

in fact, the church is a glorious temple in which each elect saint has his own eternally prepared place (Eph. 2:20-22; I Pet. 2:4-8).

Consider: When all the nations of the earth are as grasshoppers in God's sight (Isa. 40:22), less than a speck of dust in the balance or a drop hanging on the outside rim of a bucket (15)—and totally depraved as well—that the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth (28), the Wholly Other, the God of infinite perfection, the God of glory greater than all the universe, is dependent on me. It makes me shiver in horror to write it.

Let every Arminian remember that he must stand before the judgment seat of Christ and answer especially this one question: What did you do with Christ? Do you want to be among those who say, "I made Christ an ineffectual Saviour who depended on human help?" I for one have no need of such a Saviour. I need one who can save by power that is divine.

Prof. Hanko

Canons of Dordt II, Of the Death of Christ and the Redemption of Men Thereby

Article 8. For this was the sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation; that is, 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 those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given to Him by the Father; that He should confer upon them faith, which, together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and, having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever.

Article 9. This purpose, proceeding from everlasting love towards the elect, has from the beginning of the world to this day been powerfully accomplished, and will henceforward still continue to be accomplished, notwithstanding all the ineffectual opposition of the gates of hell, so that the elect in due time may be gathered together into one, and that there never may be wanting a church composed of believers, the foundation of which is laid in the blood of Christ, which may steadfastly love and faithfully serve Him as their Saviour, who as a bridegroom for His bride, laid down His life for them upon the cross, and which may celebrate His praises here and through all eternity.

Covenant Protestant Reformed Church

83 Clarence Street, Ballymena, BT43 5DR • Lord's Day services at 11 am & 6 pm

Website: www.cprc.co.uk • Live broadcast: www.cprf.co.uk/live

Pastor: Angus Stewart, 7 Lislunna Road, Kells, N. Ireland, BT42 3NR • (028) 25 891851

pastor@cprc.co.uk • www.youtube.com/cprcni • www.facebook.com/CovenantPRC

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The Voice Crying in the Wilderness (1)

Notice what the Bible highlights regarding John the Baptist. It is not his face or body for he is not a model. It is not his personality for he is not a celebrity. It is not his hands as if he were a craftsman. It is not his feet as though he were a runner or an athlete. Scripture highlights John's "voice."

This is not because it had a beautiful or melodious pitch or tone. John's voice is emphasized because of what it proclaimed: God's Word! John is called a "voice" because he was a preacher sent by the Lord. John's was a voice "crying" with power and urgency because of the greatness and burden of its message.

John's voice cried in the wilderness, where all was still and silent until his proclamation split the air. This is Isaiah 40:3, quoted by all four of the evangelists: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23).

And what is the proper response to a voice, especially a voice declaring God's Word and crying with force and vigour? One must *listen* to such a voice!

The time when the voice cried is carefully delineated in Luke 3:1-2. Seven men are mentioned: Tiberius Caesar (the Roman emperor), four regional rulers of greater Palestine (Pontius Pilate, Herod Antipas, Philip and Lysanias) and two Jewish High Priests (Annas and Caiaphas). Luke even states precisely when the voice began to cry: "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3:1). Scholars say this was AD 26. This remarkable temporal identification would be like someone in a UK context speaking of the nth year of A, the British monarch, when B was the Prime Minister of the UK and C, D and E were the First Ministers of Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland, and F was the Archbishop of Canterbury with G his designated successor.

The birth of Jesus Christ is dated according to the reigns of only two people (Luke 2:1-2), whereas the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry is dated according to the reigns of seven people with even the year of the emperor's reign being given (Luke 3:1-2). The beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry was a few months later and His crucifixion and resurrection occurred a few years later.

Luke is often called "the historian" in part because of the dates he gives (2:1-2; 3:1-2) and the effort and care he took in his inspired gospel account (1:1-4; cf. Acts 1:1f.). Luke the historian fixes the beginning of John's ministry so carefully because his voice in the wilderness ended the 400 silent years and heralded the coming of the promised Messiah and the kingdom of heaven!

Rev. Stewart

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Did Christ Die for Everybody?

Recently in the *News*, I have been explaining the truth of God's irresistible grace (vol. XV, issues 3-4) in response to a brother who wanted assistance in his discussions with an Arminian. The Arminian claimed that grace can be resisted. This error leads to another error: all men receive grace to accept Christ. This, in turn, leads to another error: Christ died for everybody, head for head.

The brother wrote, "The argument of the Arminian in connection with John 12:47 is 'Grace is not irresistible, because otherwise the whole world would be saved ... This text is good [i.e., proves the point] because it gives no chance to the Calvinist to say that the word "world" means "world of the elect ..." The text cannot be talking about the internal or external call. *The text says that Jesus came to save the world.*'"

The question we face, therefore, is whether or not the Scriptures teach that Christ died for every person, head for head, so that by His death Christ made salvation available to every person who ever lives. This, according to those who claim that Christ did die for every human being, is taught by Scripture's use of the words "world" and "all" when they are used in connection with His cross. The main texts to which appeal is made are John 3:16, I Timothy 2:4, I John 2:2 and such like verses.

It is interesting that these passages have all been quoted by those who make salvation dependent upon the will of man. This has been the case since the early history of the church. The Semi-Pelagians were guilty of this. Roman Catholicism taught and teaches this doctrine. Although none of the Reformers taught any such thing, the Arminians and Amyraldians taught it. As Arminianism swept Europe and America, the same doctrine became the common view of a church that was falling away from the truth.

But the historical fact is that the Reformers, the great synods of Dordt (1618-1619) and Westminster in the 1640s, and the best theologians in the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions rejected such perversions of the truth. With one accord, they explained the texts in question in a way agreeable to the whole of Scripture and in keeping with the truth of God's sovereignty. The interpretations of the words "world" and "all" have always been the interpretations of heretics and Roman Catholics with their perverted religion of salvation by the will and works of man.

The word "all" that is found in such passages as I Timothy 2:4 has consistently been understood as referring to all classes and all kinds of people, and not everyone head for head. This interpretation is in keeping with the whole of Scripture and makes most sense in the immediate context. It defines the church as truly catholic, that is, gathered from the entire world. We use the word "all" in the same sense. I read an article in a local newspaper which described a bad fire and remarked, "All of the city were at the fire." People from hospitals? New-born babies? Aged folk who are bed-ridden? Obviously not. The statement meant: "People from all parts of the city."

In many places, the word "world" has been interpreted correctly as referring to believers: the world of believers. This is the context of the verses themselves, as anyone

who reads John 3:16 can learn by himself. The text needs no interpretation if one explains God's Word by the well-known rule: Scripture interprets Scripture. Spurgeon has well said, "There is nowhere in the Bible where the word 'world' means all men head for head."

You can find quotations from a long list of theologians who held firmly to the Scriptures and did not try to twist it to suit their own fancies on the website of the Covenant Protestant Reformed Church (www.cprf.co.uk/calvinismresources.htm). That web page also contains a link to a manuscript that I wrote (*The History of the Free Offer*) that will, in revised form, soon be published, DV. It provides quotations, beginning with Augustine (354-430) and throughout the whole history of the church, that reject the interpretation that Christ died for all men absolutely.

The true meaning of the word "world," when used positively of mankind, is, as Scripture teaches, the world of eternal election and sovereign salvation: the universal church of all believers. God chose us individually so that our names are written in the book of life. God gave us to Christ who died for us (read the whole of John 17 for it is powerful). We are brought into the church by the work of the ascended Christ, through His Spirit, who gathers, defends, preserves and saves to the uttermost those given Him of His Father. We are the true world. We are called that because we are redeemed and saved from every nation, tribe, country, race and people in the world. We are destined to live with Christ forever.

Furthermore, the word "world" reminds us that God saves the entire cosmos, the universe, the whole creation. He created it; He loves it as His own work; He will not let Satan and the wicked world take it from Him; He will glorify it along with His people. That is the "cosmos," the cosmos of God's eternal purpose (Rom. 8:19-23; Gen. 9:8-17; Col. 1:13-20).

But there is more. Those who claim that Christ died for all men destroy the cross. That is a terrible sin.

Consider: If the Arminian is right, Christ shed His precious blood for people who are never saved. If Christ's blood, shed on Calvary, cannot save those for whom He died, it can save no one. It has been well said, "A Christ for everyone is a Christ for no one." Those who teach this must be careful that they do not crucify the Son of God afresh, because for them there is no repentance (Heb. 6:4-6).

Consider: If only those are saved who by their own free will agree to be saved by believing in Christ, then salvation is dependent on us and God cannot do anything without our consent and help. Such subtracts from the infinitely powerful One who does all His good pleasure (Ps. 115:3; 135:6). It is not the true God revealed in the Scriptures, but a god of man's imagination, an idol.

Consider that the one and only God of all glory now shares His glory with puny, sinful, wicked man because God can do nothing without man's help (Eph. 2:8-10)!

Consider: Such terrible views of God make the church a motley throng, a mob, a mass of people, a crowd of those who happen to decide to believe in Christ; when,