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## Did Jesus Die for All or Just a Few?

1 John 2:2: (NIV) *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

We as Christians all hold the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as the centerpiece of our faith. Without Jesus, we are nothing. One of the key factors about this sacred truth that actually divides Christianity is the application of the sacrifice of Jesus. Just who did he die for and who, if any, are excluded from the benefit of his death? Stay with us as we look into a variety of perspectives and try to find the Biblical principles that seal the answer to this question.

### Doesn't the Bible talk about a select few to be saved?

There are many scriptures that focus on the salvation of a few: Matthew 1:21: *His people* would have been Israel. Matthew 20:28: Hmmm...*many*, not every man, woman and child who ever lived...Luke 1:68: There are more Scriptures that talk in context of *his people* and *many*.

 **Atonement - intent or power is limited, Calvinism vs Arminianism, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)**

- *Both views in some sense limit the atonement. Calvinism limits its intent, Arminians limit its power. The Calvinists believe that the atoning work of Christ was limited only to the elect. The Cross purchased and guaranteed everything the elect center needs to be justified. Arminians, on the other hand, believe that Jesus' work on the cross was not designed to purchase a specific people for himself, nor was it to secure salvation for any particular center. The intention was to simply make salvation possible for any person who would, of his own free will, repent and believe.*

**So, who is right?** 1 Peter 2:7-10: So, unbelievers are separated out in this verse as disobedient. There were prophecies that already predicted this would happen long before Jesus even came. <sup>9</sup>*But you are a chosen race, A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim (but proclaim to whom?) the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup>for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. On the contrary, the chosen are elevated to several titles - what do those titles mean?*

 **Did Jesus die for everyone? [christiananswers.com](http://christiananswers.com)**


- *John 10:14-15: "I am the good shephard and know my sheep" ...I lay down my life for the sheep - not for every man, woman and child who ever lived - there's people that lived thousands of years before Jesus came - the Indians over in North America - they never heard of Jesus - they were living and dying without knowing any of this stuff.*

But what about those Indians living back in North America? Do they just not matter to God at all? Were they not part of the plan, and are they not important? Could there be more to the plan of God? But all of these Scriptures so far have an exclusive class. Is that the beginning of the plan or the total plan? Or are the specific few put in place in order to somehow touch the rest of the "everybody else?" John 10:11-15

### Wouldn't this make God NOT a God of Love?

Now the question is - did God call a special people out of the world and abandon the rest of the world, or is this calling somehow for the benefit of the rest of the world? Is God holding a grudge? **Adam's choice led to a life of sin and an end of death - not only him but for his posterity as well:** Genesis 3:17-19: God fulfilled His word. He was consistent but not arbitrary. Any lesser consequence would make God unreliable.

**Atonement is 1 of 2 types of bridges, Calvinism vs Arminianism, [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)**

 *...the Arminian view of the atonement can be compared to a wide bridge that extends most of the way across a river. In order to reach the other side, the sinner must take the last and final step. The Calvinist, on the other hand, believes that the bridge, while narrow, did in fact extend all the way to the other shore. The sinner does not and cannot take any steps. Regeneration is the "rapture" of the sinner from one kingdom to the other and it's the work of Christ alone.*

Do either of these bridges actually fit the scriptural explanation of Jesus' sacrifice? 1 Timothy 4:10: Here we have both classes of saved men - those who believe and those who don't. Is there a "bridge" mentioned for both? 1 John 2:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>and he himself is the propitiation (meaning "satisfaction") **for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.** An advocate is someone who sits with you on your side. So we, the believers, have a mouthpiece, an advocate on our side. There are believers in both sets of Scriptures, but there is also *the whole world*, or who we call the "everybody else."*



1 Timothy 2:5-6: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>For there is one God, and one **mediator** also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as **a ransom for all**, the testimony given at the proper time. A mediator is a translator, someone who goes between both sides to bring them together. Jesus as a mediator is "in between" God and the sins of man. It is a different role for two distinct types of people. The "believers" have an Advocate because they have accepted Jesus. The "unbelievers" have a Mediator because they are at odds with God. Although the believers are still sinful, they have the "robe of Christ's righteousness" on them. They are no longer at odds with God because they are then acceptable to God. In both cases, there is a connection - there is something good at the end for both classes of people. This "mediator" relationship is describing another bridge and how it works!

**We have been reconciled: So we pass this ministry on to the world...** 2 Corinthians 5:17-19: (NASB) <sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. <sup>18</sup>Now all these things are from God, who **reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us (believers) the ministry of reconciliation**, <sup>19</sup>namely, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world (the non-believers) to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed to us (believers) the word of reconciliation.**

There is definitely an exclusiveness to the believers, but not to the exclusion of the world. It is actually to the benefit of the rest of the world. This text puts the two together and indicates that there are two distinctly different "bridges."

**Bottom line: Did Jesus die for all men or just for believers?**

John 17:4-5: Why would Jesus be praying for something that was already guaranteed?

Matthew 26:37-39: Why would Jesus be asking for an experience to be removed if the result was guaranteed? **The following text is an incredibly strong proof of several things:** Romans 5:12-14: Adam was entirely responsible for inherited human sin. Death reigned even before the Law was given, therefore the penalty was clearly upon *all* humanity.

Romans 5:15-17: (NASB) <sup>15</sup>But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, (the many **MUST** mean all humanity according to the above context) much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (This **MUST** mean the same "many") <sup>16</sup>The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand, the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. <sup>17</sup>For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, (again, who did death reign over? **Everyone!**) much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Aha! There **IS** a qualifier here applying to the called out ones! This shows a reign for them in heaven - they are given an exclusive authority.)

Romans 5:18-21: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. (Okay - no qualifier - all humanity **MUST** be included) <sup>19</sup>For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. (Again - this is about **ALL** humanity) <sup>20</sup>The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup>so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Grace replaces sin on a wholesale scale!) There is a first reign of sin and then a reign of God's grace through Jesus.

So there are two "bridges." The bridge for the called out ones is a narrow way, a difficult way, a way of sacrifice. It is a bridge over death to heaven! But then there is a second bridge, by the grace of God. It is a broad bridge to a Day of Judgment, which is a day of accountability. Those will have work to do to put them in line with the will of God.

Let's look again at our theme Scripture: 1 John 2:2: The atonement is divided into two separate pieces. One is a special calling for a special reward for the followers of Jesus *now*. This special calling will never again be duplicated. The other part of the atonement for the sins of the whole world will allow a reconciliation with God in the future, after they are resurrected. These will *not* receive a heavenly reward. We will get into some of the logistics of this as we progress.



### What makes Jesus' personal sacrifice so special?

Of course we know that by the very words of Jesus, there was always a possibility of his failure, so there was no guarantee. Jesus didn't hurt or mutilate himself. He allowed himself to be tortured to expose the great sinfulness of sin. He laid down his life in sacrifice.

The value of Jesus' sacrifice is not about the amount of torture involved, nor is it about the fulfillment of prophecy, even though prophecy explains much for us. The sacrifice of Jesus is all about one thing: The Satisfaction of Justice. The Old Testament Law was hard and clear on matters like this: Leviticus 24:21-22: The Old Testament Law was very "black and white" and decisive on matters of life and death. If you killed a man, for instance, your life was required to satisfy justice. **A New Testament view helps us to see the process that God's plan of salvation had in place: Galatians 3:19-22:** (NASB) <sup>19</sup>*Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator <3316>, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.* <sup>20</sup>*Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.* <sup>21</sup>*Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.* <sup>22</sup>*But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.*

Remember when we talked about Jesus being in the role of Mediator for the world of mankind? Well, the Law of Israel had someone in the role of Mediator for them as well. That was Moses.

Even though the Law was given, it was not possible to bring everyone to life because with since everyone born in sin, none could live up to the standards the Law demanded. Romans 3:19-21: The Law was put in place to first make Israel accountable, but it was also to reflect righteousness to the rest of the world. All the world was accountable to God because of the Law. There is a big picture of accountability. The Law defined sin, and therefore made man accountable. The satisfaction of Justice was the key factor in the sacrifice of Jesus.

A caller suggested: Acts 24:15: *And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.* The key is an opportunity. All men will have an opportunity in the Day of Judgment. So follow the process: Justice was demanded at the beginning with Adam. There was a command from God for obedience that was disregarded. Consequences were implemented that affected all who would follow - the consequence for sin is death. Justice was explained to the world through the Law. Since no one could live up to the Law and break the grip of sin (resulting from the original disobedience), justice still required satisfaction. That's where the sacrifice of Jesus comes in to play! We believe God's desire for all mankind is the OPPORTUNITY FOR SALVATION. 1 Corinthians 15:22 Colossians 1:20: If Jesus' sacrifice *made peace* then justice was therefore satisfied. Doesn't this create a logistical problem? Can people be as evil as they want and get a second chance? We will address that shortly.

**This prophecy not only sums up this satisfaction of justice, but the satisfaction of the continual requirement of justice as a result of the life for life sacrifice of Jesus: Isaiah 42:1-4:** This is again showing us a very broad picture of Jesus' sacrifice - it covers the whole earth! This is a prophecy of the future - when this happens, justice will rule on the earth. Therefore, with justice always comes accountability and some kind of consequence. The "called out" ones (the faithful believers) who have gone to heaven are not part of this application. The "everybody else" have to go through very difficult times but will at least have the opportunity to do so.

Justice is exacting in what is required. A perfect man had to die for a perfect man. That is the Ransom. The word "ransom" means "corresponding price," or the right amount. Everyone suffering under Adam can have that suffering eliminated under Christ.

### Is it fair to grant life in the resurrection to one who outwardly hates God now?

The value of the sacrifice of Jesus was that because he fulfilled the Law that no one else could, he had the right to life as a perfect man on the earth. He gave that up - that was the sacrifice and it gave all mankind the opportunity to live again. **It is the greatest sacrifice ever.** So far we have focused on justice. So is it just to have that "second bridge" where all are resurrected even when they didn't ask to be? Is it fair that everyone had to inherit sin from Adam? If you inherited the disadvantage, God says you will now inherit the advantage. Romans 8:19-22: So, the world *does* long for that bridge; they just don't describe it that way. All men are looking for a better world without cancer, loneliness, cruelty, and so on. They are looking for the answer God's plan will give them; they just don't necessarily realize it will eventually be from God when the time is right. Acts 17:30-31: (NASB) Finally we get to the Day of Judgment! Everyone wants that judge to be fair and righteous. Again, justice is a centerpiece - this bridge for the world must lead through judgment to its eventual end result.



Romans 2:5-9: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>*But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,* <sup>6</sup>*who will render to each person according to his deeds:* <sup>7</sup>*to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; (these are the true followers of Christ)* <sup>8</sup>*but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. (everybody else)* <sup>9</sup>*There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek...*

We don't know specifically what the punishment will be, but we know *because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself*. No one will get a "free ride" for what they willfully did in this lifetime. The Judge will *render to each person according to his deeds*. Once resurrected, they will be **exposed, accountable and responsible**. They will have to make right all the evil they did. They will have to face the people they hurt. Passing through judgment must prove your willingness to live righteously and change course.

Those who are following after Jesus now are on trial for their lives now. Some men's sins go before the judgment and others follow after (1 Timothy 5:24) because those of us following after Christ are accountable right now for what we say and do in our lives. There are many people who walk in ignorance of the plan of God who are not accountable now but will be later. Living in an evil and sinful manner has its consequences for them.

Those truly following after Christ now receive *glory and honor and immortality, eternal life*. The "everybody else," because they are *selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, get wrath and indignation*. But they will have the opportunity to acknowledge their wrong doing and to make it right by doing the work necessary to make amends, change their heart, and live righteously in accordance with God's laws.

Matthew 12:36-37: 2 Peter 2:9: Again we see two parts, or two different bridges. There are those who dedicated their lives to the service of God through Jesus and are delivered out of temptation. The unjust are delivered to the Day of Judgment where there will be accountability, responsibility and the necessity to change their ways or they will lose their lives. That's just. They will be given in many cases a first opportunity to come to the knowledge of God, make reparations and then act accordingly. So, salvation for the masses of humanity does come - but not without a price. There is a significant price of accountability.

### What does the outcome of Jesus' sacrifice look like?

Loving your enemy, scripturally, is giving them the opportunity to rehabilitate. If we do wrong, we want the ability to make it right. Why wouldn't we allow our neighbor to have that same opportunity? God's plan has a way of loving the enemies of righteousness to rehabilitate and come clean through work, struggle, difficulty, time and failure. Loving your enemy gives them a chance. It is merciful, just and loving. Let's see what the Bible lays out as the outcome of loving or even dying for your enemy. **All of the prophets of old spoke of the times of restitution:** Acts 3:19-21: **Just a few examples of God's desire for man as expressed to: ...David:** (The 22<sup>nd</sup> Psalm details the suffering of Jesus on the cross. These verses represent the victory that follows the cross...) Psalms 22:27-29: This is the end result! This is what comes from Jesus' victory: *All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD.* **...Zephaniah:** Zephaniah 3:8-9: Scripturally, fire purifies and destroys. So *all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal* would make no sense if taken literally because immediately after, the people have purified lips, serving God shoulder to shoulder. The people aren't dead, they are serving God. Evil is wiped clean because of that anger. Zephaniah 3:15 Zephaniah 3:20: Israel is restored *among all the peoples of the earth.* (On earth, not in heaven.) **...Isaiah:** Isaiah 45:22-24 These are comprehensive pictures of God's desire for mankind - *salvation in all the ends of the earth!* God will reign in all that has gone on in the world. It will all come back to Him through a system of wisdom, justice, love and power. People will understand that salvation comes through Jesus' sacrifice. Isaiah 62:1-2: Are you noticing that Israel plays such a prominent part in this story? God will fight for Israel and the earthly part of this kingdom will take place with Israel as a centerpiece. Watch Israel - as Israel goes, so does the plan of God. Acts 4:12: Israel will go through a great time of trouble (called Jacob's Trouble and then Armageddon) to put all into perspective and realize the position of Jesus Christ. Jesus did die for all and the plan of God makes places for all mankind. He gives sinners the opportunity to be judged according to what they did and be responsible to either make their lives right or to be punished with eternal death.

**Did Jesus die for all or just a few?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!**