

## **"This Is Good And Acceptable ..."**

*"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be born in its own time ..."* (1 Tim. 2:3-6).

The words, *"this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,"* speaks of Paul's request that *"supplications prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving"* be made for all men. Paul says that God *"would have all men to be saved"* which tells that not only should prayers be made for our rulers that we might be able to live a peaceful life, but also that their own personal salvation might be secured. Not matter how wicked the ruler, God does not wish that any should perish and Peter writes that *"God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet. 3:9).

The third of the five tenets of Calvinism is the doctrine called "Limited atonement." The premise is that the blood of Christ was shed only for the elect: the elect being (according to the doctrine) those whom God predetermined from the world's foundation to be saved. Since man can do nothing to be saved (as the doctrine states), the blood of Jesus saves all sinners it was shed for. Therefore (the doctrine concludes) Jesus did not die for the non-elect: otherwise they would be saved!

Our Lord taught otherwise. It takes a lot of alteration to make the statement *"God ... would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"* mean that God "would have representatives from all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" as advocates of Calvinism "explain" the verse. Jesus said that *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life"* (Jn. 3:16). Paul wrote, *"The grace of God hath appeared, bring salvation to all men"* (Tit. 2:11). *"The world," "whosoever,"* and *"all men"* sounds as though God's grace is available to all men, doesn't it?

How could it be otherwise? The scriptures say, *"And God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of God"* (Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:35). No matter how one tries "to doctor" the language which tells that God's grace is offered to all, that all can be saved if they wish to be; the phrase *"he that will"* makes God's offer universal! *"And the Spirit and the bride say come, and he that heareth, let him say Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take of the water of life freely"* (Rev. 22:17). Equally as clear are the Savior's

words to Laodiceans: *"Behold I stand at the door and knock. if any man will hear my voice and will open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me"* (Rev. 3:20). Will some be lost for whom Christ died? Calvinism says "No." What does God say? Paul wrote the following: *"For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died?"* (1 Cor. 8:10f). Did you miss the significance of the latter verse? The weak brother perisheth, is lost; the brother for whose sake Christ died! Surely, to any mind which is not so blinded by prejudice, one can perceive that Christ died for some who would perish -- be lost.

In conjunction with the truth that God would have all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (therefore it is good and right that we pray to that end), Paul adds, *"For there is one God, one mediator also between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."* Again the universal nature of Christ's death is declared: Christ gave himself a ransom FOR ALL. Oh the wonder of the love of God: the comfort of the love of God! The words of an ancient hymn expresses it so well! "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found; was blind, but now I see!"

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