

An Attempt To Listen To God

The Brazen Altar

The Gospel Aspect

By

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## Introduction

A small amount of this material was mentioned in the paper on the “Sides of the Brazen Altar” but this is more in detail.

Because there are measurements given, it automatically sets limitations and we are then forced to consider an aspect of the gospel we have possibly not looked at before. We have always been taught, and rightly so, that the gospel is for the “whosoever will” but it does have limitations, a comment which will possibly make some saints throw the paper down in disgust or jump to a wrong conclusion. What I write is Biblical truths which all believers, when they see, will fully agree with. **I am not saying atonement is limited, such a doctrine is error,** but salvation is limited.

The scriptures know nothing of a limited atonement or a salvation only for the elect. It is open to the “whosoever will”. While salvation is available for the whosoever (Jn. 3:16), there will never be any insufficiency in the work of Christ (Isa. 53:6; 2 Pet. 3:9), yet it is only upon all who believe (Rom. 3:22). Those who teach “limited atonement” will argue that an individual can only believe when the Holy Spirit moves and gives them enlightenment or life, because a spiritually dead individual cannot believe! That is perfectly true, but they are failing to recognize that in Romans, where man is told to believe, he is viewed as a living person (Rom. 4:24). However, in Ephesians man is viewed as being dead in sins (Eph. 2:1) and the work of salvation is by the quickening power of God (Eph. 2:1, 8-9).

## What is meant by “limited atonement”?

There is one major danger that anyone can easily fall into regarding atonement. It is that of extremism. There are those which preach that this doctrine means God predestines some men to hell in exactly the same way as he predestines others to heaven. This thinking makes God the author of sin, unrighteousness, and the offer of salvation to the whosoever a charade. The other error is to teach that Christ died becoming the substitute for everyone, and this is called “Universal Atonement”, which teaches that all will eventually be saved.

It is my believe that the scriptures never contradict themselves else God would be the Author of confusion. Between limited and universal salvation there is a balance which enables all verses to be perfectly true. My belief is as follows:

- a) Christ died for all in the sense that His sacrifice was sufficient for the salvation for all humanity.
- b) That God is perfectly righteousness, and in love and truth holds open the genuine offer of salvation to all.
- c) That there is salvation for the reconciliation of all humanity back into fellowship with God, but for all those who reject that offer, there is the assurance of banishment in hell for all eternity.
- d) That it is only when an individual accepts Christ as Saviour that they can say: “He died for me as my Substitute”.
- e) I am aware that some will think I am speaking blasphemy with the last statement so let me clarify. In the doctrine of righteousness it is rightly said that if God punished Christ for my sins and then punishes me for the same sins, that is not righteous! Do we not sing: “Payment God will not twice demand, first at my bleedings Surety’s hand and then again at mine”. That which one must understand is that while Christ has provided salvation for everyone, He only becomes their substitute the moment they accept Him.

## Salvation is Limited

- a) It is limited as to when the individual can respond to God’s gracious offer. God has said: “My spirit shall not always strive with man” (Gen. 6:3), and again: “he that being often reprov’d . . . shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy” (Prov. 29:1). These are Old Testament expressions but that does not nullify the fact that God is not a puppet on a string who I can despise, and then respond when it suits me! It is limited to as long or as often God deals with the sinner. Well has the hymn writer penned: “There’s a line that is crossed by rejecting out Lord, where the call of His Spirit is lost”.
- b) It is limited as to those who can avail of it. There is no salvation for angels who sinned (Heb. 2:16). It is a message for humanity alone.

- c) It is limited being only available as long as an individual is alive. It must be clear, from the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus, there is no transference from heaven to hell to give relief, neither is there any transference from hell to heaven in repentance (Lk. 16:24-26). Once an individual dies all hope is gone forever, mercy never again knocks at the hearts door. In that place of torment there is memory of the previous life (Lk. 16:27); of previous relationships (Lk. 16:28); and of the present situation (Lk. 16:24, 27). The scriptures are clear that death is the end of all opportunity (Heb. 9:27). While an individual is alive and the Spirit of God is striving, there may be multiple opportunities for their acceptance (Jn. 3:16; Acts 16:31). Once a person dies there are no more chances. The idea of purgatory, a place where people go after death to pay for their sins, has no biblical basis. The offer of salvation is terminated when an unsaved individual dies, and at that moment the individual is made aware that there is a change:
- i) From laughing to wailing
  - ii) From opportunity to hopelessness
  - iii) From theory to reality, and these for all eternity

*Hell, the prison house of despair,  
Here are some things that will be there:*

*Fire and brimstone are there, we know,  
For God in His Word hath told us so.  
Memory, remorse, suffering and pain,  
Weeping and wailing, but all in vain.*

*Blasphemer, swearer, hater of God,  
Christ-rejector while here on earth trod,  
Murderer, gambler, drunkard and liar,  
Will have his part in the Lake of Fire.*

*The filthy, the vile, the cruel and the mean,  
What a horrible mob in Hell will be seen.  
Yes, more than humans on earth can tell  
Are the torments and woes of Eternal Hell.  
. . . Unknown*

***“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.” Hebrews 2:3***

- d) It is limited by the moment the Lord comes. On this we must be careful for the scriptures will not allow one to say that all who have heard the gospel will not have further opportunity. It is all those “who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thess. 2:12). Such are those who in full knowledge and understanding rejected the gospel. For a person to be such, they not only have heard the gospel but understood it (Matt. 13:14-15). Many of us heard the gospel many times but its truths were never really understood. However, let it be very clear, when the Lord comes for His own there will be no second chance for those who have in full knowledge spurned the message. I am aware that there are books which convey the idea that such will be able to get saved. Concerning such, the scriptures have a closed door.
- e) It is limited to the individuals who are willing to listen to the gospel. Had the Israelites in Egypt rejected the message of Moses, there would have been no redemption and liberation. Such a case would not have been because God was incapable of delivering them or it was idle talk from Moses. Their continued enslavement would have been because they refused to listen. Likewise with the individual today who refuses to listen and learn from the gospel. All effectiveness of its message will be nullified. Man can harden his heart as Pharaoh did (Ex. 7:14; Heb. 3:8) and the Israelites who stopped their ears (Zech. 7:11; Acts 7:57). For such there can be no salvation.

- f) It is limited to the individuals who, having heard and understood, are willing to accept it as the only way of salvation, that being through Christ and His finished work at the cross. Well has the apostle said: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven" (Acts 4:12); there is no other way (Jn. 14:6). This was the truth Cornelius had to learn (Acts 10:1-48); the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27-39); and Saul (Acts 9:3-6). There is the danger of hearing, and understanding, and like Judas, coming right to the Door of Heaven and then dying in his sins. Abner stood at the very gate of the city of refuge and died (2 Sam. 3:33).
- g) It is limited to those who do not put any confidence in the flesh or personal activities. The scriptures are plain: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5); "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

### Salvation Is Not Limited

Thank God for the comforting lovely words: "Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sins" (1 Jn. 1:7). This verse gives the assurance that salvation is:

- a) Not limited as to the types of sin which can be forgiven
- b) Not limited as to when the sins were committed, pre-salvation or post, past, present or future
- c) Not limited to the persistent continuance of a particular sin
- d) Not limited to the number of particular sins an individual can be forgiven
- e) Not limited in capacity of Heaven to receive
- f) Not limited to the ease of burden and anxiety it can give to a sin burdened conscience
- g) Not limited to the fulness of the forgiveness God offers
- h) Not limited to the release from self condemnation and the feeling of astonishment and amazement of "How could I have done that"?
- i) Not limited in the ability of Christ to keep for: "He is able also to save to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25); "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling" (Jude 24).
- j) Not limited to the ability of God the Father to keep, for we are: "Kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Pet. 1:5).
- k) Not limited to the willingness of God to save for: "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9); God "Who will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4).
- l) Not limited in the ability of the Holy Spirit who has the power to keep, for He is the "earnest" of the Spirit (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5).
- m) Not limited to the number of those who can avail themselves of it for: "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

The sacrifice of the Lord and His resurrection gives: "the power of that raised up Christ from the dead" (Eph. 1:19-2:1) to the individual. This is a "great salvation" (Heb. 2:3) because of it is a:

- a) Personal salvation (Rom. 1:16)
- b) Powerful salvation (Rom. 1:16)
- c) Present salvation (Jn. 3:36; 5:24)

It is great because:

- a) Of the price paid to procure it (1 Pet. 1:19)
- b) Of its universality (Jn. 3:16)
- c) Of the blessings it bestows (Eph. 1:3-5)
- d) It is eternal in its duration (Heb. 5:9; 2 Tim. 2:10)
- e) It is incomparable in its effectiveness now (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:18-2:6)

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**May God grant us good understanding as He, by His Holy Spirit, deigns to guide us into all truth.**

**John 16:13**

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