

July 06, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

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## How Long, O Lord, Shall Evil Victors Stand?

How long, O Lord, shall evil victors stand  
Upon the necks of these, Thine own redeemed?  
Shall heaven's Crown not rise to vindicate His name  
And stem the surge of martyrs' bloody stream?

Death's forest grows as righteous willows fall,  
And truth is trampled down with no restraints.  
Why doth the One who crushed the serpent's head  
Now fail to hear the cry of broken saints?

Fear not, my child, thy victory is sure,  
And certain is the day of My revenge.  
But some of My own sheep are still at large,  
And 'til they're safe there cannot be an end.

'Tis for the joy of My eternal Bride  
I bore the cross and suffered her great shame.  
And shall we now refuse to stay the course  
And cut her short to ease the present pain?

Nay, not one of her head's golden strands  
Shall perish in the flame of hell's dark fire!  
Take heart! Fight on! The battle shall be done  
When that last lamb my pardon doth desire. .

•ejr

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**Quote of the Week.** from *Dyson Hague*, *Professor of Liturgics, Wycliffe College, Toronto*.

“To the soul that beholds the Lamb of God, and finds peace through the blood of the cross, there comes a sense of joyous relief, a consciousness of deep satisfaction that is newness of life.

“A Christianity that is merely a system of morals... is not worth preserving. A Christianity without Christ Divine, an atonement vicarious, and a Bible inspired, will never carry power. ...It has never produced a martyr; it never will.

“At the same time, a Christianity that is merely orthodoxy, or an orthodoxy clasped in the dead hand of moribund Christianity, is one of the greatest curses. ...A dead church can never be the exponent of a living God.”

from *The Fundamentals- At-One-Ment by Propitiation*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) - vol III, pp. 69-70; reprint from original, Bible Institute of Los Angeles 1917.

Feature Article:

## Limited Atonement?

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*  
*Ephesians 1:3-7*

*And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 John 2:2*

*...we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe. 1 Timothy 4:10*

I have often indicated my profound conviction and appreciation for the doctrines of sovereign grace (*Calvinism*). The Council of Dort (1618-19), in its five-fold response to Jacobus Arminius (Dutch Theologian, Jakob Harmenszoon) articulated the gospel of Christ on a firmly Biblical foundation in its issued *Cannons*. However, from the introduction of the TULIP acronym for the five points, there has been concern expressed by many regarding the ‘forcing’ of the term *limited* to fit the atonement into the TULIP. Many prefer *definite atonement*, *particular redemption*, or other such terms, to avoid any misunderstanding regarding the *worth* of Jesus sacrifice. There was no question or uncertainty that Jesus infallibly secured the salvation of the elect in His death and resurrection; but where lies the *limiting* factor in the salvation of the elect?

Some appear to view the atonement as a *quantitative* measuring out of wrath. It's as though each sin accumulated so many “wrath points” against the sinner. In the atonement God just added up all the wrath points of the elect, and poured precisely that much wrath upon Jesus - no more, no less. Others seem to view atonement in such a way that each drop of blood secured the salvation of a particular amount of elect sinners; they insist, “Not one drop of Jesus’ blood will be wasted.”

I, rather, would agree with those who say that salvation is in no way limited *in the atonement*. The very nature of the factors involved in Jesus’ death refute the notion of any kind of restriction as to its value, as states the *Cannons of Dort*, themselves.

First, the *nature of the Sacrifice* (Jesus) is of infinite worth. The eternality and infinite perfection of the Son of God is without limit. Even if we somehow restrict His sacrifice to His humanity, alone, scriptures make it clear that there is no limit in the Father’s estimation of Jesus’ worth. (*See Cannons*

*of Dort Second Head, Articles Three and Four).*

In addition, *the nature of sin* demands an infinite atonement. Every imperfection stands as an eternal offense and mockery to the eternal holiness and perfection of God. Were there any limit to the offensiveness of sin, then hell would not be eternal. At some point the sin would be "paid for." But such is not the case. Every sin is an eternal offense, and can only be propitiated for by an infinite sacrifice. The *infinite* can neither be added to, nor subtracted from. If Jesus died for one sin (infinitely) than His death by nature is *sufficient* for all sin.

The limitation of Jesus' redemptive work lies not in His atonement, but in the *electing purpose of God*. Before time began, God, in sovereign grace, chose a *particular* people, to the praise of His glory. They constituted a Bride for His Son - a bride well known and beloved from the beginning.

The redemption of that Bride required the *infinite sacrifice* of the Son, Himself. *Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her (Eph 5:25)*. But *therein*, is the unsearchable wisdom, mercy, and glory of God revealed. For redemption was framed in such a way that the genuine, free offer of grace could be extended to all men without contradiction. In that redemptive offer God is neither disingenuous, nor unprepared to deliver what He offers. Beyond the limit of our human understanding, He *genuinely* pleads with sinners. The price has been paid: who-soever will, let him come freely (Rev 22:17); He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn (repent) and live (Ezek 33:11); He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2). Figuratively, the sign on hell's door reads, "You have come here as a sinner *justly condemned*, having trampled down every roadblock of grace set before you"; and the welcome on heaven's gate reads, "You have come here by Jesus' blood and righteousness alone, having been chosen before time with no merit of your own."

It is important to realize also, that because of the infinite value of the atonement, God remains just in extending His present kindness and mercy even to the unrighteous (Lk 6:35-36). The reality is that human life itself, and every blessing anyone has ever known - from the first breath of air and first heartbeat, to the food that sustains him; from the rain and sunshine, to the apprehension of beauty in God's creation - **every benefit and blessing any human being has known was purchased by the blood of Jesus**. He truly is the Savior of all men (1 Tim 4:10). He died, *in a sense*, for all men - but not for all in the same way, or for the same purpose.

Understanding that illustrations must be very limited in their scope and application, I offer the following. Suppose I have just married a wife, and she works in an upper floor of a high-rise office building. One day, as I am walking down the street near her office, I overhear two men talking about a bomb they have planted on the first floor of that building. It is due to detonate in minutes.

There is no time to alert the authorities; there isn't even time for my wife to get down and out to safety. So I run as quickly as possible to the building, and, entering the first floor, I locate the package. Picking it up, I run as fast as I can out the door and away from the building. I run as far as I can until the bomb explodes. I have sacrificed myself for my bride. That was my overwhelming motive. But, as a result, everyone in the building received benefit. Everyone was spared that particular catastrophe. However, **no one** but my bride will *receive my inheritance*; and could I rise from the dead, **no one** but my bride would be *going home with me*. None shall enter my house but my bride and me.

In conclusion, we should not ascribe any limitations to the worth of Jesus Christ by the devaluing of His death in defense of sovereign grace. Any bounds or limitations are set in the electing purpose of God, according to the good pleasure of His will, and unto His eternal glory.

Have you turned your life to Christ in faith? There is nothing preventing you, outside yourself. Jesus said, *He who comes to me I will by no means cast out (John 6:37)*. ●ejr3

### ***Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.*** **Love Your Enemies.**

*...love your enemies, ...For He is kind to the unthankful and the evil. Luke 6:35*

As I have mentioned above, the merits of Jesus' death overflow to the blessing of all men to one degree or another. As Christian believers, we are the particular benefactors of His eternal love and blessing. But the grace that has redeemed us demands that we imitate the mercies of our Father. He bestows innumerable blessings upon the vilest of sinners. It is true, that if the goodness of God does not lead the sinner to repentance, he is treasuring up for himself wrath against the day of wrath (Rom 2:4-6; 12:20-21). But wrath delayed, and blessings bestowed, are an amazing act of mercy and forbearance on the part of God, having been purchased by blood of Jesus. Therefore, we are enjoined to love our enemies, doing good and showing kindness. There shall be perfect justice in the end, but for now we are called to bear patiently the insults and injuries of others, just as our Father does.

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