

DO YOU AGREE WITH JESUS?

QUESTION: Did Jesus die for all men?

There are those in the religious world who contend that Jesus did not die for all men, but that his death was only for those elected to salvation. Calvin's idea of hereditary total depravity (the idea that children inherit the sins of Adam) led him to conclude that if man is born in sin, then God must select certain ones to be saved and others to be lost (unconditional election). Based upon these assumptions, Calvin assumed that if God chose those who would be saved and those who would be lost, then Christ could not have died for all men (limited atonement). Is it the case that Christ died only for "the elect?"

Jesus stated, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Notice that Jesus speaks of God's love for the entire world, not just a select few. The giving of Jesus upon the cross is for whoever will come to believe. In another passage, Jesus issued his invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). The invitation of our Savior is extended to "all." A God who would extend an invitation to come to salvation to those He has already predestined to damnation is most cruel and not in keeping with One who is characterized as all-loving. Calvin says only a select few are invited to eternal salvation. The word of the Lord says, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). The truth is, Jesus died for all men, that all might have the opportunity to be saved.

Do you have a question that you would like for us to consider together, or a comment regarding what has been written? If so, please email us at sixthavenue@bellsouth.net, or write to us at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, 35501.