

For Whom Did Christ Die?

By Bill Robinson

Come let us reason together!

We can certainly agree on one point. The Bible plainly tells us that all believers are saved and all non-believers are lost (Jn. 3:18-36). If you do not count yourself among the saved, then your only recourse is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Nothing else can be said or done. **It's that simple!**

To those of us who would be numbered among the saved, however, there is much to say. We are sure of our salvation and the Bible says we can and should be so because our salvation is based not on our own merit but on the word and work of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This truth is the only basis for anyone's assurance of salvation in this age of grace. (See Jn. 1:12-13 and 20:24-31 and Ro. 3:20-26; 5:1-8; 6:23; 8:1,2,25-39; II Cor. 5:18-21)

If we have this assurance then, we are resting on and trusting in the death of our Lord for our salvation and must therefore conclude that no one for whom Christ died will be lost. If even one, just one single individual, for whom Christ died is to be lost, where is our assurance? How can we ever be sure that the one to be lost is someone else? If we can be sure of our salvation **because Christ died for us** – then all, every single one for whom Christ died, have the same assurance and He could not possibly have died for anyone but those who are saved. To say anything else is merely foolish contradiction designed to appease the pride of unbelievers who would be better off if we tell them that they must believe or be lost and perhaps this very statement will be the instrument used of God to effect their salvation.

Many say that this doctrine of limited redemption (only those chosen by God are redeemed) can only cause its hearers emotional distress and despair of being worthy to be chosen. The absolute truth of the matter is that not one, whether chosen or not, is worthy and this message is the only one that properly expresses the grace of God and brings to naught the pride and self-righteousness of sinful man. (Ro. 3:10-18)

It is a plain, simple fact that either Christ died only for the saved, the elect of God, or else the Bible is a lie. If you believe the Bible is a lie, throw it away, do all the good works you possibly can and you will be judged for those works at the Great White Throne just before you are cast into the lake of fire to be punished for eternity (Rev. 20:11-15).

If, however, you believe the Bible to be true, join with me and we will seek to discover:

What saith the scripture?

In Romans 4:25, Paul tells us that Christ was delivered (He died) for our offenses and raised again for our justification. To whom does Paul refer when he says “our offenses” and “our justification”? It should be safe to assume that he meant himself and those to whom the epistle was sent. Referring back to Romans 1:5-6, we find that the epistle is addressed to the called saints of Christ. While we can readily see from this epistle that Paul in no way inferred that all Romans were saints and from his other epistles we find that sainthood was not relegated to Romans only, the addressees were definitely the saints which were in Rome. “Our” must then refer to believers. Further evidence of this can be found in I Thessalonians 5:2-11 where Paul makes a specific distinction between “we” and “they”. Here we are plainly told that Christ died for “we” and not for “they”.

Turn now to Romans 8:28-39 and very carefully read this small section of scripture for it contains not only the who, what, how and why of salvation, but also the most blessed assurance of eternal security for the saints. In fact, verses 38 & 39 alone should be enough to convince even the most skeptical individual that **no one for whom Christ died could ever be lost.**

Since salvation is presented in these verses as a completed work through and including final glorification of the saints, let's attempt an analysis in the same manner as we would with any other finished product.

Starting with the finished product, the glorified saints, found in the last part of verse 30, let's work back to the beginning of the work of salvation, the last part of verse 28, and see if we can answer the question: **"For whom did Christ die?"**

GLORIFIED – those who had been justified (30)

JUSTIFIED – those who had been called (30)

CALLED – those who had been predestinated (30)

PREDESTINATED – those who had been foreknown (29)

FOREKNOWN – those called according to God's purpose (29)

GOD'S PURPOSE – brethren for His Son (28 & 29)

From the six steps illustrated above, salvation can be plainly understood from start to finish. God working according to His own purpose that Christ should have many brethren conformed to His own image, foreknew (knew before) those whom He would use to accomplish it and predestinated them to fulfill that purpose. He then called (elected) those whom He had decided to use. Next, Christ was sent to die and rise again so that these elect ones might be justified and then glorified.

Confusion and disbelief of this process is generated by those who do not like the idea of predestination. They claim that God's foreknowledge means only that God was able to look into the future and see those who would believe in Christ. God then selected or predestinated those whom He knew would believe to fulfill His purpose. After all, they say, man is not a robot. Man has absolute free will and is therefore free to choose to accept or reject God. God is only allowed to save those who want to be saved. Their conclusion: Christ died to make man savable but man must make the final decision.

If this were true, God would no longer be God. He would be subservient to man. This would also make the grace of God worthless because salvation would not be bestowed sovereignly by a gracious and merciful God, but would be the result of the choice made by man. This is works, not grace or unmerited favor. Salvation would then become the payment due for making the proper choice.

Let's eliminate the confusion by realizing that the only way God can know the future is by controlling the future. God knows who will believe because He causes them to believe.

Before the foundation of the world, (cf. Ep. 1:3-11) God chose, selected or picked out those whom He would use to fulfill His purpose. At that time, (Re. 13:8) God caused Christ to be slain for the sins of those whom He had chosen.

The Gospel of John makes it quite clear that Jesus only saves the elect. In John 1:12-13, those who believe are said to be born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. God determines who they are!

In Jn. 6:44, Jesus states that no one can (believe) come to Him unless he is first drawn by the Father and those who are drawn are the ones He will save. The Greek word translated "drawn" is <helkoo> and means drag. It is used in 8 verses and each time has the meaning of being forcibly moved. The whole idea of the Holy Spirit wooing (begging or pleading with) someone to get him to come to Christ is merely a figment of unbelieving man's imagination.

Jesus says in Jn. 17:2 that He gives life to those given to Him by the Father. In Jn. 6:65 Jesus says that the only ones who can come to Him (believe) have been given that ability (elected) by the Father.

So, what about verses that appear to teach that Christ died for everybody? For example: Jn. 3:16; 2 Pe. 3:9; Jn. 1:29; Jn. 3:17; Jn. 4:42; Jn. 6:33, 51; Jn. 12:47 seem to say that God loved the world and sent Jesus to save the world. If Jesus died to save everybody, why, in Jn. 17:9, does Jesus refuse to pray for the world. Why does He pray only for those given to Him by the Father? It seems only logical that Jesus would pray for the ones He was going to die for. Actually, that is exactly what He did! First, He prayed for them and then He died for them. Not for the world – but only for those He had been given.

Now, let's define "world." The Greek word is <kosmos> defined by Strong's Greek Dictionary as: orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally))--adorning, world. Kosmos is used in 152 verses in the New Testament. It is translated as world in all but one verse (1 Pe. 3:3) where it is translated as "adorning."

The Random House College Dictionary offers these meanings for world: 1. the earth or globe considered as a planet. 2. a particular division of the world. 3. the earth and its inhabitants during a particular period of time. 4. mankind, the human race. 5. the public generally. 6. any sphere, realm or domain with all pertaining to it. ie. woman's world, the insect world. 7. a particular class of mankind with common interests. 8. the universe. 9. a very great quantity or extent. and etc. It is clear that the word "world" has various meanings. Even in the world of today, we often hear of the third world or the civilized world or the sports world. Why then is it necessary to demand that when the Bible uses the word "world," it must always mean "each and every single individual who ever has or will live?"

John 3:16, in the King James Version, reads as follows: **"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."** From this, many conclude that Christ died for every body. But does this verse really say that? Let's dissect the verse and see what it is actually telling us.

For God so loved the world, (whatever world means, God loved it.)
that He gave His only begotten Son, (this is the action God took because of His love.)
that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (this is the result of God's action which He took because of His love.)

From this, the verse could be rewritten as follows: God gave His only begotten Son to save believers because He loved them. If this is not the correct meaning of the verse, why would God only save some of those He loved? Surely God is capable of saving all if He chose to.

2 Pe. 3:9 says that God is not willing that any should perish -- does this mean God is unable to do that which He wishes to do?

Is. 46:9-10 states that God will do all His pleasure so it can only be concluded that the world in Jn. 3:16 is the believing world or world of believers (the elect.) Also the any in 2 Pe. 3:9 means any of God's elect.

A few more examples:

Jn. 1:10 – Here world is used three times with as many meanings: "He was in the world" (mankind – He became a man) "and the world was made by Him," (everything that was ever created...see Jn. 1:3) "and the world knew Him not" (some men...could not mean every man for at least Peter knew Him...see Jn. 6:69)

Jn. 12:19 – The world must exclude the Pharisees for they were not following after Christ.

2 Pe. 3:6 says the world perished but we know that 8 humans and some animals were spared.

While we have indeed gone much deeper than necessary to answer our question, this is by no means an exhaustive study of the subject.

Can there be any doubt left that all for whom Christ died are justified and all who are justified are glorified. How then could we even begin to think that it would be possible for someone for whom Christ died to perish? Can one who is glorified also be cast into eternal damnation?

For whom did Christ die? He died for the elect, the saved, those who believe, (whichever title you prefer) each and every one of them but He did not die for a single nonbeliever. Each one for whom He died will be glorified and each one for whom He did not die will be damned.

So to ALL MEN, each and every one without exception, we say, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and, if you do, you will be saved because He died for you – but if you do not believe, you are lost because He did not die for you. (Jn. 3:18-36)**