

Introduction

- Essential beliefs are what every one must believe in order to be a Christian.
- These beliefs are important and may feel foundational, but are not essential.
- Godly Christians can disagree and still be saved and worship alongside each other.
- Everyone should limit the atonement in some way, or we are in trouble.
- No one limits the worth of Christ's atonement, which is of infinite value.

Overview

- View 1: Jesus Christ died to effectually save everyone from their sins.
- View 2: Jesus Christ died to effectually save believers from their sins.
- View 3: Jesus Christ died to possibly save everyone from their sins.
- Views 2 & 3 agree that not everyone will be saved and a free offer of the gospel can be made to everyone who is born.

View 1: Universalism

- This is an unorthodox position and is widely rejected by Christian traditions.
- "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." 2 Pet 3:9
- "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men." Romans 5:18
- "who desires all people to be saved" 2 Tim 2:4
- "through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" Col 1:20
- It does not believe all religions are correct, but that Jesus saves everyone.
- I do think it is important to see that Bible verses alone do not protect us from heresy.

View 2: Limited or Definite Atonement

- This view wants to emphasize that Christ's death actually accomplished something.
- "give his life as a ransom for many" Matt 20:28
- "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Matt 26:28
- "He will save his people from their sins" Matt 1:21
- "to give his life as a ransom for many" Mark 10:45
- "the church of God, which he bought with his own blood" Acts 20:28
- "just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" Eph 5:25
- "so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many," Hebrews 9:28
- This view gets right that Jesus actually did save some people when he died.
- This view is logically and theologically consistent with the rest of Reformed theology, but this particular point is not explicitly taught in the Scriptures.
- It may be fair to say Christ actually died for some, but it is less clear that he did not die for all.

View 3: Unlimited Atonement

- This view will emphasize the possibility that Christ has died for everyone.
- It will use many of the same Scriptures as Universalists.
- "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son" John 3:16
- "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" 1 John 2:2
- "gave himself as a ransom for all" 1 Tim 2:6
- This is deeply Biblical in affirming that Christ's death is for everyone.
- A problem is that Christ does not actually die to save anyone.
- If "it is finished" and Christ paid the penalty for the sins of the entire world, then how can unbelievers be judged for sins that have been paid for?

My View

- Personally, I struggle to reconcile how to bring these two ideas together.
- I think Jesus did actually save people when He died on the cross.
- However, I don't think the Bible allows us to limit the atonement to only the elect.
- The Bible itself seems uninterested in clearly making the logical distinctions that we may want to.
- I affirm and preach what the Bible teaches even if I can't fully reconcile it.

Takeaways

- We should recognize how complicated even simple biblical statements are.
- I do think we can have confidence that Jesus actually purchased your salvation on the cross if you have professed faith in Him.
- I do think we can confidently say Christ died for the sins of the world and that anyone who comes can find salvation.