

The following is a formal debate I had with the late David Shaw, who was known for many years as KingJehu in the chat room #ChristianDebate on the Dalnet IRC network. The debate took place over a three-week period in August of 2004, on a message board operated by Shaw. (Unfortunately, the message board is no longer available and that location of the debate was not indexed by the Internet Archive.)

The topic of debate was the doctrine of **Limited Atonement** as affirmed by Reformed theology. In this debate I affirmed the truth of the doctrine while Shaw denied its truth. The word-count limit was set at 2,000 words for each submission.

Despite my urges to the contrary, I have refrained from editing the debate; i.e., the formatting, the grammar, spelling and punctuation, etc., is exactly how it was submitted by both Shaw and myself.

David Smart
2 September 2009

FORMAL DEBATE: "Limited Atonement"

August 6–27, 2004

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DAVID SHAW (KingJehu) — Opening Remarks Against Limited Atonement

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

I have been, and always will be in opposition of limited atonement because no matter how loosely one defines it, the concept, as above leads to the conclusion that Christ did not die for every man, but rather for a 'limited' number.

I must establish that it's the KJV, and bibles and manuscripts it's derived from which the 121 Puritans used. As did the Church of England. The Scottish Presbyterian Church and Calvinist use this same version today, and so will I. Some might say, "How dare you use the text they use to formulate the confession, you have to know Greek!"

- This affirmation is from 'Separated Unto the Gospel' by the Free Presbyterians to explain their position.

"In carrying on this preaching ministry the Free Presbyterian Church has, throughout its history, used the Authorized (often called the 'King James') Version of the Scriptures. We wish to avoid the confusion that arises from the use of many different translations and paraphrases in church services. We believe the Authorized Version is unrivaled as a translation of the Scriptures and that it reflects the authentic, historic Hebrew and Greek texts that God 'immediately inspired, and by His singular care and providence kept pure in all ages' (Westminster Confession of Faith, I.8) ."

The Free Presbyterian applies the Westminster Confession's statement on the sustaining of scripture by God expressly to the King James Authorized Version. If it is good enough to base the Confession on, it should be used to defend or refute the confession. We are not here to debate the KJV, but the Westminster Confession. They used the KJV to draw their conclusions.

I hold firm, by the study of the scripture they used, that all souls would be included in an 'unlimited scope of atonement' and Father made it possible for all men to taste the saving grace and salvation of Jesus Christ, and it is because of their rejection of Christ, they are damned. (1 Pet 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. . .")

Note that the word 'foreknowledge' not "fore-appointment" is used. Father being omniscient knew who would accept Christ after exercising their own free will. They were given the chance to accept Christ, but rejected him of their own free will. Christ paid the price for their sins, and they rejected that payment.

Within the context, we also have (1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:)

Now if the election are redeemed from the start, why have a "trial of faith" They couldn't lose faith in Christ. How could they, they are the election. Also note the words "might be found" - not "you are the election and it will be."

Yet again, in that same chapter (1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:) proclaims Father is not a respecter of men, we are all on the same playing level.

He has given us all the chance for redemption, and some reject it, to no fault of God. (Acts 10:34, Romans 1:19-20) Jesus died for all men. Anyone who obeys the gospel may be saved eternally. (Rev. 22:17 And the

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

Again it must be noted, "and 'if' ya call on the Father." If limited atonement were true, there would be no command to call on the Father, you couldn't help but call.

(2 Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:)

Here we see that this limited election is not a secure fate. First Peter calls them his brethren, and then tells them to be sure they stay their election, and "if" they do they shall never fall from that election. Conditions to the election. Stay the course.

(2 Thessalonians 1:11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:)

Again if limited atonement was true, and Jesus died for the few select, appointed before the foundations of the world and the number was cast in stone by Father; and Jesus did not die for the rest, why pray for the election? There it shows this election is not a sure fate, leaving it unlimited to each mans own heart and freewill. You wouldn't have to pray for the election to 'be' the election, they would already be the election, even if they didn't know it.

"God would count you worthy of this calling. . ." How can the election be worthy, if it is of none doing of their own, what are they worthy of?

If He deems our heart is set on His will, He will call us to the election. (Romans 8:27, Luke 16:15, Acts 15:8) . But it is each mans heart that determines if they are called, by their excising their own freewill. (Luke 6:45, Acts 15:8.)

And we are judged every man according to his works. (2 Timothy 4:14, Mathew 16:27) Why have a Judgment Day? What's to judge in limited atonement? "You're saved because God saved you and you're damned because God damned you, and none of this has anything to do with anything you have or haven't done." is proclamation, not judgment.

We run into another problem with Limited Atonement, and the Westminster Confession above. . . note it says. ". . .

Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed in Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

Yet the election talked of in Romans 'effectually' shows those talked of are not of the faith, they are called our enemies, are the election, enemies of the election?

(Romans 11:28 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the Father's sakes.)

This automatically brings into doubt biblical alliance and compatibility. "All Israel will be saved" Is the 'Israel' talked of the election? They do not confess Christ, so they can't be called the election by the those that profess the Westminster Confession, the bible calls them our "enemies OUR sake" yet the bible calls them the election as well. (Isaiah 45:4, Isaiah 65:9)

(Galations 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:) "Might" It is not a set deal, one can't be of the election and assume he can not fall away from it. (Hebrews 10:36)

(1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.)

Here again is another clear distinction, not only ours (The elections) But the sins of the whole world.

(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 that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.)

Here it CLEARLY shows he even purchased the price for the false ones, that rejected him. Over and over it makes it clear he paid for all sins... of every man, even the false prophets. . . that does not mean all will cash in on this deal, nor makes Jesus a failure, but rather man.

The false prophets in that verse are unsaved, they're bound for destruction. Peter says that even though they are unsaved Christ died for them. Some will not come to Him, that they might have salvation; they will not have Him to rule over them; they reject their salvation.

(Heb 2:9 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 man.)

It Also states Christ died for the ungodly (Romans 5:6.) and yet hell is reserved for the ungodly. (2 Peter 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.) We were all ungodly at once, "Total Depravity" and Christ died for all the ungodly, and some rejected that sacrifice, and remain ungodly, none the less Christ died for them too.

(2 Cor. 5:10-11 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.)

Why use persuasions of doctrine and preaching, if the election are only those Christ died for? Why preach the word at all, either Christ died for them or He did not, they are the election, they can't help but be saved.

(1 Timothy 2:4-6 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.)

I ask my opponent to answer one question, and one question alone to respond to:

Q. If Limited Atonement is truth, I'm a street-preacher; preaching the Atonement of Christ in an alleyway full of junkies, ones that don't confess Christ as their Lord, in honesty (because the last thing one wants to do is be dishonest in preaching the word) shouldn't the truth be preached as. . .

"There is a limited Atonement God has set, some of you, or all of you are the election. . . and some of you, or all of you are not the election."

"Those of you that aren't the election, you're damned no matter what Christ did on earth, he did not die for you, there is nothing you can do to change it, if you want to remain a junkie, so be it, you're bound for hell and worse things ahead anyway."

"Those of you that are the election, there is nothing you can do in the end, but be of the election. God will, in the end bring you out of your wicked ways, even if you don't know it now, and in fact if you are of the election, it matters not how much dope you put into your arm, you can stay here and dope up all you want, because in the end, you're the election, God will call you out when you hear the call. You'll know when He calls you, you're the election."

To recap by the face value of the KJV, which the Confession is formulated from, who did Christ die for by the bible's words, to me?

1. For all (1 Tim. 2:6; Isa 53:6 Titus 2:11).
2. For every man (Heb. 2:9).
3. For the world (John 3:16).
4. For the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2 Isa 49:6).
5. For the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).
6. For false teachers (2 Peter 2:1).
7. For many (Matthew 20:2).
8. For Israel (John 11:50-51).
9. For the Church (Eph. 5:25).
10. For "me" (Gal. 2:20).

word count 2044

LIMITED ATONEMENT - A Formal Debate

06-AUG-2004

OPENING REMARKS - by David Smart

A Brief Introduction

On virtually a daily basis, informal debates occur within #ChristianDebate on the Dalnet IRC network—that is, after all, the essential purpose of the room in the first place. But unless I am mistaken, this is to be the very first formal debate to occur in any venue between members of that room; furthermore, the first formal debate between two channel operators of that room. I appreciate and would like to thank KingJehu (David Shaw) for his generosity and goodwill in agreeing to participate in this historic event and I look forward to both the fruits of this effort as well as the opportunity for similar formal debates in the future. I would also like to thank Servetus for agreeing to moderate, and Charismata for agreeing to host the completed debate on the room's official web site.

The subject of this formal debate is the Reformed teaching of 'limited atonement' (also known as 'definite atonement' or 'particular redemption'), a teaching which develops and explains the concept that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, while sufficient for all, was efficient for the elect only—in other words, that Jesus died for the sins of the elect definitely, and not the sins of all mankind indefinitely. My name is David Smart (a.k.a. Ryft) and I will be taking the advocate side of this issue. My gracious opponent is David Shaw (a.k.a. KingJehu) and he will be taking the opposing side of this issue. While I will be attempting to show that this teaching is biblically sound, Mr. Shaw will be attempting to show that it is not.

The Advocate's Argument

In any debate, it is a good idea to define the key terms. In this particular debate there is one key term, *atonement*, with an attending qualifier, *limited*. In order to debate 'limited atonement', we should begin with an understanding of just what atonement actually is and what it means, because it is inseparable from the question "For whom did Christ die?" since that is precisely what his death accomplished: atonement.

'Atonement' is that whereby the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ reconciled fallen man with the sovereign, holy God. But it inextricably refers also to the logical order of reconciliation: namely, that the merits of Christ's life, death, and resurrection secured expiation (the removal of guilt due to sin), propitiation (satisfied the justices of God), justification, reconciliation, and as our High Priest he makes intercession for those so redeemed. The root meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words translated as such suggest to cover, to expiate, to cancel, to placate, to offer (or receive a sin offering; hence appease or propitiate), to effect reconciliation (by some conduct or course of action); specifically in the Greek, the meanings suggest 'to be friendly' or 'cause to be friendly'; also, with the preposition, 'to restore' or 'to leave off' (enmity, or evil, etc.). Various sources inform us that this word is derived from the Anglo-Saxon phrase 'at one' and signifies harmony of relationship or unity of life, etc., which implicitly harkens us back to Eden where Adam and Eve were 'at one' with God in relation, and also to the catastrophic Fall with its attending breach in that unity. The work of Christ in his death and resurrection reconciled the lost with God through expiating sins, propitiating God, and securing justification (Rom 5:1-21). This is what 'atonement' is and what it means (see also 'Atonement' in *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, 3rd Edition, 1897).

Consequently, the qualifier 'limited' means that the atonement and its saving graces are not for all men, and we can say this because scriptures are clear that not all men are reconciled to God, not all men are justified, not all men are saved from condemnation. If scriptures are to be believed, that the death and resurrection of Jesus secured atonement, then the fact that not all men are reconciled to God show us that Christ did not die for all men without exception. Since the clear testimony of scriptures informs us that, in the end, there will be tares among the wheat, goats among the sheep, condemned among the justified, we know that the atonement wrought by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus does not apply to all mankind. And we know that the Son of God died for no other purpose but atonement and its attending corollaries. It must be said that Jesus did not die for all mankind but rather for his people, for his sheep, for his church. And we see in John 10:11-15 that Jesus himself affirms that he laid down his life for the sheep: **"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I lay down my life for the sheep."** Ergo, he did not lay down his life for all mankind (verse 26, **"you are not my sheep"**; see also Eph 5:25-27).

It must be understood that the message of Calvary is not simply that the life of some man named Jesus expired on a cross and was resurrected on the third day. That is merely news; it is not *good news*. The reason why the gospel is called 'good news' is because his death and resurrection were more than a mundane point of fact: it actually accomplished something—atonement. Not potentially, not possibly, but actually. Symington wrote, *"This was the period when emphatically the Son of God made atonement for sin; when the tide of suffering rose to its height; when the dregs of the bitter cup of anguish were wrung out; when the sentence of woe reached its climax."*

His death upon the cross satisfied completely the justices of God; once Christ expiated sins and propitiated God, God no longer had any reason (legal or otherwise) to be angry with the believing sinner. In this way we can know that the atonement cannot apply to all men since some men remain under God's wrath (John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5-6, 8; etc.). "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," Paul clearly states, "according to the richness of his grace" (Eph. 1:7; cf., Col. 1:14). Does this describe all men? Do all men have redemption? No, not all men are in Christ. We can therefore know that the atonement does not apply to all men. Scriptures inform us that Christ died to deliver believers from this evil age, as God had willed (Gal 1:4), to redeem and purify believers (Titus 2:14), to sanctify and cleanse the church (Eph 5:25-27), in actuality remove God's wrath against believers (Rom 3:25), in actuality reconcile believers to God (Rom 5:10), actually obtain and secure eternal redemption for believers (Heb 9:12; Eph 1:7). This is not what his death and resurrection might do. It is what his death and resurrection did do. As J. I. Packer noted, Christ did not win *"a hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers, a mere possibility of salvation for any who might possibly believe,"* but a real, full, and complete salvation for his people, for his sheep.

We also know that Christ intercedes on behalf of those for whom he died (Rom 8:33-34), and this is why he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them (Heb 7:24-25). Does he intercede for all mankind? No: **"I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours ... I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message"** (John 17:9). He does not intercede for all mankind but rather only for believers (John 17:9; cf. 6:36-37, 44, 65). What sort of conclusion can we draw?

1. Christ died for all and prays for everyone, but the Father refuses to accept his sacrifice in part and refuses answer Christ's prayers in part.
2. Christ died for all but refuses to intercede for all.
3. Jesus died only for believers, and thus prays only for believers.

Both (1) and (2) violate several passages of God's Word. If one rejects 'limited atonement', some serious problems present themselves to be addressed. Consider the following:

1. God either intended to save all mankind, none of mankind, or some of mankind
 - (a) If it is true that God intended to save all mankind, then God is neither sovereign nor omnipotent, for (i) he will have failed to accomplish what he intended to do (ii) against an obstacle outside of himself (usually the will of the sinner, it is argued).
 - (b) If it is true that God intended to save **none of mankind**, then he is neither sovereign nor omnipotent, for (i) he will have failed to prevent (ii) the will of another being, Jesus, who intended to save at least some of mankind and will succeed; moreover, the Trinity is denied in this scenario, since it affirms a conflict of both powers and wills between the Father and the Son; an option to escape this dilemma is to reject the veracity and reliability of scriptures, for they are which testify (iii) that Christ will succeed, as well as (iv) to the unity of the Godhead.
 - (c) If it is true that God intended to save **some of mankind**, then we have an argument for limited atonement. A sovereign and omnipotent God chose his elect before the foundation of the world, having predestined them according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, and intended to save them by his unsearchable mercy and grace, for his good pleasure, in order that they might be for the praise of his glory.
2. It is said that Jesus died for
 - (a) **some** of the sins of **all** men
 - i. If this notion is true (including its sibling, that he died for some of the sins of some men) then, in the final analysis, it is understood that all men yet have some sins to bear the penalty for; that is to say, no men are saved! This notion should intuitively be tossed out by any thinking Christian, for no manner of Christian would sincerely affirm that Christ's death failed to save anyone. Therefore, we ought to be left with only the second and third notions for serious consideration.
 - (b) **all** of the sins of **some** men
 - i. Now if this notion is true, then we have an argument for 'limited atonement.'
 - (c) **all** the sins of **all** men
 - i. If this notion is true, then this raises some interesting questions. If it is true that Christ died for all the sins of all men, why are any men condemned to hell? Because of unbelief, comes the answer, because they did not accept the salvation offered to them. But tell me, is that not a sin? If it is not a sin, then why do they bear any penalty for it? If it is a sin, then Christ already bore the penalty due unto it (see 1 Pet 2:24 ; cf. Isa. 53:6); unless, of course, it is argued that God did not accept Christ's sacrifice in their stead, see (ii) below.
 - ii. If Christ did die for any non-believer, then that would mean that his suffering for them was unacceptable to the Father—that in spite of Christ's redemption of that person, the Father still had wrath left to pour out upon the person. Such a teaching nullifies the worth of the cross and destroys the gospel altogether.

(d) There are, of course, three possible avenues out of this dilemma:

- i. Christ did not die for that particular sin, which returns us back to 2(a)
- ii. Christ did not die for the sins of that person, which returns us back to 2(b)
- iii. the efficacy of Christ's atonement depends on and is determined by sinful man; i.e. Christ's life, death, and resurrection was not sufficient in itself for salvation, needing some element from the sinner added to it.

Again, I appreciate my friend's generosity and goodwill in agreeing to this debate and I look forward to the coming exchange.

2,019 words

DAVID SHAW (KingJehu) — Rebuttal Against Mr. Smart's Opening Remarks

Quote: If scriptures are to be believed, that the death and resurrection of Jesus secured atonement, then the fact that not all men are reconciled to God show us that Christ did not die for all men without exception.

Ryft, If scriptures are to be believed, then Christ died for "The World" "All Men" "The Ungodly" "The Lost" "Every Man" etc. etc.

Second, one doesn't repudiate the other. This is Fathers whole point, He sent Christ down to die for all men's sin, and those that are evil and wicked reject that atonement, which leaves them without excuse. (rom 1:18-20).

Third, one has to be able to accept something to be able to reject it. (John 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.) They would have to be able to receive, and believe His words, to reject them.

(Hebrews 12:24-25 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:.) Here it clearly shows that the choice is up to each mans own heart, and they all could have this atonement. Some reject it, and that leaves them without excuse because they deny Him, they could have been atoned, they deny it.

(2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:)

Again Choice.

Quote: Since the clear testimony of scriptures informs us that, in the end, there will be tares among the wheat, goats among the sheep, condemned among the justified, we know that the atonement wrought by the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus does not apply to all mankind.

Again, it is anything but clear because one doesn't dispel the other. In fact it never states Christ "didn't" die for some, but it does state Christ died for "all" "every man" "the world" etc. etc. because the enemy is among us, doesn't mean they can't be saved, as (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.) show's us.

The Lord isn't "longsuffering" for the election, why would He be, they couldn't perish, unless one believes that the election can lose that atonement, which blows Limited Atonement out of the 'Theological Sea of Apologetics'.

I don't believe in "Once Saved Always Saved" but that's another debate. For Limited Atonement by the 'Confession' to stand, one can't lose that atonement, so by the views of Limited Atonement, that can't be Father 'longsuffering' for the election, they couldn't lose that election if they tried, so it has to by default be about those not of the election and God would have them be saved as well, of thier own freewill.

Quote: *And we know that the Son of God died for no other purpose but atonement and its attending corollaries. It must be said that Jesus did not die for all mankind but rather for his people, for his sheep, for his church.*

Again, no, we do not know that by the Word of God, as stated above, it overwhelmingly shows the opposite. This is where interpretational subjectivity comes in, and we can waddle in the puddle of preference renderings till it dries up, but by face value, the bible is clear as to who Christ died for.

Quote: *And we see in John 10:11-15 that Jesus himself affirms that he laid down his life for the sheep: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ... I lay down my life for the sheep." Ergo, he did not lay down his life for all mankind (verse 26, "you are not my sheep"; see also Eph 5:25-27).*

Ryft, yes, lets take that chapter in 'correct' context. Jesus clearly states. -'10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.'- This shows that any man 'could' enter of his own freewill, so they could have atonement as well and if that isn't enough, we have '10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.'The first fold of sheep of course are those of the 12 tribes of Jacob, those of "Israel" as shown here.

Matt 15:24-28; But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Here Christ declares who He has come from, His fold is the 'Lost' House of Israel, which the woman is not of, she is a gentile, and yet she worshipped Christ, and He proclaimed her faith as 'great' and gave blessings. Some of course will contend that this has nothing to do with salvation, that it is a mere blessing for life on earth, but note Jesus said it was meant for the "children He came for" and the mother also worshipped Christ and confessed Christ as Lord. 'whosoever denies me before man, him will I deny before my Father in Heaven, but whosoever confesses me before men, him will I confess before my Father in Heaven.'

Some believe one can't change from "not of the fold" to "of the fold." And vice-versa. Yet many bible verses show just the opposite. Saul to Paul is just one of many that made the change. (1 Timothy 1:9-16) It also limits 'All things are possible with God' to 'Almost all things are possible with God.' (1 Corinithians 6:9, Mathew 12:41)

Verse 26 only says they are not of His sheep as well, it does not mean they couldn't be of His fold.

Quote: *In this way we can know that the atonement cannot apply to all men since some men remain under God's wrath (John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5-6, 8; etc.).*

An Atheist's respond to this doctrine of limited atonement would be something along the lines of this.

1. "If I'm not of the Limited Atonement why does God tell me to call on God if I can't?"

2. "If I'm of the Limited Atonement why does God tell to call, if I can't help but call when it is my time to call?"

3. "Why does God tell me to repent if I can not repent?"

4. "Why does God tell me to repent if can't help but repent when it is my time to repent?"

(John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.)

This verse alone show's an unlimited atonement, why will the wrath of God abide on him, because he did not believe the words of Christ. It was there for him, he could have believed, but his heart was evil, and wanted no part of God, and therefore Christ. Why would God punish someone in everlasting hell, for not believing in Christ, if they were not given the chance to believe? 'Sovereign Rule?' See without it, defined as the Calvinist define it, "Which in no way is the right rendering anyway." it seems Limited Atonement falls as well. One has to take on the position that God will cast them in hell, for no other reason then to prove His Supreme Rule.

Ryft, you use Rom 1:18-20 as biblical evidence of Limited Atonement as well, but if taken in context it show's just the opposite as well . . .

Romans 1:18-21. . . shows there is a cause, a reason God has done this to them, which brings about a reaction of God and His wrath on them. It shows they had and have a choice, freewill, and thereby could have accepted God, and Christ, but loved evil more, and rejected God. If they "could" have accepted Christ, then His death was for them as well, which of course leaves the atonement open for all. Some will reject it because they want pleasure in unrighteousness. Those other verses you cited in that quote, are unpersuasive in showing me the atonement is limited as well, but running out of word count. . . yikes! Perhaps next post.

***Quote:** Paul clearly states, "according to the richness of his grace" (Eph. 1:7; cf., Col. 1:14). Does this describe all men? Do all men have redemption? No, not all men are in Christ. We can therefore know that the atonement does not apply to all men.*

(Ephessians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:)

. . . according to the riches of his grace. (Ephessians 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:) This is the same context, that is to say, the subject is still the riches of his grace and please note it does not say to the 'election', but includes all non-jews, will they all accept it, no, and they'll be judged for that rejection. Gentiles in no way refers to Christians alone, for all non-jews are gentile.

In John 17:9, Jesus does not pray for the world, because as He said, He did not come for any other then the lost sheep of Jacob, BUT once they rejected Him, and His blood was shed, then the New Covenant was established. (Hebrews 8:13, Hebrews 12:24, Rom 11:25-30)

(1) Christ died for all and prays for everyone, but the Father refuses to accept his sacrifice . . . Ryft Christ sits on the right hand of God, you will have to show me where it states, in heaven, that He is praying for anyone. Interceding for us is not praying for us.

Second God sends blessing on both the just and the unjust. Christ prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" Does that mean Judas is saved? Annas and Caiaphas? Pilate? What does that do to the Confession? They had no faith in Christ. Or did God not answer Jesus' prayers.

Also, Jesus is praying for the 12, in John chapter 17, does this mean that all the other followers of Him are not being prayed for? Read verse 20. The world here is shown to represent evil as a whole, and no, Jesus nor us is to pray for it.

(John 5:40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.) Note it doesn't say, you CAN NOT come to me. Will not, showing choice.

Ryft, you appear to believe that if God makes a payment in blood, if some do not use that payment for it's purpose, that makes God a failure, if so, how does that make God a failure?

If I pay your fine (atonement) for an offensive you committed, left you clear and implicit instructions of how to obtain said payment (My Word), and how to apply it, and you reject it, then who is at fault, me or you? Does that make the payment made useless?

Wasn't the sacrificial offering made for the people? (Leviticus 9:15, Leviticus 16:24 etc etc etc) Could non Hebrews partake of this atonement? Yes.

Blessings in Christ.
KingJehu.

Out of Word Count!

LIMITED ATONEMENT - A Formal Debate

13-AUG-2004

FIRST REBUTTAL - by David Smart

I would like to thank Mr. Shaw once again for this wonderful opportunity to explore the profundity of scriptures and richness of Christ's truth through the examination of this debate's central subject. I am always excited and enthusiastic to study the Word of God and its revealed truths, especially with others, and I am confident that Mr. Shaw shares this feeling. I hope that we all, especially our readers, come away from this encounter changed and edified.

It should be underscored here that the central subject of this debate is 'limited atonement'. For those that are not familiar, this is the 'L' of the acrostic T.U.L.I.P. (**T**otal depravity, **U**nconditional election, **L**imited atonement, **I**rresistible grace, **P**erseverance of the saints), which should not be thought of as a statement of Reformed theology. Rather, these specific teachings originated in the canons of the synod of Dordrecht, which was essentially a point-by-point response to the five Articles of the Remonstrance of 1610, spearheaded by the followers of James Arminius who deviated from the Reformed theology in which he was raised.

The reason I am investing valuable word-count on this note is because my colleague appears to have committed the largest portion of his Opening Remarks to other issues contained in this acrostic; specifically, most of his objections regarded 'unconditional election' and 'perseverance of the saints'. For instance, he offers several passages which seem to suggest that election is not "a secure fate" (perseverance of the saints), and elsewhere he offers several passages which he feels supports the notion that if God "deems our heart is set on His will, He will call us to the election" (unconditional election). While these teachings are interrelated and important one to another, the scope of this debate is only limited atonement. With all due respect, and without intending any offense, I am going to disregard everything in his Opening Remarks except for those statements which I could discern as relating to the subject of this debate.

To substantiate his position against limited atonement, Mr. Shaw offered four primary texts: 1 Joh 2:2, 2 Pet 2:1, Heb 2:9, and 1Tim 2:4-6. Given the word-count restriction of this debate, that is too much for me to address already—for Mr. Shaw's sake, who I am confident would not be satisfied with a short, pithy apologetic on each of these; I am confident, rather, that Mr. Shaw would appreciate a precise, biblically consistent exegesis. So for the sake of addressing his questions in a more thorough manner, I will address just one of these texts, which ultimately should suffice since his interpretation of the context in each is identical: that Christ died for all men. If I can explain the context with respect to one text, it should carry over to the other verses as well. Upon the completion of this debate, if necessary I would be more than willing to explain the remaining three verses as well (and make it available on the Internet through a hotlink in my Closing Remarks).

Let's examine 1 John 2:2. It states that Christ Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." This passage brings to center stage a word I used in my Opening Remarks with respect to atonement, propitiation, a term which refers to that saving grace whereby Christ removed God's wrath from believing sinners; when God's wrath against a sinner is propitiated, it is removed from that sinner. Therefore, in order to be consistent, Mr. Shaw has to believe that every single person who ever lived will be saved (universalism) because propitiated sins cannot be punished,

otherwise propitiation loses its meaning. But John does not believe this (Rev 14:9-11; John 5:29; 3:18, etc.) and, actually, neither does Mr. Shaw, and we will soon see why he must concur that 1 John 2:2 does not mean 'the whole world' as every person without exception.

What does John mean in this passage, then? We find a parallel in his gospel, John 11:51-52: "[Caiaphas] prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad." Elsewhere John is consistent with this context, such as when he says, "And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd" (Joh 10:14-16); also, "And they sang a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation'" (Rev 5:9). In other words, what John is saying here is that Jesus is the propitiation for not just the sins of the Jewish Christians but for the sins of believers from every tribe, language, people, and nation, sheep that are not of this fold that the Good Shepherd must bring. Concordant with the teachings of another apostle, Paul, John is saying that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of all men without distinction (cf. Gal 3:28), and not all men without exception (cf. Rev 14:10). Clearly John contends that there are indeed exceptions, clearly he teaches that there are some whose sins are not propitiated, such that they remain under God's wrath, which is confirmed elsewhere when he says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36; cf. Rom 1:18; 2:5-6, 8; etc.).

Additionally, the Jews had always held the notion of the Gentiles that "there is no propitiation for them" because they are not of Israel, which is what John is addressing here and may even be the reason why he spelled this out. Paul, likewise, emphatically asserts salvation for all men without distinction—not only Jew but Gentile also—when he asserts that "not all who are descended from Israel are Israel" (Rom 9:6-7; cf. Gal 3:28; Mat 3:7-10). Consider the following from the apostle Luke that is within this vein:

"On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: 'We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth'. When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:44-48f).

Of particularly interesting note is the latter half of verse 48, "and all who were appointed for eternal life believed," which corresponds with the assurance of Jesus who said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me" (John 6:37), and they will come to him because "I know my sheep and my sheep know me . . . I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice" (John 10:14-16).

So both myself and Mr. Shaw must understand that 1 John 2:2 cannot mean literally 'the whole world' without exception, we must understand that Jesus Christ is not the propitiation for the sins of all mankind without exception, because we understand there are exceptions, because there are those on whom the wrath of God remains. By definition, those did not have their sins propitiated—in other words, the atonement is limited. The difference between Mr. Shaw and myself is that, for some reason other than 1 John 2:2, he stops somewhere between acknowledging the exegesis and realizing its conclusion.

I am reaching the end of my word-count restriction, so I have no choice but to commit the rest of this rebuttal to the question he wanted answered the most. He asked me, "Why use persuasions of doctrine and preaching if the election are only those Christ died for? Why preach the word at all? Either Christ died for them or He did not; they are the election, they can't help but be saved." That last clause, it will be noted here, is a very inaccurate and inappropriate conception of election, but I don't have the space to obviate it.

Why preach the gospel? A multitude of reasons, the most primary being that the child of God absolutely loves to; the child of God is so overwhelmed with joy and peace that he can't help but spread this good news to any who will listen. And quite often, this gospel is spread without the use of words: the child of God lives the gospel, and people find themselves compelled to ask after them about it. Another reason is that the children of God were commanded to, and their greatest pleasure is in following their Father's will for the sake of his glory. Yet another reason is offered rather clearly by the apostle Paul: "...for 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? . . . Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:13-17). See also the Parable of the Sower (Mat 13:3-23) and Paul's application of it (1 Cor 3:1-9), where he affirms that we are to sow the seed (the word of Christ, Luk 8:11), but whether it grows or not is up to God.

What are you supposed to tell your listeners? Not that Christ died for all men, for he died only for his sheep; rather, you should tell them that God, out of the unsearchable richness of his mercy and grace, sent his only begotten Son to be the propitiation for the sins of all who believe, that a real, full, and complete salvation is secured for all who believe in the Son of God and call upon his name, that he died for all men without distinction (whether you are a Jew or a Gentile, whether you are a responsible family man or a strung out junkie, etc.), that no matter what you have done in your life, however good or bad you feel it has been, none of it matters when it comes to God's merciful salvation. He was able, after all, to save a blood-thirsty murderer (Saul of Tarsus). What do you tell your listeners? Only that which finds correspondence to and is consistent with God's revealed word.

I find myself wishing the word-count restriction was higher, for I would have liked to address so many more issues than this. But as I said, with the context of 1 John 2:2 properly in hand, it should carry over to the other verses as well. There are additional issues that could have been addressed, like the plethora of scriptures that shows 'all men' rarely means literally all men (e.g. Luk 21:17), just as it has been shown that 1 John 2:2 cannot mean literally 'the whole world' without exception, since there are exceptions.

1,935 words

DAVID SHAW (KingJehu) — Response to Mr. Smart's Rebuttal

Quote: For instance, he offers several passages which seem to suggest that election is not "a secure fate" (perseverance of the saints), and elsewhere he offers several passages which he feels supports the notion that if God "deems our heart is set on His will, He will call us to the election" (unconditional election).

I most respectfully contend that both have everything to do with limited atonement as most everyone familiar with the term does as well. If it can be shown by scripture that one can be of the election and then fall from the election, it shows the election to be a changing number, and unlimited.

Likewise of course if unconditional election can be supported by scripture, it leaves choice in the matter. If one is given a choice to accept or reject that atonement, this leaves the atonement unlimited. Both as shown in the last two posts have everything to do with unlimited atonement and overwhelming show it to be truth.

Quote: To substantiate his position against limited atonement, Mr. Shaw offered four primary texts: 1 Joh 2:2, 2 Pet 2:1, Heb 2:9, and 1Tim 2:4-6If I can explain the context with respect to one text, it should carry over to the other verses as well.

In all actuality 1 john 2:2 and 2 peter 2:1 are exclusive events, distinct one from the other. . . 1 john 2:2 shows why Christ came "sacrifice for all sins" and 2 peter 2:1 shows certain men turning down that "sacrifice for sin"

I note above an appeal was made to other scholars commentaries on the subject, and if you will indulge me for a second, let's read what Matthew Henry had to say on verses 1 john 2:1-2 . . .

When have an Advocate with the Father; one who has undertaken, and is fully able, to plead in behalf of every one who applies for pardon and salvation in his name, depending on his pleading for them. He is "Jesus," the Saviour, and "Christ," the Messiah, the Anointed. He alone is "the Righteous One," who received his nature pure from sin, and as our Surety perfectly obeyed the law of God, and so fulfilled all righteousness. All men, in every land, and through successive generations, are invited to come to God through this all-sufficient atonement, and by this new and living way. The gospel, when rightly understood and received, sets the heart against all sin, and stops the allowed practice of it; at the same time it gives blessed relief to the wounded consciences of those who have sinned.

2 peter 2:1 is a whole other event in itself. John shows who Jesus is, the propitiator sent by God, for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. 2 peter shows the event of that propitiation being turned down.

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 that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

I'm not one that stands much on "Argumentum ad verecundiam" but noted in above posts it was used by the opposition, therefore, must be deemed "usage proper by precedence" within this debate.

Again, let us turn to the Matthew Henry Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible, on this verse as well. Though I assure all, this is by no means the only Respected Commentary that confirms this believe by Scripture.

Excerpt on commentary on 2 Peter 2:1 by Matthew Henry;

... They reject and refuse to hear and learn of the great teacher sent from God, though he is the only Saviour and Redeemer of men, who paid a price sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world. ...

You see it must be recognized and acknowledged that the mercy seat of the Tabernacle was called the propitiation as well. The sacrifice made in the Tabernacle was made for all those that wished for atonement of sins, and this atonement was not left only to the 12 tribes, but as many as would convert to the will of God. That is to say, the Hebrew/Judaism Sacrifice for Sin was open to all, regardless of their being of the 12 tribes or not. Anyone not born of the 12 tribes of Jacob, could in fact still have atonement of sin, by conversion. There were such converts from early times (Isa. 56:3; Neh. 10:28; Esther 8:17). The law of Moses made specific regulations regarding the admission into the Jewish church of such as were not born Israelites (Ex. 20: 10; 23:12; 12:19, 48; Deut. 5:14; 16; 11, 14, etc.).

Christ being the New Covenant, brings with Him more or less Atonement? If He brings less Atonement, then the Old Covenant would surpass the New as far as atonement goes, for with the old covenant "All men" could place themselves under this atonement. But the fact is, of course that Christ brings with Him more atonement, because not only is He the Sacrifice for the Sins of the World, but He sets us free from the burdens of the law, wherein liberty resides.

Propitiation is of course accomplished in the travails of Christ on the cross. The sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world changed the whole position of humanity in our relationship to God, for He recognizes what Christ did in behalf of the sinning man, whether man enters into it or not.

Justification of condemnation is wholly based on this sacrifice of Christ. God has given all men, justification for their sin "Atonement by the Blood of Christ." and upon turning down that justification for sin, justification of condemnation remains, because they of their own freewill wish to be separated from God, therefore turn down the "Price that Bought Them"

***Quote:** Let's examine 1 John 2:2. It states that Christ Jesus "is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." This passage brings to center stage a word I used in my Opening Remarks with respect to atonement, propitiation, Mr. Shaw has to believe that every single person who ever lived will be saved (universalism) because propitiated sins cannot be punished, otherwise propitiation loses its meaning.*

No, Mr. Shaw does not believe that at all, as stated above, one has to have the correct understanding of the word propitiation.

Propitiation

This means the turning away of wrath by an offering. It is similar to expiation but expiation does not carry the nuances involving wrath. For the Christian the propitiation was the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. It turned away the wrath of God so that He could pass "over the sins previously committed" (Romans 3:25). It was the Father who sent the Son to be the propitiation (1 John 4:10) for all (1 John 2:2).

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People don't have to accept a propitiation for it to be made. The whole point is, that Christ made the payment for sin, by His sacrificing His sinless blood and "the damned" reject that payment, of their own freewill. No one will ever stand before God and claim that Jesus did not die for them, they are and will be without excuse (Romans 1:18-20.) Their sin was paid for, up front, they reject that payment and come Judgment Day will be required to pay for their own sins, since they rejected that payment "sacrifice"

Quote: But John does not believe this (Rev 14:9-11; John 5:29; 3:18, etc.) and, actually, neither does Mr. Shaw, and we will soon see why he must concur that 1 John 2:2 does not mean 'the whole world' as every person without exception.

Again, very presupposing on Ryft's part. I have read the whole rebuttal, and very staunchly and steadfastly disagree. I conquer just the opposite in fact, as most verses posted to support contentions on limited atonement in fact show it to be unlimited by conceding choice and freewill. If humanity as a whole has the ability and freewill to accept Christ, then Christ paid the price for all, and some reject that sacrifice made on behalf of their sins.

Let's look at a cited verse used to support limited atonement in the above quote.

Revelation 14:9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

Right there is another example of a verse misused to support limited atonement. That verse clearly shows a cause for the wrath. They have a choice in the worship of the beast, or Christ. God is not angry with them because God gave them no choice in the matter. That would be borderline insanity, schizophrenic and egomaniacal.

"I'm angry with you, because I left you no choice but to receive the Mark of the Beast, and you took it! Now you will feel my wrath on you, for doing what I created you to do! And now I will burn you in hell for everlasting, because you were not give freewill and a choice in the matter!"

The other to verses that are cited to coincide show a "cause" for wrath as well, rejection of Christ, His words and His sacrifice. Father is not going to condemn souls to everlasting punishment without justification. (Isaiah 45:21, John 5:30, John 8:16)

Again, what judgment is there in judging men that had no choice but to remain wicked?

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Ezekiel 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Both those verses and many many more show that the wicked can indeed change, of their own freewill, and this was under the Old Covenant, are we to believe that the New Covenant of Christ doesn't include as much, if not more "Atonement Proficiency" then that of the Old?

Revelation 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

In fact even Jezebel could have repented, but by exercising freewill, she chose not to repent, even though God gave her space and time. . . "Long suffering that all come to repentance." Which of course leaves the atonement sacrifice open to all.

Quote: *Yet another reason is offered rather clearly by the apostle Paul: "...for 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? . . . Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:13-17).*

And again, I contend that under limited atonement, the election are the election, regardless of the preaching of the word. If one is born into the Election, there is nothing that can derail that election, and therefore no need in preaching the word. The election will remain the election, and the non-election will remain the non-election irrespective of hearing or not hearing the word. In Fact Rom 10:13-17 shows direct conflict with limited atonement as well. There would be no need for the election to hear the Gospel, they are the election and are saved no matter what. The election predestined to salvation, irreversible, would in no way need to hear the Gospel, because they are of the election, and can not be derailed from that "theological track"

Blessing KingJehu
Word Count 2020

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I'm once again way over my word count, and my closing statement will reflect that over usage by a deficit of word count numbers, but suffice to say, I found the oppositions rebuttal to be very evasive.

LIMITED ATONEMENT - A Formal Debate

20-AUG-2004

SECOND REBUTTAL - by David Smart

As we begin to reach the end of this formal debate between myself and Mr. Shaw, a few things have come to light. One of the more striking things that has come to light during the course of this debate is Mr. Shaw's apparent disinclination to address the actual subject of the debate: that being 'limited atonement'. Time and again he has developed impressive and elaborate smoke-and-mirror shows through subjects such as 'Unconditional Election' and 'Perseverance of the Saints' and 'Irresistable Grace', insisting that they are integral to the issue of atonement and that such subjects must be addressed if 'Limited Atonement' is to stand (i.e. Red Herring fallacy). While I do not disagree with him in that respect—indeed, I admitted such subjects were interrelated and important—I must note that he has done everything but address 'Limited Atonement'. He has shown verses which, for him, appear to suggest that election is not a secure fate, he has asked what the point of evangelism is if election is true, he has suggested that the composition of elect is "a changing number, and unlimited," he has provided verses that show a call to repentance and explained how, for him, they demonstrate that 'choice' is a key factor in salvation, he has explained how he feels that 'Unconditional Election' seems to negate 'choice', et cetera ad nauseum. These are all very important subjects and very good questions. However, they are all different letters off the acrostic T.U.L.I.P., while the *agreed upon* scope of the debate was just the 'L'.

Another striking thing is the fact that Mr. Shaw is evidently lacking in understanding when it comes to Reformed teaching, with his every post serving as verifiable evidence. His logical fallacies are legion, and the Straw Man is his most notorious. For instance, time and again he has appealed to 'choice' as being a manifest element in faith and salvation, as if Reformed theology denies choice in any respect. As a matter of fact, Reformed theologians recognize the element of choice every bit as much as Mr. Shaw does, insisting every bit as strongly that man is not programmed automaton (with the plausible exception of Graham Kendall). Simply because Mr. Shaw cannot understand how 'choice' is meaningful or genuine in light of 'Unconditional Election' doesn't mean Reformed teaching denies choice; such would be the fallacious argument from personal incredulity. If this debate was actually about 'Unconditional Election', I would love to explain how 'choice' is meaningful and genuine. But that is not the subject of the debate. Both myself and Mr. Shaw believe that 'choice' is an essential and important element to faith and salvation—there is no disagreement there. But please note this carefully: whether or not we are free agents doesn't answer the question, "For whom did Christ die?"

In both my Opening Remarks and First Rebuttal, I examined carefully two distinct and inescapably important terms: *atonement*, and *propitiation*. When it comes to the subject of 'Limited Atonement', it is fundamentally integral that we understand what 'atonement' is and what it means if we are to understand its extent. And if a particular definition of the extent of atonement does not correspond with the eschatological reality as expressed in scriptures, then that definition is false in some respect. This is why an examination of those two terms are so vitally important. Scriptures are clear that Christ's sacrifice removed the guilt of sin (expiation), removed the wrath of God (propitiation), secured justification, reconciling man and God, and he always lives to make intercession for them. This is atonement, this is what it is and what it means. Therefore, if it is unlimited, then all men have the guilt of sin removed from them, all men have the wrath of God removed from them, all men have justification in Christ, all men are reconciled to God. However, if it is limited in its extent, then some men remain guilty of their sin, some men remain under the wrath of God, some men remain condemned, separated from God. I ask, then, which of the two correspond with the eschatological reality as expressed in scriptures?

And I gave a key passage with respect to the extent of the atonement, setting it apart as per agreement, with the expectation that Mr. Shaw would address it, as per agreement. To the detriment of his argument in the context of this debate, Mr. Shaw failed to refute the passage. Jesus said clearly that he laid down his life for the sheep. That's weighty enough in itself, but verse 26 adds insult to injury when Jesus informs the Jewish leaders that they are "not of my sheep." **Did he lay down his life for them? According to Christ's own words, no, he laid down his life for the sheep, which they are not of.** In that singular discourse, Jesus limited the atonement by a certain number already. The Jewish leaders may be "of the house of Israel," but Jesus confirmed that they are not of his sheep. It is also interesting to note that Jesus did not say, "Because you don't believe, you are not of my sheep." Rather, he said, "You do not believe because you are not of my sheep" (i.e. election). Mr. Shaw mentioned something about the Canaanite woman from the district of Tyre and Sidon. We don't know whether or not she was 'saved', but even if we assumed she was, I would respond that Jesus admitted he had "other sheep not of this fold." However, all we know is that her daughter was healed. We know nothing else.

And through a key passage of Mr. Shaw's argument, 1 John 2:2, I explored even more deeply than before the meaning of the term 'propitiation' and examined this passage in light of it. I explained that propitiation refers to that saving grace whereby Christ removed God's wrath from believing sinners; when God's wrath against a sinner is propitiated, it is removed from that sinner. And Mr. Shaw appeared to concur with that definition, citing a similar definition from Matthew Slick's *Dictionary of Theology*, which concurred with my articulation: "This means the turning away of wrath . . . [the propitiation] turned away the wrath of God." Given that propitiation means the removal of God's wrath, if Mr. Shaw believes that 'the whole world' in that verse is literally universal, then he believes God's wrath has been removed from the whole world. This interpretation, however, contradicts scriptures. Again, John teaches that there are some whose sins are not propitiated, such that they remain under God's wrath, which is confirmed elsewhere when he says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him" (John 3:36; cf. Rom 1:18; 2:5-6, 8; etc.). It is to know nothing of justice, or the holy nature of God, to suggest such blasphemy as that God would punish a thing twice. As Charles H. Spurgeon noted, "God will not punish twice for one thing. If God punished Christ for your sins He will not punish you. 'Payment God's justice cannot twice demand; first, at the bleeding Saviour's hand, and then again at mine.' How can God be just if he punished Christ, the substitute, and then man himself afterwards?" The very notion is blasphemy, as it maligns the name of our most holy God and his righteous character. As Mr. Shaw has agreed in a few places, some men remain under God's wrath. Obviously, then, Christ did not remove God's wrath from literally the whole world but rather only from the believers. Who are the believers? The sheep, which are those for whom Christ died.

Here is an interesting quote from Matthew J. Slick, webmaster of www.carm.org: "Jesus died only for the elect. Though Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was not efficacious for all. Jesus only bore the sins of the elect." Ironically, www.carm.org and its webmaster are Reformed. Matthew J. Slick graduated with a Masters in Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary in 1991 (see also The Calvinist Corner at www.mslick.com). I was delighted to witness Mr. Shaw cite from that source in his rebuttal. But then, he freely quotes from Matthew Henry, too, who said in reference to the world, "Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it" (*Commentary*, Vol. V, p. 1,154).

A final thing that has come to light as we approach the close of this debate is Mr. Shaw's apparent disinclination to respond to my direct challenges to him, even though I duly responded to the one he directly presented to me. Now, to be fair, it may not have been recognized as a challenge, so I will restate it here in the form of a question: Did God intend to save (a) all men, (b) some men, or (c) no men? I submit that (a) and (c) destroy the character and nature of God, as well as the harmony and unity of the Trinity (see my Opening Remarks for elaboration). The other challenge was, of course, contained in 2(c)(i) which was presented against unlimited atonement. If Christ died for all men, especially in light of 1 John 2:2, then for what reason are any condemned to hell? If unbelief is a sin, Christ already atoned for that sin, including

the removal of God's wrath. Unless Mr. Shaw is prepared to admit that either (a) God punishes twice for one thing (that sinner's Substitute first and then that sinner on top of that), or (b) God did not accept Christ's suffering as a propitiation. If unbelief is not a sin, then for what reason is that person in hell?

I am sincerely hoping that Mr. Shaw does not, in his Closing Remarks, continue to presuppose the truth of his argument by reasserting that a person is capable of becoming one of the sheep of his own accord, or by reasserting that salvific grace is resistable or that election is conditional and not a secure fate, or by reasserting that evangelism seems pointless if unconditional election is true, or reasserting the truth of libertarian agency or persisting in his straw man about 'choice'...

...because the subjects of Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Irresistable Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints are all different letters off the acrostic T.U.L.I.P. and outside the scope of this debate, a scope which was agreed upon beforehand, and are therefore red herrings. The scope of the debate, as agreed upon, regarded 'Limited Atonement' which addresses the question, "For whom did Christ die?" 'Total Depravity' talks about how one is incapable of becoming, on his own accord, one of those for whom Christ died. 'Unconditional Election' talks about how one does not contribute anything to becoming one of those for whom Christ died. 'Irresistable Grace' talks about the powerful sovereignty of God in succeeding to save those for whom Christ died. 'Perseverance of the Saints' talks about how those for whom Christ died will, in the end, be saved. It is 'Limited Atonement' that talks about "For whom did Christ die?" and that was supposed to be the debate.

1,844 words

DAVID SHAW (KingJehu) — Summary of Argument Against Limited Atonement

My contender in this bout, it seems, has given us every reason why he will not answer proposed questions, even using up much valued word count to refuse to answer such question, and repeatedly, as most Calvin Doctrine professing people do.

When I was asked to partake in this debate, I read the statement, and posted my first post: "I agree. That statement is in my opinion biblically incorrect. I will be taking the opposing position and refute Limited Atonement by that definition."

He was proposed with many questions, and perhaps a bit overwhelmed at which time, spent more time telling us why he won't elaborate, and even trying to focus and limit the debate within one simple question, yet admits himself the subject is complex. He say's I did not answer and will not answer the question. "Who did Christ die for." Now anyone with the ability to scroll and read can see I have answered that question many time. . . and clearly.

To recap by the face value of the KJV, which the Confession is formulated from, who did Christ died for by the bibles words, to me?

1. For all (1 Tim. 2:6; Isa 53:6 Titus 2:11).
2. For every man (Heb. 2:9).
3. For the world (John 3:16).
4. For the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2 Isa 49:6).
5. For the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).
6. For false teachers (2 Peter 2:1).
7. For many (Matthew 20:2).
8. For Israel (John 11:50-51).
9. For the Church (Eph. 5:25).
10. For "me" (Gal. 2:20).

Now I ask, is that not a clear statement as to who I believe Christ died for? Of course that is not the only instance by far.

Limited Atonement means the Atonement of Christ is limited to a certain number, that all can't accept this atonement. Unlimited Atonement means that the Atonement can be accepted by all souls. My opponent freely admits that all men have freewill, and all have a choice in acceptance of Christ. Now if all mankind can accept Christ, then the atonement is unlimited in scope, going out to all men.

My purpose in this debate is stated very clearly, to refute Limited Atonement by the definition and confession above. Because my rival in the debate might have got more then he bargained for, he wishes to bring into doubt my understanding of Calvinistic Doctrine. This very message board shows that not to be the case in the forum "Unlimited Atonement vs Limited. . ." And my own web page as well. . .
www.angelfire.com/realm/s...istic.html

I don't need to "toot my own horn" I leave it up to the viewers to decide what I do and do not know about the doctrine. Nor shall I resort to such claims as to what my opponent knows or doesn't know, the debate reflects and bears witness to that.

I also believe the viewers of this debate are intelligent enough to recognize any 'red herrings or logical fallacies' presented by either side, and don't believe they are so beneath understanding that the incidents or who is perpetrating them needs to be pointed out. Nor shall I lower and debase myself to comments like. . .

Quote: *His logical fallacies are legion, and the Straw Man is his most notorious.*

Quote: *he feels that 'Unconditional Election' seems to negate 'choice', et cetera ad nauseum.*

Again leaving it up to you, the viewer, to judge this debate and both his and my debate tactics. I will try however to move on with this debate in brotherly love and fellowship.

The opposition wishes us to believe that limited atonement means "The number of those that are redeemed by Christ" it doesn't and never has meant that. What it means is that God limited the number of souls which the atonement can be accepted by. (Please refer to the official church definition; David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas; *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1975, p. 17* 'and the above Confession of faith')

Unlimited Atonement means, the number of souls the Atonement is presented to is boundless, meaning all "Could" have atonement in Christ by choice and freewill. The redemption of souls is only limited in respect to the number of souls that accept the atonement by the calling to repentance and acceptance of atonement. Does God know that number all ready, of course. Did God set the number, or wish anyone to burn in hell everlasting, of course not. If the Atonement is possible for all men to be graced with, then of course Christ died for them as well, and paid the price for their sin, which leaves them without excuse. Many verses show this, one which my rival wishes not to address is. . .

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 that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

I ask the attendees and judges of this debate, is that verse 'not' relevant to the subject of "Who Christ died for?"

This establishes without doubt Christ paid the price and bought the false prophets even! Extending "possible atonement" to even the wicked ones. "Unlimited in scope, even the false prophets could be saved, choice and freewill." My most esteemed brother in Christ does not even wish to address this verse, or most of the other verses presented to him, but uses more lines to escape explanation than it would take to explain.

It has also been stated, that by me examining and addressing doctrines that must stand, in order for limited atonement to stand, this is somehow hitting below the belt in my refutation of limited atonement. I refer you back to my original statement that I would refute the doctrine of limited atonement by the definition presented above. To further expound on this point, we have Calvinist saying the same thing.

The essential doctrines concerning salvation, which the Puritans and all good Christians cling to, are summed up in the acronym T.U.L.I.P. A tulip is a flower with 5 petals, all intertwining, and without which, it would not make up a complete flower. If one petal is removed from the flower, it ceases, for all intents and purposes, to be complete. It is the same with the essential doctrines of salvation. Each doctrine is essentially linked to the others. If one of them is removed, then the whole system falls into absurdity and contradiction. (Thus, there would be no such thing as a 3 point Calvinist or a 4 point Calvinist (like Amyraldianism)-- it would be better to say they are confused Arminians.)

www.apuritansmind.com/TULIP/TULIP.htm

Limited Atonement can't stand without the other four doctrines, per the Dutch Reformers edification of said doctrine. The other side would have you believe that "Unconditional Election" has no relevance to 'who Christ died for'. . . Anyone with any understanding of the term, knows this is the farthest thing from the truth.

'Unconditional Election' is defined this way through the catechisms and confessions: God did, by His most wise and holy counsel, of His own, freely and unchangeably ordain some men to heaven and some men to hell by the nature of His good pleasure. In eternity, God has predetermined the course of everything and everyone. He had foreordained the eternal destiny of everyone whether to heaven or to hell for His glory. Men are unconditionally elected by God for His purposes without any prior works (good or evil) by which God would judge them good or evil. The election of men rests solely on the counsel and purposes of God. God has not decreed anything which he foresaw in the future, for that would place His decree upon foreseeing something in the creature ...

source cited above.

NOW, how does that NOT have relevance to whom Christ died for. He died only for those predetermined by God.

The other side would have you believe that "Irresistible Grace" has no relevance to 'who Christ died for'. . . Anyone with any understanding of the term, knows this is the farthest thing from the truth.

The other side would have you believe that "Perseverance of the Saints" has no relevance to 'who Christ died for'. . . Anyone with any understanding of the term, knows this is the farthest thing from the truth. Christ died for the saints alone. You can't be a saint "Christian" and fall from it, if it can be shown that you can fall from the election, after being the election, then Christ died for you, then didn't and that would change this "limited atonement". This is well known, even dare I say, by my rival in this debate, and why I stated before he is being very evasive.

If one falls they all fall, and is known as "domino theology" and the opposition is well aware of this and would like to divert attention away from this fact by casting doubt on it's validity and relevance in desperation.

Quote: Mr. Shaw failed to refute the passage. Jesus said clearly that he laid down his life for the sheep.

This was not the case at all, in fact it was me that showed that there were and are other sheep "not of this fold" that Jesus talked about, AND it was ONLY then that the opposition tried to "clean it up" and a poor job he did at that.

The opposition ALSO did not address the fact that by his view the Old Covenant would supersede the New Covenant just by the mere fact that the Atonement for Sin Sacrifice made by the temple priest was open to all that wishes to repent and convert to the Jewish Law.

You see what we have here it seems is one being presented with questions and problems within a certain doctrine and when they can't be explained, either skip over them, call them irrelevant to the debate, or claim your opponent "just doesn't really understand the doctrine and it would take too much time to explain it." To me that is pure avoidance.

Let Calvin have his last say on the matter as well, since he was one of the forerunners and namesake to the doctrine.

Calvin's "LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, April 25, 1564" as printed in the History of the Christian Church, Vol. 8, pp. 828-29, by Philip Schaff [as published by Eerdmans in Grand Rapids, 1972], states:

"I testify also and declare, that I suppliantly beg of Him, that He may be pleased so to was and purify me in the blood which my Sovereign Redeemer HAS SHED FOR THE SINS OF THE HUMAN RACE, that under His shadow I may be able to stand at the judgment-seat..."(op. cit., p 829)

Quote: Did God intend to save (a) all men, (b) some men, or (c) no men? I submit that (a) and (c) destroy the character and nature of God, as well as the harmony and unity of the Trinity.

WHAT a loaded question, why isn't there a (D) God is Long-suffering that ALL MEN should be save, by the exercising of their own freewill?

The oppositions view, it seems, is, God always gets what He intends? Was it Father's intention a baby was raped yesterday somewhere? Because God doesn't always get what He intends makes man at fault, not God. His intent and wish is that all men be saved, but with granting freewill knew this would not be the case.

My assessment of this debate is, my belief that 'The Atonement of Christ' is offered to 'all men' is steadfast, now even more so then before.

Blessings, David Shaw.

word count 1976

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Note to Moderator. Because of the time difference my opponent has a two hour lapse in posting time then myself. He should NOT BE allowed to address anything in my closing statements, in his closing statements, as I'm not able to address anything in his. He himself freely admits this in an earlier post. Any references, comments or commentaries about my closing remarks should be stricken.

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Note to Moderator. This was late because of massive computer problems as stated before. I see though the opposition is late in posting as well, therefore, no harm, no fuss.

LIMITED ATONEMENT - A Formal Debate

27-AUG-2004

CLOSING REMARKS - by David Smart

Before I begin concluding this debate, I would like to first express my unending gratitude and praise to our God and Father in heaven through his Son Jesus Christ for the wisdom and illumination of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon those chosen in Christ for the ministry of redemption which is taken throughout the world to the lost; for without the indwelling Spirit, man would not be able to accept such things, as it is written, "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." The child of God in Christ always delights in the truths revealed in scriptures, no matter where they lead, because he always loves the God of that word. To be taken from enmity against God to conformity with Christ, that's the real miracle of the work of the Holy Spirit.

Here at the end of the debate, Mr. Shaw's disinclination to address the agreed-upon subject of this formal debate (Limited Atonement) has been made abundantly clear and verifiable by his own responses. He invested almost all his energies in every other letter off the acrostic—election being the favoured one—and spent almost no time on Limited Atonement. Time and again he addressed issues about the composition of the elect and the purpose of the elect (which regards Unconditional Election), as well as issues about the nature of man, his will, and ability to believe (which regards Total Depravity), election not being a secure fate (which regards Perseverance of the Saints), that God can fail to save someone he intended to save (which regards Irresistible Grace). For example, in his Second Rebuttal Mr. Shaw says: "If it can be shown by scripture that one can be of the election and then fall from the election"—this regards 'Perseverance of the Saints'—"it shows the election to be a changing number, and unlimited"—this regards 'Unconditional Election'. The issue here is not the elect, nor the composition thereof, whether the number is definite or indefinite, nor whether its determined by the will of the sinner or the will of God. For example, I claim that Christ died only for the elect, and if Mr. Shaw presents an argument that shows the number of the elect is indefinite, that will fail to refute my claim because whether the number of the elect is set or variable, Christ died for them only. It should also be noted that this idea (that the number of the elect is indefinite and variable) rejects the omniscience of God.

Any avenue of discussion about the elect is off topic. Much could be said about these theological assertions that Mr. Shaw proposes and the scriptures they contradict, but I am not willing to entertain red herrings that detract from the subject of the debate. Rather, I would—and did—remind Mr. Shaw of the debate's subject, caution him that these other subjects relate to the wrong letters off the acrostic T.U.L.I.P., and invite and encourage him to return to the "L" of Limited Atonement. For instance, he quotes Matthew Henry but, if you read the content of this quote he selected, not even it contained a single word about Limited Atonement; the entire segment refers to the mediatorial office of Christ as High Priest, the full sufficiency of the atonement, and the universality of the gospel message, the kerygma. Nothing within that quote relates to the question, "For whom did Christ die?" Both scriptures and Reformed theology agree and teach that Christ's death was fully "sufficient to redeem as many worlds of sinners as there are sinners in the world," but the subject of Limited Atonement refers not to the *sufficiency* of Christ's death but rather its *efficacy*. As I had indicated in my Opening Remarks, the teaching of 'Limited Atonement' is one that develops and explains the concept that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, while sufficient for all, was efficacious for the elect only. It would be an underwhelming debate if the subject was the sufficiency of Christ's death, since both myself and Mr. Shaw affirm its infinite merit.

In his entire Second Rebuttal, Mr. Shaw addressed Limited Atonement in only two spots (all else related to election): the first was invalid, and the second backfired by actually affirming Limited Atonement. In the first place, he said that "If one is given a choice to accept or reject that atonement, this leaves the atonement unlimited." This is invalid insofar as it is non-sequitur (it does not follow) because it can still be said that whether one accepts or rejects the atonement, it applies only to (i.e. is limited to) those that accept it. In other words, Mr. Shaw can speculate endlessly about whether or not the composition of the elect is determined by the will of the sinner during his own lifetime or the will of God before the creation of the world (Eph 1:4; cf. 2 Tim 1:9), but in the end he will have failed to obviate the claim that the atonement is efficacious only for the elect, that to be saved one must be of the sheep, for they are whom Christ died for.

In the second place, he made reference to the Israelite temple ceremony known as the Day of Atonement and, in a twist of pure irony, he confirmed that it, too, was limited. Just as within the context of this debate and agreeing with my argument, while the atonement sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was efficacious only for "those that wished for atonement of sins," as Mr. Shaw put it, it was efficacious only for "as many as would convert to the will of God." It did not apply to all people in all places at all times, but only to the people of Israel, including those who "became Jews, for the dread of the Jews had fallen on them" (cf. his reference to Est 8:17). We know that, both then and now, the atonement was not universal since there remain those upon whom the guilt of sin and wrath of God remain (i.e. neither were removed). Mr. Shaw then asked whether Christ in the new covenant "brings with Him more or less Atonement?" The answer, of course, is "Neither," contrary to Mr. Shaw's self-contradictory claims. The atonement both then and now, while sufficient for all, was and is efficacious only for those that do the will of the Father in heaven.

So here at the end of the debate we have not only Mr. Shaw's failure to refute John 10:11-30 (that Jesus did not die for all men but, rather, only for the sheep) and John 17:9-21 (cf. Heb 7:25; Rom 8:34; that Jesus intercedes for those he saved, which is not the whole world but the sheep only), but we also have those arguments of his, which actually do address Limited Atonement, ironically confirming it (as above, "this atonement was not left only to the 12 tribes, but as many as would *convert to the will of God*"; emphasis supplied). I had said in my Opening Remarks that "I will be attempting to show that this teaching is biblically sound, Mr. Shaw will be attempting to show that it is not." Given that my arguments for Limited Atonement went undefeated, and given that his arguments which actually did regard Limited Atonement went on to confirm it, I think the conclusion of the debate is clear.

End notes.

Mr. Shaw said, "And again, I contend that under limited atonement, the election are the election, regardless of the preaching of the word." This sentence is biblically accurate—since the elect are those chosen in Christ *before the creation of the world* (Eph 1:4; cf. 2 Tim 1:9), then obviously the preaching of the word has no bearing (since until creation no one existed). The elect are chosen, not according to the gospel being preached and heard, but according to God's own pleasure and will, purpose and grace, before the beginning of time, before anyone was born or had done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls (Rom 9:10-12). It does not depend on man's desire or effort but on God's mercy (Rom 9:16); he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy (Titus 3:5); who the children of God are is not determined by genealogy nor by any product of man's will but by God (John 1:12-13; Rom 9:6-9; cf. Phil 1:29).

But, tragically, Mr. Shaw also said, "If one is born into the Election, there is nothing that can derail that election, and therefore no need in preaching the word. . . . There would be no need for the election to hear the Gospel, they are the election and are saved no matter what. The election predestined to salvation, irreversible, would in no way need to hear the Gospel." These sentences, quite sadly, are wholly unbiblical since they contradict scriptures directly—see Rom 10:17, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the

message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ." The composition of the elect is determined alone by God's purpose and grace, before the creation of the world; however, the elect, in order to be saved, *have to first be born*; in due season the elect must be called, and that is where the word of Christ comes in. According to scriptures and Reformed teaching, there is "need in preaching the word." Mr. Shaw, in his evident lack of understanding of Reformed teaching, has confused election with calling.

Also, Mr. Shaw asked, "Again, what judgment is there in judging men that had no choice but to remain wicked?" What he appears to be asking here, in context, basically is, "How can God be just in condemning men if they were incapable of believing?" The sinner could reply that he never had the ability to believe. And that would be true. But who's fault is this? Who's fault is it that man does not have the ability to believe? Is it God's fault? No, man rendered himself unable; it is man who rebelled, not God. Man has a corrupt and polluted heart that is enmity against God; having cut himself off from the source of life, he is dead in sins and trespasses. *Yet this spiritual suicide of man does not and cannot make God alter or change neither his perfect law nor the gospel.* Note this correlative: although man is unable to keep God's moral law, he will nevertheless be judged for every infraction of God's law in thought, word, and deed on the day of judgment. Correct? There is nothing unreasonable for God to require men to obey His law and gospel when men are unable, because man rendered himself unable. It is man's fault and man's problem. We should be thankful that God, in his mercy, enables any to believe and be saved at all.

One might suggest that the condemned man could reply, "How, then, can you condemn me for not believing if I never had the ability to believe?" To which the scriptures reply, It is not for unbelief that you are condemned, for we know that whosoever does not believe stands *condemned already* (John 3:18). Just as justification does not confer righteousness, unbelief does not confer condemnation, because it is not as though man exists in a state of spiritual limbo from which either belief or non-belief determines which state he enters – justification or condemnation. It is not his unbelief that condemns him; rather, in his unbelief he remains condemned. This point must be emphasized: *Man exists in a state of condemnation already.* Through belief in the Son a person crosses over from death to life. There is no middle ground. Despite the perpetual and creative lies of the Adversary, man is dead in sin—it is not as though man is merely sick, he is not merely handicapped... he is dead. He doesn't need help; he needs to be brought back to life.

2,036 words