

The Inscrutable Question: Unlimited Atonement; Faith is Nonmeritorious Perception

32. The principle that anyone who believes in Christ receives salvation and eternal life is called Unlimited Atonement.
- 1) Unlimited atonement may be defined as the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross in which He suffered spiritual death as a substitute for the entire human race.
 - 2) Unlimited atonement also includes the fact that the judgment of every human sin in Christ was sufficient to satisfy the righteousness and justice of God resulting in propitiation.
 - 3) Unlimited atonement therefore means that salvation is a potential for the entire human race, but only becomes a reality for those who believe in Christ.
 - 4) For whom was Christ "made sin" in 2 Corinthians 5:21? For everyone to whom God imputed soul life and simultaneously Adam's original sin at physical birth.
 - 5) Every person beginning with the birth of Cain has been born condemned at physical birth.
 - 6) In eternity past God knew from His omniscience each and every person He would choose to select and His undiminished love prepared a solution through Christ.
 - 7) Salvation is the divine solution to spiritual death that every person is free to accept or reject.
 - 8) Consequently, condemnation is the greatest benefit that could accompany the imputation of human life.
 - 9) Condemnation of the entire human race sets up the potential of salvation of the entire human race. God did not condemn us to send us to the lake of fire but so that we might be saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 - God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

4:10 - ... we have fixed our confidence on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, primarily believers.

- 10) Therefore, unlimited atonement means salvation is available to all mankind, the elect and the non-elect, the predestined and those who are under just condemnation but only believers can appropriate salvation.
- 11) Unlimited atonement makes it possible for two of the salvation ministries of the Holy Spirit to function: common and efficacious grace.
- 12) When the unbeliever reaches the point of God consciousness God is obligated to provide that person the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Titus 2:11 - The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all mankind.

- 13) At gospel hearing the Holy Spirit provides academic understanding of the Gospel. This is called common grace because it is common to all mankind when the Gospel is presented.
 - 14) If the unbeliever who hears responds through faith in Christ then the Holy Spirit saves that person's soul. This is called efficacious grace because it is effectual only to those who believe.
33. Unlimited atonement allows every unbeliever, even though spiritually dead, the freedom to believe in Christ for salvation.

34. Faith is a non-meritorious system of perception, which occurs following common grace and results in efficacious grace.
35. Faith is the English word that translates the Greek noun **πίστις / pistis /**. Faith in Christ is a transitive construction in that faith requires a direct object.
36. In a transitive construction, the emphasis is always on the object of one's faith not the one who has the faith.
37. In other words, there can be no real assurance of one's eternal future if the object of one's faith is anything other than Jesus Christ.
38. The same may be said for the verb form which is **πιστεύω / pisteuo /**: to believe. It is a transitive verb meaning the merit is found in its object.
39. Thus salvation is appropriated by first of all believing and nothing else. In other words, faith alone.
40. Secondly, that faith must have an object that has the merit to accomplish the desired effect.
41. That meritorious object is Jesus and no one else is qualified to assure one's eternal salvation. In other words, Christ alone.
42. Salvation through faith alone in Christ alone is the message of three verses we have recently noted and are presently studying:

Galatians 2:16 - Nevertheless, knowing that a person is not justified by the works of the law but through faith [**πίστις / pistis /**] in Jesus Christ, even we have believed [**πιστεύω / pisteuo /**] in Jesus Christ in order that we might be justified by faith [**πίστις / pistis /**] in Christ and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law no flesh will ever be justified.

Acts 16:31 - And they said, "(You) believe [**πιστεύω / pisteuo /**] in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved ..."

John 3:16 - God demonstrated His unconditional and undiminished love to the world in the following manner: He gave His uniquely born Son for the purpose and with the result that anyone who believes ...