

Title: **STUMBLING AT THE WORD OF GOD**
Text: 1 Peter 2:6-8
Readings: *Bob Poncer and Ron Wood*
Subject: *Scriptures Explained which Arminians Use to Deny the
Efficacy Of Christ's Blood Atonement*
Date: Sunday Evening — October 19, 2008
Tape # Z-56b
Introduction:

When you have witnessed to someone, or brought them to hear the gospel, only to see them enraged by it, how often have you thought to yourself — “Why can’t he see this?” — “Why can’t she understand that which is so clearly written in the Word of God?” Why do so many stumble at the Word of God?

We believe, according to the Scriptures, that the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the redemption of God’s elect when he died as our Substitute under the wrath of God. — We believe, according to the testimony of God, that his blood paid our debt, satisfied the justice of God, and effectually put away our sins forever. — We believe, according to the writings of this blessed Book, that all for whom Christ died shall be with him in glory.

But there are many who do not believe the testimony of Scripture regarding the death of Christ. Rather than believing on him unto life everlasting, trusting Christ alone for redemption and righteousness, the vast majority of religious people in this world stumble over the gospel doctrine of the atonement and perish in their sins. And this, too, is according to the purpose of God. Let me show you. Turn to 1 Peter 2. — This Book, the Sacred Scriptures were written by Divine Inspiration, and written as they are, to confuse the unbeliever, to cause those who will not trust Christ to stumble at the very things written for the salvation of God’s elect.

(1 Peter 2:6-8) “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.”

As he is revealed in Holy Scripture, the Lord Jesus Christ is to reprobate, unbelieving, self-righteous men a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. And this is by divine arrangement. — God has so written his Word that reprobate men will get tripped up by it and stumble over the Scriptures as stumbling stones to hell.

God has fixed it, so that those who are determined to cling to their own righteousness, who are determined not to submit themselves to the righteousness of God established by, revealed in, and found in Christ alone, will stumble over him and fall into hell. This is exactly what happened to those Jews described in Romans 9:31-33.

(Romans 9:31-33) “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. (32) Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (33) As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

Proposition: In other words, **those very same Scriptures which, by the blessing of God the Holy Spirit, are as gates of mercy to God’s elect, are stumbling stones to the reprobate and unbelieving.** — The Spirit of God declares in our text (1 Peter 2:6-8) that the unbelieving stumble at the Word of God and do so by divine appointment.

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Tonight we are going to look together at those texts of Scripture which unbelieving and disobedient, will-worshipping Arminians, most commonly wrest to their own destruction.

I have neither the desire nor the inclination to answer the cavils of blaspheming men and women against the Word of God. But I do want to

help you who know and worship God to understand his Word and the wonders of his grace more fully. And I want to so preach the Word to you that you who are yet without faith in Christ may be brought by the Spirit of God to faith in our Savior, through the hearing of the Word.

THREE CATEGORIES

As I have stated many times, **there is not even a hint of universal redemption in the Word of God.** Read and interpreted contextually, there is not the slightest implication of the heretical doctrine that Christ died to redeem and save those who perish under the wrath of God in hell! Such doctrine is utter blasphemy!

However, there are numerous texts of Scripture which are often pointed to, quoted, twisted, and perverted by dishonest blasphemers, and by those who are confused by their teachings to refute the blessed gospel doctrine of particular, effectual redemption.

Generally speaking, those Scripture texts most often misinterpreted and perverted by men relating to the death of Christ and the atonement he made for God's elect by his blood may be lumped into **three categories:**

1. Those texts where the word "*all*" is used to describe those for whom Christ died.
2. Those texts where the word "*world*" is used to describe the people for whom Christ died.
3. And those texts which seem to suggest, in the minds of some, that some for whom Christ died might yet perish under the wrath of God.

We are going to look at these three groups of Scripture texts tonight, not to explain away the caviling objections of those who despise the gospel, but to seek by the teaching of God the Holy Spirit the message of grace contained in them.

Sometimes, when we try to teach people the gospel, explaining passages like John 3:16 and 1 John 2:2, they respond by saying, "'All' means all and '*world*' means world. When the Bible uses the word '*all*' it means everyone, every human being, without exception. When the Bible uses the word '*world*' it means everyone, every human being without exception." But that simply is not the case. And the fact that that is not the case is

obvious to any one who cares to look. Let me give you one example — Luke 2:1.

(Luke 2:1) “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”

Obviously, the words “*all*” and “*world*” as they are used in this text refer to all within a specific, limited range, a specific group. They have absolutely no bearing upon or reference to you and me. With that in mind, I want us to look at these three categories of Scripture texts:

1. Those texts where the word “all” is used to describe those for whom Christ died.
2. Those texts where the word “world” is used to describe the people for whom Christ died.
3. And those texts which seem to suggest, in the minds of some, that some for whom Christ died might yet perish under the wrath of God.

SCRIPTURES WHERE THE WORD “ALL” IS USED

First, we will look at those texts of Scripture where the word “*all*” is used to describe those for whom Christ died.

(John 1:7) “The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.”

John the Baptist, like all true gospel preachers, was sent as a messenger from God to men, to preach the gospel to lost sinners, so that all who believe the message of redemption and grace in Christ might be saved. **If God sent no preacher none could be saved, because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.** But John was not sent to everyone, without exception. God never has sent his preachers to everyone, without exception. There are many to whom God never sends a gospel preacher, some to whom God will not allow his servants to go, no matter how much they may desire to go (Acts 16:6-8). — **The word “all”, as it is used here, must mean all kinds of men, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free.**

(John 12:32) “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.”

When the Lord Jesus said, “*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,*” he certainly was not referring to all in an absolute, universal sense. That is obvious from the facts that many were already in hell when he made that statement, and many never have the gospel preached to them. The word “*all*” refers again to all kinds of men, not to all men universally.

(Romans 5:18) “Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.”

(1 Corinthians 15:22) “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

In these two passages, often quoted as proof texts for universal redemption, the Holy Spirit is declaring that All who were represented in Adam (the entire human race) died in him, and that all who are represented by the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, are made alive by him. To suggest that the word “*all*” in these verses means all in an absolute sense is to assert that all shall be saved without exception. Such an interpretation is a denial of the fact that some shall forever suffer the wrath of God.

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15) “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: (15) And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

- We were all dead under the law and dead in sin.
- Christ died for all, not all men, but all his people. — All His Sheep. — All His Church. — All The Sons He Brings To Glory. — All God’s Elect
- All for whom Christ died died in him and with him. — We were crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20).
- All for whom the Lord of glory died, shall, as the sure result of his death, be made to live unto him by his grace.

The Son of God died for us that we might live unto God. It is the love of Christ, revealed and experienced in particular, effectual redemption, which motivates, compels, and constrains us in all things spiritual (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 19-20). The “*all*” for whom Christ died are the all who died with him at Calvary and live with him in grace, his sheep, his church, the many sons he shall bring to glory. All for whom the Lord of glory died, shall, as the sure result of his death, be made to live unto him by his grace.

(1 Timothy 2:4-6) “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. (5) For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (6) Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

- **God is no respecter of persons.** The all referred to means all sorts of men. God has his elect everywhere, in every rank of society.
- The Lord Jesus Christ gave himself a ransom for all God’s elect for whom he is the Mediator, for whom he makes mediation (John 17:9, 20). — The objects of his priestly intercession and the objects of his priestly sacrifice are the same.

(1 Timothy 4:10) “For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”

Our great and glorious God and Savior is that One who is the Savior of all men in the sense that it is he who preserves all men in life, providing all things necessary for life and maintaining life for and in all. In him we live, and move, and have our being. But he is “*specially*” the Savior of those who believe. He saves all in providence, to serve their ordained purpose for the saving of his own elect (Isaiah 43:1-5). The sons of Ham are kept in life for a while, that they might serve the sons of Shem and Japheth (2 Peter 3:9).

It is not our believing that makes him our Savior specially, but his being specially our Savior that makes us believe. Being our Savior specially, the Lord God...

- Chose Us.
- Redeemed Us.
- Preserved Us.
- Called Us.

- Gave Us Faith.
- Keeps Us in Grace.
- Will Bring Us To Glory!

(Titus 2:11-12) “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, (12) Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;”

This passage is often cited to refute the gospel doctrine of particular and effectual redemption; but that is precisely what it teaches. The grace of God has appeared to all men. That is to say, Christ has appeared to all men, or the gospel has appeared to all men. But the “*all men*” to whom the grace of God has appeared must be understood in a relative sense. There are multitudes that have never even seen a Bible or heard the gospel. The grace of God has appeared to men in a general sense, and appears to all who hear the gospel. However, it comes effectually to those who are taught of God and converted by its power.

(Hebrews 2:9) “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

The word man is not the original. The verse ends with the word “*every*.” The writer means for us to understand and rejoice in the fact that Christ tasted death for every one of those who are saved by his grace, as the context indicates...

- Every Son.
- Every Heir.
- Every One Of Abraham’s Seed.
- Every One For Whom He Intercedes.
- Every One He Calls Brother.
- Every One In His Church.

(2 Peter 3:9) “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Read the context. The longsuffering of our God is “to usward;” and his longsuffering “is our salvation.” We read in verse 15 that we are to “account that *the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.*”

SCRIPTURES WHERE THE WORD “WORLD” IS USED

Second, I want us to look at those texts of Scripture in which the word “world” is used to describe those for whom Christ died. I want you to see clearly that those texts of Scripture in which the word “world” is used to describe those for whom Christ died do not contradict the plain revelation of the gospel. They do not teach the doctrine of universal redemption.

(John 1:9) “That was the true Light, which **lighteth every man** that cometh into the world.”

Christ is the Light of the World. **He gives...**

- The light of Creation and conscience to all men (Romans 1-2).
- The light of Holy Scripture to most.
- The light of gospel preaching to many.
- And the saving light of grace to his elect.

(John 1:29) “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which **taketh away the sin of the world.**”

When John the Baptist declared, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), he was not asserting that Christ takes away all the sins of all men throughout the world. If that were the case, none could ever be lost. Would God punish men for sin who have no sin? John was simply declaring what is declared throughout the New Testament. – The Lord Jesus Christ came to save and has effectually redeemed his people out of every nation in the world. He is not the Savior and Redeemer of Jews only, but of God’s elect among the Gentile nations as well (John 3:16; 4:42; 6:51; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:14).

(John 3:16) “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.”

(John 4:42) “And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

(John 6:51) “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

(2 Corinthians 5:19) “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

Those meant by the world, who were reconciled to God by the blood of Christ are the same as those whose sins God would not impute to them. It is the world of his elect, Jew and Gentile, black and white, bond and free, male and female.

(1 John 2:1-2) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: (2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.”

Though saved by the grace of God, God’s elect in this world are sinners still. When we sin we have an Advocate with the Father. Our sins, horrible as they are, can never change our standing before or relationship with God our Father because of who our Advocate is and what he has done!

- “*Jesus*”
- “*Christ*”
- “*The Righteous*”
- “*The Propitiation for Our Sins*”
- Also For The Sins Of God’s Elect Throughout The Whole World!

(1 John 4:14) “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.”

Blessed be God, there is a Savior! But there is only one Savior for the whole world!

- Christ is the Way — The Only Way!
- Christ is the Truth — The Only Truth!
- Christ is the Life — The Only Life!
- Christ is the Savior — The Only Savior!

**SCRIPTURES WHICH
SEEM TO MANY TO SUGGEST
THAT SOME FOR WHOM CHRIST
DIED MIGHT YET PERISH
UNDER THE WRATH OF GOD**

Third, there are some passages of Holy Scripture which seem to suggest to many that some for whom Christ died might yet perish in hell under the wrath of God. Of course, that cannot be. God is just, righteous, and true. He cannot and will not violate his own character. He cannot send anyone to hell for whom his justice has already been satisfied by the sacrifice of his own darling Son.

(Romans 14:15) “But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”

The word destroy here means to corrupt, mar, or defile. We must take great care not to use our liberty in Christ at the expense of hurting or offending our weaker brethren for whom Christ died.

If Christ died for you, it is a very small thing for me to refrain from any earthly pleasure for you. But what I do, while it may be of great harm to your present peace and stability, can never thwart the purpose of God, destroy the grace of God, or make the blood of Christ of non-effect.

(1 Corinthians 8:11-12) “And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? (12) But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”

I cannot give a better, more sensible explanation of this text than **John Gill** did. He says the word “*perish*” here “intends, not the perishing of his

immortal soul; or of his perishing eternally in hell; which can never be the case of any for whom Christ died; for then the death of Christ would be so far in vain; and not be a security from condemnation; contrary to Romans 8:33 nor be a full satisfaction to justice; or God must be unjust, to punish twice for the same offence: but **it intends, the perishing of his peace and comfort for a time; and is explained by ‘defiling’ and ‘wounding’ his conscience, and making him to ‘offend’, through the imprudent use of Christian liberty,** in those who had stronger faith and greater knowledge, (1 Corinthians 8:7, 12, 13) of which they should be careful, from this consideration; that a weak brother is as near and dear to Christ, since he died for him, as a stronger brother is.”

(Hebrews 10:29) “Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

Many are outwardly sanctified by professed faith in Christ who have never been inwardly sanctified by the experience of grace. In time they forsake Christ and the gospel (Hebrews 10:25), bringing upon themselves even greater condemnation than they are under by nature. That is what Hebrews 10:29 declares. — *“Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”*

(2 Peter 2:1) “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

2 Peter 2:1 is a remarkable declaration of Christ’s absolute sovereignty over all men, not an admission of failure, frustration, and defeat on his part, as the Arminian would have us believe. — The word “*Lord*” in this verse would be better translated, and should be translated, “despot”. The word “*bought*” is not the word that means, “to buy out of” or “deliver”. Rather, it is the word that means, “to purchase,” *agoradzw*, not *ekagoradzw*.

If I were purchasing a house, I would use the word translated “*bought*” (agoradzw) in this passage. The house would be mine. I would take possession of it. But I would not move the house. If I went into the local pawnshop to redeem a treasured pocket watch I had previously pawned, the word used for redeem would be another word. It would be the word commonly translated “*redeem*” (ekagoradzw) in the New Testament, when speaking of the work of Christ at Calvary. That is a word which means, “to deliver by the payment of a price.”

That is what the Son of God did as our God-man Mediator for his elect. He delivered us from the curse of the law and the wrath of God by the ransom price of his own life’s blood. He did not deliver the reprobate or the false prophets described in 2 Peter 2:1. He did, however, as a man, as our God-man Mediator, purchase and take possession of them and of the entire world as a sovereign despot. As a man, he bought the right to rule over and dispose of all flesh, that he might give eternal life to God’s elect (John 17:2; Romans 14:9; Philippians 2:9-11). He sold all that he had (2 Corinthians 8:9, and bought the field of God’s creation, that he might get the treasure of God’s jewels hidden in that field (Matthew 13:44).

Application:

It is a great pity that men and women will deliberately pervert and twist the Word of God rather than acknowledge their total depravity and trust the work of Christ alone for acceptance with God. But we must not allow ourselves to get caught in the snare of debate with infidels. If we do, we rob ourselves of the joy of these holy things. Rather than trying to answer all the carpings of reprobate men, let’s simply take God at his Word, rejoicing in the great and glorious gospel doctrine of particular, effectual redemption (Isaiah 43:1-7).

(Isaiah 43:1-7) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. (2) When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (3) For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. (4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been

honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. (5) Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; (6) I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; (7) *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

Take these very texts which are stumbling stones to the reprobate and read them as gates of mercy. From these verses we are taught great things. May God the Holy Spirit teach them to us all.

1. Redemption by Christ is glorifying to all the character of God.
2. Redemption could never be accomplished or obtained in any other way.
3. Christ has obtained and holds redemption for all God’s elect.
4. The redemption obtained by Christ is an eternal redemption.
5. All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ by the gift of his grace, through his Spirit, were redeemed by him at Calvary.

(Galatians 3:13-14) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree: (14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

I say with Paul...

(Galatians 6:14) “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Amen!