**The Atonement Of Christ Is Unlimited**

Since David Landon admits in his last response that “the five points of Calvinism stand or fall together,” then all five points of Calvinism fall as my last two articles conclusively proved the idea that Jesus only died for a select few (the “limited atonement”) to be patently false. That means the inherited Total depravity, Unconditional election, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of 100% of the saints theories also are denied successfully. This next article is to deal with David’s latest objections.

David wonders how if Jesus is the savior of all men, why are not all men saved? This type of reasoning is an affront (shows disrespect) to God since it denies, because of human reasoning, what God actually says in passages like I Tim 4:10, which teaches Jesus is the “Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.” As we have already pointed out, “all men” in this verse can’t just be all believers because of the follow up phrase “specially of those that believe.” If I were to say David loves everybody at his congregation, especially his immediate family, the force of the word “especially” would have to mean the everybody that David loves would include more than just his immediate family. So Jesus is the savior of even unbelievers; the force of the word “specially” in I Tim 4:10 shows that; there is no way around it.

David’s take on I Tim 4:10 is that it is only referring to the “providential preservation of men.” By this David means a “temporal” (physical) preservation. First, doesn’t that understanding seem contrived in order to fit a preconceived notion? Why should Christians be more willing to labor and suffer reproach just because God provides for the physical preservation of all men? That doesn’t follow. But it certainly does follow to say we are willing to labor and suffer reproach in this life because God will saves us spiritually (eternally); we have heaven to look forward to when the trials of this life might otherwise get us down.

The word “Saviour” (Strong’s #4990) is in our new testament 24 times. Not once does it refer to a physical/temporal salvation. Examples include:

* Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted … to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance … and **forgiveness of sins**.
* Titus 2:13-14 our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us from all iniquity**, and **purify** … a peculiar people
* Titus 3:4-7 … 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; … That being **justified by his grace**, we should be **made heirs** according to the hope of **eternal life**.

I Tim 4:10 can’t be referring to the “temporal” (physical) preservation of “all men” by God because God simply does not do that. Many men die in the womb or in infancy; they are not physically preserved in any sense. Were the millions that died in Noah’s flood providentially preserved by God? What about the thousands that died in the terrorists attacks on Sept 11, 2001? But according to David, I Tim 4:10 is teaching God providentially preserves “all men”? Talk about “asking men to believe in a savior that does not save,” David thou art the man.

David next presents John Owen’s dilemma, which is really no dilemma at all – the answer is that Jesus was punished for “all the sins of all men.” This is clearly stated by Isaiah 53:5-6. In talking about the punishment Jesus received so that men could have peace with God in verse 5, verse 6 states “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us **all**.” So it was the sins of “all” men that were laid on Jesus. Even according to the Calvinist position, this can’t be talking about the sins of the elect only. The “us” whose sins were laid upon Jesus would contextually have to be the same as the “we” in the same verse who have gone astray and the “we” in the same verse who have turned to his own way – David agrees these phrases refer also to the unsaved (as quoted in Rom 3:12), not just to the saved. So the context of verses 5-6 proves Jesus was punished for “all the sins of all men.” Those who ignore the truth many times do so by ignoring context.

David then asserts the same argument he made previously that since Eph 5:25 says Jesus gave himself for the church, that would mean Jesus gave himself for the church only. Since David decided not to respond to my reply to that argument, I might as well just repeat what I said before, since it clearly refutes his contention: How would David’s same reasoning work in a scripture like “…God sent forth his Son … To redeem them that were under the law …” (Gal 4:4-5). According to David’s logic, that text then would mean Jesus died for the Jews only, and not any of us Gentiles. Moreover using David’s same logic, Gal 2:20 (“the Son of God … gave himself for me”) would prove Jesus gave himself for Paul only; Paul would be the only person who could possibly be saved. Does David really think that if I say “I provide for my children,” that is “restrictive” (David’s word for it) in the sense that it implies I do not provide for my wife also? This shows me David doesn’t really even believe his own argument, because he doesn’t reason this way with the same type language in everyday life and with other similar passages. Me thinks that some (and not just David) use arguments for particular situations that they really don’t believe are sound in other situations.

David says my arguments for the unlimited atonement from I Tim 2:5-6 and I John 2:2 hinge upon “ambiguity of the words *all* and *world*.” But that conveniently ignores the fact that we examined the context of both of those passages to make our argument. David’s response to I Tim 2:5-6 (“Jesus … gave himself a ransom for all”) is that “all” refers to all of the elect, not to all men. But context shows that can’t be true in this case. I Tim 2:1 begins by exhorting us to pray for “all men.” That can’t just be referring to the elect only because verse 2 shows this “all men” includes praying for “kings, and for all that are in authority.” Unless all that have been in government authority throughout history (including Adolf Hitler) just happened to be of the elect (were saved), then the “all men” in this context refers to all men unlimited including the non-elect. David is correct that “verses generally have within the passage the key to their interpretation.” Why doesn’t he apply that concept here, and consistently across the board?

I John 2:2 says “And he (Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” It is actually stated in this verse that Jesus died for the **whole world**, and I don't know of a single verse in the Bible that uses the word "world" to refer to the saved/elect only. David responds by saying “world” here refers to the Gentiles in contradistinction to the word “ours” referring to the Jews. This is simply a reach in the dark as the rest of the book asserts it was written to Christians (2:7, 3:13, 5:11), not Jews. But let’s go with David’s assertion for the sake of argument. I John 2:2 would teach then that Jesus died for both the Jews and the Gentiles. Wouldn’t that get all men, not just the elect, since there are plenty of Jews and Gentiles who are not of the elect (the saved)? Back to the obvious - the verse is really saying Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the Christians (the elect), and also for the sins of the whole world. That necessarily proves Jesus is also the propitiation for the sins of the non-elect. If Jesus died for the elect and others, then others besides the elect have to be included. This is how anybody would take the verse who didn’t have a previous agenda to uphold. It just means what it says. What’s the point of changing it?

While we are on the subject of Jesus dying for the Jews, let note Gal 4:4-5 – “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Consider the following syllogism about this passage:

* All Jews (**elect and non-elect**) were under the law
* Christ died to redeem them that were under the law
* Therefore, Christ died for the **elect and non-elect**

Repeating, since Christ died for all those under the law, and since more than just the elect were under the law, therefore Christ **died for more than just the elect**.

My argument from Rom 14:15,23 was that Christ died for some who would be d-a-m-n-e-d. David responds that my argument lies in the ambiguity of the word “destroy.” That doesn’t come anywhere close to answering what I actually said. The word “destroy” in verse 15 may be ambiguous in David’s mind, but surely the word “d-a-m-n-e-d” isn’t ambiguous to him. Doesn’t the Calvinist know for sure what the word “d-a-m-n-e-d” means? If Jesus dies for some that would be d-a-m-n-e-d as Rom 14:15,23 asserts, then that proves He died for even the non-elect, doesn’t it?

I made the same basic argument from I Cor 8:11. David says my argument hinges on the ambiguity of the word “perish” but I am pretty sure David knows what that word “perish” means in John 3:16. Why is David certain “perish” means spiritually lost in John 3:16 but not in I Cor 8:11? Is loyalty to the Calvinistic system (instead of Christ) the only reason why? And why does David have no problem understanding that Acts 20:28 and I Cor 6:20 are referring to the atonement when they teach Jesus purchased / bought us with his blood, but for some reason can’t understand the same about the like phrase in II Pet 2:1? Is it only because that text clearly refers to the unsaved?

David responds to Matt 22:14 by saying it refers to the outward call of the gospel, but not the inward. You couldn’t tell that by the text itself, could you? I think David would probably admit a Bible student would have to have a Calvinist to guide one into that particular interpretation of the verse. But let’s go with that for the sake of argument. So Matt 22:14 is referring to the outward call of the gospel. Now is that outward call of the gospel an honest call/invitation on the part of God, or a dishonest invitation? If it is an honest invitation, then that would mean those invited in the verse (which David admits includes the non-elect) have the possibility of accepting such invitation, would it not? Else it is not an honest invitation. So we see then the non-elect have the opportunity to accept God’s call of salvation; they just don’t.

This might be a good time to peruse several of the “God’s invitation to salvation” texts and examine who the invitation is made to, everybody or just the elect? The following verses speak for themselves on this question:

* 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.
* John 6:51 ... and the bread that I (Jesus) will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the **world** … if **any man** eat of this bread, he shall live for ever
* Rom 10:13 For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.
* Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if **any man** hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him ...
* Mark 16:15-16 ... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to **every creature**. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ...
* I John 4:14-15 ... the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the **world**. **Whosoever** shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

David asks “Where … is the advantage of the wide (unlimited) atonement if it doesn't actually save?” The advantage (and this makes all the difference in the world for mankind as a whole David) is that since Jesus died for all, that gives everybody (and I mean everybody) the opportunity to be saved. On the other hand, the Calvinistic system says that even some who choose to love and obey God will not be saved if they are not of the elect, since Jesus didn’t die for them. In effect then Calvinists deny the plain meaning of passages like II Pet 3:9 (“the Lord is … not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”) and I Tim 2:3-4 (“God … will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”) that show all have opportunity to be saved.

That truth that Jesus died so that all have opportunity to be saved, not that everybody Jesus died for will ultimately be saved is taught by many, many passages. Consider Gal 5:2 – “Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.” Do you see how Gal 5:2 shows that a particular man can either be profited by Christ’s death or not profited by Christ’s death, depending upon what that man does? For example, if a Christian does not try to bind circumcision as new testament law, then Christ’s death will profit him. That proves Christ must have died for that man, else it would be impossible for him to profit from Christ’s death. But if that same man does try to bind circumcision, then Christ’s death will not profit him. We have already established the fact that Christ died for this particular man, but this verse says Christ’s death will not profit the man. The conclusion is that Christ died for somebody who could be lost; He didn’t just die for the saved/elect; instead He died for all so all would have opportunity to “profit” from His death. So the truth is Christ died for everybody, but only those who obey Him (Heb 5:9) take advantage of that death (are saved).

David asserts “men are dead in sin and are unable to do the least thing towards their salvation,” but he misconstrues the word “dead” to mean something different than what he understands it to mean elsewhere. Thayer defines the word as used in Eph 2:1 as “destitute of a life that recognizes and is devoted to God, ... **inactive** as respects doing right.” The idea is not inability, but inactivity. We know “dead” does not mean the inability to choose God’s way because of the many passages asking sinners to do just that (e.g., Josh 24:14-15). Furthermore, if Eph 2:1 means it is impossible for sinners to do right, then Romans 6 would mean it is impossible for Christians to sin. Notice how the same Greek word is used in verse 11 (“Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be **dead** indeed **unto sin**”) and verse 2 (“How shall we, that are **dead to sin**, live any longer therein?”). David doesn’t believe those two verses teach it is impossible for a Christian to sin; that’s how I know he believes the word “dead” means inactive not unable – at least in passages that don’t affect his view of Calvinism. The truth is the Ephesians were “dead” in sin, not by birth, but for what **they** **did**: We see that from the rest of verse 1 - they “were dead through **your** trespasses and sins” (ASV), not through Adam’s trespass.

While we have David’s admission that all men (unlimited) are dead, let’s examine II Cor 5:14 which reads “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.” Notice the word “all” is used twice in this verse, and the comparison made is only valid if “all” means the same thing in both places. David and I agree the "all" who were dead in this verse is not limited to the saved/elect, but is unlimited. And as already stated, the "all" who Jesus died for would be the same in this verse as the "all" who were dead. Therefore the "all" who Jesus died for is not limited to the saved/elect; instead it is **unlimited**!

David mistakenly asserts our position against Calvinism doesn’t see the death of Christ “as the actual procuring cause of salvation.” Let me assure David we most certainly do. Suppose a professional baseball player buys tickets to a game for all 100 children at an orphanage. Suppose only 95 choose to attend. Did the 95 orphans procure their tickets because they went? Or did the baseball player actually procure their tickets? Does the 5 who didn’t go mean their tickets were not actually procured? See the point as applied to our salvation? The blood of Christ actually procures our salvation. Just because it is conditioned upon our trust and obedience (Mark 16:16) does not change that fact one iota. And just because some choose to not take advantage of it does not lessen the accomplishment of Christ’s sacrifice, not one iota. Question: What is more generous – a player buying 100 tickets for all who want to go, or a player buying 10 tickets to limit those who are able to attend? John 3:14 ("And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up") compares the atonement to the serpent of brass on a pole in Num 21:9. Whoever looked upon the serpent was healed of their snakebite. Whoever refused to look was not healed. Does this mean God's healing was less "magnified" (as David put it) because it did not heal those who would not look? Does it mean those who didn’t look would not have been healed even if they had of looked? We all know what the illustration means. Please apply the comparison to salvation as John did.

David exhibits a misunderstanding of Acts 13:48. It is impossible to tell from the Greek in that verse who did the ordaining – God (if in the passive voice) or the people themselves (if in the middle voice). Compare to “they have addicted (same Greek word #5021) themselves to the ministry of the saints” in I Cor 16:15. Who did the addicted/ordaining there? Notice the context of Acts 13:48 two verses previous – “… It was necessary that the word of the God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.” These Jews made their own choice of rejecting the word of God; they “put it from” themselves; they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life. God didn’t make the decision for them. So in verse 48, the people were “ordained” to eternal life in the sense that God ordained that all good hearted men would trust and obey and receive eternal life. Don’t we see that from Luke 8:15 anyway? – “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” And it’s up to us to have a good heart (“make you a new heart” - Ezek 18:31). These Gentiles in Antioch were ordained by their own disposition - they obviously were hungerers and thirsters after God’s righteousness (Matt 5:6).

David asserts “the unlimited theory of the atonement represents God as acting foolishly as it were, as earnestly striving to do what He foreknows He will not be able to accomplish.” This comment illustrates David’s very low expectation for what God set out to accomplish. The Calvinist view is that God only wanted to give an opportunity for a few to be saved. The Bible teaching is that God gives everybody for all time the opportunity to be saved. And He accomplished that goal 100%. Calvinists then diminishes the grace of God, because their position is that God’s grace only covers a few, while the Bible position is that God’s grace covers everybody for all time. Jesus’ blood truly is a fountain (Zech 13:1), not just a trickle like the Calvinism has it.

Heb 2:9 simply and decisively says Jesus tasted “death for every man.” You would think that would settle this issue of all serious Bible students. After all, why can’t we just accept the plain meaning of that verse and leave it at that? Why does David feel the need to struggle to try to get around what that text (and 10 or 12 other simple ones like it) clearly say? What does anybody have to gain by working so hard to get around the plain sense of all those passages?