest degree of love ever experienced in man. The greatest form of love that man can know is described by the Lord in John 15:13: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Since Christ died for His friends, His love for them must be no less than the greatest love of man. Indeed, His love is greater than the love of men, for in Romans 5:7,8 it is said: *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* Therefore, if God loved each man to the extent that Christ would die for each man, then love of such degree would certainly motivate provision of any other means of salvation to each man. The scriptures also substantiate this reasoning in Romans 8:32: *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

How is it then that God has not made other of the proposed means of salvation of universal availability? For example, if baptism is a necessary condition to salvation, then why have not all had the opportunity to be scripturally baptized, particularly when the love necessary to motivate such provision can be no greater than the love motivating the death of Christ? This same

question hangs as a darkening cloud over every doctrinal scheme which affirms universal atonement, but denies that the death of Christ is alone sufficient to secure salvation.

The reasoning above also applies to the intercessory work of Christ. If the moving cause of the death of Christ was love of supreme degree, then His intercessory work must be motivated by love of no greater degree, and therefore, if His love for all mankind was sufficient that He would die for all mankind, then it follows that He would be willing to intercede for all mankind. However, the Lord restricted His intercessory work in John 17:9: *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine*. If it be objected that this verse has reference only to the 11 faithful disciples, then it should be observed that the request is enlarged in the 20th verse to encompass all believers. In any event, it is quite apparent that the great intercessory prayer of John 17 does not include the entire human race.

The doctrine of universal atonement purports to exalt the love of God by making it uniformly applicable to all. In reality, the doctrine diminishes the love of God by portraying it to be ineffectual and insincere. Suppose that a man were to write us a check for millions of dollars, but that we were never to receive this check, or even the knowledge of it, because the man were too miserly to pay the postage to deliver it. Such a gift would certainly be ineffectual, and we would have to question the sincerity with which the gift was intended. This is precisely the manner in which the doctrine of universal atonement portrays God, for it rightfully claims that God gave a gift of infinite value in the life of His Son, but it wrongfully claims that God has not necessarily made provision for the delivery of this gift to its intended beneficiaries.

Advocates of universal atonement will claim that God has provided opportunity for salvation to all men, and will typically claim that He would have been unjust in doing otherwise. Such claims are symptomatic of a rebellious attitude toward God's sovereignty and a blindness to the undeserving state of man. Moreover, those advocating this position are compelled by visible reality to charge God with injustice, for if it be unjust to grant opportunity to some and not to others, then it must also be unjust to grant less opportunity to some than to others; yet, in no aspect of life has God dealt with all men equally and alike. Indeed, it would be difficult to show that God has ever given any two individuals identical degrees of intelligence, instruction, information, or ability. It is evident that multitudes of people have been so deprived in certain of these areas that to demand their compliance with the conditions of salvation proposed by advocates of universal atonement would be utterly unreasonable.

The doctrine of universal atonement therefore suffers from an extreme oblivion to stark reality. One cannot consistently claim that God is under moral obligation to give all men opportunity to salvation while claiming that God has been just in His dealings with this world. And it cannot reasonably be claimed that God would provide a necessary means to salvation so precious as the life of His Son, but that He would deny other necessary means of far less value. Were the doctrine of universal atonement true, one should expect a far different world from the one actually observed. The doctrine is therefore no more than an ideological fantasy.

10) The scriptures teach that God has prolonged the second coming of Christ and the destruction of the world so that some might be given time to come unto repentance. But if Christ died for all

men, and if the possibility of saving repentance is therefore available to all, then at what time could God destroy the world without denying such opportunity to at least one?

II Peter 3:9 reads: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Examination of the context reveals that the promise under consideration is the promise of the second coming of Christ. Peter's statement is offered as an explanation for the apparent delay in this great event. The explanation is that God has preserved the world so that repentance could be secured in those yet living and in subsequent generations. But if Christ died for all mankind, and if the possibility of saving repentance is therefore available unto all, then Peter's argument would forever remain valid, even as of the destruction of the world. Consequently, in destroying the world, God would be violating the very principle upon which He had previously preserved it. Such policy could never befit an immutable God.

On the other hand, this text can be easily explained if special atonement is taken to be true. The repentance under consideration must be a change which affects one's eternal status since it is of such importance that it justifies the delay of Christ's coming. Those that God would have come unto such repentance are the same as those for whom He is longsuffering. Peter said that God *is longsuffering to usward.* By "us" Peter means the elect family of God. The text therefore explains that the world must continue until all of the elect have experienced birth, both natural and spiritual. Spiritual birth must of course be preceded by natural conception (John 3:3-8, I Corinthians 15:46).

The doctrine of special atonement is charged with unfairness because it does not make the blood of Christ of universal availability; however, even the doctrine of universal atonement teaches a discriminating God, for if God were to perform any action which would shorten the natural lives of unsaved men, such as the destruction of the world, then such men would not be given equal opportunity to appropriate the benefits of Christ's death.

11) The love of God is presented in the scriptures as being an assurance of salvation; however, it obviously serves as no assurance at all if some receiving this same love will finally be damned.

a) II Timothy 2:19 - *Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his...* The word *knoweth* clearly means "loveth." If the word merely implied familiarity or awareness, then the assertion of the verse would be of no force at all, as the Lord is equally aware of those who are not His. Similarly, the verse becomes senseless when God is interpreted as loving all mankind, for how then could the love of God serve as a sustaining foundation to the salvation of some while others under the same love will ultimately be condemned? One is therefore compelled to conclude that either: 1) the doctrine of universal atonement is false, or 2) the doctrine of universal salvation is true, or 3) Paul has greatly exaggerated the power of God's love. Clearly, the first alternative is the only reasonable choice.

b) Romans 8:38 - *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* One can scarcely find a verse offering greater assurance than this, yet all the assurance of this

verse is based upon the love of God. Now if Christ died for all mankind, then God must love all mankind; however, if some will finally be damned, then these must ultimately be separated from the love of God, and must therefore contradict this verse.

c) Romans 8:32 - *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?* The logic of this verse runs thus: If the love of God was of sufficient degree that God would offer His own Son, then such love must also assure salvation to those for whom the Son was offered. However, this logic obviously fails if not all embraced within this love will finally be saved.

12) The scriptures present the love of God and Christ as being analogous to: 1) the love of a friend (John 15:13), 2) the love of a brother (Matthew 12:49,50 and Hebrews 2:12), 3) the love of a father (Matthew 7:9-11, Luke 15:11-32, Hebrews 12:6-8), and 4) the love of a husband (Matthew 25:1-13, Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelations 19:7-9). All these analogies suggest that the love of God is individually focused and exclusive. It is not a love for man but a love for men. It is not a love for a species but a love for individuals within a species.

Perhaps the most revealing of these analogies is the love of a husband for a wife. The concept of love imagined by the doctrine of universal atonement is inconsistent with this analogy. Any man who loves all women alike is not a suitable husband. Furthermore, one would certainly question the masculinity of a man who loved his wife above other women merely because she had accepted him whereas others had not. On the other hand, a person would respect a man having a special and autonomous love for his wife, and would not expect him to apologize to other women for not loving them the same.

Jesus claimed that man shows no greater love than when he dies for friends (Jn 15:13). It is clearly suggested that the death of Jesus was also a sacrifice for friends. This statement says much about the nature of His love. There have been numerous cases where persons have died for those who were not their friends. For example, soldiers have died on the battlefield to save people completely unknown to them. Similarly, civilians have perished while attempting to save others who were not necessarily friends. One might think that it takes more love to die for one who is not a friend than for one who is. However closer consideration reveals that the motivation for dying to save friends may be much different than the motivation for dying to save strangers or enemies. In the former case, one dies because of love for individuals. In the latter case, one dies because of love for a principle. For example, most generally acknowledge the principle that it is honorable to value the lives of others above our own, and this principle has proven to be one for which some men are willing to die.

When man dies to uphold a principle, the cause for which he dies is often honorable. However, history has repeatedly shown that man will also die for principles that are patently absurd, ungodly, and in no way motivated by love for anyone. Indeed, the willingness with which man will die for principle is sometimes bewildering. Man is much less inclined to sacrifice his life for another when the only motivation is love for the individual. It is indeed that case that man has no greater love than to die for a friend.

Jesus clearly indicated that His death was for friends. His primary motivation was not love for a principle, for principle would have been completely served had He not died at all. Now since the love of Jesus was clearly a love for individuals, and since it is a love which is characterized by analogies suggesting both special and exclusive love, the claims that Jesus loves all mankind, and that He died for the same, are inconsistent with the scriptural teachings as to the nature of His love.

### **An Examination of Texts Thought to Support Universal Atonement**

1) John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* - Though the verse does not expressly say that God gave His Son for the world, this is inferred from the assertion that God loved the world, and the clear suggestion that such love was the motivation for giving His Son. If *world* means all humanity, then universal atonement readily follows.

However, it should be observed that the term *world* is used with varying latitudes in the scriptures; moreover, of the numerous occasions where it appears, very seldom does it refer to all mankind. For example Luke 2:1: *...there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.* Clearly, *world* here cannot mean all humanity. In John 6:33 the Lord says, *For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.* If *world* is interpreted here as meaning all mankind, then one arrives at the absurd conclusion that all mankind will experience spiritual life. There are numerous other texts using the term where it is equally evident that it must refer to less than all mankind (John 1:10, 12:19, and 17:9, Acts 19:27, Romans 1:8 and 11:12, Colossians 1:6, I John 5:19).

In John 3:16 the Lord is speaking to a Jew, Nicodemus, and is in the presence of Jews. It was then the prevalent opinion among the Jews that salvation was limited strictly to the seed of Abraham. By asserting that the love of God and the gift of His Son pertain to the world, the Lord does not intend to suggest that either the love or the gift is unto all humanity, but that these blessings encompass *all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues* (Revelations 7:9). This interpretation also applies to other texts in which the benefit of Christ's death is described as being extended unto the world, including: John 1:29, 4:42, 6:33, and 6:51, Romans 11:12-15, II Corinthians 5:19, I John 2:2 and 4:14.

2) I John 2:2 - *And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* - It might be said that though the term *world* does not necessarily refer to all mankind, the more emphatic expression *whole world* does.

However, the expression *whole world* is also used in scriptures where reference cannot be to all mankind. In this same epistle it is said in 5:19, *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.* Clearly, *whole world* does not include those that are *of God*. The expression is also used in a limited sense in Romans 1:8, where Paul says of the Roman church: *...your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.*

Even were one to allow that *whole world* indeed refers to all mankind, then the verse vastly overstates the opposing position, for if propitiation has in fact been accomplished for all mankind, then one should firmly expect all mankind to be saved. A similar problem with this interpretation occurs when the verse is compared with Romans 3:25, where Paul says of Christ: *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood...* Since propitiation is claimed to be through faith, then propitiation for all must imply that all have faith. This is of course patently absurd (II Thessalonians 3:2).

We prefer to explain this verse thus: By the statement, *And he is the propitiation for our sins*, John means that Christ is the sole source of propitiation for the sins of John's own people, the Jews. Then by the statement, *and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world*, John presents Christ as being the sole source of propitiation to the Gentiles also. Hence, *whole world* has the same significance as *world* in John 3:16. The only inference that may be drawn as to the number of persons benefiting from the propitiation is that this number includes both Jews and Gentiles.

The intent of the verse is to assert the exclusiveness of the source of propitiation - not the extent of its application. It may be truthfully said that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world in the sense that there is no other source in this world through which propitiation can be accomplished. For example, if one were to state that a particular utility were the supplier of natural gas to a whole community, this statement would not imply that everyone in the community purchased natural gas; rather, it would imply that of those purchasing natural gas, all must have done so from this particular utility. Similarly, Christ is the sole supplier of propitiation for sins, though not all humanity will be supplied with such propitiation.

3) Romans 5:18 - *Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.* - Here it will be said that not only does the verse assert that the gift of Christ is unto all men, but also that the benefits of Christ's righteousness are of equal extent as the consequences of Adam's transgression, but the latter are known to be universal.

First, statements in the scriptures using such terms as *all men* or *every man* may have latitudes as variable as expressions involving *world* or *whole world*. This is demonstrated in:

a) John 12:32 - The Lord said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* But *all men* cannot mean every human that has ever lived, since this would contradict both experience and other scriptures.

b) II Corinthians 3:2 - Paul said unto the Corinthian church, *Ye are our epistle written in our own hearts, known and read of all men.* Obviously, *all men* cannot include those that had never heard of the Corinthian church.

c) Luke 16:16 - *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.* Again, if *every man* refers to all men that have ever lived, then both experience and scriptures are contradicted.

Next, the analogy comparing Christ's relation with mankind to Adam's relation with mankind does by no means strengthen the argument for universal atonement. Indeed, the doctrine is vitiated upon this very ground, for it is apparent from earlier verses in the chapter that Adam's transgression did not merely make men vulnerable to sin and death; rather, it afflicted all mankind with both. For example, the 12th verse reads: *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned...* Therefore, the analogy between Adam and Christ would suggest that Christ's righteousness did not merely make righteousness and life accessible to men; rather, men were made to be actual partakers of both. This reasoning is also supported by the general context. Therefore, if Adam's transgression and Christ's righteousness are both taken to have reference to all mankind, then this in conjunction with the reasoning of the context leads to the conclusion that all men must be saved.

Perhaps the most common explanation of this text offered by advocates of special atonement is that the *all men* affected by Adam's transgression consist of all men in Adam's posterity, and that the *all men* affected by Christ's righteousness consist of all men in Christ's posterity. Though this explanation is not without merit, Romans 5:18 is better resolved by understanding the fifth chapter of Romans to have reference only to the elect family of God. That is, the chapter simply does not address the case of the nonelect, but is completely concerned with the experience of the elect family of God from condemnation in Adam to justification in Christ. Therefore, when the 18th verse says, *...as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation...*, the expression *all men* should be understood as being all the elect. Similarly, when it says, *...even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men to justification of life*, the expression *all men* should again be interpreted as all the elect.

There are at least two reasons for favoring the last interpretation. First, the expression *all men* is not given two different meanings in the same verse, as is done in the more common interpretation. Second, the interpretation is more compatible with the 20th verse, which reads: *Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound...* It would be unreasonable to assert that grace has dominated sin in the lives of those that will finally be damned; therefore, it is evident that the 20th verse has reference only to the elect, both with respect to the offence and the overruling grace.

4) I Timothy 2:1-6 - *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God and our saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and come into the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* - It will be objected that since these verses assert that it is God's will that all humanity be saved, then God would not have made the sacrificial provision of His Son for some while passing others by; furthermore, it will be claimed that the doctrine of universal atonement is expressly stated when it is said that Christ *gave himself a ransom for all*.

It is evident that those that God would have saved are the same as those that God would have acquainted with the knowledge of the truth. How could it be that God would have all humanity to

be saved when it is evident from other scriptures that God has deliberately concealed or withheld truth from many? For example:

a) Matthew 11:45 - The Lord said, *...I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

b) I Corinthians 1:21 - *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*

c) II Thessalonians 2:11 - *And for this cause God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

d) Paul said of the Jews in Romans 11:8: *...God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear...*

Even were it admitted that it is God's will that all humanity be saved, it could not be true that this will is of equal strength for all. The scriptures teach an irresistible assertiveness of God's will toward the salvation of those given to His Son (John 6:37-39, 6:44,45 and 17:1-4). Accordingly, the work of God in the regeneration of the saved is described as work of irresistible power. For example, it is a work of:

a) begetting power (John 1:13, 3:3, and 3:5, I Peter 1:23),

b) quickening and resurrecting power (John 1:12,13 and 5:25, Romans 6:13, Ephesians 2:1 and 2:5, Colossians 2:13 and 3:1),

c) translating power (Colossians 1:13), and

d) creating power (Romans 8:19-21, II Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 2:10).

Moreover, the scriptures teach that this power is unsolicited by those upon whom it is exerted, and is therefore the sovereign act of God. This follows since:

a) The fact that it is unsolicited is directly and explicitly asserted by scriptures (John 1:11-13, Romans 5:10 and 9:11-16). An unsolicited force accords well with the fact that:

b) All of the analogies to regeneration given above have an irresistible power working upon an object incapable of action, which logically follows since:

c) Natural man is both opposed to this power and incapable of its reception (Job 21:14, Matthew 7:15-20 and 12:33-35, Luke 16:29-31, John 6:44, 6:64,65, and 8:47, Romans 3:10-18 and 8:5-8, I Corinthians 2:12-14), and therefore:

d) Mans' submission to and reception of this power is also the result of sovereignly bestowed grace (Psalms 110:3, Proverbs 16:1, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekial 36:25-27, Matthew 16:17, John

6:44 and 6:64,65, Acts 11:18, 15:9, and 16:14, Romans 6:17 and 12:3, Galatians 5:22,23, Ephesians 1:19,20 and 4:24, Philippians 1:6, 1:29, and 2:13, Colossians 3:10, I Timothy 1:14, I Peter 1:21, II Peter 1:3, I John 4:19).

Therefore, if it is indeed God's will that all be eternally saved, then the fact that many will not be saved implies that this will, though irresistibly and sovereignly imposed upon some, cannot be irresistibly imposed upon all, and is therefore not of equal force for all.

The fact that God imposes an irresistible power in the regeneration of the saved is clear suggestion that without such imposition salvation would not be possible. Therefore, God's will for the salvation of some is sufficiently near indifference that the actual salvation for these has been left utterly impossible. While God does not delight in the condemnation of any, it is clear enough that His will towards the salvation of some is not of sufficient force to provide the necessary means to this end, and therefore not of sufficient force to provide the benefits of His Son's death.

The best explanation for these verses is obtained by observing that in the scriptures *all* frequently means all manner or all kinds of the objects embraced within the noun it modifies. So when Paul says that God would have *all men* to be acquainted with the knowledge of the truth, by *all men* is meant all manner of men, or all kinds of men, but not all men without exception.

That *all men* here means all manner of men, is evidenced by the fact that Paul requests in the first verse that prayer be made for *all men*. Now, if *all men* means all men without exception, then there is significant difference between Paul's instruction and John's instruction, since John does not encourage prayer for those who have committed the sin unto death (I John 5:16). Moreover, that all manner of men is meant is further evidenced by the fact that Paul, after requesting prayer for *all men*, then instances kinds of men, such as kings and men in authority. The request of prayer for all kinds of men follows naturally from the previous chapter where Paul relates his former life as a blasphemer and a persecutor of the church. Christians are generally negligent and somewhat reluctant to pray for men of Paul's former character; however, Paul later proved to be a chosen vessel of God's mercy and grace.

We now demonstrate that *all* does indeed mean all manner or all kinds upon numerous occasions in the scriptures:

a) Matthew 10:22 - The Lord said unto His disciples, *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake...* The disciples were hated by all manner of men, but they were loved of many, and loved one another.

b) John 12:32 - Again, the Lord said, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* All manner of men have been drawn unto the Lord, but not all men without exception.

c) Luke 2:10 - The angel of the Lord said unto the shepherds at Christ's birth, *...I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.* The angels report was and is of good news to all manner of people, but not to Herod (Matthew 2:3).

d) I Timothy 6:10 - *For the love of money is the root of all evil...* Much evil has originated from motives other than the love of money, but all manner of evil has been prompted by the love of money at some time or another.

Numerous other texts using this meaning of *all* could be discussed as well. These include: Matthew 23:27, Mark 7:9, Romans 1:29, II Corinthians 3:2, I Thessalonians 2:15, II Thessalonians 2:9, Titus 2:11, and Revelations 19:18.

5) II Corinthians 5:14,15 - *For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.* - It will be said that universal atonement may be inferred from the explicit statement that Christ died for all. Moreover, it might be said that those described as formerly being dead are the same with those for whom Christ died; therefore, since the whole Adamic race was indeed dead in sin, then it follows that Christ died for all in Adam.

First, much of the above interpretation is based upon the presumption that the death experienced by those for whom Christ died was death in Adam; however, the verse makes better sense when this death is interpreted as positional death with Christ. Indeed, an alternative rendering of the verse is: "...if one died for all, then all died..." That is, if one legally died in the place of all, then all effectively died the death that justice demanded, and died to the power which had produced guiltiness worthy of such death. This interpretation is more plausible than the one above since death in Adam does not logically follow from Christ's death, but death to the condemnation and power of sin does. This is taught upon numerous occasions in the scriptures (Romans 6:1-13 and 7:4, Galatians 2:20,21, 5:24, and 6:14, Colossians 2:20 and 3:3, II Timothy 2:11, I Peter 2:24).

Second, if it be the case that the *all* for whom Christ died are the same as those who died with Christ, then upon determining the contents of the latter group one shall also determine the contents of the former. Now II Timothy 2:11 reads: *It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him...* This truth is proclaimed again in Romans 6:8: *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.* Hence, those who died with Christ must invariably live with Christ, but those who died with Christ are the same as those for whom Christ died. This forces the unavoidable conclusion that all who died with Christ will also live with Christ. Therefore, if the *all* for whom Christ died is equal to all men, then all men must live with Christ.

Third, if it be true that this verse indeed teaches that Christ died for all mankind, then it is most peculiar that the indebtedness proceeding from this death is confined to *they which live*. It seems most probable that the life under consideration is life in Christ, as opposed to natural life, since death in Christ and life in Christ are elsewhere connected in the scriptures. For example in Galatians 2:20 Paul says, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Paul first mentions being crucified with Christ, and then speaks of his present life in Christ, or more accurately, of Christ's present life in him. It is apparent that the life under consideration is not natural life, for it is life *in the flesh* and not life of the flesh. Also, Romans 6:11 states: *Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto*

*sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Again, a special life in God follows death unto the condemnation and power of sin. Now, if Christ died for all mankind, then it would assuredly follow that all rational mankind, whether alive in Christ or not, would be indebted to *live unto him which died for them.* How is it then that the obligation to live unto Christ is here confined to those which live in Christ, when such persons comprise less than the entire human race?

If it be true that the expressions *all men* and *every man* must be interpreted within the light of scriptural context, then much more should the term *all* be interpreted in that same light. It should therefore be observed that there is not a single reference to the wicked in this entire chapter, or at least one which can be unambiguously proven. The chapter begins with: *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* The persons under consideration in this first verse have a home in heaven, and there is absolutely no indication that Paul ever departs from addressing the case of these at any point in the chapter. This would then indicate that those embraced within the *all* for whom Christ died in verse 14 are the same as those whose case is addressed in the first verse, but the first verse clearly cannot pertain to all mankind.

6) Hebrews 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 should taste death for every man.* It will be claimed that universal atonement must be concluded from the fact that Christ tasted death for *every man.*

Again, the primary error of this interpretation is that the encompassing expression *every man* is taken to its fullest possible extent, when such extent is necessitated neither by scriptural precedent nor by the immediate context. As has already been shown, the expressions *all men* and *every man* frequently do not mean all mankind; however, one can generally determine the contents of these expressions by examining the context in which they are found. Here, both the preceding and succeeding verses shed considerable light upon the contents of the expression *every man* in verse nine.

First, consider the preceding verses. Beginning with the fifth verse: *For unto the angels hath he not put into subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him: Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the work of thine hands: Thou hast put all thing in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not all things put under him.* Much confusion has resulted over these verses because of failure to recognize that Paul is speaking, not of this world, but of the *world to come.* The present verse alludes to verses 10 through 12 of the previous chapter where Paul made statements about the world to come. The fact that Paul does not have reference to this world is further evidenced by his claim that the conditions described cannot be seen in this world.

It is claimed that in the world to come, higher honor and authority will be conferred upon men than upon angels. This claim is then supported by a quotation from the eighth Psalm, which teaches that in spite of man's insignificance, God has blessed him, or will bless him, with glory

and honor. It is also claimed that man has been made a little lower than the angels. But *little* has reference to time, and may be interpreted as "little while," thus indicating that man's inferiority to angels is temporary. Upon reading the Psalm, it will be seen that it has some application to Adam and this existing world before the Adamic fall; however, Paul's application here serves as a New Testament revelation that this Psalm, though of historic application, is of prophetic significance also.

Now by considering these verses, one can determine the contents of the expression *every man* in verse nine. First, it is comprised of men of whom God is mindful. Second, it is comprised of men who are visited by God. Third, it is comprised of men who are made a little while lower than the angels. Fourth, it is comprised of men who will be crowned with glory and honor in the world to come. Now, if *every man* is indeed equivalent to these, then the wicked cannot possibly be included, for the wicked will never be superior to angels, nor will they be crowned with glory and honor in the world to come. The men of whom God is mindful are the same as the men that are visited by God; who are the same as the men that are temporarily lower than the angels; who are the same as the men that are to be crowned with glory and honor; who are the same as the men for whom Christ tasted death.

Similarly, the succeeding verses indicate that *every man* in verse nine must comprise less than all humanity: *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.* The context here suggests that *every man* of verse nine is composed of the sons of glory; who are the same as the sanctified; who are the same as the brethren of Christ; who are the same as the children of God. Therefore, *every man* does not include those who are not children of God, and consequently, cannot include all mankind.

7) II Peter 2:1 - *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.* It will be claimed that since this verse has damnation befalling certain men *bought* by the Lord, it does destruction to the doctrine of special atonement by demolishing its principal support; namely, the doctrine of the sufficiency of Christ's blood.

Indeed, could it be shown that certain of those for whom Christ died will finally be damned, then the doctrine of sufficiency would be destroyed. It is also true that the doctrine of sufficiency is a supporting pillar to the doctrine of special atonement, for the fact that not all mankind will finally be saved in conjunction with the sufficiency of Christ's death necessarily implies that Christ did not die for all humanity. Moreover, it must also be admitted that the false teachers to which these verses refer are described elsewhere in the chapter with some of the most condemning language in all the Bible; to the extent that the interpretation which places these among the eternally redeemed of God must not take the Lord's instruction seriously when He says, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them* (Matthew 7:20).

However, the above interpretation critically relies upon the presumption that these false teachers were *bought* of the Lord in the sense that Christ's blood was shed in their behalf. Now it is true that those for whom Christ died are said to be *bought* by Him (I Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23); moreover, they are said to be *purchased* by Him (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:14), and *redeemed* by Him (Galatians 3:13 and 4:5, Titus 2:14, I Peter 1:18, Revelations 5:9). However, these terms are used with equal frequency when describing God's temporal relationship to the nation Israel. In particular, Israel is said to be *bought* by Him (Deuteronomy 32:6); *purchased* by Him (Psalms 74:2), and *redeemed* by Him (Exodus 6:6 and 15:13, Deuteronomy 7:8 and 13:5, II Samuel 7:23, I Chronicles 17:21). Now, upon closer examination of the present verse, it will be found that the latter sense much better describes God's relation to these false teachers than does the former.

The observant reader of the scriptures will frequently find verses in the New Testament to have a familiar echo from verses in the Old Testament, even though the Old Testament verses may not be cited. This happens to be the case with the chapter in question. The chapter bears strong similarity with Deuteronomy 32. In particular: Peter describes these false teachers as utterly perishing in their own corruption (vs. 12); similarly, Deuteronomy 32:5 describes persons who have corrupted themselves. Moreover, Peter describes these false teachers as being *spots* (vs. 13); similarly, Deuteronomy 32:5 refers to its subjects as *spots*. Most importantly, Peter describes these false teachers as being *bought* of the Lord (vs. 1); similarly, Deuteronomy 32:6 refers to its subjects as being *bought* of the Lord. However, the persons of Deuteronomy 32 were not bought of the Lord through the blood of Christ, but through the Lord's purchase of national Israel under the Old Testament covenant.

The connection between the second chapter of II Peter and Deuteronomy 32 is further strengthened by a linkage through the book of Jude. The reader will find a striking similarity between Jude and the second chapter of II Peter, particularly with regard to their descriptions of false teachers. Indeed, the parallelisms between their statements regarding false teachers are so numerous that one is lead to conclude that Spirit has here inspired essentially the same message through two different witnesses; however, the two messages are sufficiently distinct to make them complementary rather than redundant. Among the similarities, Jude also refers to these false teachers as corrupting themselves (vs. 10), and as being *spots* (vs 12). It is interesting to note that Deuteronomy 32:5, II Peter 2:13, and Jude 12 are the only verses in the Bible in which the wicked are referred to as *spots*, thus further indicating that the accounts of both Peter and Jude were written with Deuteronomy 32 in view.

Moreover, in the fourth verse of Jude it is said of these false teachers: *For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* The Greek word for *ordained* in this verse is "prographo," which literally means "before written." The Greek word also occurs in Romans 15:4, where it is translated *were written aforetime*, and in Ephesians 3:3, where it is rendered *wrote afore*. Hence, Jude explicitly declares the case of these false teachers to have been considered in previous writings. Obviously, these previous writings must be of prophetic character, and indeed, upon closer examination of Deuteronomy 32, it will be found that this chapter contains prophetic elements. This is seen upon observing that the first part of Deuteronomy 32 is an address by Moses unto the children of Israel in which Moses warns of their apostasy in the latter days. The introductory remarks of this

address are recorded in the final verses of chapter 31. Among these there is Deuteronomy 31:29, where Moses says, *For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the works of your hands.* This verse indicates the address of Moses to be of prophetic significance. In particular, it has pertinence to a time described as the *latter days*.

The considerations above suggest that the false teachers to which Peter has reference are of the Jews. The fact that Peter's concern centers upon false teachers of Jewish origin accords well with the fact that:

a) Peter was an apostle unto the Jews (Galatians 2:7-9).

b) Both this and the first epistle of Peter were addressed unto the Jews. That the first epistle was addressed to the Jews is made evident in several of its verses, including: 1:1 (compare with James 1:1), 1:18, 2:12, and 4:3. The second epistle must then be addressed to the Jews also, for it is said to be written unto the same persons as the first epistle (II Peter 3:1).

c) It appears from the scriptures that most of the false teachers during this age were of the Jews (Acts 15:1-5, I Timothy 1:7, Titus 1:10).

To the above, one may add the fact when these false teachers are described as *denying the Lord which bought them*, the word *Lord* is translated from the Greek word "despotes," a title which is never distinguishably used of the Lord Jesus Christ. The term occurs only 10 times in the scriptures. It is translated *master* upon five occasions; four of which have reference to men (I Timothy 6:1,2, Titus 2:9, I Peter 2:18), and the other is used illustratively of God (II Timothy 2:21). Upon the remaining five occasions, it is translated *Lord* (Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24, II Peter, 2:1, Jude 4, Revelations 6:10), where reference is either explicitly to God the Father, or may be reasonably interpreted as being so. Moreover, in the fourth verse of Jude, which is fully quoted above, these false teachers are said to deny *the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*. The first occurrence of *Lord* in this statement is translated from "despotes," but the second occurrence is from "kurios," which is by far the most common of the two terms, and the one that is used elsewhere, as here, with reference to Christ. Hence, Jude clearly uses "despotes" in distinction to Christ, which yet further adds to the already preponderant evidence that the false teachers were not in fact bought with the blood of Christ.

Indeed, with the last observation, the present verse appears to suggest exactly the opposite of what advocates of universal atonement would have it to say. The word *Lord* appears in II Peter upon 15 occasions; all of which have reference to God; most of which have reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, but 14 of which are translated from "kurios." What prompted Peter to depart from the habitually used "kurios" in 2:1, where "despotes" is used instead? If Peter is indeed asserting that the false teachers were bought with the blood of Christ, then this message would have been best conveyed with "kurios." The fact that a different term was used indicates that a different message was intended; thus, it appears that Peter was deliberately avoiding the suggestion that these had been bought through Christ's death. But what need would there be of such precaution if Christ did in fact die for all mankind?