

THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT

Thampi Mattackal

“God presented him (Jesus) as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus” (Rom.3:25,26).

The Psalmist says, “No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him-the ransom for his life is costly, no payment is ever enough-that he should live on forever and not see decay” (Ps.49:7-9).God cannot relinquish His holiness, nor recede from His justice. The righteous requirement of God for redemption is very high and man is incapable to satisfy that requirement. There is no atonement of sin without satisfying the requirement of God. So the redemption in all its aspects, including its origin, design and execution should come from God. Apostle Paul, in his doxological statement, after explaining the doctrine of salvation in the first eleven chapters of Romans says, “ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Rom.11:36).That is the right assessment of salvation.

God’s way of redemption is through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and it is the center of divine truth. The various aspects of it were revealed through the ceremonial rites of the Day of Atonement. It was a special and solemn day of the year that the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies with the blood, and to sprinkle before and on the mercy-seat to cover the sin. The whole of the ritual in the tabernacle was performed by Aaron, the high priest. We read this in detail in Lev.16.

God is a loving God, who wants to redeem and to commune with man. The tabernacle, priest, offerings and the Day of Atonement were temporary provisions that God made for sinner to approach God with a repented heart until the coming of Jesus Christ. “When we read in Leviticus about the Day of Atonement, it was a God-given way of managing the problem of sin. The sacrifice and the scape goat were God-given treatments controlling the damage caused by sin. But to some extent they were interim measures, temporary measures; and their temporary nature is revealed in the way that these rites and ceremonies had to be repeated year after year. These sacrifices were not the full and complete solution to the complex problem of human sinfulness. But they pointed forward to the day when God would provide the ultimate, perfect sacrifice which would deal with the root cause of sinfulness” (Preaching the Atonement, P.K.Stevenson and S.I.Wright, P.30).

MEANING

The Hebrew word for atonement in the Old Testament is ‘kaphar’ means ‘to cover’. It implies the idea ‘to cover by making expiation.’ It is to cover an offence from the eye of offended justice by means of paying appropriate compensation. This word also applied to the mercy seat, which is the covering of the Ark of the Covenant, closely connected with the sacrificial system. In the New Testament this word is

translated as 'propitiation' or 'reconciliation', depend upon the version of the Bible. Biblical scholars like J.N.Darby, F.W.Grant and William Kelly, note there are mistranslations in portions like Rom.5:11; Heb.2:17. According to them Rom.5:11 should be 'reconciliation', where as in Heb.2:17 should be 'atonement' or 'propitiation'. We can avoid confusion by knowing that reconciliation is not atonement, but the result of atonement. In the New Testament propitiation applied to God and reconciliation applied to believers. It was man who committed sin and man needed to be reconciliation to God. Believers are reconciled to God because of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. According to W.E. Vine, the corresponding N.T. words are propitiation, 1 Jn.2:2; 4:10, and mercy-seat, the covering of the Ark of the Covenant, Rom.3:25; Heb.9:5. These describe the means by which God shows mercy to sinners (Expository Dictionary, P.85, 86). "Atonement is God's intervention in His grace by Christ's death to expiate the sins and pardon the guilt who believe; and therefore is it the sole way in which He can righteously bring the sinner into reconciliation with Himself" (William Kelly, Day of Atonement,P.31).

THE CEREMONY OF THE DAY OF ATONMENT

The Old Testament in general is the shadow of good things to come. God in His divine wisdom used a series of types and ceremonies in the Old Testament to prepare the hearts and minds of people and to introduce a language and terms as a fitting medium to reveal Jesus Christ, the redeemer and to explain the redemption through him. The words like sacrifice, propitiation, redemption, priesthood are introduced to the New Testament readers and we get good understanding of them, when we interpret within the context of the Old Testament. The Day of Atonement was a special day that the children of Israel with great sorrow and repentance come and confessed their sins they had committed during the year and offer sacrifice to atone their sins. God's atoning work through Jesus Christ is displayed through this ceremony. The New Testament interpretation is in the Book of Hebrews.

There are three atonements or cleansing taking place on this special day. They are the atoning of the priest, the atoning of the place and the atoning of the people

ATONEMENT OF THE HIGH PRIEST

When we read about the Day of Atonement we can understand the complex nature of human sinfulness. Sin is described in many terms. It is uncleanness and rebellion (v.16). Uncleanness is a kind of pollution which drives God away from the people. Rebellion is a willful disobedience. It is called wickedness in v.21 and sin in v.22. The death of Aaron's sons proves that priests, even the high priest cannot approach God any time or the manner that they choose (Lev.10). Man can approach God only in a manner that is consistent with His intrinsic nature. Aaron, by office the most holy person also needs a sin offering for his sin and that will make him to offer sacrifice for the people. "Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering" (Lev.16:11). The implication is that a sinner cannot stand between God and man to do the work of redemption because he himself needs a redeemer. Jesus Christ is the only one without sin and qualified to be a redeemer (Heb.7:26, 27; 2 Cor.5:21).

The high priest comes not in his official robe, but in a sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarment next to his body. This is a special holy garment required for the atoning work. He must bathe himself before

he puts them on. This symbolizes holiness and humility necessary to approach God. The high priest has to offer a bull for his own sin offering before he comes to holy of holies. Then he has to take a censer full of burning coal from the altar and put incense and take behind the curtain. The smoke will cover the mercy seat, so that he will not have a direct look on God and die. Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the in the Garden of Eden, and their expulsion from the immediate presence of God, there has been a need for a visible separation exist between holy God sand sinful man. All these tell about the intrinsic imperfection and the uncleanness that he has no qualification to approach God. His access to God is only through incense and blood.

ATONEMENY OF THE SANCTUARY

For the people of Israel the tabernacle was a sacred place where God had chosen to dwell. The sin and the rebellion of people defiled the sanctuary and made it unfit for the habitation of God. So Aaron has to slaughter the goat and takes the blood and sprinkles it on the atonement cover and in front of it. This is to cleanse the holy of holies. He also does the same for the Tent of the Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness (15-18).

Sin not only polluted man, it also polluted the whole creation and subjected it to decay and corruption (Rom.8:18-21). The result of Christ's atoning death is that the whole creation is going to be cleansed. We are promised a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying "Now the dwelling of God is with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev.21:3).

ATONEMENT OF THE PEOPLE

Once the high priest and the place of sacrifice are ceremonially clean, then it is ready for the cleansing of the people. In order to purify the people, Aaron is instructed to take two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of the Meeting. He is to cast lots for two goats-one for the Lord and other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat which lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it.

Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it. He then put some of the blood of both animals on all horns of the altar and sprinkles it on the altar seven times.

But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord. He shall lay both hands on the head on the goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites – all their sins-put them on the goat's head. He shall be sent the goat away into the desert.

The high priest then shall take off the linen garments and put on his regular garments and offer burnt offering for himself and for the people. He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. The carcasses of both bull and goat shall be taken outside the camp and burn.

The Day of Atonement is the picture of Christ's saving work and the New Testament explanation is very clearly explained in the Book of Hebrews. It was an external regulation until the time of the new order

(Heb.9:13). Jesus entered the most holy place once for all by His own blood, having eternal redemption (Heb.9:12).

Paul in Rom.3:25 explains that Jesus Christ is our sacrifice of atonement. God presented Him (Jesus Christ) a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate His (God's) Justice (God has to show justice to Himself), because in His forbearance He left the sins committed beforehand (that are past, under the first covenant) unpunished. It does not mean that God never punish sin before. It is about the ultimate and final judgment. He did this to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. It means that even Old Testament saints who followed ceremonial system under the old covenant received their sins cleansed by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "The imagery of the scapegoat, fulfilled in Christ's perfect bearing of sins, means that sins are really forgiven. The blood of animal sacrifice could never cope with the problems of men, made in God's image as he is. But the blood of Christ can and does. Our Day of Atonement was the day of the cross. Jesus 'suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood' (Heb.13:12)" The Atonement, Leon Morris, P.87.

TWO GOATS

Aaron is to cast lots for two goats – one for the Lord and the other for scapegoat. The Lord's lot is to be sacrificed and the blood to be taken inside; the other to carry the sins of the people away in to the wilderness. These two goats together form one sin offering. These two are representing two aspects of the atonement. One represents propitiation and the other substitution. The scripture clearly distinguishes the propitiation, which is expiation and substitution, which is transferring of guilt and sin. One is directing toward God and the other is towards man. The Lord's lot illustrates propitiation; the scapegoat illustrates substitution. The propitiation is the Godward side of the atonement and the substitution is manward side of the atonement. Propitiation refers to what God is in His nature and character and substitution refers to man with his personal sin and guilt. Propitiation takes place inside the holy of holies, where God's presence is revealed and substitution is outside the holy of holies. In propitiation presenting blood before God and in substitution taking the sins of the people confessed away. In propitiation God's righteous anger is satisfied and appeased and in substitution, sins of the people are removed. Propitiation deals with an access to God according to His nature and holiness and substitution deals with man according to his responsibility. **There are two goats, but one Christ. Both aspects are fulfilled in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.**

PROPI TIATION

The idea conveyed in this word is appeasement. The prefix 'pro' means 'for', so propitiation makes a change in God's attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us. J.N.Darby explains, it did not change God in what He is, but it changed the relative attitude of God towards the sinner because of what has been done for him in the sacrifice of Christ. As when God said when He smelled the sweet savor from Noah's sacrifice, 'I will not curse the ground', (The Collected Writings, Vol.29, and P.260). According to George Smeaton, "The uniform acceptation of the word in classical Greek, when applied to the Deity, is means of appeasing God, or of averting His anger" (The Doctrine of

the Atonement According to the Apostles, P.455).The wrath of God is a reality that the sinner must face. His righteous indignation should be satisfied. What Christ did on the cross was propitiation that the wrath of God is taken away from us.

When we read Jesus Christ is our propitiation (1 Jn.2:2, 4:10) it intimates that He is the means of God's anger turning away. Sin is intolerable to the nature of God and can be propitiated through a divine judgment of an adequate victim.

The high priest sacrifices the Lord's goat and takes the blood inside veil and sprinkles it upon the mercy seat. The blood is presented to the Lord. God's righteous demand for the atonement of sin of the people met. God's anger toward sin is satisfied because of the blood on the mercy seat. God said to Moses regarding the Passover, I am the Lord and I will bring judgment on Egypt. The blood will be a sign for you on the house where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you (Ex.12:12, 13).The blood is necessary for the atonement (Lev.17:11) Here there is no confession of sins or putting hands on the goat. Everything is the glory and the majesty of God. His majesty and all divine characters are vindicated and glorified. His moral nature is satisfied, holiness maintained, and became Just and the justifier of those who come by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul in Rom. 3:25, 26 explains that Christ is presented to sinners as a mercy seat where he could approach God according to God's righteousness by faith in His blood. Here the blood of Christ is presented to God. Propitiation goes toward God. "God has set forth a mercy seat , through faith in his blood for the shewing forth of his righteousness, in respect of the passing by sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God"(Rom.3:25,26 JND).

The antitype of this we read in Heb.9:12, He (Christ) did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but He entered the Most Holy place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. Christ has glorified God in the place of sin. "God gave His only begotten Son is the expression of divine love, but it is the expression also of the demands of righteousness which required satisfaction before it could be shown forth: and this is what we mean by propitiation-a God -satisfying sacrifice" (F.W. Grant, The Atonement, and P.80). "By His blood shedding, Christ appeased the righteous wrath of God. By His sacrifice, He pacified the claims of Divine justice (A.W.Pink, The Satisfaction of Christ, P.69).

SUBSTITUTION

When Aaron has finished making atonement for the most Holy Place, the tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelite -all their sins- and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert.

This goat illustrates substitution. The high priest lays both hands on the head of the goat and confesses the people's sin and transfers it to the goat and sends away to the wilderness. Sin has been already dealt with in judgment in the Holy Place. Blood was already presented before God and divine justice was satisfied. The blood of Jehovah's lot was already put on the mercy seat. Beside this there is personal guilt and positive personal sin for which people are responsible. It is the righteous demand of God that they have to bear sin. It is a personal sin and each person is responsible. It is the righteous demand of

God that they have to bear the penalty of their sins. The high priest is the representative of the people; transfer the sins on the people on head of the goat send away and never to be found. Here in this ceremony shows representation, confession of sin, transfer, substitution and the work is effectual for those represented. Confession of sin is due to God since every sin is primarily against God. It is also a proper response of the conviction of sin. On the Day of Atonement, sins of the people are carried away by the goat. Here this goat is their substitute. When we take the whole ceremony both goats represent Christ.

It is very important to note that substitution is for people whom the substitute represents. It is one taking the place of another. Jesus Christ is the substitute of whose place He has taken. Jesus Christ is our substitute and has borne our sins of His people in His body on the tree. When our sins are confessed and sent away, then we can have complete peace and comfort that the burden of our sins gone and never to comeback. Jesus Christ as a high priest confessed all the sins of His people as His own and as a victim bore our sins on His own body on the tree. **Both goats representing Christ in the same atoning sacrifice.**

The second goat is not effective without the first goat. God must be approached with the atoning blood first to be free from the heavy load of sins. The Day of Atonement shows the double aspect of Christ's sacrifice. God found satisfaction in the blood of Christ and our sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. The blood was brought before God and propitiation is accomplished and the guilt and sins of the people were laid on the head of the goat by the priest. God is glorified in what He is and man's guilt and sin are taken away. "One goat secured admission to the presence of God according to His holy nature-"boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, "as is expressly and elaborately taught in Heb.9, 10-and the other, removing of all the sins of God's people according to their responsibility towards Him" (J.N.Darby).

The substitute should meet every requirement of God's demanded perfection. Jesus is a substitute by divine appointment (Acts 4:27, 28) also by his free will (Heb.10:5-7). As a substitute of the sinful people, Christ had to be found faultless yet pronounced guilty. As a person was blameless, but for the purpose of redemption deserved condemnation by divine justice. He was sinless, but made sin (not sinner) for us. Though the beloved Son of the Father, yet forsaken by the Father. He was holy, but made curse for us. He was the priest taken from among men to offer gift and sacrifices to God, yet vicariously became a victim. He was God incarnated, yet became the object of God's wrath. All these are the distinctions of his person and substitutionary work. Yes, this is the one who became our sacrifice of atonement.

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood
Sealed my pardon with His blood
Hallelujah what a savior.

In Psalm 32, David explains the blessedness of a man whose sins are forgiven. In that Psalm he describes both aspects of the atonement. V.1 reads "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." It speaks of propitiation. Then in V.5 speaks of substitutionary goat taking way the confessed sins of the people. "I acknowledge my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.'" Both aspects of Christ's atonement are also described in Heb.9:26-28. "But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself." It speaks of the propitiatory aspect. The substitutionary aspect is described in V.28, "So Christ sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people."

Let me conclude this section by quoting J.N. Darby. "Propitiation is presenting to a God what the righteousness and holiness of that God necessary claim, while infinite love has provided, and infinite love has offered, the spotless sacrifice. Substitute is for people whom the substitute represents; it is one man or person substituted for another, taking actually the consequences of the conduct or position of him who he represents" (The Collected Writings, Vol.23, P.241).

THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT

Is it Calvinism or Arminianism?

There is a controversy regarding the extent of the atoning work of Christ among the evangelical Christians. Calvinism teaches that the atonement is limited only to the elect; whereas Arminianism teaches that the atonement is universal. One believes that the saving intent of atonement is only those who are actually saved; the other believes that the atoning death of Christ paid the price of sin of all but its benefits are only who trust Christ. The Calvinistic or Reformed view is built upon the premises that since all are not going to be saved, the atonement offered by Christ actually applied only to the elect. The Arminian view is built upon the premise that since man is responsible for his own damnation, we cannot rule out the universal application of the atoning work. Both have reached their own conclusions based on their interpretations of the scripture. There are few examples given below. Those who argue for limited atonement interpret these texts in the following ways:

Mat.1:21. "...he will save his people (only chosen not all) from their sin".

Jn.10:11. "I am the good shepherd. The Good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (only for the sheep).

Heb.9:28. "Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many (not all) people".

Eph.5:25. "...Christ loved the church (love only the church) and gave himself up for her" (Atonement only for the church).

Those who argue for the unlimited atonement interpret these texts as follows:

Jn.12:32. "But when I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all men to myself"

Heb.2:9. "...by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (universal).

1 Tim.2:5, 6. "For there is one God and one mediator between ... the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all men" (not few)

It is a truth that the scripture speaks of the atonement in universal term (Heb.2:9; Jn.3:16; 1 Jn.2:2) and also in restricted term (Mat.1:21; 13:48; Heb.9:28; Isa.53:12). The scripture does not teach that Christ died only for the elect and the lost are not included in the plan of salvation. The scripture also teaches that man cannot contribute anything for salvation and it is from God. (Jam.1:18). God has chosen us in Christ before the creation of the world to be saved (Eph.1:4), yet it always is a free choice (Jn.1:12; Acts 17:27). We cannot avoid the tension between these two, as we study the scripture. This argument also leads to the soteriological discussion of the Sovereignty of God and Man's responsibility.

There are certain elements of truth in both views, yet it does not contain the whole truth. These are two human made systems of teachings. The whole confusion is the result of not understanding the difference between two goats of the atonement and also not understanding the difference between propitiation and substitution. Aaron was asked to bring two goats and cast lots; one for the Lord and the other for scapegoat. The Jehovah's goat represents propitiation and the scapegoat represents substitution. Both are the part of the atonement. There are two goats but one Christ. Both aspects are fulfilled in Christ's atoning sacrifice; one is directing towards God and the other directing towards man. The propitiation is directing towards God and the substitution is directing towards man. The blood of propitiation satisfied God and God is sovereign to forgive sin on the basis of the blood. Since God found satisfaction in the blood, now He could act in grace towards men. At the same atonement, Jesus becomes my substitute and carries my sin, when I confess my sins and put it on him. It speaks about the human responsibility in salvation.

The scripture very clearly distinguishes propitiation and substitution. **Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the whole world and substitution for whom the substitute represents.** On the Day of Atonement blood of the Jehovah's goat was presented on the mercy seat and God's holy anger towards man is propitiated (appeased). Similarly, Jesus's propitiatory blood was brought into the Holy Place, not manmade, but a heavenly one (Heb.9:11) and sprinkled on the mercy seat. God saw the precious blood of the lamb and His righteous requirement fully satisfied. His blood is available for anyone who comes. In that aspect Christ died for all. The extent of the propitiatory aspect of the atonement is for all. Notice these verses. "Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins; but not for ours alone, but also for the whole world" (1 Jn.2:2, JND). "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men" (1Tim.2:5, 6). "But we see Jesus... because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one" (Heb.2:9). Heb.10:10 tells that the sacrifice of the body of Jesus is the means of salvation for all. No sinner is beyond the reach of God's salvation.

On the Day of Atonement the blood of the Jehovah's goat sprinkled on and before the mercy seat and God saw and was satisfied just as the blood applied on the door post on the Passover day. God said, When I see the blood I will pass over. Jesus Christ's blood was shed and God is satisfied. Jesus Christ

glorified all attributes of God by his atoning sacrifice. On the basis of that atoning blood now the gospel can be proclaimed that whosoever comes, the blood is available. There is no confession of sin or transfer of sins on the head of the Jehovah's goat. It is Christ's atoning work toward God and man has no part in that. Because of the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, now God can forgive a sinner. There is no limit and is available for anyone and everyone. Calvinism puts a limit on propitiation by saying it is effectual only for the elect. God made a provision and is sufficient for the whole world. What the blood of propitiation of Christ has accomplished in believers is capable to accomplish in any sinner, if he accepts it by faith. Calvinist very often refers portions like Jn.10:11; Eph.5:25 to show that Christ died only for the sheep or for the church. The answer to that argument is, when Paul says "Christ died for me" in Gal.2:20, we cannot infer or conclude that Christ died only for Paul not for anyone else. In the same way there are portions that say Christ died for the 'sheep' or 'church'. It does not mean that the extent of atonement is limited to the church or sheep only. They subjectively experienced the efficacy of the blood of the atonement by faith. When writing to the believers, it is reasonable to use 'us' or 'our' in reference to atonement. "Of course it is true that in writing to the church, New Testament authors speak of the atonement in reference to their audience. Thus it is not surprising to find them saying like Christ died for the church, and so on" (David L. Allen. The Extent of the Atonement. P.778).

Those who believe in the limited atonement argue that if Christ died for all people, then why all are not saved. This confusion is because of not distinguishing the extent the atonement and the application of the atonement or not knowing the difference between propitiation and substitution. The gospel that Paul preached, when he came to Corinth, before anyone was ever saved was "Christ died for our sins according to the scripture" (1 Cor.15:1-4). His death is for all and the extent of the atonement is unlimited. 2 Cor. 5:19-20 reads "That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, 'Be reconciled to God.'" The message of the gospel is for all sinners. All those who believe will be saved. Limiting the atonement limits the extent of the free offer of the gospel for all. The scripture also tells that all are not going to be saved (Matt.7:13, 14).

The word substitution means one taking the place of another. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest confesses the sins of the people and transfers on the head of the goat. There is a personal sin that everyone in Israel is responsible. As the representative of them, the high priest confesses and transfers the sins of the people on the head of the goat. Laying the hand on the head of the victim is a sign of identification and also the transferring of the confessed sin on the sacrificial victim. There is no blood shedding here. That has been done in the first goat. On the basis of the blood of the Jehovah's goat, man comes with repentance to transfer the sins committed. Confession is the necessary response of a soul due unto God when convicted of sin. It is personal responsibility. It is the expression of self judgement according to the righteous standard of God. It is the work of the word of God and the Holy Spirit in the heart of man. This also gives peace and comfort of sin forgiven.

Christ is the substitute only for whose place Christ has taken. We do not find in the scripture that Christ bore the sins of all. "For He bore the sin of many" (not all) as we read in Isa.53:13. ... "my righteous

servant will justify 'many' and He will bear their iniquities" (Isa.53:11). Wherever 'all' is used in connection with substitution, it refers to 'all believers'. For example, "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa.53:6). The prophet uses 'our' and 'us' many times in this section starting from v.4 to distinguish the believing remnant from the unbelieving nation, that rejected the message of the suffering servant of Jehovah (v.1). The prophet laments over their unbelief as a nation and says, "Who has believed our message". In the previous chapter the prophet talks about believing Gentiles (Isa.52:15). 1Pet.2:24, "Who himself bore 'our' (it is a language of faith) sins in His body on the tree". Christ bore our sins and removed it as far as the east is from the west. Hebrews 10:17 the principle of scapegoat is applied to the church now and will be applied for Israel under the new covenant in the future. The writer there quotes from Jer.31:34, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." At that time Israel, as a nation is going to confess Jesus Christ as their Messiah and repent of their sins. "They will look me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him..." (Zech.12:10). The usage of 'we' or 'us' in connection with propitiation and substitution in general refers to believers or Christians, unless context marks clearly.

When it comes to bearing of sins the scripture use 'many' instead of 'all'. "My righteous servant will justify 'many' and he will 'bear their' iniquities" (Isa.53:11). "So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of 'many'" (Heb.9:28). In Rom.5:18 reads, "Therefore by the one trespass was condemnation for all, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that bring life for all men". This verse deals with universality of our connection with the first Adam and the last Adam as two federal heads. The effect of Adam's sin did not rest on Adam only, but passed on everyone; so also the effect of Christ's work of righteousness did not rest on him alone, but passed on toward all. But in the sense of application, it is 'many' instead of 'all'. Paul uses 'many' to show as many as connected with each heads in V.19, "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the 'many' made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the 'many' will be made righteous."

Laying hand is also transferring our sins that are responsible for. It is also our confession that the "Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all" (Isa.53:6). Christ standing before God as my sin bearer and substitute. As our sin bearer, Christ could say, "My sins have overtaken me...and they are more than the hair of my head (Ps.40:12). "You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you "(Ps.69:5). This is the fulfilment of Isa.53:12 that "he was numbered with the transgressors and he bore sins of many."

The Arminian view takes the substitution and erroneously applies to all. According to that view both propitiation and substitution are synonyms and used interchangeably. It denies the scriptural teaching that the effectiveness of atonement is conditional and it is conditioned on faith. If Christ is the substitute for the whole world, then the whole world would have been saved. F.W. Grant correctly stated "The Lord Jesus, then, was the substitute for believers and made propitiation for the sins of the world, its effectiveness being conditioned on faith."

There are some, who take the verse "... the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn.1:29) and apply it for universal substitution. 'The Lamb of God' is a title of Christ. Jesus Christ may be said to be the 'Lamb of God' and a substitute of His people any time. But Christ became actual substitute and bore the sin at the cross. He was God's Lamb always and His mission was to take away the sin of the

world. Similarly, Jesus Christ can be called 'Savior of the world', any time even when He was born and His mission was to save people from their sins. But in reality, He became our Savior at the cross. As a title Jesus can be called 'The Lamb of God' any time and his mission always was to take away sin of the world. His putting away of sin was by the atoning sacrifice on the cross. He was once offered to bear the sins of 'many' in His substitutionary work (Heb.9:28).

The substitution in atonement is not a simply substituting the penalty, but enduring the penalty itself from God. Christ endured the wrath of God on our behalf. Bearing sin means bearing the punishment. Transferring the punishment is a very important aspect of substitution. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal.3:13). The curse is eternal death, which is the eternal torment of the spirit, soul and body in the lake of fire, also called as the second death. No man can undergo and be saved. It was necessary to transfer the punishment from them who deserved it but could not bear it, to one who not deserved it but could bear it. So Christ bore that punishment as 'our' (all who are justified by faith like Abraham) substitute. "So Christ was sacrificed once to take away (picture of the second goat) the sins of many people" (substitute not for all) (Heb.9:28).

When we study the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism views, these are one sided theologies and very contrasting when it comes to the application of atonement. J.N. Darby puts this in a profound way: "The Arminians take up Christ's dying for all, and generally they connect the bearing of sins with it; and all is confusion as to the efficacy and effectualness of Christ's bearing our sins, for they deny any special work for His people. They say, If God loved all, He cannot love some particularly; and an uncertain salvation is the result, and man often exalted. Thus the scapegoat is practically set aside.

The Calvinist holds Christ's bearing the sins of His people, so that they are effectually saved; but he sees nothing else. He will say, If Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, there can be no real love for anything else. Thus he denies Christ's dying for all, and the distinctive character of propitiation and the blood on the mercy-seat. He sees nothing of but substitution.

The truth is, Christ is said to love the church, and never the world. That is a love of special relationship. God is never said to love the church, but the world. This is divine goodness, what is in the nature of God (not His purpose), and His glory is the real end of all" (Collected Writings, Vol.29, P.287, 288). The love of divine goodness is towards the world and a special relational love is towards the church. Calvinism sees only God's love for the church, not for the world. They accept the people's goat (substitution) and deny the Jehovah's goat (propitiation). Arminianism sees only Jehovah's goat (propitiation) and deny people's goat (substitution) that resulted an insecure salvation.

In Rom.3:22 we read, "Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all (corresponding with Jehovah's lot and propitiation), and upon all of them that believe "(corresponding with people's goat and substitution). The righteousness of God is offered unto all and upon only those who believers. It is our duty to preach the gospel 'unto all'. But the effect produced 'upon' all those who accept if by faith. There is a universal aspect of the proclamation of the gospel and a positive and the subjective effect upon those who believe.

Another portion that presented both aspects together is Heb.9:26-28. "But now he (Christ) appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself (propitiation). Just as man is destined to die once and after that to face judgement, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins (substitution) of many (only who lay hand on the head of the lamb and confess)." Propitiation deals with our sin according to the holy nature of God and is available for all. Substitution deals with sins according to man's responsibility and for those who believe. It is not possible to unite substitution with propitiation in real sense for the world. It will make universalism and there could be no judgment for anyone. On the other hand, He is the substitute for the saved. Not distinguishing propitiation and substitution and their spiritual significances will lead into confusion and erroneous teaching regarding the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The scripture teaches that the sacrifice of Christ is a propitiation for all and a substitute for believers. If a man dies unsaved, the responsibility is on him alone. The application of substitution for all will lead to a universal salvation. Limiting propitiation only to the elect will limit the value of the blood of Jesus Christ. We should not be carried away by human theology. "It is quite true that in the conflict of minds upon the subject which has been in controversy for centuries, the balance of truth has been very much lost (although I could not say, equally,) by those who contended on either side; extremes on either part have tended to throw men off into the opposite extreme. Thus Calvinism and Arminianism, or what are commonly so called, have nearly divided Christians between them, each refusing to recognize, for the most part, any truth in the other.... The fact is, that as another has said, in general, the strength of each lies in what it affirms; its weakness, in what it denies" (F.W. Grant. Leaves from the Book, Vol.2 P.151, 152). Br. Robert McClurkin, who is the author of many books and edited the magazine 'Counsel' for many years writes, "Since Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 John 2.2, then all are invited to share its benefits....Thus, the atonement that He made is not to be measured in its value by a certain number of sins that He was supposed to bear, but by the infinite Worth of His Person. Therefore the merits of Christ's atoning death are unlimited in their value and in their application to men. The benefits of His death are available to every poor sinner who will receive Him as Savior and Lord" (Biblical Balance on Election & Free will. P.33). In another place in the same book he writes, "In a fallen world, God chose to display the grace of His heart, not to any select few, but to all mankind. On the basis Christ's atonement, God comes to man as Shepherd seeking the lost sheep, and wherever a soul wills to be saved, that soul will be saved"(P.35). We cannot limit Christ's propitiatory work only to the redeemed, since it was directed towards God and God's righteous demand is satisfied. The work of Christ's propitiation opens door for everyone. Because of Christ's work of propitiation both saved and the unsaved stand on the same favor of God. God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Now God can send the glad tiding of the gospel to everyone. Some will believe and some not.

Calvinism makes God the author of sin and the reason for people go to hell. If Christ's atonement offers no salvation for certain individual, how can He judge them on the basis of 'not believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God'? Arminianism undermines the grace of God and makes man his own savior. It is my sincere prayer and hope that the readers will understand the work of atonement in the light of Scripture. The more we think about the atoning work of God, the more glory due to God.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

God's Sovereignty and Man's responsibility is a blessed truth revealed in the scripture. Both are true and complementary, if we confine ourselves within the revelation of the scripture. Unfortunately, it became a great controversy during the sixteenth century and continues still. This soteriological dispute arose from the teachings of John Calvin (1509-1564), a French Reformer and theologian and Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), who disagree with the traditional Reformed view of predestination and limited atonement. He believed a universal atonement and God now impart the benefit of the cross to those who meet the condition for salvation. It is reasonable to believe that Calvin was influenced by the teachings Augustine; whereas Arminius was influenced by the teaching of Pelagius, who was a monk that lived in the latter part of the fourth century and the early fifth century. Pelagius denied total depravity and the imputation of Adam's sin. Br .John F .Parkinson has given a brief and an insightful summary of both views in the following words, "It is important to note that both parties ultimately equated election with salvation. In the case of the Calvinist, election to salvation was unconditional and entirely God's sovereign choice. In view of Arminian, God's election to salvation was conditional on the individual's choice" (The Faith of God's Elect. P.52).The controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism is not limited to the issue of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility; it includes many other theological issues. My intention is not to discuss about Calvinism or Arminianism, but to explain how God's sovereignty and man's responsibility displayed in the ceremony of the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement is an Old Testament type of Christ's atoning death for sins. It was a provision made for the whole people of Israel, whether native born or an alien living among them. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility is displayed in this ceremonial act. There are two goats, one for the Lord; and the other for the people. There are two ceremonies, one behind the curtain; and the other outside. One represents propitiation indicating Christ's work directing toward God; the other represents substitution, indicating Christ's work directing towards sinners. One represents God's sovereignty; and the other man's responsibility. One tells that God is the author and giver of salvation; and the other tells man is the recipient by faith. In one, there is sprinkling of blood; and the other there is confession of sins. One displayed the holiness of God; and the other displayed the sinfulness of man. One displayed God's righteousness unto all; and the other displayed God's righteousness upon all them that believe.

On the Day of Atonement, Aaron slaughters the Lord's goat and takes the blood inside the holy of holies and sprinkles it on the mercy seat. The blood is presented to the Lord. God's righteous demand for the atonement of sin of the people is met. This represents propitiation. The blood is available for any one.

Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the whole world. "He is the propitiation for our sins, not only for ours but also the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn.2:2). "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men" (1 Tim.2:5).The gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians and they received and saved was that "Christ died for our sins" (1Cor.15:3, 11). This is the only ground of preaching the gospel of salvation. His propitiation did not give instant salvation for the whole world or make all men righteous, but made provision for all. The blood is

available for “whoso ever “comes. “ 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” (Jn.3:16). This is the good news of the gospel. He is the propitiation for whole world. The blood is available for any sinner. “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts.2:21). Christ’s atoning work is sufficient for the salvation. God’s sovereign grace is available for anyone and everyone. We take the gospel on the ground of Christ’s finished work on the cross and proclaim it to the world. Jesus Himself said, “But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself” (Jn.3:32). There are numerous texts that reveal God’s desire of all to come to salvation (Acts.17:30; 1 Tim.2:3, 4; 2Pet.3:9). God sovereignly prepared a way of salvation for man .It is true that some will accept and some reject.

If God is not sovereign, He could not save any one. The sovereignty of God in salvation is demonstrated in His dealing with the People of Israel after they committed the sin of worshiping the golden calf in Ex.32. God’s anger kindled against them and said, “Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you (Moses) into a great nation” (32:10). God was basically telling to Moses that I am going to destroy the whole people and start over with you. The whole Israel was guilty of sin. God addressed them as ‘your people’ instead of ‘my people’ (Ex.5:1). Destroying the whole Israelites for their sin would have been very consistent with His righteous character of God. After the mediation of Moses, Lord relented and did not bring on His people the disaster He had threatened (Ex.32:14). It would have been perfectly righteous for God to kill all people, except Moses. If God is not sovereign, He could not have spared anybody and everybody would have been destroyed. God’s sovereignty in salvation was manifested through the means of a mediator. Then in Ex.33:19, God Himself revealed a great statement about His sovereignty. The Lord said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, I will have compassion on whom, I will have compassion.” Later through the inspiration, Apostle Paul revealed that God is also sovereign to harden the heart whom He wants (Rom.9:18). Before making this statement, Paul referred the example of Pharaoh to show that the Lord hardening the heart of Pharaoh was the result of the judicial punishment of Pharaoh hardening of his own heart as we read in the Exodus narrative (Ex.7, 8, 9). If God pre-ordained Pharaoh for reprobation and harden his heart before his birth, God does not need to harden his heart again. A careful reading of Rom.9:22, 23 show that it is the longsuffering of God that made him fitted for destruction. “And if God , minded to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction” (JND) . “These verses will show that it is not said that God fitted such vessels to destruction, but that He prepared the vessels of mercy unto glory....Furthermore, instead of saying that He prepared the vessels of wrath for destruction “before they were born,” it is said that He “endured with much long-suffering” these vessels-not a word about His preparing them, but about His forbearing with them” (P. Wilson. God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Responsibility. P.34). Man’s self-hardening and God’s hardening are always connected together.

There are two questions to ask regarding the incidents mentioned above to clear our understanding about the sovereignty of God regarding salvation. On how many people did God show mercy, in the case of the sin of Israel? The answer is to all. Not selected few. The second question is, why did God harden the heart of Pharaoh? The answer is because he himself hardens his heart. The willful rejection of God and the indulgence of sin can lead to a depraved mind by God (Rom.1:28). God’s sovereignty is

displayed while we were sinners He made a provision for all. The gospel and the salvation are for all sinners, not for elected sinners only. God is also sovereign to harden those who harden themselves. He is sovereign in saving and condemning the sinner.

In the ceremony of the Day of Atonement, there is responsibility on the part of the people. People had to confess and lay their sins on the goat. The priest was the representative of the people came with sorrow and repentance of their sins. The instruction for the people read in Lev.16:29-31. Though the high priest performed the blood sacrifice inside the holy place and the blood is effective and accepted by God, the whole nation, both Israelites and the foreigner should come with repentance. This is an everlasting law. The blood is on the mercy seat. Because of the efficacy of the blood of the mercy seat, the people can come to confess their sin. Without the blood of Jehovah's goat, the second goat is ineffective; and without laying hand on the head of the second goat, the blood of the first goat is not effective personally. The people's goat represents the effect of the atonement.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ removed the barrier that separated us from God. On the basis of the blood of Jesus Christ, God is able to forgive one's sin, if comes by faith in the atoning work of Christ. When a person comes with repentance and accepts the salvation by faith, Jesus becomes the substitute. The substitution is not efficacious unless it is accepted by putting the hand on the head of the victim (symbolically speaking of faith). By believing the atoning work of Christ, the wrath of God against him is quenched, God's justice is executed and God becomes just and justifier of him who have faith in Jesus.

Now because of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ the gospel can be proclaimed to the whole world. Hearing the message of the gospel produces responsibility. Based on the text of Heb.3:7, 8, G.Campbell Morgan says, "Two things are assumed by the Holy Spirit in this text: first, the human responsibility begins with the hearing of the voice, "Today if shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts"; and, second, that when the voice is heard man is left free to obey or to disobey....Responsibility begins with the hearing of the voice" (Westminster Pulpit. Vol. VII, P.304). There is no irresistible grace in the scripture, as the way that Calvinism defines. According to Calvinism, God creates a desire in man for Christ and they all will come to salvation. If it is so, the Lord doesn't need to plead with the Israel "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing"(Matt.23:37).

God does not ordain man's choice, but He ordains the consequence of choice. Those who believe, Christ is precious and will never be put to shame. Those who disobey the same stone make them fall (1Pet.2:6-8). God did not appoint any to disobey. Being disobedient, thy received the consequence that God ordained, that is to stumble. God's will always stands, which is to destine to save those who believe and destine to punish those do not believe. Man's responsibility is not something we add to the work of salvation, which is completely from God. It is fulfilling our accountability either to receive the free gift of salvation or rejecting the grace of God.

Faith believes the testimony of God through the scripture. When God presents His truth to us, we are accountable to believe and have faith in it. This is what Jesus warns the Jews in Jn.6:39, 40. "These are

the Scripture that testify about me, Yet you refuse to come to me to have life.” Jesus said “Time is coming and has now come when the dead (spiritually) will hear the voice (testimony) of the Son of God and those who hear will live” (Jn.6:25). “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom.10:17). There is a possibility that we hear and reject it. There is also possible that we hear and be convicted, still reject it. The usage ‘dead in your transgressions and sins’ in Eph.2:1 is not a condition of inactiveness or incapability to accept by faith. It was a condition that we were active in doing sin. Paul in Ephesians talks about salvation in its finality, not explaining the process of salvation. The believer is already raised up with Christ and seated in the heavenly place in Chapter 1. The effectiveness of the atonement is conditioned on faith. So there is a responsibility pressed upon to everyone who hears the gospel. This is very clear from the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, “you must be born again.” Scripture does not tell that a spiritually dead person is unable to believe (Jn.6:25). The power for salvation is not in our faith, but in the gospel (1 Cor.1:18).

Faith is not a meritorious act from the part of men for salvation. This is one of the major subjects of Paul, when he talks about salvation. He puts faith in contrast with works of the Law (Phil.3:4-9). We receive the free gift of salvation by faith. Faith is not a selective gift that God gives only for few. There is a common passage often Calvinists quote is Eph.2:8, 9. It reads, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” According to Greek scholars the gift is not simply the faith, but the whole concept of salvation. F.F. Bruce explains, “The fact that the demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ is neuter in Greek (tauto), whereas ‘faith’ is a feminine noun (pistis) combines with other considerations to suggest that it is the whole concept of salvation by grace through faith that is described as the gift of God. This incidentally, was Calvin’s interpretation.” (The Epistle to the Ephesians. P. 51-52) Similarly, A.T. Robertson, W.E. Vine, M.R. Vincent are few of the others of similar interpretation. A great expositor, Alexander Maclaren writes, “Mark the last words of my text (Eph.2:8, 9) -‘that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.’ They have often been misunderstood, as if they referred to faith which is mentioned just before. But that is a plain misconception of the Apostle’s meaning and is contradicted by the whole context. It is not faith that is the gift of God, but the salvation by grace.”(Expositions of the Holy Scripture, “Ephesians,” P.104-105).

If we claim any kind of merit in our faith, then salvation is not by grace. Paul was trying to be righteous by the work of the Law and failed (Phil.3:7). That is the reason Paul puts faith as an antithesis to the work of the Law. What we accept by faith is the one God provided at the cross. In the fourth chapter of Romans, Paul explains the relationship between faith and justification. It is not the faith in our state of righteousness that justifies; but the faith in the person and the blood shedding sacrifice and the resurrection of Lord Jesus that justifies the sinner. “God will credit righteousness for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom.4:24, 25; 5:1).

The emphasis in Eph.2:8, 9 is salvation by grace. Sir Robert Anderson explains, “For if a sinner has a claim of any kind for blessing or mercy, there is no room for grace. Therefore it was that grace could not be revealed till Christ came....The whole world now stands in a common level of sin and wrath....this is

the dark background on which “the grace of God, salvation-bringing to all men, has been manifested.” And grace of God is not, as some seem to think, a kind of good influence imparted to the sinner fit to receive Divine blessing. It is the principle on which God bless sinners in whom He can find no fitness whatsoever....Grace is reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, by our Lord Jesus Christ” (Redemption Truth. P.82, 83, 84). This explanation should give a proper understanding of the relationship of salvation, grace and faith.

“Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him” (God’s sovereignty) Ps.32:2. “I acknowledge my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgive the guilt of my sin” (man’s responsibility) Ps.32:5.

“When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; (Man’s responsibility) and all who were appointed for eternal life (God’s sovereignty) believed” (Acts 13:48).

“This righteousness from God comes (God’s sovereignty) through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe” (man’s responsibility) (Rom.3:22).

“And we know that all things God works together (God’s sovereignty) for good (in this context is the glorification that is the final phase of our salvation) to them that love God (man’s responsibility)” (Rom.8:28).

“God’s purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who (God) calls” (God’s sovereignty, Rom.9:11-12). “For, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord (Man’s responsibility) will be saved” (Rom.10:13).

“And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God (God’s sovereignty) by faith” (man’s responsibility)(Phi.3:9).

“... and once made perfect, He become the source of eternal salvation (God’s sovereignty) for all who obey Him” (man’s responsibility) (Heb.5:9).

The gospel is the testimony of God’s grace and the responsibility of every sinner to receive it by faith. When a person believes the good news of the gospel and accept it by faith, then we can assure him that Christ has borne all your sins; never going to come back. He can confidently say like Paul, Christ loved me and gave Himself for me. The visual image of the scapegoat taking away the sin on the Day of Atonement gives the people the assurance of their sin taken away and never to return. The believer can be able to feel subjectively the security of sin taken away, like the visual aid of the scapegoat gives for the people about their sin taken away on the Day of Atonement.

God is sovereign to save anyone. It is a prerogative of God. But God sovereignly and graciously designed to give man a free will and choice and made him responsible to accept or to reject the free gift of salvation. Man’s free will is his own personal, righteous accountability to God (Rom.1:19, 20). Thus we see the sovereignty of God in the way in which the death of Christ was planned in the mind of God in the eternity past (1 Pet.1:20), promised (Gen.3:15, Gal.3:16), and executed, without contradicting His nature

and attributes (Rom.8:3, 4) as a source of salvation and also sovereignly arranged a way for man to accept freely by faith in His Son. No one in the Bible saved until they believe the atoning work of Christ (2 Cor.5:17-21).The power of believing comes from God; the act of believing comes from man and is volitional.

It is the desire of God that all to be saved. "This is good, and pleases God our savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim.2:3, 4).If it is the desire of God, then why all are not saved? The desire in 1 Tim.2:3, 4 is not the will of the divinely decreed purpose that will be fulfilled according to the plan of God. Nothing can change or stop that absolutely decreed will and purpose (Rom.8:28). Rather 1 Tim.2:3, 4 is the expression of God's desire through an appropriate means given to the choice of men, not by coercion (Mat.23:37; 2 Tim.2:25; Tit.1:1). "Verse 4 (1 Tim.2:4) does not imply that all will in fact be saved preemptively, whether they respond in faith or not. The gospel is not a simple, absolute universalism that would insist that all are in fact effectively redeemed whether they want to be or not....Nor does the text suggest that God's will might be frustrated by those who refuse salvation .Rather the focus is upon the universal relevance of the Christ event, in contrast with an exclusivism that would say Christ died only for some" (Thomas C. Oden. First and Second Timothy and Titus. P.48). God graciously provided a plan or arrangement or economy of salvation (dispensation) that man can appropriate it by his own free will. It is the 'will of His desire' that all to be saved by faith, not 'the will of His decreed purpose'.

There is a principle of interpretation that we need to follow concerning God's election and predestination. There are truths mentioned in both positive and negative ways in the scripture. We must be careful to conclude only to the extent the truth is revealed. For example, whoever believes in Christ will be saved and whoever does not believe will be condemned (Jn.3:16-18).We can believe both positive and negative because both are mentioned in the scripture. Scripture tells that believers are elected and predestined by God. But nowhere do we read that the unsaved are elected and predestined by God for eternal condemnation. We have not right to conclude that the negative is true in this case, simply because of the positive. Paul in Galatians 2:20 tells that the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. It is wrong to conclude from this verse that Christ loved only Paul and gave himself only for him, not for anyone else.

In conclusion, I want to take an excerpt from "One-sided Theology" by C.H. Mackintosh: " And further, we believe that not a single soul would ever come to Christ if not drawn, yes, compelled by divine grace....And this we believe not as part of certain system of doctrine, but as the revealed truth of God....But , on the other hand, we believe , just as fully, in the solemn truth of man's moral responsibility, in as much as plainly taught in Scripture.... We believe these five points (of Calvinism) so far as they go, but they are very far indeed from containing the faith of God's elect....if I am taught to regard "The five Points" as 'the faith of God's elect," I shall not think of looking beyond them; and then a most glorious field of heavenly truth is shut out from the vision of my soul. Not one of them contains the full, entire truth of God....the truth is often neutralized by the error."

