

God's Grace Is Inclusive

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Because of His abundant love for mankind, God extended His grace universally through the death of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Tit. 2:11). God does not desire that only some be saved, but He "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). He is longsuffering, "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9b). To this end, the Christ "gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:6a). Accordingly, John reminded the saints to whom he wrote that "Jesus Christ the righteous...is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:1b-2).

In His promise to Abraham, God first revealed that He planned to bless all men: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18a). This was no generic promise that the patriarch's descendants would somehow be a source of blessing. Rather, the promise had a very specific end: "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16).

God's gracious and loving gift is His Son, through Whom everyone ("whosoever") may have the opportunity to be saved ("have eternal life") (John 3:16). Every spiritual blessing is in the Christ (Eph. 1:3). The power necessary to save the souls of all men is in the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). We should therefore not be surprised that Jesus' final instructions to His apostles involved the universal proclamation of the Gospel of grace. He ordered them to take it to all the nations, all the world, the whole creation, and the uttermost part of the earth (Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).

Jesus did not "taste of death" for only a few or even for many, but "for every man" (Heb. 2:9). The Calvinistic doctrine of the "limited atonement" is palpably false; God extended grace through Jesus' atonement to all mankind. However, one errs exceedingly to conclude that all **will** be saved just because all have the **opportunity** to be saved.

One can only marvel that the one true and living God, Who displayed His omnipotence in creating the universe and our very selves, is so generous, gracious, and loving.

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