

Title: **THE MOST HIDEOUS
DOCTRINE IN THE WORLD**

Text: Hebrews 10:29

Subject: *The Evils of the Theory of Universal Redemption*

Introduction:

Turn with me to Hebrews 10:29. I do not intend to expound this verse of Scripture today. I simply take it as a starting point for my message. — *“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?”*

That man who treads under his feet the Son of God, counts the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and despises the Spirit of grace, commits the greatest evil in the world and deserves the terrible vengeance of God’s unmitigated wrath. Does he not? In this message I want to expose what I believe to be **THE MOST HIDEOUS DOCTRINE IN THE WORLD.**

Sometime ago, I received a call from a young man who heard me on the radio. He politely asked me to send him a copy of the message he had heard and asked if I would answer four questions for him. The he asked me...

1. “What is the doctrine of universal redemption?”
2. “Why do you so strongly oppose that doctrine?”
3. “What do you believe about the redemption work of Christ?”
4. “Why do you believe it?”

¹ Lealman Church 3\18\95 - Orlando, FL 3\18\97 - Rescue, CA 6\23\89 - Darlington, ENG 5\26\87 - Spring Lake, NC 2\17\87 - Alexandria, LA 9\20\86 - Lexington, KY 3\26\86 - Oak Ridge, TN 10\7\86 - Carbondale, MO 3\5\87 - Albany, GA 7\1\88 - Danville, KY 3\9\86 (PM) – 3\30\97 – Madisonville, KY 6\7\00 — Buck Mountain Baptist (11/23/02) — Fairmont Grace Church, Sylacauga, AL (SAT 02/16/08)

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Reading: *Psalms 80:1-19*

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I spent a good bit of time writing that young man a letter, carefully answering his questions as briefly and clearly as I could. I trust that God was pleased to use the letter to give him a clear knowledge of the gospel of his grace and glory in Christ.

After I wrote to him, I thought, that will preach and needs to be preached. So, in this message, I am going to simply take those four questions and answer them for you. May God the Holy Spirit give me your attention and be our Teacher.

I am going to speak plainly, distinctly, and clearly. I mean to be understood, and will be. I have absolutely no doubt that if you listen to me, you will understand exactly what I have said when I am done.

(1 Corinthians 14:8) “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

For my part, I am convinced that ambiguous speech on the part of preachers is both intentional and treasonous to the glory of God.

“The servants of God must not only be *for* the truth; they must also be *against* error and evil and that manifestly and always...Vacillation and weakness of statement are to be deplored...Definiteness of speech is needful. In Nehemiah 13:23-24 we read of the degenerate Jews that ‘*their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod and could not speak the Jews’ language, but according to the speech of each people.*’ So it is today...The clear, bold, distinct phraseology of Scripture is not heard as it should be. [We are commanded to] ‘*Preach the Word,*’ but not in ambiguous language which may be explained to suit both sides, but which satisfies neither.”

John Hazelton

Illustration: *Peter and John in Acts 4*

(Acts 4:10-12) “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this

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man stand here before you whole. (11) This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. (12) Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Now, let me answer these four questions for you, as I did for that young man.

1. **“WHAT IS THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION?”**

I know there is a danger of building up a straw man just to knock it down. I do not want to do that. It would be of no profit to anyone. I want to state the doctrine of universal redemption as fairly and honestly as I possibly can, as it was taught to me in college and as I hear men state it both from the pulpit and in private conversation.

Illustration: *My conversation Doug Sharon*

Briefly stated, the doctrine of universal redemption may be summarized by three statements. **Those who teach it would have us believe that...**

“The Lord Jesus Christ died for all men, without exception.” — They tell us, “Christ shed his blood for everyone in the world equally. He made redemption, salvation, and eternal life equally available to all people. He died for all men without exception, as much for those who perish as for those who are saved. He did no more for those who are in heaven than he did for those who are in hell. All are equally the objects of his love and grace, and equally the objects of his atoning sacrifice.”

The Lord Jesus Christ did not (according to these heretics) actually secure and guarantee the salvation of anyone by his death on the cross, but only made it possible for all men to be saved. They tell us, **“Christ made salvation possible for all men.”**

Those who preach universal redemption say that Christ did not actually redeem anyone, justify anyone, or put away anyone’s sins when he died, but

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that he made it possible for all men to be redeemed and justified and have their sins put away.

“Man, by his act of faith, gives merit to the blood of Christ, making it effectual for himself.” — Several years ago, I heard **Al Geisler**, who was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Danville, make this statement in a sermon — “Jesus loved you, died for you, and has done everything he can to save you; but it will all be in vain unless you believe. What a shame it will be that Jesus’ death will be in vain for so many.” — I agree. It would be a terrible shame and embarrassment, not for you, but for him! It would not be a failure on your part, but a failure on his part, if he died to save you and failed! — I once heard **Jerry Falwell** say, “If you go to hell, you will go to that awful place, in spite of the fact that God himself has done everything he possibly could to save you.”

That is a fair, honest statement of the doctrine of universal redemption. I have shown God’s enemies the kindness of honestly presenting their doctrine, heretical as it is; but that is all the kindness I intend to show.

THREE QUESTIONS

I ask you to consider three questions.

1. Would the Son of God lay down his life for people for whom he refused to pray? (John 17:9, 20).
2. Would the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely wise, shed his blood to redeem the multitudes who were already eternally damned when he died? (Judas, The sons of Korah, The inhabitants of Sodom, etc.)
3. Would the God of Glory sacrifice the Son of his love to die in the place of one who was positively the object of his hatred? (Romans 9:13 — Pharaoh).

It seems to me that any reasonable man who considers these three questions, must conclude that there certainly are some for whom Christ did not die.

2. **“WHY DO YOU SO STRONGLY OPPOSE THAT DOCTRINE?”**

The doctrine of universal redemption, the teaching that Christ died for all men, for those who perish under his wrath in hell as well as for those who

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are saved by his grace, is more harmful to the souls of men than any doctrine in the world. I speak strongly, but deliberately. I reject the doctrine of universal redemption as outright heresy, and I denounce it as the most hideous doctrine that has ever been perpetrated in the world. The doctrine that Christ died to save all men, both those who are saved and those who are lost, treads under foot the Son of God, counts the blood of the covenant an unholy (common) thing, and does despite unto the Spirit of grace. — Let me show you **five reasons** why it must be exposed and denounced as the heresy it is.

The doctrine of universal redemption says that there is no power, merit, or efficacy in the blood of Christ, without man's faith to ignite that power.

- Essentially, it makes man his own Savior.
- The Word of God limit the design, extent and purpose of the atonement. — The Arminian, the will-worshiper limits the merit, value, and power of Christ's blood.

The doctrine of universal redemption makes the grace of God nothing but a frustrated desire in God's heart to save. — Grace is not a tool God puts in man's hand.

Illustration: *"If there is anything I can do..."*

The theory of universal redemption perverts the character of God, and reduces his glorious attributes to nothing but meaningless words. It is a denial of God's distinct character as God.

- It reduces the **love** of God to nothing. What kind of love would that be which has the power to save, but does not save?
- It perverts the **wisdom** of God into ignorance and foolishness. Who makes plans he knows can never be carried out? Who pays for what he knows he shall never obtain?
- It makes mockery of the **justice** of God. To punish a man twice for the same offense is injustice. It is barbaric cruelty.
- It reduces the **power** of God to a helpless, withered arm, waiting for "man's omnipotence" to revive it by an act of his "almighty will."
- It completely denies the **immutability** of God's love, mercy, and grace.

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- It robs God of his **glory** (Eph. 1:3-14).

Universal redemption makes the work of Christ a futile exercise and a waste. It makes the precious blood of Christ nothing but a wager, a bet, a gamble, which God bet on man!

- If Christ died for all, and all are not saved, then he died in vain for some.
- If Christ died to save all men, and all are not saved, then he failed in his work.

Let me give you a direct quote from **Noel Smith**. Mr. Smith was my first theology professor. He taught biblical interpretation and theology at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO. He was my professor there when I was eighteen years old. *As he endeavored to describe hell, this is what he wrote...*

“What is hell? It is an infinite negation. And it is more than that. I tell you, and I say it with profound reverence, hell is a ghastly monument to the failure of the triune God to save the multitudes who are there. I say it reverently. I say it with every nerve of my body tense. Sinners go to hell because God almighty himself couldn’t save them! He did everything he could. He failed!”

If Christ suffered the agony of the cross for all, and all are not saved, he shall never see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. What is this, but a denial of Christ’s deity? A subtle, but absolute, denial of Christ’s deity.

The doctrine of universal redemption is as useless as it is hideous.

- It offers **no real grounds of hope** to any sinner. It declares that sin is not pardoned and redemption is not yet finished.
- It offers **no basis of assurance** to any believer. If salvation is ultimately determined by my repentance and faith, I must be constantly harassed by nagging questions: — Have I believed enough? — Have I repented enough? — What if I should lose my mind and no longer be able to believe?
- It gives the believer **no reason to love, praise, magnify, and honor Christ** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

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(1 Corinthians 6:19-20) “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

Indeed, this obnoxious doctrine gives men a reason to stick out their chest and strut before God. “*Who maketh thee to differ?*” we are asked. They reply, “I make myself to differ!”

3. “WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT THE REDEMPTION WORK OF CHRIST?”

Hear me well. **Our redemption was effectually accomplished by Christ on the cross** (John 19:30; Hebrews 9:12 Galatians 3:13).

(John 19:30) “When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

(Galatians 3:13) “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:”

(Hebrews 9:12) “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. ”

And the redemption which Christ accomplished at Calvary has been effectually applied to our hearts by the power of his grace.

THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

The doctrine of Holy Scripture is this: **The Lord Jesus Christ died as a Substitute in the place of his elect** (Isaiah 53:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

(Isaiah 53:8) “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

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(2 Corinthians 5:21) “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

- His sheep (John 10:11-16).
- His church (Ephesians 5:25).
- His seed (Isaiah 53:10).
- Every sinner who believes (John 3:14-16).

Illustration: *My Conversation with John Cofield*

NOTE: No text of Scripture in all the Word of God, in which the doctrine of the atonement is typified, illustrated, or explained, teaches or evens hints at the possibility of universal atonement. It is a doctrine totally of human fabrication.

By pouring out his life’s blood unto death, our Savior satisfied divine justice for us, making an effectual atonement for his people’s sins (Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:12; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2).

(Galatians 3:13) “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:”

(Hebrews 9:12) “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.”

(1 John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

(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.”

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The sure result of Christ's redeeming work at Calvary is eternal salvation of all those for whom he died (John 6:37-40; Isaiah 53:11).

(Isaiah 53:10-11) “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

(John 6:37-40) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Illustration: “*Let these go!*” (Barabbas).

HOW CHRIST DIED

This is the gospel. Everything contrary to it is a false gospel.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-3) “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; (2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”

How did Christ die for our sins according to the Scripture? He died...

- As a Voluntary Surety.
- As a Vicarious Sacrifice.
- As a Victorious Savior.

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4. “WHY DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO ABOUT THE DEATH OF CHRIST?”

The Word of God plainly states the doctrine of limited atonement, particular, effectual redemption (John 10:11, 26).

(John 10:11) “am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”

(John 10:26) “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

This doctrine alone ascribes the whole work of redemption and grace to Christ alone, and gives him all the praise of it (Revelation 5:9-10; Psalm 115:1).

(Revelation 5:9-10) “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; (10) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

(Psalms 115:1) “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake.”

This doctrine alone gives hope to perishing, helpless men (Isa. 40:1-2).

(Isaiah 40:1-2) “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

This doctrine alone gives believers a real basis for assurance (Romans 8:33-34; 2 Timothy 1:12).

(Romans 8:33-34) “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is*

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Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

(2 Timothy 1:12) “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

5. Let me add one question of my own, a question I am frequently asked. – **WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE SCRIPTURES WHICH MEN USE TO DENY THE GOSPEL DOCTRINE OF PARTICULAR AND EFFECTUAL REDEMPTION?**

As I said before, No text of Scripture in all the Word of God, in which the doctrine of the atonement is explained, teaches or evens hints at the possibility of universal atonement. It is a doctrine totally of human fabrication. Yet, men frequently rend the Scriptures from their context, and try to turn us from gospel truth by spitting texts and parts of texts at us. Let’s look at a few of them. Before we do, I want to show you two facts from the Scriptures.

Every passage of Holy Scripture where the subject of Christ’s redemption, the atonement for sin made by his blood, and the results of it are dealt with, show that the Lord Jesus Christ died for a particular people and effectually accomplished their eternal redemption. — There is not a single exception to that in all the Bible. Obviously, I cannot deal with all of them. My object is not to answer the objections of others but to clarify things in your minds. So let’s look at some of those texts where redemption is taught.

I want you to look for two things. If you see them, I want you to let me know. In these verses, **is there anything to indicate that Christ made atonement for the sins of those who suffer the wrath of God in hell? And is there even a hint that he may have failed to redeem some of those for whom he died?**

(Isaiah 53:8-11) “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land

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of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. (9) And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. (10) Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

(Matthew 1:21) “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

(Romans 5:8-11) “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

(Romans 8:33-34) “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

(2 Corinthians 5:21) “For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(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.”

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(Hebrews 1:1-3) “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, (2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (3) Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;”

(Hebrews 9:11-12) “But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; (12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.”

(Hebrews 10:7-10) “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. (8) Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and *offering* for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure *therein*; which are offered by the law; (9) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. (10) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.”

(1 Peter 2:24-25) “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (25) For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

(1 Peter 3:18) “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

It must not be overlooked that every type and picture of redemption in the Old Testament, which foreshadowed the work of Christ as our Substitute, also portrayed it as a work done for God’s elect alone. — Again, there is not a single exception. All the Old Testament types of

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redemption were types of limited atonement, particular and effectual redemption.

- The Sacrifice and Skins for Adam and Eve
- Noah's Ark
- The Ram Caught in the Thicket for Isaac
- The Passover
- The Priesthood
- The Scapegoat
- The Lord's Lamb
- The Mercy-Seat
- The Brazen Serpent

Now I want us to look at a few of THOSE SCRIPTURES WHICH MEN AND WOMEN USE TO DENY THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL DOCTRINE OF PARTICULAR AND EFFECTUAL REDEMPTION BY CHRIST.

(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." (See **Luke 2:1.**)

(Romans 5:19) "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

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

(1 Timothy 2:1-4) "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

(Hebrews 2:9-18) "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**

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man. (10) For it became him, for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things, in bringing **many sons** unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. (11) For both he that sanctifieth and **they who are sanctified** *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren**, (12) Saying, I will declare thy name **unto my brethren, in the midst of the church** will I sing praise unto thee. (13) And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the **children** which God hath given me. (14) Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (16) For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* **the seed of Abraham**. (17) Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of **the people**. (18) For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

(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 [Despot] that bought [agaradzo not ekagaradzo] them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

(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.” “The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation” (v. 15).

(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.”

Application: Whenever you think about the redemption work of Christ, remember these four words:

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1. Sovereignty
2. Substitution
3. Success
4. Satisfaction

I trust this glorious, sin-atoning, justice satisfying Substitute. I hang all the hopes of my immortal soul upon him, who he is and what he did at Calvary two thousand years ago. I pray that God will give you the grace to do the same.

Illustration: *Dr. A.J. Gordon — The Two Black Birds*

Amen.