The Influences of Sin

CLAUDE B. HOLCOMB
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Since we are living in a time when the reality of sin is being denied, it might be well for Christians to give more thought to its impact on past generations, and be reminded that the prevailing attitude toward sin today is the result of the influences of sin itself. Total disregard for God's revelation to man has led many to say that nothing is wrong except as a person's own thinking makes it wrong. They tell us there Is no such thing as absolute truth, and no definite standard of morals. The idea Is that every man is his own god, and what is right or wrong is determined in his own mind. This is anarchy in Its boldest posture.

Peter was constrained to write "to put you in remembrance of these things, though ye know them." Since sin is so subtle Christians should ever be reminded of its deceitfulness. We need to contemplate the lessons of the past lest we let them slip away from us. The impact of sin in man's history is seen in the Bible accounts of Adam's posterity, and "these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition."

Cain called God's way in question, and his presumption led him finally to murder his brother. As the sons and daughters of Adam multiplied on earth, man became so engrossed In the re-enactment of Eden's tragedy that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Repentance on the part of God doesn't mean that there was any vacillation or variation in his nature. It is merely an expression of pain felt in the great heart of the Creator because of the sin of his creature, and emphasizes the infinite love that God has for man. But

justice must be upheld, so man paid the penalty for his perversity, and was destroyed from the earth, excepting the small remnant of Noah's family. God's wrath revealed in the flood was legal wrath rather than emotional. Had it been emotional, it would have been executed without mercy, and that would have been the end of human history. God's mercy is demonstrated in the fact that he gave the antediluvians ample opportunity to escape the consequences of their sin through the preaching of Noah, but they would not repent.

The preservation of the race after the flood was made possible through the small remnant of righteous souls found in Noah's family. But the posterity of Noah was also subject to sin, and in his sons are found again the human proclivities to doubt and question the ways of the Lord. Ham, not completely purged from the vices of the old world, forgets the honor due to a father, and in sinning against his father he sins against God and brings a curse upon himself. He was the progenitor of those who later became the adversaries of God's people, and the sinful influences of Ham are seen in the deeds of his posterity.

It was the influence of sin that led those men to undertake the building of a tower whose top would reach unto heaven. The real motive behind this act was a desire for renown – the pride of life. Their object was to stay together, and thus they would fail to carry out God's purpose to replenish the earth according to his commandment to "bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply therein" (Gen. 9:7). Their fear of dispersion could well have been that the in ward bond of unity and fellowship had already been broken by sin, and they were thus seeking to maintain a false sort of unity by this outward means. How presumptuous they were! God sent a confusion of tongues and scattered them abroad upon the face of the earth.

As men are multiplied, sin abounds. The great cities of Sodom and Gomorrah became so violently wicked that the Lord could no longer bear with them, and because not ten righteous souls

could be found In Sodom they were destroyed. This does not mean ten souls who were sinlessly perfect, but ten who through fear of God kept themselves from the prevailing wickedness of the city. So God rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from heaven, executing his legal wrath against transgression of his law. This catastrophe is a permanent memorial of the punitive righteousness of God, and serves lo keep the fate of the ungodly before the minds of all subsequent gene rations.

The fate of Lot's wife also becomes a warning to all ages against the evil of disobeying God, and the danger of "looking back" after having charted a course that leads away from death and destruction. Jesus exhorted the people of his day to "remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32). Peter makes reference to Sodom and Gomorrah and says that God "made them an example unto those that should live ungodly" (2 Peter 2:6).

Time would fail to tell or the multitude or individuals whose sins are recorded in divine history, and of the tremendous effects their conduct had on the lives and destinies of men. We could speak of Esau, who despised his birthright and sold it for a morsel of food; of Nadab and Abihu, who presumptuously offered strange fire in the place of that commanded; of the son of Shelomith who blasphemed the God of heaven; of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who rebelled against the authority God had vested in Moses and Aaron; and of all the cases in subsequent History which so graphically inscribe upon our minds the stupendous impact of sin upon the human family.

The whole story of sin may be summed up in the failure of man to get rid of the lusts within himself. We cannot quite get away from selfishness. To gratify selfish desires we yield to covetousness and sacrifice our souls upon idol altars! Idolatry in our day consists largely in the form of worshipping self. We need to learn the lessons that all these examples in Israel's history teach us. We need to learn that sin on our part begins with the lusts in our own hearts. It is

true that the devil is the originator of sin, and ushered sin into the world through the first couple on earth, but we are not compelled to serve Satan, and we do so only because we are drawn away by our "own lusts, and enticed" (James 1:14). That is why Peter said, "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11). That is why God gave us all these examples to warn us against the subtlety of sin.

No intelligent person can contemplate the influences of sin upon the human race from the beginning until now, and then with any degree or honesty deny the reality of sin. The idea that sin is only the figment of an imaginative mind, or that any impurity can be washed clean by one's own thinking, is just another one of the crafty contrivances of Satan to lead souls captive.

Let us therefore exhort one another daily, "lest any of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3 :13).

701 N. Dixon St., Gainesville, Texas 76240

Original Sin

By T. Pierce Brown
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The dictionary defines *original sin* as "the sin by which the human race, rebellious against God because of Adam's disobedience, was deprived of grace, and made subject to ignorance, evil, death, and all other miseries." The doctrine of "original sin" has probably given rise to more additional false doctrines than any other single teaching. In its simplest terms it means that as a result of the fall of Adam every person is born depraved, and this perverted state is the

cause of all his evil acts.

Ambrose of Milan (c. 340-397) taught that through the sin of Adam all men come into the world tainted by sin. When he baptized Augustine in 385, it was easy for Augustine to use that doctrine to excuse his life of debauchery. Although Augustine gave the framework of the doctrine, which Roman Catholics came to accept, Calvin made it more popular and acceptable to Protestants in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion.*

The "tulip theory" is a summary of Calvin's theology. The *T* stands for *total hereditary depravity.* The *U* is for *universal condemnation.* Since some will be saved, Calvin followed Augustine's assumption that God elected all men and angels to salvation or condemnation and the number is so certain that it can neither be increased nor diminished. The *L* is for *limited salvation.* The natural consequence is that of *irresistible grace,* which takes care of the *I.* if a sovereign God saved a depraved person, he would not be able to resist God's gracious effort to save him. God then makes it impossible for that person to be lost, so the *P* is for the *perseverance of the saints*.

The teaching is false at every point. In *The Banner Of Truth,* June 1993, Fred Blakely said:

> *Man was not merely damaged by the fall of Eden; he was completely ruined. Adam's nature was defiled, and so separated from God – made spiritually dead – and this state has been transmitted by the natural birth to all his posterity.*

My questions to Blakely are: If a person is born completely ruined and spiritually dead, does God need to operate on him in a special way to get him into a position where he will receive the gospel? What causes a child to sin that is any different from that which caused Adam to sin?

Every false doctrine has enough truth about it to make it appealing but usually leads to many other doctrinal errors. For example, it is true that man has no power to move himself from a sinful state to a saved state by his own power. “It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps” (Jer. 10:23). Consequently, salvation is by grace.

Calvinistic theologians pervert those truths and assume that since “no man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him,” the Father must draw by “irresistible grace” because man is by nature incapable of coming to God, which makes God the sole actor in the salvation process.

Jesus said, “Every one that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me” (John 6:45). It is true that man has no power to save himself, but since “the gospel is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom. 1:16), Peter could properly say, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation” (Acts 2:40). They had power to accept or reject God’s offer of mercy and salvation.

The theory of inborn depravity is false from start to finish. It is assumed that Adam’s sin so corrupted his nature he could not choose to do right. Then it is assumed that the nature of his corrupted spirit was transmitted to his descendants. The Bible does not teach either of these views.

Adam had the same freedom of choice after his sin to obey or disobey that he did before. God made him with the ability to obey or disobey. He decided to disobey. If one takes the position that a person who sins today does so because of his “fallen nature,” he should be able to answer the question: If my fallen nature causes me to sin, what caused Adam to sin?

The Bible presents humans as having freedom to choose, and being blessed or cursed as a result of those decisions.

It is speculated that since man was made in the image of God, when he sinned, he broke that image. All his descendants are

born after the image of an earthly father, who is totally depraved. It is assumed that when Genesis 5:3 says that Adam became the father of a son "in his own likeness, and after his image," it means that Seth and all his descendants were no longer in the image of God.

Contrary to that, 1 Corinthians 11:7 says, "For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God." James 3:9 expresses the same idea when it says, "Men … are made after the similarity of God." There is not one verse in the Bible that teaches that mankind ceased to be born in God's image because Adam sinned. God is "the Father of our spirits" (Heb. 12:9). Man does not inherit his spiritual qualities from his physical father.

No one, from Augustine down, can answer these simple questions:

- If it is possible for a sinful person to transmit a depraved nature to his offspring, why is it not possible for a redeemed and pure person to transmit his holy nature to his offspring?
- We may become "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). Why is that not transmitted?
- What is there in man's present nature that causes him to sin that was not in Adam's nature that caused him to sin?

Some answer, "We have a greater tendency to sin than Adam did." We then ask, "Where do you get that information?" Apparently the first time they were tempted, Eve and Adam succumbed. Whatever tendency they had, it was before the fall. Adam's tendency before the fall appears to be as great as ours after the fall.

Here are some Bible truths showing the falsity of the doctrine of original sin: Ezekiel 18:20 says: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the

father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." Children are not born hereditarily, totally depraved.

Jesus said in Matthew 18:3, "Except ye become converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Can any sensible person imagine him saying, "Except ye become converted and become unable to do a good thing or think a good thought (totally depraved), you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven?"

In Mark 10:14 he says, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven." Does the kingdom of heaven consist of corrupt and totally depraved sinners?

Genesis 3:5-7 says:

> *God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.*

Instead of their sin causing moral blindness which was transmitted to their children, as all who theorize about their "fallen nature" teach, they now could recognize good and evil.

Adam and Eve, before the fall, knew what was good and evil. They had intellectual awareness that it is right to obey God and wrong to disobey him. If they had not known it was wrong, they would not have been condemned for eating forbidden fruit. Then when they sinned, they knew by experience.

It is impossible for us to live without sin. Paul says, "All have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). And 1 John 1:8 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in

us.”

If we rephrase the question, we can better understand the answer. “Is my nature such that I have to sin all the time?” The simple answer is that the statements of Paul and John, indicating the universality of sin, are general truths that do not apply to specific situations. Suppose you were standing by Paul after he was told, “Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins,” and you asked Paul as he arose from the water, “Do you now say you have no sin?” Paul’s answer, “My sins are washed away and I have no sin.” If a person can live without sin for one minute, then he does not have a sinful nature that makes him sin all the time. That does not deny the general truth that all have sinned.

The idea that a person is created so that he has to sin, and then God condemns him for doing it, places God in a bad light. It makes God a respecter of persons. What sort of God would it be who would say, “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28), and make man where he could not do it, nor even want to do it?

No wonder those who concocted that idea had to come up with another false doctrine like “irresistible grace” to help solve the problem! The other false doctrine only made the problem worse, for then God would have to arbitrarily elect some to salvation and others to damnation by sovereign grace. You would have no right to question him!

No civilized society could function properly founded on the premise that man is born naturally evil and unable to make any moral choices. We admit that a pregnant mother who is a drug addict may pass on to her child a physical body that craves dope. But to pass on a physical characteristic is far removed from having an evil spirit.

The easiest and proper way out of all those problems is to recognize the Bible answer: All men are born with the same

nature Adam had when he was created – with the ability to choose right or wrong. When man chooses wrong, he sins, but does not transmit that nature to his children any more than Adam did. Even though every mature person sins, it does not follow that he is required to do so by divine decree. It is true that "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:11-12). Still, this is the choice of the created and not the ruling of the Creator.

Limited Atonement?

By Dr. John Hobbs

The third cardinal doctrine in Calvinistic Theology is the doctrine of "Limited Atonement." It is the "L" in the T-U-L-I-P acrostic. Most Calvinists prefer the term "Particular Atonement" or "Definite Atonement."

What Calvinists Believe About Limited Atonement

> *The Canons of Dort, article 8, states, 'It was the will of God that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and only those, who were from eternity chosen to salvation.'*
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> *Henry Fish, a Baptist wrote in 1850, 'Did the atonement, in its saving design, embrace more then the elect? The elect*

only; for whatever he designed he will accomplish, and he saves only his people from their sins.'

David Steele and Curtis Thomas wrote, 'But He came into the world to represent and save only those given Him by the Father. Thus Christ's work was limited in that it was designed to save some and not others.'

WJ. Seaton said, 'Christ died to save a particular number of sinners.'

Lorraine Boettner said, 'The value of the atonement depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of the person making it; and since Christ suffered as a Divine-human person the value of His suffering was infinite … The atonement, therefore, was infinitely meritorious and might have saved every member of the human race had that been God's plan.'

Ralph Gore wrote, "Christ died for the elect. The extent of the atonement is identical with the intent of divine election."

Paul Enns wrote, 'If God is sovereign (Eph. 1:11) then His plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved then God's plan is frustrated.'

R. B. Kuiper said, 'God purposed by the atonement to save only the elect and that consequently all the elect, and they alone, will be saved.'

The question may be put this way: When Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who he knew would ultimately be saved? Calvinists would answer the latter group.

Wayne Grudem wrote: The term that is usually preferred is particular redemption, since this view holds that Christ died for particular people (specifically, those who would be saved and whom he came to redeem), that he foreknew each one of

them individually (cf. Eph. 1:3-5) and had them individually in mind in his atoning work.

The Foundational Basis for Limited Atonement

The doctrine of Limited Atonement is based on the concept of double jeopardy (trying a person twice for the same crime). The argument goes like this: If Jesus died for the sins of all men, then the sins of all men are paid for and one has already been judged for those sins. On the Day of Judgment, if God would bring a man into judgment and commit him to hell even though Jesus had already paid for his sins, God would be putting that person in double jeopardy. God would be unjust – something he is not (Deut. 32:4).

The argument is: Since we do not permit double jeopardy in our own legal system, surely we would not expect God to do something we would not do.

Calvinists argue therefore – Jesus actually died only for the sins of the elect, the chosen, the saved.

However, just because there is an analogy from a human viewpoint, this does not prove that it coincides with the truth of God's word.

Isaiah 55:8-9 states, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." We are warned: "Lean not upon thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

We do not formulate doctrine by analogies or examples. They may illustrate doctrine, but they do not prove doctrine. We must determine truth from the Word of God and not human reasoning. There are some great truths of scripture which are beyond our comprehension and we accept because the Bible teaches them (such as, the Trinity, God's love, nature of sin, and such like), and therefore are not proved by reason, but are known by revelation.

Scriptures Used by Calvinists to Support Limited Atonement

Matthew 1:21 states, "For it is he that shall save his people from their sins."

Jesus "loved the church and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25).

Romans 4:25 reads, "Who was delivered up for our trespasses."

Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:10 reveals, "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son."

Romans 8:32 declares, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

Acts 20:28 states, "To feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."

In John 10:15 Jesus said, "I lay down my life for the sheep."

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "Him who knew no sin he made to be [a] sin [offering] on our behalf."

Galatians 1:4 says, "Who gave himself for our sins."

> *Ephesians 1:7 says, "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."*
>
> *Titus 2:14 states, "Who gave himself for us."*

Calvinists use the above Scriptures as proof texts that Christ died "only" for the elect.

Christ died for his people. That is the main point of these verses! However the Bible does not teach Limited Atonement – that Christ died "only" for the elect, "only" for a limited class.

Calvinists "twist" and "pervert" other plain Scriptures that clearly teach that Christ died for all men. They do so unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:15-17). When we come to the Bible, we must take all of it to arrive at total-saving truth. Psalms 119:160 states, "The sum of all thy word is truth." Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It takes all of Scripture for the man of God to be complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). We must preach "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Christ died for all men. Christians appreciate the fact that Christ died for them. The verses used by Calvinists emphasize that point. Unbelievers do not appreciate that fact and therefore do nothing about it.

A True Story Concerning Hebrews 2:9

In 1980, I took second year New Testament Greek through Wheaton College at the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas, Texas. My professor was Dr. John Werner, an outstanding world-recognized Greek scholar. But, he was a Calvinist through and through. One day we were reading the book of Hebrews in class. When it came my time to read, I was to translate Hebrews 2:9. I translated the verse, "But we

behold him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God he should taste of death *only for the elect."*

My professor and the class laughed. After the laughter subsided, I added, "Excuse me – that should be – for *every* man."

Brethren, if the grammar makes sense, anything else is nonsense. To deny that Jesus tasted of death "for every man" is to deny the plain and clear teaching of Scripture! Dr. Werner agreed that the verse should be translated "for every man." But, he denied that is what it meant. He believed that it meant "every redeemed man" even though that is not what the text says!

We should not base biblical doctrine on "feeling" or "thinking." Biblical doctrine is based on God's Word!

If the Holy Spirit wanted to say that Christ died only for the elect, he could have easily done so. But, he did not do so. There is no "specific" passage in the entire Bible that teaches Limited Atonement.

Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, says, "Hebrews 2:9 is best understood to refer to every one of Christ's people, every one who is redeemed."

Grudem is reading the Bible with his rose colored glasses on and sees what he wants to see instead of what is really there! The text does not say that Christ tasted of death for every "redeemed" man. Grudem is reading into the text something that is not there. This is something that God's Word explicitly forbids (Rev. 22:18-19; 1 Cor. 4:6; Gal. 1:8-9; 3:15; 2 John 9-11; Matt. 4:4; Prov. 30:5-6; Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

The words *every man* in Hebrews 2:9 are translated from the Greek word *pantos* (in form it is a genitive masculine or

neuter singular word from the adjective *pas, pasa, pan* meaning "all" or "every").

Bruce says:

> *So far as the form goes, pantos might be masculine ("everyone") or neuter ("everything"); but since our author's concern is with Christ's work for humanity, and not with cosmic implications of His work, it is more probable to be taken as masculine.*

Alford says, "The singular brings out, far more strongly than the plural would, the applicability of Christ's death to each individual man." Jesus died for each individual person (which equals all mankind). The singular *pantos* emphasizes his care and love and concern for every human being!

This fact is a strong factor for each individual person to give his life back to him and live a holy God-fearing life (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

This same Greek word, *pantos,* is found in Matthew 13:19 and is translated "when any one." It is obvious in Matthew 13:19 that the Greek word refers only to lost human beings.

It is interesting that the Greek New Testament uses the word *pantos* at least once specifically to refer "only" to condemned human beings. Calvinists say that the word *pantos* in Hebrews 2:9 refers "only" to saved "redeemed" people. If the word *pantos* in Matthew 13:19 refers only to lost people who will spend eternity in hell, does that mean that in Hebrews 2:9 that the same group is being considered? No!

Can the word *pantos* refer to all mankind including those who appreciate Christ's death for them? Of course! Christ "tasted of death for every man." It is important to understand that the meaning of *pantos* will have to be determined by the context. Therefore, we can conclude that in Hebrews 2:9, the

Greek word *pantos* refers to all humans period – not just the saved, not just God's special people. Jesus died for all humans – those who are lost and those who are going to heaven. Calvinists deny the plain teaching of God's Word and add to it when they say Jesus tasted of death for every "redeemed" man.

An Examination of God's Word and Limited Atonement

The Bible is very clear that Jesus died for the sins of "all men" and not just for "the elect."

Consider these passages as to who Jesus died for:

1. John 1:29: "the one that taketh away the sin of the world" – i.e. all mankind
2. John 3:16: "the world" – i.e. all mankind
3. John 4:42: "This is indeed the Saviour of the world" – i.e. all mankind
4. John 12:47: "I came … to save the world" – i.e. all mankind
5. Romans 5:6: "Christ died for the ungodly"
6. Romans 5:8: "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"
7. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15: "he died for all"
8. 2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" – i.e. all mankind. Those who believe in Limited Atonement say this refers to "the world of the elect." Again, they are adding to the Word of God.
9. 1 Timothy 1:15: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"
10. Timothy 2:6: "Who gave himself a ransom for all"
11. 1 Timothy 4:10: "Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe"
12. Titus 2:11: "bringing salvation to all men"

13. Hebrews 2:9: “He should taste of death for every man.”
14. 2 Peter 2:1: “Denying the Master that bought them” – Christ provided redemption for the false prophets but they refused to accept it.
15. 1 John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.” – i.e. all mankind
16. 1 John 4:14 “The Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” – i.e. all mankind

A Study of 1 John 2:2

One passage that must be the focus of our attention is 1 John 2:2. Here John wrote, “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”

Vine defines “propitiation” as “a means whereby sin is covered and remitted.” The text is very clear that sin covering has been provided “for our sins” – that is, Christians’ and “for the whole world,” or all humanity. If there was ever a verse in the Bible that taught the possibility of unlimited salvation – this is it!

Brown says that the word “world” is the “sphere of human beings and of human experience.” The apostle John uses the word “world” several times to refer to all humanity (John 1:29; 3:16-17; 4:42; 12:46-47; 1 John 4:14).

It is sad that some people “twist” the scriptures from their true meaning (2 Pet. 3:15-17). The same basis for forgiving one man’s sins is also the same basis for forgiving the sins of all men – the death of Christ.

It is not implied or taught that sins are forgiven unconditionally. The Bible does not teach the doctrine of Universalism, i.e. all men will be saved. The Bible does teach that only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their

sins will be saved (Rom. 6:3-4, 17-18; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 2:10; 7:14).

> *Wayne Grudem, a Calvinist, writes, "The preposition 'for' [in 1 John 2:2] is ambiguous with respect to the specific sense in which Christ is the propitiation "for" the sins of the world.*
>
> *The Greek word translated "for" in this verse is peri, and means 'concerning' or 'with respect to." It does not define the way in which Christ is the sacrifice with respect to the sins of the world.*
>
> *It is consistent with the language of the verse to say that John is simply saying that Christ is the sacrifice available to pay for the sins of anyone and everyone in the world."*

There are several problems with Grudem's twisting of Scripture:

(1) Grudem does not deal with the word *world* in his defense of Calvinism. It is obvious that John uses the word "world" in the verse and in the other verses cited to refer to all humanity. Jesus died for all mankind.

(2) It is true that the word *for* in the phrase *for the whole world* is the Greek word *peri*. I agree that it means "concerning" or "with respect to."

Robertson says that *pen* has a sense similar to *hyper* in the verse. The word *hyper* means "in behalf of." It must be pointed out that the word *for* in the phrases *for our sins* and *not for ours only* in 1 John 2:2 is translated from the Greek word *peri*.

The Holy Spirit inspired John to use the Greek word *peri* three times in 1 John 2:2. This word is sufficient to define the way Christ is the sacrifice "for our sins" but not "for the sins of the whole world."

Grudem says that the preposition *peri* "is ambiguous." He is straining the gnat and swallowing the camel in order to avoid accepting the clear truth. Grudem would say that its third use in the verse is ambiguous but not its first and second uses.

The emphasis in the verse is on Christ's "propitiation" – not the preposition "for."

John says Christ's propitiation is "for our sins" and "not for ours only" but also "for the sins of the whole world."

A Study of 1 Timothy 4:10

Paul wrote, "For to this end we labor and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of them that believe."

This verse is important to the discussion. Here the apostle clearly states the salvation of all men. He does not teach Universalism. But, he does teach that salvation has been provided for all men, i.e. all humanity. However, that salvation is appropriated and appreciated by those who believe. All men are potentially saved by Christ's death, but only those who appropriate the blood of Christ over their sins will be saved.

Grudem says:

> *He [Jesus] is referring to God the Father, not to Christ, and probably uses the word 'Savior' in the sense of 'one who preserves people's lives and rescues them from danger' rather then the sense of 'one who forgives their sins,' for surely Paul does not mean that every single person will be saved.*

Grudem misses it again.

(1) No, Paul is not teaching that every single person will be saved. No New Testament writer ever taught that.

(2) There is no problem with taking the word *Savior* as referring to God the Father. He is the Savior of all men in that He sent Jesus to die for all men (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10). The Father and the Son are one in purpose, aim, plan, and design (John 10:30).

(3) For Grudem to say that the word *Savior* does not refer to "sins" shows his theological bias. In Matthew 1:21, the child is to be called Jesus. Why? Because he will save his people from their "sins." The word "Jesus" means "Savior." Grudem does not want 1 Timothy 4:10 to refer to "sins," so he denies it.

(4) God desires "all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6). Salvation for "all men" has been provided (1 Tim. 4:10). However, this salvation is "specially" for those who "believe." This word does not imply that all will be saved. The Greek word *malista* translated "specially" is also translated "particularly" or "especially" in 1 Timothy 5:17 and "above all" or "especially" in 2 Timothy 4:13. Paul is saying that God is potentially the Savior of all men. For the individuals who "will" to come to the Lord, these individuals "will in no wise be cast out" (John 5:40; 6:37).

J.W. Roberts wrote, "He is the savior (potentially) of all men, but especially (or actually) of believers."

Dr. J. C. Davis states, "God is the potential Savior of all men (John 3:16; Rom. 10:13; 2 Pet. 3:9). God is the actual Savior of believers" (Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:8; Rev. 2:10).

J. N. D. Kelly wrote, "Paul is no doubt giving expression to his conviction that the certainty of salvation belongs in an especial degree to those who have accepted Christ." True!

1 Timothy 4:10 is like Galatians 6:10. Christians are to "work that which is good toward all men and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith." We have an obligation

to do “good toward all men” (even the ones who have not named the name of Christ). But, we have a special obligation to help those who are Christians. Christ died for all men but especially for those who believe.

An Invitation Is Given to All Men

In Matthew 11:25, Jesus said, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The church, the bride as it is called, and the Holy Spirit perpetuate that invitation as shown by John in Revelation 22:17:

> *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

The invitation is given to all men. Why offer salvation to all if that is not possible? The text says “whosoever” will.

God Desires All Men to Be Saved

In (2 Peter 3:9) we read:

> *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

God wants “all” to come to repentance! Boettner, a Calvinist, denies that it is God’s plan for all to be saved. Seaton, a Calvinist, asks, “The over-riding question must always be the Divine intention; did God intend to save all men, or did He not?”

The fact that God desires that “all” should come to repentance implies that God has provided provisions for “all.” Christ died for all men. This verse teaches that if a man is lost, it is against God’s will because he wants “all” to come to

repentance and be saved.

In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul wrote, “Who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.” Here again God’s Word is clear. God desires that all men be saved.

In (Ezekiel 33:11) we read:

> *As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

God desires that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live. God does not want or wish that any person be lost.

Paul Enns, a Calvinist, wrote, “If God is sovereign then His plan cannot be frustrated, but if Christ died for all people and all people are not saved, then God’s plan is frustrated.”

God is sovereign, but his plan involves the free will of man. His plan is that those who by their free will elect to believe and become obedient will be saved.

God is “frustrated” or “grieved” when men do not respond to his saving grace (Gen. 6:5-6; Mark 3:5; Luke 19:41; Eph. 4:30).

God’s desire and will is frustrated when men are lost. God wants “all” to come to repentance and “all men” to be saved. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11). “God is not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9).

But, some will perish – not because Jesus did not die for them. He died for each individual person to show his intense love. If an individual is lost, it is because he has rejected God’s intense love. God does not desire it that way. But, he respects the right of a person to make his own decision.

Pardon for Sins Can Be Rejected

It is possible for pardon and salvation to be offered and rejected. In 1829 two men, Wilson and Porter, were apprehended in the state of Pennsylvania for robbing the United States mail. They were indicted, convicted, and sentenced to death by hanging. Three weeks before the scheduled execution, President Andrew Jackson pardoned one of the men, George Wilson. This was followed by a strange decision. George Wilson refused the pardon! He was hung because he rejected the pardon.

Today, God has provided eternal salvation and pardon for all men. He has accomplished this by sending his one-of-a-kind Son to die for the sins of each and every individual person. However, this salvation can be refused.

If one chooses not to appropriate the blood of Christ over his sins initially and continually, he is refusing and rejecting the salvation which has been provided for him by God Almighty. While we can recognize the foolishness of such a decision, we must be aware of the fact that the majority of mankind will refuse their pardon (Matt. 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24). How sad!

Why Did God Create Man?

A lady asked me, “Why did God create man if he knew so many would be lost?”

This is a thought-provoking question. I answer this with two thoughts:

(1) Whatever God does is right and just. We may not understand what he does but that is because we are human and finite while he is divine and infinite (Isa. 55:8-9). Deuteronomy 32:4 states, “For all his ways are justice: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.” God himself asked Job, “Wilt thou even annul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be justified?” Job attacked

and condemned the present righteousness of God. Job sinned by doing this. Job later repented Job 40:35; 42:1-6).

(2) I think the answer to this tough question is that God respects our free moral agency. If a man is lost, it will be his fault – not God's! God has done everything possible for the salvation of each person. God will not overtake one's will and force him to obey. Life is what we make it! We can avail ourselves of God's love or we can spurn it and reject it. The choice is ours (Deut. 30:11-15; Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:37, 40).

Seaton, a Calvinist, said, "If it was God's intention to save the entire world, then the atonement of Christ has been a great failure, for vast numbers of mankind have not been saved."

Seaton misses it. Christ's death was not a failure. The failure is man's free moral will. Man by his own free will chooses not to obey. Christ is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9; cf. John 3:36; Rom. 6:17-18; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17).

On the Day of Judgment if a person is cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity, it will be his own failure – not God's! The failure lies with man not with God.

Calvinists say they focus on God's sovereignty while we focus on man's free will. I say it is not an either/or situation; it is a both/and situation. Both of the these concepts are respected in the scriptures. We must accept both.

Conclusion

To deny the Bible teaching that Christ died for all is to make God a respecter of persons – unjust and unmerciful. The doctrine of limited atonement is false. All men are potentially saved. If a person refuses pardon, death is not the fault of the one who offered mercy, but of the one who

refused to accept it.

> *(Editor's Note: The word atonement means to cover or conceal. It is an Old Testament word and is not found in the New Testament. The sins of people before the cross could be atoned, but after the cross the sins of the obedient believer were forgiven. There is a dramatic difference. Under Moses there was a remembrance made of atoned sins year by year [Heb. 10:3 – the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins]. The blood of animals could cause God to overlook sins while remembering them year by year, but could not remove the sins. This was atonement. The blood of the Lamb of God is able not to merely cover or bypass sins, but to remove every transgression and disobedience. To receive the forgiveness available in the blood of the cross, one must obey [Heb. 5:7-8].)*

On 1 John 1:7 (Forgiveness)

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs
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There is considerable misunderstanding about automatic forgiveness of sin. Some seem to have the mistaken idea that Jehovah God, by the sheer exercise of his unqualified grace, will wipe out "secret sins."

The notion that the Creator ignores innocent-looking wickedness by the operation of his unlimited mercy takes various twists. A few say that all men walk under the protection of boundless grace and therefore no one will be lost—not even Adolph Hitler and Charles Manson.

Others claim that it is impossible for any man to know and do all that God requires of him. Hairsplitting arguments attempt to show that if a person does not fully understand niceties of divine injunctions, his ignorance or transgression or omission will be spontaneously dismissed.

Advocates of the idea of grace dispensing with some law are unwilling or unable to name specific sins that God "winks at" in our age. Still, they cannot bring themselves to believe that God will enforce his laws absolutely. They fear lest some tender soul might be tortured with nameless guilt and beset with nightmares and look for some basis to say to the transgressor that God will impulsively forgive, and grant the sinner peace and rest.

The one verse to which all advocates of automatic forgiveness appeal is this:

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Though we had a lengthy discussion on this around the first of this year, I will again consider the question because a few dear brothers are still having trouble grasping John's teaching—they don't seem to catch his drift, as the dudes say. Certain nervous-nelly types wring their hands and clutch their chests and bemoan the poor soul that violates some obscure and petty rule in the divine lawbook.

Shall such a one go down to eternal perdition simply because he/she was caught on some technicality? Thinking about someone floundering forever in flames of fire because of being entrapped on the hook of some minor point of doctrine is more than they can bear. Surely, they think, we can stretch the strait gate just a little—just enough to take care of insignificant violations.

There are several things amiss in this wrong-headed thinking.

In the first place, it casts doubt on God's love and goodness and suggests that the Lord makes loopholes in his law and plays games with us (it does seem God is wise enough to speak to us in our language so we can understand him). The laws of God are not all that complicated. Any person who wants to do the will of God can understand his will (John 7:17).

In the second place, it denies God's holiness and purity and suggests that, after all, God ought to tolerate some sins – *teeny-weeny ones* –(mortal sins deserve hell, but venial sins should be purged in some temporary confinement, or entirely overlooked, according to this view).

In the third place, it does not take into account the justice of God. God is love, but he is also just. His mercy tempers judgment, but according to rule and not by whim. "Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off' (Rom. 11:22).

In the fourth place, it assumes superior knowledge about what is minor and unimportant and about what is major and necessary. If you keep the whole law but offend in one point—even if you think it is a tacky point—you have violated the whole law (James 2:10). The essence of sin—even so-called small sins—is rebellion. If we rebel in one point, we will rebel in another because we have an indisposition to respect the law. There may be large and small consequences of law-breaking, but all infractions are equally serious. Otherwise God is a respecter of persons. We must understand what it means to walk in the light. The condition upon which the blood of the lamb is cleansing us from all sin is walking in the light, according to 1 John 1:7. Please don't forget the condition—the passage begins with an "if'—"if' we walk in the light, then—and only then—does the blood of Jesus keep us clean from all sin. If we do not walk in the light, then the cleansing does not follow.

Walking in darkness is the opposite of walking in light. Either we walk in darkness or we walk in light, and we cannot do both simultaneously.

Note: "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6).

Note: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:3).

He who walks in darkness and says he knows God lies (1 John 1:6).

He who keeps not God's commandments and says he knows God lies (1 John 2:4).

Therefore walking in darkness is the same as not keeping God's commandments.

If the negative is true, the positive is also true. Walking in darkness is not to keep his commandments. Walking in light is keeping his commandments. Therefore, John is saying if we keep the commandments of God the blood of Jesus keeps us clean from all sin.

Question: How can a person sin who is walking in the light—keeping God's commandments? *Answer:* One who attempts to hear and do the words of Jesus can fail—he may omit to do something the Lord requires of him or do something the Lord forbids. If he should sin, he repents and confesses; that constitutes walking in the light—keeping God's commands—and the blood of the lamb is cleansing him from all sin. If a blood-bought child of God sins but excuses his wrong and will not confess and repent, he is not walking in the light and the blood will not cleanse his transgressions. The key is walking in the light. Walking in the light is a continuous action. Cleansing therefore is a continuous action because walking in the light involves keeping the commands of God, which involves

confessing sin and repenting of sin. All of this—walking in the light, confessing, repenting, and cleansing—is continuous action.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This passage, by the way, is in the immediate context of 1 John 1:7.

Yet some would have us believe in spite of this that somehow, someway, sometime, God will forgive his child of a slight infraction of sacred precepts, that walking in the light magically forgives casual sins—whatever that is!

That won't wash! The verse under study says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." We are continuously cleansed not from some sin, nor from haphazard sin, nor from unknown sin, but from all sin—all sin!

If walking in the light is something other than keeping all the commands of God, if it is approximate obedience and just getting close, then all sin—all sin!—adultery, murder, stealing, lying, idolatry—all sin—is automatically forgiven. The verse says "all sin," just as verse 9 says "all unrighteousness."

If the liberalizing view that grace dispenses with complete obedience to every requirement of heaven is true, then "all sin" is washed away in the blood of the cross unconditionally and all will be saved—Adolph Hitler and Charles Manson included. Simply put— Calvary was a mistake.

Some say "the light" is God, because verse *5* says, "God is light." So, the passage would read, under this understanding, "if we walk in God, as Jesus walked in God. . .." The question comes: How did Jesus walk in God—in the light?

Question: Did Jesus obey his heavenly Father incompletely and

only when it was handy, or did he obey Jehovah always and in all things? The passage requires us to walk in the light as Jesus is in the light, if his blood is to keep on cleansing us from all sin. Jesus claimed sinless perfection and challenged his contemporaries to convict him of wrong (John 8:46-47). None did! He always pleased Jehovah (John 8:29). Keeping divine law gladdens the heart of God (1 John 3:22). Therefore Jesus always kept the commands of Jehovah, and that pleased his holy, heavenly Father. “Then said I, Lo, I am come (In the roll of the book it is written of me) To do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:7). The unbending rule of the life of Jesus is “not my will, but thine be done.”

Jesus walked in the light, and so must we if his precious blood is to keep us clean from all sin. He never failed. We may fail, but provision is made for forgiveness, if we walk in the light as he is in the light.

It is tragic for a professing teacher of righteousness to encourage people to think that any rule of God can be disregarded with impunity. Instead of trying to comfort the guilty by offering false hope, let us console them by rebuking sin and calling for repentance. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need” (Heb. 4:15-16).

Now, that gives some real help and lasting relief! “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

If Any Man Speak

By J. Shannon (Shan) Jackson
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One of life's grandest blessings is our ability to discuss with others. Speech, when correctly used, is of essential benefit. Used incorrectly, talk can do much harm. The difference between the two is often in the speaker's attitude and motive. The tongue is a "little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!" (James 3:5). Jesus asked the Pharisees, "How can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (Matt. 12:34). Christians must consider attitude in their speech and guard their words.

We all should be impressed with the awesome power of the tongue. Improperly used, James says, the tongue can defile the whole body (James 3:6). Properly used speech can do much good. "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6). Consider the proper use of language.

In teaching truth, we must "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

Here is the caveat. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). Jesus tells his disciples to "go and teach all nations" but their teaching is to be the things he "commanded them" (Matthew 28:19).

In 2 Timothy 4:2 Paul tells Timothy to "preach the word." He warns, "for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

A proper use for human speech is "speaking the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15). There is also occasion for sealed lips and answering not a word (See John 19:9). In worship of God, acceptable worship must be "in spirit and in truth" – correct in attitude and correct in action. The Bible names five acts of worship – singing, praying, teaching, communion, and giving. Singing, praying, and teaching require speech. "Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). Bringing our feelings into sweet harmony with the words of a song, a public prayer, or the presentation of God's word shows our love for a loving God.

In confession of Jesus, there are also five steps that bring salvation. The New Testament tells us to hear God's truth, believe it, repent of our unholy life, confess Jesus as Lord, and submit to water baptism. It is the acceptance and obedience of these steps that puts us "in Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).

Confession of Jesus as the resurrected son of God is to be verbal. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).

In defense of truth: Many problems facing the church today stem from our unwillingness to defend God's truth. A Christian is to be ready always to teach the truth and protect it. We fear and studiously avoid controversy to the disgrace of the gospel and our own shame. Argument for the sake of argument is infamy, but argument in defense of truth is honorable and necessary. We forget Jesus was a brilliant debater.

Paul said that “in the defense and confirmation of the gospel” we are “partakers of grace” (Phil. 1:7). Our knowledge enables us to approve the things that are excellent (and therefore disapprove things that are contrary to truth) that we may be “void of offence unto the day of Christ” (Phil. 1:10). We must be “bold to speak the word of God without fear… set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:14, 16).

“Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand unto this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4). Yes, our speech is very serious business. Jesus said, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:37). Watch your mouth and pay attention to your words. “For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven…a time to keep silence, and a time to speak” (Eccl. 3:1, 7). What you say can condemn you! What you ought to say, but fail to speak, also can condemn you! Happy is silence in the face of slander and injustice.

BABIES ARE NOT BORN IN SIN!

By Lynn Blair
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The idea of babies being born in sin is foreign to the Bible. Babies do not inherit sin from their parents.

“The soul that sinneth, It shall die. The son shall not bear

the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).

Children are born in a perfect state. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15). Jesus said that unless we humble ourselves and become as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:1-4).

Among the denominations that teach this false doctrine the misuse of Psalm 51:5 is predominant. That verse says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me." Some modern versions mistranslate the phrase "I was born a sinner."

There is a vast difference in the meaning of the translations. In the King James and American Standard the mother did the sinning, but, in the New International for instance, it was the baby that was the sinner! The older versions are correct.

We know this in two ways. First, the original language states it emphatically, as do the King James and American Standard. Second, since the Bible does not contradict itself, and verses such as Ezekiel 18:20; 28:15; and Matthew 18:1-4 teach that babies are not born sinners, the statement that a baby was born in sin cannot be true.

One might ask, if that is not the meaning of Psalm 51:5, then what can it mean? First, it is a Repentance Psalm. David committed adultery and murder (2 Sam. 11:1-27). He said, "my sin is ever before me" (Ps. 51:3). Because of his terrible guilt, he felt he had been sinning so long he couldn't remember when he started.

There is another scriptural explanation for this. Deuteronomy 23:3 says, "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to his tenth generation shall

he not enter into the congregation of the Lord." In Ruth 1:4 we find two Israelite men marrying Moabite women, one of which was Ruth. Ruth was the great-grandmother of the author of Psalm 51—David!. He was within "ten generations" of a Moabite! That may be why he said, "in sin did my mother conceive me."

There has never been a baby that believed (Mark 16:16). There has never been a baby that repented (Acts 2:38). There has never been a baby who had his sins washed away (Acts 22:16), because there has never been a baby that sinned!