

For Whom Did Christ Die?

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Bible Text: 1 John 2:2

Preached on: Studies in 1st John

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1 John chapter two, because we do want to reference this verse where we want to begin at this morning. And then we are going to branch out into a whole plethora of truth this morning. I am going to try to teach you the whole Bible in this Bible study this morning, because these are... this thing that we are looking at here... I am entitling this message "For Whom Did Christ Die?"

And I know that is a subject that a lot of men don't want to broach in our generation. They say, "Well, you are going into areas and avenues where God never intends us to go into."

Well, as I told them in the Sunday school hour, we want to be precise in our message. And we want to be as clear as we can be on the truth of the Scriptures. And we want comfort and encouragement out of God's Word. We don't want to comfort a man, because I will tell you what. To comfort a man, to comfort a woman it will fail you. And so we want to appeal to the Word of God and we want to deal with this question seriously, because I tell you.

People say, "Well, it doesn't make any difference whether he died or everybody or whether he died for just his people. He still died."

Well, that might not mean anything to you, but I want to put everything, bring everything back under the scrutiny of the Word of God. Does God tell us some things in his Word? Well, I know this much. In 1 John chapter two verse one and two the one that we have already looked at most of it. We want to deal with verse two in particular this morning.

He says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin..."

And like we told you two or three weeks ago, "And when you do sin..." is the way that is written. We, who? Anybody who sins. If we are talking about all men and women without exception, when you do sin and everybody does. So we are all... we will all admit that, right? Lost or saved, Calvinist or Arminian if you want to go that way, religious or irreligious. We are all sinners. We can all admit that, right?

He says here, “And if any man sin, we...” Who? Any man that sins have an advocate. What is that? A lawyer, one who pleads our case with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he. Who? This advocate who pleads our case on our behalf, based on the merits and worth and value of his person, he is the propitiation. What is that? Satisfaction to law and justice, to the legal and judicial charges of the law for our sins and not for our sins only, but also... “The sins of” is in italics so it wasn’t in the original. Also the whole world.

Boy. What are you going to do with that, preacher? How are you going to get around that? Doesn’t the whole world mean whole world? Well, we are going to deal with that this morning. We are going to deal honestly with it.

And, see, it all revolves around this. If you don’t understand the work of the advocate and you don’t understand what propitiation actually means, you will always draw the wrong conclusions about our sins and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world. You always are going to draw the wrong conclusions.

As we have seen in these first couple of verses of chapter one, the whole nature of Christ’s finished work at Calvary, his literal death there at Calvary as a propitiation, a satisfaction, law and justice. It exposes the fallacy and the futility of the attitude that men and women take in our generation in religion saying that Christ died for every single, solitary person without exception.

You hear it all the time. “Christ died for everybody.”

And you ask them, “Well, what do you mean by everybody?”

Well, they mean everybody. Ask them. Ask your friends. Ask your family. Who did Christ die for? They will tell you he died just as much for Adolf Hitler as he did for anybody else.

Now that... they would say, “Well, no, I don’t really believe that.”

Well, then you don’t really think he died for everybody. Either he did or he didn’t. I mean, that... I mean, I encourage you this morning. You are going to have to put your thinking caps on now. And you are going to have listen closely.

Somebody said, “Well, doesn’t world, whole world, here, doesn’t it say whole world?”

Well, yeah, it says whole world. I am not denying it says whole world. But we have to define and understand define and understand the meaning of this term. You can’t just read any phrase in the Scripture and just say, “Well, it means the same thing everywhere and every place and every situation, every circumstance.”

Consider this. If Christ reconciled sinners to God, that is what we are talking about. We are talking about the work of reconciliation. If he actually reconciles sinners to God, that is to say, God made... he made satisfaction to God's law and justice for sinners, all of them. If he actually propitiated God in the sense of having taken all of the sins of every individual that has ever lived from Adam to the last person that lives on this planet, dying for them and paying for their sin debt, because that is what happened at Calvary, right? He was paying a sin debt. If he actually died and paid their sin debt to law and justice, then wouldn't it just simply stand to reason that God is no longer at enmity with them? If he bore their sins in his body and by his stripes they are healed, if it means everybody without exception, doesn't that mean God can't be angry with them? God couldn't charge them with their sins if he has already charged their sins to his precious Son the Lord Jesus Christ who paid for their sins. God would be unjust to let them perish because he couldn't justly hold their sins against them if he has already held Christ accountable for them.

So if Christ is the propitiation of the sins of every individual without exception, then everybody is at peace with God. That is they conclusion you have to draw. And nobody is lost. Nobody will perish. All will live eternally with the Lord Jesus Christ. He died and he bore the sins of his people all without exception. Every man, every woman, every child, every person that has ever lived. Everybody is going to heaven, Bart.

Think about it like this. Universal atonement automatically means universal salvation.

You say, "Well, I don't believe that."

Yes, it does. You say he bore the sins of every individual and he atoned for the sins of every individual? Then what does that mean?

But that would contradict the Scriptures because the Scriptures tell us that there is multitudes who die in unbelief and where are they at right now? What was hell created for?

Well, how can we understand it?

Well, we look to the Scriptures. And I did a little research on this. You know, this... the passages that speak of Christ as the Savior of the world with one exception, just one, every one of them, do you know who wrote about Christ being the Savior of the world? John did. Every one of them. Every time it is mentioned that he is the Savior of the world, the apostle John wrote that with the exception of one.

Now the word "world" has several different meanings in John's writings as well as in other writings. And since there are several different meanings of the word "world" this one world, it stands to reason that the meaning in one passage doesn't necessarily mean the same thing in another passage. Context, then, is what? You got it. Context is everything. I mean, it is absolutely essential that you establish the context.

Sometimes world means the whole universe of created beings, all without exception. Listen to this.

Well, there is no way that I will let you read all these, but you write this down.

John chapter one verse 10 it says this. "He was in the world and the world was made by him and the world knew him not."

Now what is that talking about? Well, that is talking about he was in the world. Where was he at? He was on this planet. And he made this planet. What did that mean? Made the plants. Made the air. Made the dirt. Made the men. Made the dogs and the cats. He made everything.

In John chapter 16 verse 28 listen to this one. "I came forth from the Father and am come into the world. Again, I leave the world and I go unto the Father."

What does that mean? Christ is saying there, "Where am I leaving? I am leaving the inhabited earth and going back to be with the Father. I came into the inhabited earth. I am leaving the inhabited earth."

In John chapter 15 verse 19 he says, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

What is the world here?

Well, the world in this sense is used to designate who? Unconverted people.

And in John chapter 17 in his high priestly prayer he says this. "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but of them which thou hast given me out of the world."

What is that talking about? The word "world" in that sense is talking about the world of the non-elect, those who were not given to the Son by the Father, those who will never come to faith in Christ.

And he says, "Do you know what? I don't pray for them."

Now I know this much. He ever lives to make intercession for who? The objects of his love. But there is a group of people he did not pray for.

Now you can go through 1 John. There is no way we can... we could just take 1 John and take it apart verse by verse. It is used, the word "world" is used in so many different ways with so many different meanings you have got to understand the context.

In 1 John chapter two verse 15 through 17 he uses the word "world" six different times referring specifically to the unregenerate world. In 1 John chapter three that same word

“world” that he uses there, the apostle writes of the world of the unregenerate and he says, “You know what? The unregenerate will not recognize God’s children or God’s Christ or his Church.”

In 1 John chapter four verse 14 I do want you to look at this one with me. In 1 John chapter four verse 14 it says this.

“And we have seen and do testify.”

What is this? We are declaring. Ok? What is he declaring?

“That the Father sent the Son.”

Do you see that? He sent the Son to do what? To be... not to attempt, to be the Savior of the world.

Do you see that? Now either he did or he didn’t, David. He either saved the world or he didn’t. Whatever this world is. Now this isn’t saying that the Father sent the Son into the world with the intention of saving or making salvation possible. If you would fulfill certain conditions. But it says very clearly here what? The Father sent the Son here for a specific purpose, to save fallen humanity.

Now if you don’t get anything else I say this every time every Sunday. If you don’t get anything else, you get this one point and store this one away. To save fallen humanity Christ doesn’t have to save all human beings without exception. Let me say that again. To save fallen humanity Christ does not have to save nor offer salvation to all men and women without exception.

There was a man and his wife and their children got put on an ark, right? Remember that story? Everybody outside the ark what happened to them? They died. Humanity was saved. How many folks were saved? I think it was eight people, right?

And I will tell you what. I am not a mathematician, but you go back and you do the math if you could. There were probably as many people back then as there are on this planet now, because back then, I mean, you and I, if we lived to be a ripe old age of 70 years of age we are living a long time. Have we not? And they were living to the age of 900, folks. And it said they bore children all their lives. Read it for yourself. And their children were going to 900 and they were having children, too. And yet God saved humanity.

He said, “I am going to destroy this place with a flood.” And he did it and he saved humanity and humanity was saved not in a million or a multitude. How many? Eight folks. Humanity was saved.

So you don’t have to save the whole world and you don’t have to offer to save the whole world in order for humanity to be saved.

And, see, turn with me to John chapter three, because the best known verse that everybody takes out of context and always appeals to to try to prove that God loves everybody without exception. He is trying to save everybody without exception. Christ died unconditionally for all men and women without exception. John 3:16.

And I will tell you what. As a child of God you and I ought to love and appreciate and be grateful every single solitary moment of our lives for John chapter three verse 16, because it is important to you as an individual.

“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.”

Now listen to me now. World here can't mean every individual son and daughter of Adam. The world here in view, who is he talking about? The world here in view is the object of God's special redeeming love. What is he talking about in John chapter three? Christ's work of redemption.

It doesn't include every individual without exception. The person intended here are those for whom God had given his only begotten Son and who came... who come to believe in him by God given faith.

And see their faith, they believe. Their faith is a direct result of what? God's giving the Son.

Religion turns it around. They think you get salvation because you get faith. No, because you have been saved, because you have been redeemed, because you have been regenerated, what do you do? You confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not the cause of salvation. What is it? It is the result. It is the effect.

Those whom Christ came to save for whom he is a propitiation for their sins, folks, they will never perish.

He said, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” Right?

And he said, “My sheep hear my voice and they come unto me and I give unto them...” What? Eternal life and they shall never perish.

Now notice. Everybody read John 3:16, but they don't go on and read verse 17, because verse 17 proves that it is not every single solitary person without exception.

“But God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

The whole race of humanity fell in Adam, right? We agree about that. And fell under the wrath and condemnation of God. God therefore didn't send his Son to condemn them. What were they? They were already condemned. He didn't send them to condemn them. What did he come here for?

He said one time, "I came to seek and to save that which was lost."

What was lost? His elect. Where were they lost? When Adam fell and plunged all of humanity, who went with him? The elect. And Christ was sent to do what? To redeem them, to justify them.

And if in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, God intended to save every individual without exception, this would make him the most colossal failure and render Christ's blood, his propitiation, his righteousness of no real value in the salvation of sinners.

Think about that one.

I will guarantee you. Just use it personally.

You say, "Well, we can't judge folks."

Now listen now. Forget that end. Just in your own little world, how many people do you know that are lost? And yet Christ died for everybody?

If we just think back to the ark everybody outside the ark, what happened to them? They perished, not just physically, Bart. Where did they go? Huh? Eight folks in an ark. A multitude outside the ark. The eight in the ark are God's children. The multitude outside are those that are under the wrath of almighty God and bear his entire punishment.

Look at it from the outside it kind of looks like a failure, doesn't it? A multitude [?]. That boat was big enough to hold as many as God intended to save.

I am telling you. If God had intended to save that world the earth wouldn't held the ark that would have been built.

I tell you. That idea destroys the truth of the gospel, the good news of it. If Christ died for everybody, folks, all men and women without exception even those who are in hell, his blood doesn't make the difference between saved and lost. Something else does.

You say, "Well, no. I don't believe that."

Yes, you do, because if you say he died to put away sin and there is men in hell who he bore their sin, something else makes the difference.

Salvation is placed not in the hands of almighty God, his free grace. What is it placed in? It is placed in the hands of men. Christ said this in John chapter six verse 33 he said,

“For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world.”

It doesn't say he tries. He gives life to the world.

An old author on this verse wrote this. He said, “No man no more can be designed by the word ‘world’ than those to whom this bread of God gives life. It is clear that God does not give life to every one without exception.”

Those men and women who insist on promoting God's universal love and a universal atonement declaring that God loves all without exception and that Christ died for all men and women without exception say, “Well, if the world ‘world’ doesn't mean... include everybody without exception, well, surely here in 1 John chapter two verse two in this discussion of this particular verse it has got to mean everybody because he designates it, whole world. Surely he means everybody here. Surely the phrase ‘the whole world’ admits no exceptions. It has got to mean everybody.”

Well, again, let's let the Word of God be the determining factor. Let me show you some places where he uses the phrase “whole world” and you tell me.

1 John chapter five verse 19 it says this.

“And we know that we are of God.”

Do you see that? We know we are of God.

“And the whole world, the whole world lieth in wickedness,” literally in the wicked one.

Hold on now. There is two groups here. We are of God. And he makes the point that the whole world whose power is it under control in? It is under the control of Satan. Clearly the whole world here excludes the saved and the righteous, those redeemed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not in that wicked one, are we? We are not of the world, right? He has chosen us out of the world.

Those who insist on universal propitiation, they are the ones who have the burden of proof to prove that world means all without exception.

See, when they come at you and say, “Well, you can't prove that world doesn't mean everybody without exception.”

Tell the, “You prove to me from the Word of God that it means that he died for all men and women without exception.”

The burden of proof is on them, because think about it like this. If I didn't have one verse that would prove their ideology wrong it would be this one in Romans chapter eight verse 33.

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?”

Remember, God didn’t send his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. Who is the only one that can condemn?

“Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Who? Those whom God the Father justified.

So the one... the only one that can condemn me, he died for me. He rose again for me. He is at the right hand of God for me and he makes intercession for me and he can put me in hell.

You square that one away. Read 2 Corinthians chapter five verse 17 through 21. Read about “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not charging their trespasses unto them.”

If he is not charging trespasses to somebody, what does that mean? No sin, no guilt and condemnation, no possibility of being lost.

I can’t over emphasize the truth that propitiation by its very definition it means salvation secured, folks, accomplished.

See, this is the thing. God isn’t propitiated towards unbelievers. He is just not. Therefore if Christ were the advocate of every individual without exception including those who perished in unbelief and those who will perish, what comfort could it be to me and you that he is our propitiation? His propitiation was ineffective in their cases. He didn’t put away their sins. He didn’t satisfy law and justice on their behalf. What makes you think it will be effective in your case?

You say, “Ah, but I believe.”

Well, do you know what I would say to you? I would say to you, then, that your faith, not Christ is your Savior.

You say, “Well, I don’t like that.”

Well, think about it. You are hoping in the free grace of God. It is not in God’s faithfulness to save you based on the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in the fact that you believed, that you had faith.

See, the difference between you who claim to be saved and the lost isn’t God’s grace. What is it? It is your faith.

Well, I would ask you this. How do you know you are going to continue to believe?

Didn't that man cry, "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief"?

What about if you die in a moment of unbelief and doubt? Where is your Savior then? Then you would have no Savior, because your unbelief at that point would render Christ's work of redemption ineffectual.

Well, in what sense, then, is Christ the propitiation for the sins of the whole world? Well, I will tell you what. Go back to our text and we will close out with this, for this is so important that you understand it. Who is he talking to? Why would he use this kind of language?

He is the propitiation not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.

Well, we are dealing with a bunch of Jews is who we are dealing with here. And these Jews, do you know what Jews thought about me and you? The Jews thought so little of us that what did they try to do with the Gentiles? They proselyted, because what did they have to do? In order for you to be saved, what did you have to become? You had to be converted to Judaism. You had to become a Jew like person, right? So most Jews believed that the blessings of Messiah, who did they go to? They thought God dealt just exclusively with the nation of Israel for hundreds, thousands of years, folks. And so they were convinced in their mind that who was going to get eternal life? Who was going to heaven? Just Jews. They even claimed... Hey, I tell you. If anybody believed in election, the Jews did. Huh? They thought we are, indeed, the elect of God. And they thought we are going to get all the blessing and benefit.

And that is why they were so adamant to proselytize people and get them converted to Judaism because they thought, you don't come over here except you are circumcised after the law of Moses. What are you going to do? You are going to go to hell.

So they were a bunch of false believers is what they were. They were a bunch of Judaizers. The Old Testament never taught salvation just to the Jew. You can't prove that. It always taught salvation from all, Jew and Gentile.

Just because you were a natural descendant of Adam, Abraham, it didn't guarantee you were going to heaven. Wasn't Korah a natural descendant of Abraham? And the earth opened up under Korah and swallowed him and all those that were with him into the earth alive and closed up.

One of the major parts of the established for that new covenant was the gospel going freely to who? To the Gentiles.

As a matter of fact, when you think about it, John the Baptist in his generation stood among the Jews and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins..." Of

who? The world.

It was addressed by Simeon. Remember when they brought Jesus to him in temple and he held our Lord Jesus Christ in his hands and he said of that one, that person he said, “I have seen God’s salvation, a light to lighten the Gentiles.”

And our Lord Jesus Christ addressed it, too. He said, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they will hear my voice and they will be one fold and there will be one shepherd.”

Do you know what the Jews thought when he said that? They got indignant about it. He stood in the temple one day. Remember the story? I will quit with this. He went into the temple that time to read the Scriptures and he read the Scriptures and he took the book and he spoke to them and he quoted from Isaiah chapter 61 in Nazareth now. And he said that that in Isaiah 61 he said, “Do you know who this applies to? It applies to me.”

It applied to him. And when they rejected him, he used the events of the Old Testament from Isaiah 61 to illustrate how their rejection...

Look at Luke chapter four to show how their rejection would ultimately be used by our God to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Look here. Verse 25.

“But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout the earth; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.”

What was she? Where was Sidon? It wasn’t in Jerusalem. It wasn’t in Israel. Where was it? It was in a Gentile land.

It goes on.

“Many lepers, and there was a bunch of them, were in Jerusalem in Israel at the time of Elisha the prophet. And none of them were cleansed,” saving who? You all think he could have cleansed? But he went to one Gentile and verse 28.

“And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things,” what did it do to them? It filled them with wrath. They said, “This can’t be.”

Read the book of Acts [?]. Read it for yourself. Even Peter he had trouble getting over that natural prejudice, didn’t he?

Remember when God said, “Go on down there to my man down there and preach the gospel.” He saw the vision. Remember the blanket come down. All the... “Oh, Lord, I can’t take meat. I can’t... it is unclean.”

So what John is dealing with, he said, “He is the propitiation for our sin... not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world.”

He said, “He is not just a satisfaction of law and justice for Jews who believe the gospel, but for who else?” The whole world. What is that? The Gentiles who you have trouble accepting as your brethren. He died for them, too. The elect from the Jews and the elect from the Gentiles.

A Jew by virtue of being a natural descendant of Abraham and being circumcised had no more qualifications or right to the benefits of the Christ propitiation than the Gentile. And thank God a Gentile by the fact that he is a natural descendant of Abraham, not a natural descendant of Abraham and not circumcised, he wasn't disqualified and he wasn't barred from Christ's propitiation.

All sinners, both Jew and Gentile who come to God for salvation based on the propitiation of the Lord Jesus Christ pleading his righteousness alone, they will be saved. Whosoever, whosoever if you will come pleading that blood and that righteousness, that accomplished redemption, I promise you will be saved.

God bless his Word to our hearts and to our minds and to our understanding.

Let's stand together and we will be dismissed.

I appreciate your presence. The Lord bless you and keep you until we see you Wednesday night.

David Step, would you dismiss us, please?