

Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible 025

John 2:2

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All right, here we are in Sunday School, continuing our topical series that we started some time back on "Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible."

Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible

- I. Calvinism's Mixed Blessing
- II. Why Critique Calvinism?
- III. The Source of Calvin's Theology
- IV. Calvin's Manner of Life
- V. TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture**
- VI. Conclusion

We are there in Roman numeral V, where we are going to spend the bulk of our time, looking at the Calvinistic acronym TULIP.

V. Running TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture

- A. Total Depravity
- B. Unconditional Election
- C. Limited Atonement**
- D. Irresistible Grace
- E. Perseverance of the Saints

(TULIP stands for Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Perseverance of the Saints.) We are comparing what is being taught today, through that grid (TULIP), with the Bible.

We have already dealt with Total Depravity and Unconditional Election. Last week we moved into the "L": Limited Atonement.

C. Limited Atonement

- 1. Calvinistic definition
- 2. Examples
- 3. Problems with the Calvinistic definition

The Calvinistic system works as follows: people are totally depraved. I agree with total depravity, but not how they are teaching it. What they mean is that a human being is like an inanimate object, like a rock, and is totally incapable of responding to spiritual things.

So if that is true, then how does anybody get saved? Well, they get saved because God picks some before the corridors of time, as to who would be saved and who would not. You discover in their system that a small fraction of the human race is elected unto

salvation. Everyone else is bypassed, and they go into hell with no choice in the matter. Somehow, in their thinking, God is glorified in that.

And if you question them, they say, "Well, who are you to question God?" Essentially what happens is that because some are chosen ahead of time to receive salvation, that affects their view of the atonement: the death of Christ. Basically, Calvinists teach that Jesus did not die for everybody—He only died for a very small handful of people called the elect.

The "I" is Irresistible Grace. It is a work, Calvinists say, that God does on the front end. He imparts the gift of faith to some, because, according to "T" (Total Depravity), they cannot believe on their own. So God imparts the gift of faith to some, and then regenerates them first, so that they can believe and will. When God does that, the elect are irresistibly drawn to Christ. Resistance is futile.

That leads to the "P" (Perseverance of the Saints), in which, if you are one of the elect, your life will prove it, by perpetually overcoming in both good works and sound doctrine. That is how the Calvinistic system comes together.

We are at the "L" (Limited Atonement) stage in which they are trying to tell us that Jesus only died for some, not the world. The last time I was with you, I gave you their Calvinistic definition.

"'L' stands for 'Limited Atonement.' Christ's atonement on the Cross was not for everyone but rather just for the 'elect.'"¹

I gave you some examples that yes, Calvinists really teach this. I gave you a quote from Jay Adams in his book "Competent to Counsel," which is a pretty good book on counseling. But on page 70, he says that when he has people in his office that he is counseling, of whom he is not really sure whether they are believers or not, he never tells them that Christ died for them, because he does not know if they are one of the elect or not.

So in Jay Adams's pretty good book on counseling, Jay Adams being a devotee of five-point Calvinism, is the opposite of what I do. Every lost person I encounter that God gives me an opportunity to share with, I tell them categorically that Christ died for them. I tell them that when Jesus died on the Cross, He was actually thinking about them individually. I say those things because I am not a believer in Limited Atonement. I am a believer in unlimited atonement.

John 1:29 is about John the Baptist, who saw Jesus coming. When John saw Jesus coming, he said,

"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

¹ Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 34.

Now, look at the footnotes in the John MacArthur Study Bible. John MacArthur was a five-point Calvinist. How does MacArthur understand John 1:29? Well, it is right there in print for anybody to see it:

"sin of the world....In this context 'world' has the connotation of humanity in general, not specifically every person."²

MacArthur has just changed the definition of "world." He says that "world" is a generic statement of the human race, and does not include every person. Why would he come up with an interpretation like that? Because he is devoted to the "L" in TULIP: Limited Atonement.

I gave you a lot of examples in Calvinists' own writings, where they actually teach Limited Atonement. From the examples of Calvinistic teaching, we went to number 3: problems with the Calvinistic definition.

3. Problems with the Calvinistic Definition

- a) Attack on God's character (Num. 14:18; Ps. 103:8)
- b) Limited atonement proof texts lack exclusivity (Matt. 20:28; John 10:15; Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25)
- c) Abundance of unlimited atonement passages
- d) What Jesus never said

1. I believe that the Calvinistic definition of Limited Atonement is an attack on the character of God. First John 4:8 says, "God is love." It is not only that God is loving—He is love. Therefore, to me, it is just totally incompatible with the Calvinistic idea that God creates people for the sole purpose of going to hell. That does not make any sense.

2. They have passages that they use, but in each of their passages, you do not find exclusivity. You do not find the Greek word "monon" (lexical form "monos" [μόνος]), which means "alone," from which we get the word "monopoly," for example. Here are the passages that they use:

Extent of the Atonement

Limited

- ❖ Five point Calvinism – TULIP
- ❖ Biblical support
 - Matt 20:28
 - John 10:15
 - Acts 20:28
 - Eph. 5:25

One of them is John 10:15, which says that Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. The five-point Calvinist will say, "Well, there it is in the Bible: Jesus laid down his life for the

² John F. MacArthur, Jr., ed. (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 1576). Word Pub.

sheep. He did not lay down His life for the world. But they are not telling you that John 10:15 does not say that Jesus only laid down His life for the sheep.

If John 10:15 said that, they would have something to argue for, but the verse does not say that. It just says that He laid down his life for the sheep. And the fact that He laid down his life for the sheep does not mean that He did not also lay down His life for the world. In other words, when He laid down His life for the world, He also simultaneously laid down His life for the sheep, as a sub category.

It is like having two kids, and you tell one kid, "Hey, I love you." And the other kid says, "Well, you don't love me?" "Well," you say, "wait a minute. I never said that I do not love you also. I am not talking about you right now. The world does not revolve around you. I am talking to this kid over here, and I said, 'I love you.'" And when you say, "I love you," to kid A, it does not mean that you do not love kid B.

Now, if you said, "I love you, and you alone," well, then kid B might have something to complain about. That is how to handle these texts that Calvinists use. These verses are not statements of exclusivity, but Calvinists turn them into statements of exclusivity. We went through some of that.

We are here on 3: what I call an abundance of unlimited atonement passages, which I would like to show you.

Extent of the Atonement

Unlimited

❖ Biblical support

- John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 6:51; 12:32, 47
- Acts 17:30
- 2 Cor 5:19
- 1 Tim. 2:4, 6; **4:10**
- Titus 2:11
- Heb. 2:9
- 2 Pet. 2:1
- **1 John 2:2**; 4:14

Two of them I have underlined: 1 Timothy 4:10 and 1 John 2:22. To me, those are the clearest. I will walk you through some of these other unlimited atonement passages. One of them we just referenced: John 1:29. This is John the Baptist, speaking of Jesus when He showed up to be baptized by John the Baptist.

"The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

"World" does not mean a generic statement about the human race. It means every

individual person that has ever been born. Adam and Eve were brought into existence, and from them came the human race, which Jesus died for—Adam and Eve forward. The next verse supporting unlimited atonement is John 3:16. You know that one by heart, right?

"For God so loved the [elect]"³—

Whoops. It did not say that.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Let me take you to a few more verses. Go to John 4:42. John's Gospel has a lot to say about this issue, which makes sense, because John's Gospel is probably the only Gospel created with a goal of evangelism. Most of the other books of the Bible, as they were brought into existence, were brought into existence for purposes of edification: edifying the saved.

But John's Gospel is different. Its focus is evangelism. That is why when you run into people at work, or wherever, and they say, "I heard you are a Christian. You know, I am investigating the claims of Christ. Do you have a recommendation on which Bible book I should read?" Most Christians, when they are confronted with that question, are flat-footed. But you have an answer.

You do not send them to Leviticus or something like that—"Yeah, read 1 Chronicles and get back to me." You send them to John's Gospel, because John's Gospel is written primarily for the purpose of reaching the lost. How do I know that? Well, that is what John says at the end of his book in John 20:30-31.

"Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

So, John's Gospel is written to people that have not believed on Jesus yet. They have not received the gift of life yet, because John says, "I want you to understand who Christ is—the Son of God—through His various signs. But do not stop there. Trust in Him for salvation. And then, once you trust in Him for salvation, you will receive the gift of eternal life."

So everything in John's Gospel relates to that purpose. John gives us his purpose statement at the end of the book (John 20:30-31). Since that is the case, it stands to reason that John's Gospel, more than any other gospel, would focus on exactly who Christ died for. He did not die for a group—a category—a subset. He died for the world, not just in general, but every person, contrary to what John MacArthur, Jay Adams, and all these

³ John 3:16.

other guys—Arthur Pink—are saying.

Look at John 4:42. This is the woman at the well, remember? She got saved and she became quite the evangelist, because she had a lot of people around her that were not saved. That is one of the advantages of becoming a Christian. You have a lot of unsaved people that you are connected with that you want to share the gospel with.

The problem with being saved for a long period of time is that we can retreat into a Christian subculture, in which we do not really have many unsaved friends anymore. But brand new Christians have a lot of unsaved friends, and they become tremendous evangelists.

John 4:42 says,

"and they were saying to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world'" (John 4:42).

"World" is the Greek word "kosmos" [κόσμος].

Look over at John 6:51. These are great unlimited atonement texts. Jesus speaking in John 6:51,

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I give for the life of the world is My flesh" (John 6:51).

This is the words of Christ recorded: "I am doing all of this—laying down My life—laying down My flesh—for the world. Go over to John 12:32, in which Jesus is speaking.

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (John 12:32).

Not some men: all men. And all men, obviously, would include women. Because the woman at the well got saved in John 4. There is this view that Calvinists have, that the gift of faith, regeneration precedes faith, these things are aimed at the elect. The rest of humanity is just bypassed. They are left in their insensate state.

But Jesus here is saying the exact opposite: *"And I, if I am lifted up,"* speaking of the crucifixion, *"from the earth, will draw all men to Myself"* (John 12:32). So, the target audience for evangelism is the whole world. Look at John 12:47.

"If anyone hears My sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world" (John 12:47).

That does not mean the world is saved, but they are savable. What Jesus accomplished on the Cross is for the entire planet. This statement is important: *"I did not come to judge the world"* (John 12:47). That is speaking of the First Coming. The Second Coming, I can guarantee, is going to be very different. Jesus will come back as a violent judge. But we are not there yet. We are living in between the First and Second Comings of Christ.

I find that a lot of us, myself included, can be very condemnatory and judgmental towards the unsaved. There is going to be a place for that, believe me, yet future. But we are not in that age yet, and we need to be placing more emphasis on the savability of the world, because Jesus, when He came the first time, did not come into the world to judge it. He came into the world to save it.

Some of His final words on the Cross were, *"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing"* (Luke 23:34). He was not dying on the Cross saying, "I am going to get you all when I come back," because that would violate His purpose in coming. So we need to have ministries and approaches that approach things from the divine perspective.

Moving through this list, go over to Acts 17:30.

Paul, on Mars Hill, in Acts 17:30 was speaking to unsaved people at the Areopagus, the Stoics and the philosophers of the day. Paul had a chance to address this rather erudite group. These were people that were always hanging around waiting to hear something new. There are people in Starbucks that are like that, by the way, I notice. They are always ready for a conversation, particularly if you have something new to say. They are all ears. That is who Paul is dealing with here.

In Acts 17:30, he is getting to the heart of his message. This is in the conclusion. Paul says,

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent," (Acts 17:30).

"Repent," of course, means to change your mind about Christ. It is a synonym for "believe." At the end of the sermon in Acts 17, there are three reactions. Some mocked Paul (Acts 17:32). Some said, "We will hear you later on this" (Acts 17:32), meaning that they postponed a decision—which is a decision. And Acts 17:34 says that some believed.

"Believe" and "repent," when used in this context, are synonyms. Why should people believe, or repent? Well, because they need to get ready for the Second Coming. The provision of the First Coming will get you ready for the Second Coming because this world is headed towards judgment. Paul says in Acts 17:31 why people need to repent/believe:

*"because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world"*⁴—

Jesus came to die for the world because He is going to judge the world.

—*"in righteousness"*⁵—

That is a little scary, because we are unrighteous by nature. That puts us on a collision course with the God of the universe.

—*"through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all*

⁴ Acts 17:31.

⁵ Acts 17:31.

men by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

You will notice that this provision is for all people, because all people are headed into judgment. So again, this is universal atonement. People really start to play some strange games with the word "all." They say that "all" does not mean "all": "all" means "some." Now that is how we talk in Texas: we have "y'all" and then we have "all y'all." And coming from California to Texas, I needed a dictionary to help me with that. Because in Texas, when people say, "y'all," it is a subgroup. Then when they say "all y'all," it is everybody in the room.

So, a lot of people think that Paul is saying "y'all" in Acts 17:30-31, and not "all y'all." But they would never do that in Romans 3:23—not in a million years. Romans 3:23, which you probably know by heart, says,

*"for all"*⁶—

Now, that is "all y'all," not "y'all."

—*"have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).

So if you are going to shrink the word "all" in Acts 17, in which Paul is speaking just as he is speaking in Romans (3:23), then you need to shrink the "all" in Romans 3:23. No advocate or acolyte of Calvinism would ever do that. That is how you know that you are dealing with something that cannot be true. It must be a false doctrine, because you have to be inconsistent biblically to make it to work. Whenever you are approaching the Bible inconsistently, that is a sign that you are not on the right track.

They would never shrink the "all" in Romans 5:12 either.

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—"
(Romans 5:12).

If "all" does not mean everyone in Acts 17, then it cannot mean everyone in Romans 5:12. But no Calvinist would tamper with that, because Romans 5:12 supports their understanding of Total Depravity. But they have no problem taking "all" and shrinking it in Acts 17 to support their preexisting conclusion of Limited Atonement.

Let's continue on with this list of unlimited atonement verses. Let's take a look at a strong universal atonement passage, 2 Corinthians 5:19. Paul writes,

"namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

So, God has already reconciled the world to Himself—did you know that? But people are not practically reconciled until they trust in the atonement. Every human being is savable, although not saved until they receive the gift. So therefore, that changes the way we do

⁶ Romans 3:23.

ministry, because God *"has committed to us the word of reconciliation"* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

2 Corinthians 5:20 says,

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

God has reconciled the world to Himself through the death of Christ 2,000 years ago, and He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. The ministry of reconciliation, since He died for the whole world, is to the whole world. Our whole goal is to preach the gospel to every creature, because He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation, and His universal atonement is reconciliation of the world.

So we are not piecemeal in whom we evangelize. If they are in Adam's race, the fallen race, whether we like them personally or not is irrelevant. Whether they are of our particular culture, or whatever, is irrelevant. We preach this message of reconciliation to them because they are souls for whom Christ died.

These Muslims that just basically took over Town Square, I think a week from yesterday—it is easy to look at that and forget the fact that they are souls for whom Christ died. Do you want to stop the proliferation of Islam in Sugar Land? I do. Maybe the best way to do it is to give them the gospel, because they are out there doing all this stuff, because they are in a balancing act. The good deeds need to outweigh the bad deeds on the Day of Judgment when they go before Allah, whose very name means "deceiver."

If the good deeds need to outweigh the bad deeds, how would you ever know if you have done enough good deeds? Well, they give guarantees to people that kill other people. So maybe that is why they are doing martyr's missions and things like that. It is the only thing that gives them assurance. So, the good deeds have to outweigh the bad deeds. If you kill in the name of Allah, then we are going to give you a special place—you are in, no matter what. But for the rest of them, the good has to outweigh the bad, which is very subjective.

And then Allah, at the end, can just rip out the carpet from under anybody he wants to, because Allah is a deceiver. How in the world could you ever have any assurance of salvation in that perverted system? But you introduce them to a God that loves them and gives them instantaneous assurance of salvation at the point of faith, because Christ's death covers their sins, just as it covers my sins. Then you are dealing with a totally changed worldview.

So politics, and all that stuff has its place, believe me. But the most powerful thing you could ever do for a Muslim is to get them out of their works-oriented system into the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—to help them understand the assurance of salvation. And you will change a human heart through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, the world is savable, but not saved until they trust in the provision of the Messiah.

Let's go to 1 Timothy 2:3-4. This is talking about why we need to pray for governmental leaders.

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior," (1 Timothy 2:3).

In other words, Paul is explaining to pray for those in authority so that the gospel can travel freely. Pray for relative peace amongst our governing officials, because that allows the gospel to flow freely. When that happens, God is really happy about it.

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

How can you say that God desires all people to be saved, but Jesus only died for some? That does not make any sense. That would be God desiring something that can never happen.

Right next door to 1 Timothy 2:4 is 1 Timothy 2:6, in which Paul seems to repeat the same idea, speaking of Jesus, who is our Mediator between God and man.

"who gave Himself as a ransom"⁷—

What is a ransom? Just think of kidnaping, someone kidnaped somebody, and you pay him a price to release the victim from captivity. That is what the death of Jesus accomplished for the human race. The human race is in a state of bondage, just like a kidnaped victim. And to release someone from that state, the right ransom price must be paid. Jesus paid the right ransom price through His sacrificial death on the Cross 2,000 years ago.

"who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time" (1 Timothy 2:6).

Paul is saying, "Here is the proper testimony. Here is the proper theology at the proper time. This ransom that releases people from bondage is for all people." 1 Timothy 2:6 is very clearly an unlimited atonement passage.

Look at 1 Timothy 4:10. I have this one underlined because to me, this is one of the clearest, along with 1 John 2:2. Paul writes to Timothy and says,

"For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers" (1 Timothy 4:10).

Now, Paul would not have to say, *"especially of believers"* (1 Timothy 4:10), if Christ only died for believers. There is a qualification that it is for all men. Now, it is a particular blessing to the believer, because the believer has received the benefit of it by trusting in the provision. But this was never just given for the believers alone. It was given especially

⁷ 1 Timothy 2:6.

for them, but for all men.

So, by distinguishing categories within *"all men,"* it is crystal clear in 1 Timothy 4:10 that Jesus died for every human being.

Go over to Titus. (The two Timothy letters and Titus are the Pastoral Epistles because they are written to pastors [Timothy and Titus].) Titus 2:11 says,

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11).

Take a look at Hebrews 2:9, which says the same thing.

"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9).

Some translations say "every man" in Hebrews 2:9. Jesus tasted death. "Taste," *"geuomai"* [γεύομαι], the verb there, in the Book of Hebrews does not mean something like licking a lollipop. It is talking about a full experience. Jesus went through the full experience of death; and He did it for every man—Hebrews 2:9.

I have studied the Bible formerly under Calvinists, and they say that Hebrews 2:9 is the verse that switches them from five-point Calvinism to four-point Calvinism. And I am going to keep on pushing them till they get to three-point, and then two-point, and then one-point, and then—let's just forget the whole thing. Calvinism is only 500 years old anyway. Let's just go back to the Word of God. Hebrews 2:9 is the verse that moves a lot of the five-point Calvinists to four-point Calvinism.

Jesus tasted death for everyone—He tasted death for every man. Let me show you a verse that typically does not come up in unlimited atonement discussions. It is 2 Peter 2:1. Second Peter 2:1 is brought up by A.T. Robertson in his "Word Pictures." I did not really see this verse as an unlimited atonement passage until Robertson explained it.

"But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves" (2 Peter 2:1).

The Master purchased them. The audience in 1 Peter and 2 Peter is regenerated. But there is a big debate about the false teachers coming in, who are mentioned in 1 and 2 Peter. Are they saved or unsaved? A lot of people would say that they are saved because they have been purchased: 2 Peter 2:1. They have a knowledge of Christ, 2 Peter 2:20. We know from 2 Peter 1:8-10 that believers can be in sin. The example of Lot is used in 2 Peter 2:7-8. We think Lot was saved.

Then we have the example of Balaam being used in 2 Peter 2:15-16. A lot of people have told me that there is an argument to be made that Balaam, in the Book of Numbers, was

saved. But I think that those arguments are rather outweighed by the column on the right there.

BELIEVER OR UNBELIEVER?	
BELIEVER	UNBELIEVER
Purchased (1)	Dogs/pigs (22)
Knowledge of Christ (20)	Overcome (20)
Believers can sin (1:8-10)	Other unbelievers (4-6)
Example of Lot (7-8)	Last state worse than the first (20)
Examples of Balaam (15-16)	Darkness reserved (17)

Now, the "Unbeliever" column is not a description of the audience. This is a description of the false teachers coming in, deceiving the audience. They are called dogs and pigs in 2 Peter 2:22. I just cannot imagine a Christian being called that. It is said in 2 Peter 2:20 that they are totally overcome by sin.

We know from 2 Peter 2:4-6 that other unbelievers are mentioned in this condemnation, such as the angels that sinned, the Pre-Flood generation, and Sodom and Gomorrah. I do not think that people would argue that all of those people were believers. They are unbelievers. So Peter is using examples of unbelievers to describe these false teachers, meaning that the false teachers coming in are, I would think, unbelievers.

The verse that really tips me in the direction that we are dealing with unbelieving, false teachers, is 2 Peter 2:20. At the end of 2 Peter 2:20, it says, *"the last state has become worse for them than the first."* I have no understanding of how that would ever apply to a Christian. It is always better to be saved than unsaved. Then 2 Peter 2:17 talks about how darkness has been reserved for them. That is not the destiny of a believer. That is the destiny of an unbeliever. Second Peter 2:17 says,

"These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved" (2 Peter 2:17).

I guess I am thinking here that these false teachers coming into this saved audience are unbelievers. And if you agree with me on that, then you have clear evidence of unlimited atonement, because 2 Peter 2:1 says that the Master bought them. In other words, Christ's death was for the sin of these unbelievers, just as it was for the sin of believers.

So when 2 Peter 2:1 says that the Master bought them, and talks about how they are going into destruction, it has got to be talking about unsaved people. Because here is the

point: even though they are unsaved, Christ's death bought them—Christ's death purchased them. Christ's death was for them, even though they are headed to a godless eternity.

So, if these false teachers mentioned in 2 Peter are unsaved people—and it seems to me that they are—you are going to have a really tough time handling 2 Peter 2:1 through a Limited Atonement context. You cannot say that Christ only died for the saved, when clearly 2 Peter 2:1 tells us that He died for the unsaved. So that is just another tool in your toolbox that you can use when confronted with this Limited Atonement Calvinistic doctrine.

Let's go over to 1 John 2:2. I have this one underlined also because it, just like 1 Timothy 4:10, is crystal clear. First Timothy 4:10 and 1 John 2:2 to me are the clearest unlimited atonement passages. We just opened up our study with 1 John 1:9, did we not?

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

First John 2:2 says,

"and He Himself is the propitiation"⁸—

Now, what does "propitiation" mean? It is a fancy word that means the satisfaction of divine wrath. When Jesus said, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), He meant that God the Father's anger against the sin of the world has been pacified—satiated—satisfied. That is why Romans 8:1 says, *"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*

A lot of us struggle with the fact that God's mad at us. I am here to tell you that if you are a believer, God's not mad at you. "Yeah, but doesn't God discipline us?" Oh, yeah, of course He disciplines us. Sometimes the discipline can be so severe that it feels like wrath. But whom the Lord loves, the Lord chastens (Hebrews 12:6, paraphrase). So even though God disciplines, do not misunderstand that for the fact that He is angry, because of this wonderful doctrine of propitiation: the complete and total satisfaction of divine wrath.

This means that the holiness of God, which is a very real attribute of God, has been satisfied, as you find yourself in Christ, meaning that the only attribute left for Him to express towards you is love. Everything that comes into your life is out of purposes of love, even discipline itself. Discipline is for our own good; it is for our own correction.

I think that this is important to understand, because a lot of people come out of these dysfunctional family circumstances in which the parents are always mad at the kids, always angry at the kids, and it is easy to transfer that to God and think, "Well, my parents, my teachers, my coaches, whoever, were always angry at me. Therefore that is how God is." But what keeps your thinking straight on that is the doctrine of propitiation, meaning

⁸ 1 John 2:2.

that God's wrath has been satisfied.

Now, if you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, then it is different. John the Baptist speaking in John 3:36, says that the wrath of God remains, or abides, over a person—like the sword of Damocles waiting to fall at any minute—if they are unsaved. But once they become saved: propitiation is accomplished—the satisfaction of divine wrath.

Words like "propitiation" are fantastic salvation words. Lewis Sperry Chafer, when he taught Bible conferences, would do whole sessions just on these words. "Let's do a session on 'propitiation.'" And he would explain all of it, and then there'd be a break, and people would come back, and he would pick another salvation word such as "ransom"—what does that mean?—and develop it.

First John 2:2—

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only,"⁹—

John is speaking as a believer here: Jesus did this for me, but not for me alone.

—"but also for those of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

John is effectively saying, "This is not just for me. It is for the world. And by the way, just so you understand what I mean by the word 'world,' I am going to add the adjective 'whole' in front of the word 'world' so that there is no misunderstanding what I am talking about. This is not the world of the elect, or something like that. This is everyone."

The word "kosmos" [κόσμος], "world," is enough to communicate that. But when John writes "the whole world," that is just a point of greater clarity. Then when John throws into the mix that this propitiation is not just for us believers—not just for us apostles—but also for everybody out there. That would explain why John would pen his Gospel, whose purpose is worldwide evangelization.

Look at 1 John 5:19 for a moment. This is talking about the devil. It says,

"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).

Do you believe that Satan governs this "whole world"—same expression as in 1 John 2:2? Is Satan only controlling things in Las Vegas and Washington, D.C.? No, I think that he has the Sugar Land City Council on board. I think that he has every municipality and city in this whole country, in this whole world, in his system.

And I know that he does, because Satan's governance in the present age—which will not last forever, praise God, but will be reversed at the Second Advent (Coming)—is expressed through the expression the *"whole world"* (1 John 5:19). So, we all understand that Satan is *"the prince of the power of the air"* (Ephesians 2:2).

Do you see what I am doing here? If you are going to shrink "whole world" to meaning,

⁹ 1 John 2:2.

not the whole world in 1 John 2:2, which five-point Calvinism has no problem doing—that does not mean "all y'all"; it just means "y'all," in 1 John 2:2—well, for consistency, then how about 1 John 5:19? "So you do not believe that Satan governs the whole world?" "Oh, I believe that." Well, it is the exact same expression by the exact same author in the exact same book.

So if you start playing games with 1 John 2:2, what are you going to do with 1 John 5:19? And because, Mr. five-point Calvinist, you are so inconsistent within the same author and the same book doing the same thing, I, as a Bible reader, know that your doctrine cannot be right. You cannot have a doctrine that works on chapter 2 and does not work anymore in chapter 5. This is just basic reading comprehension, which I can do, and you can do as well.

And you can do this for Calvinism, or any errant system that you hear. You just say, "Well, let's take it out for a test drive. Let's see: you are so aggressive here in chapter 2 with the same verbiage. Is that going to work in chapter 5?" And if it does not work, you say, "Well, something is wrong here. You are selling me something that is not accurate or true."

Notice 1 John 4:14, in the same book. John's letters are fellowship letters: 1 John is about fellowship with God. Second John is about fellowship with antiChrists—do not do it, in other words. Third John is about fellowship with each other. The Gospel of John is evangelism, primarily. The Book of Revelation, which John also wrote, is about how Jesus is coming back—so get right with Him now.

In the process of developing fellowship with God in 1 John, John says in 1 John 4:14,

"We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Boy, that is exactly what the group in John 4 heard the woman at the well say: "Savior of the world" (John 4:42)—unlimited atonement.

Go to Revelation 5:9. This is speaking of the church in heaven, post-Rapture, as Jesus is getting ready to open from heaven a seven-sealed scroll which is going to bring God's judgment to the earth.

*"And they sang a new song, saying,
'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and You purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation'" (Revelation 5:9).*

"Yeah, but 'every tribe and tongue and people and nation' does not mean every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, does it?" Well, look at Revelation 13:7. Let's take it out for a test drive to see if this works. Revelation 13:7 is the AntiChrist system of the last days.

And boy, we wax eloquently about this, do we not? How this system, the mark of the beast system, is coming, and it is going to ensnare every person. You are not going to be able to get out of it if you are living on the earth at this time.

Revelation 13:7 says,

"It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him" (Revelation 13:7).

Those are the same four nouns as in Revelation 5:9 that the church is singing about. So if you are going to wax eloquently about universalism and globalism in Revelation 13:7, you cannot shrink those exact same terms to mean just a small group of people, the elect.

So to kind of wrap this up, we have looked at the problems with the Calvinistic definition of Limited Atonement. It attacks God's character. It mishandles the Limited Atonement texts that they use, because those texts do not teach exclusivity. There is an abundance of unlimited atonement passages, as we have looked at this morning. Then finally, it is something that Jesus never said.

"Jesus never preached saying, 'I am going to die for some of you, and the rest of you only came into the world so my Father could be glorified in sending you to Hell.'"¹⁰

If you can find that statement in the teachings of Christ, please help me find that, because Jesus never said anything like that. But this is the kind of theology that you are constantly getting from five-point Calvinism.

So we are finished with the "T," the "U," and the "L." Can you believe it? Now we just have the "-I-P," which stands for Irresistible Grace and Perseverance of the Saints.

By Perseverance of the Saints, Calvinists are not just talking about eternal security. They are saying, "How do you know that you have eternal security?" They are not denying eternal security. They are denying whether you can know you have it. Because if you are one of the elect, you should be persevering in good works and doctrine. So you had better not mess anything up, because the moment you mess something up is the moment you start to think, "Well, maybe I am not one of the elect."

This is major counseling stuff. Minirth and Meier wrote an article called "The Psychological Effects of Lordship Salvation," which you can find online. Lordship salvation is what the "P" in TULIP is. They wrote the article, I think, back in the late 1990s, about the damage that this doctrine is doing to people emotionally and psychologically—the toll that it is exacting on God's people, because they do not know if they are one of the elect or not, because they do not know whether they persevered or not, because they are holding people to a standard that is very subjective.

Lordship salvation rips away from people the assurance of their salvation, and that is damaging people emotionally. I am not the biggest fan of everything that Minirth and Meier say, but I tell you, that article got my attention. This is not just pie-in-the-sky theology.

¹⁰ Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 67.

This is real world stuff: how you live, how you think, how you counsel people.