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**Grace Fellowship Church**  
*Delighting in God's Sovereign Saving Grace,  
to the Glory of God!*

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**The Doctrine of the Definite Atonement**

**Part 2: The Scope of Atonement**

*Jesus completely paid the penalty for the sins of all of his people.*

*His death atoned for the sins and purchased the salvation for all who believe, all of whom are elect.*

**For Whom Did Jesus Die?**

Did Jesus die for everyone as a substitute? Did he die for everyone as a potential substitute? Did he die only for some as a substitute?

*For Everyone as a Substitute*

If Jesus completely took on the penalty of all of the sins of each individual, then God would not be just in sending anyone to Hell. But Hell is not empty, and many suffer under God's wrath, so Jesus cannot have died for all of their sins.

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (Matt 7:13-14)

Since some people are condemned to Hell, we must understand the atonement to be limited in some manner. Not limited in value! It is infinite in value, because of the cost! But limited either in its effect, or in its application. Either Jesus died for every person but not completing their salvation (general atonement), or Jesus worked a complete salvation but not for every person (definite atonement).

*For Everyone as a Potential Substitute (Incomplete Salvation)*

If Jesus died for everyone, but not everyone is saved, then there is something missing that is required to complete salvation in the life of an individual. Until that missing element –personal faith– is added, there is no atonement.

This teaching denies that Jesus completed the work on the cross (Rom 5:10). It allows that Jesus' death could possibly have been totally in vain, if no one had added their faith that that work. This is in clear contravention of Scripture (Rev. 5:9-10).

...if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. (Rom 5:10)

*For Only Some as a Substitute (Complete Salvation)*

Jesus did not die for the sins of every single individual. Instead he died only for his sheep, his people, the elect. In their stead, he completely accomplished their salvation in his life, his suffering and his death.

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45)

## Definite Atonement

All Bible-believing Christians limit the atonement in some manner. Not in value – the work of Christ is supremely valuable – but in effect. Either Jesus did not completely atone (potential substitute), or he did completely atone but not for all people (definite atonement). The Scripture strongly teaches the truth of definite atonement. (Is 53:12; Matt 26:28; Mark 10:45, 14:24-25; John 10:11-15; Heb 9:28)

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. (John 10:11, 14-15)

## What about being the One who “takes away the sin of the world”?

When Scripture refers to “all” or “the whole world,” the meaning must be determined by the context. In the case of forgiveness of sins, the meaning is frequently not “all people” but “all kinds of people” or “all people to whom this applies”. Careful examination of each passage in context will make it clear that the “all” is a specific group, not every single human being.

As an example, one of the most difficult passages is 1 John 2:1-2.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1-2)

The “whole world” could include the meaning of:

1. The ethnicities of the whole world. Not just “our” Jewish sins, but also for the sins of believing Gentiles: Romans, Babylonians, Egyptians, etc.
2. The exclusive sacrifice of Jesus. All who have their sins propitiated, any in all the “whole world”, receive that propitiation only through Jesus Christ. But that does not mean each individual receives that atonement.
3. The on-going effectiveness of Jesus' propitiation. Not just the first disciples have their due wrath propitiated by Christ, but all believers to come throughout the “whole world” will also be forgiven through Jesus Christ.

## What about “whosoever will may come”?

The Bible clearly teaches that the offer of the gospel is made to all people. John 3:16 says that whoever believes in the Son will not perish but have eternal life. All who turn to Christ are forgiven of their sins.

We also know (as taught earlier) that only the elect will ever have faith (John 6:44). Only those chosen of God will believe in his Son. But we don't know who the elect are, and so we obediently and truthfully can urge everyone to turn in repentance and faith to God, who will forgive.

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:40)

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1. To think right thoughts about God and His character.
  2. To promote His gospel.
  3. To aid in our worship.
  4. To encourage our own souls.
  5. To have something to say to our Accuser.
  6. To prepare us for heaven.
  7. To encourage each other.
  8. To strengthen our cross-centered authenticity.