



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Suffering Savior, John 3:16-17

"The Design of the Atonement: For Whom Did Christ Die? - VII!"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we again ask Thy blessing upon us, as we study the Scriptures together. We pray that Thou will guide and direct in such a way as Christ may be glorified and the things that we say, and the thoughts that we have. We thank Thee for the promise of the working of the Holy Spirit that he will bring every thought into captivity of Christ, and we pray that that may be the experience of each one of us as we think through the things that concern the saving intention of our Lord Jesus Christ. We commit this hour to Thee, and we commit each one present to Thee and we ask that Thou will minister to us to Thy glory Lord. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight is our seventh study in the design of the atonement, or for whom did Christ die. This past week I was reading a section in Augustine's, *The City of God* and he writes an answer to a possible objection that to answer that objection would require many words, and then he adds, "Surely I cannot be expected to explain everything in one volume." And so, I want you to know that in spite of the fact that we have spent seven times on this topic that it is not my intention to explain everything about this subject, but almost everything. And I am enjoying studying it myself, and I guess that is the reason I'm delaying as we go along. I want to read tonight two texts from John

chapter 3, they are successive verses, John chapter 3, verses 16 and 17. John 3 verse 16 and 17.

Now, I am going to read these verses out of the Greek text, so if this does not square with the version that you have before you, that may be the reason. "For so did God love the world, that his only begotten Son he gave, that everyone who believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world that he might judge the world; but that the world might be saved through him." Now I want you to notice that last clause, "God did not send his Son into the world that he might judge the world; but that the world might be saved through him"

Did Christ die to save all men indiscriminately or to save his elect personally and definitely. Or did Christ die to render savable or to save. That's our question. We have dealt with the theological arguments for universal atonement, and I believe we have seen that they are answerable. Some of our answers are better than other answers, of course, as is true in the discussion of almost any doctrinal matter. But I think that we have seen that they are answerable. We are now considering the biblical arguments for the doctrine of universal atonement. They are more formidable than the other types of arguments that are the theological arguments for universal atonement are not nearly so strong, not nearly so convincing to some people, as are the specific texts of Scripture. Can they be answered? And that, of course is what we are trying to ascertain.

You might be interested to know that perhaps the most popular objection as we pointed out several weeks ago to the doctrine of definite atonement of particular redemption, is that if we do say the Bible teaches that Christ died for the elect, then that destroys all missionary incentive and activity. This past week I had to travel up to Ohio. I'm really glad I live in Texas and not Ohio, what a state. One night we went to bed it was nice, clear weather, and the next morning right inches of snow everywhere. And I was delighted to be able to get on that plane and leave Dayton, Ohio Sunday night and get back to Texas. I was speaking to a group of Chinese Christians, really very interesting

people, most of whom had grown up or had been born at least in mainland China, and had come out for various reasons, most of which were concerned with the coming of Communism into the land. The other speaker was also a Chinese, I mean was Chinese. [Laughter] Snow really does things to your mind. [Laughter] And he spoke in Chinese, and I spoke in good, pure southern English. So, he spoke in tongues and I spoke in pure English, and my messages were translated into Mandarin Chinese, which proves that good sound doctrine can be stated in Mandarin Chinese. And his Mandarin Chinese messages were translated into English, and so I listened to him with earphones. Most of these men were either professors, usually of some type of science, physics or engineering, professors or doctors, or graduate students, or students, so it was a very intelligent group of students.

Well, I did not bring this subject up, I went up there purely to speak on the person and the work of Jesus Christ, making an effort to avoid any reference to the elect so that no one would say to me, "There you go again." [Laughter] Well, after two messages we had a question and answer time for forty minutes. The same was true of the other speaker, he spoke twice in the morning and then a forty minute question and answer period, and I spoke at night for two messages, one just before supper, one after supper, and then a forty minute question and answer period afterwards which they could ask any question. Well, in the course of his messages, someone brought up the question of election, and in the course of the answer and in the course of discussion afterwards, again the same objection was raised that the idea that the doctrine of election stultifies and destroys incentive for missionary activity. And therefore, that doctrine surely cannot be scriptural. Well, this was very interesting to me because about ten days ago I had a discussion with Dr. George Peters, who is a very good friend of mine, whom I admire very much, who is on the faculty of the Dallas Theological Seminary, a colleague, and who probably knows as much about the mission fields of the world as anyone alive.

Now, Dr, Peters and I have a very good relationship, because we can disagree with each other. I remember him coming in about a month ago, and sitting down at the

table in the faculty lounge at the seminary, and saying "The more I read John Calvin, the less I like him." Now, I think that was designed to stir me up a little bit. [Laughter] But I didn't take the bait, I just let him talk. And he went on like this, and then we got on another subject and had a good time discussing as usual. Well, I think he had forgotten what he had said, because ten days ago we began to discuss again, and he brought up the subject. He said, "I have discovered a very interesting thing, and you may be interested in it." He said, "I have discovered that practically every modern missionary effort that has been outstandingly successful is related to the Reformed Church."

Now, this was an amazing statement, and as you can see, what he was really saying, because generally speaking the Reformed Church or the Presbyterian Churches are churches that hold to this Calvinistic doctrine, which he had said that he like less the more he read it. And then he went on to speak specifically. He spoke of Assam. He spoke of the East Indies, and the great movement that is taking place out there as related to the Dutch Reformed Church. Believe the believing element in the Dutch Reform Church. In Korea, where the Presbyterians have done such a great work in the 20th century, where one of the outstanding revivals, using familiar southern Baptist terminology, revivals took place. In East Africa, in Uganda, in Kenya, in Brazil, in Nigeria among the Tiv people, which is probably the biggest of the movements there, and again the foundation was laid by the Dutch Reform Church. He said, "No matter where you go, the great missionary movements, for the most part, all stem from this kind of doctrine." And he said, "I have become so interested in it, that I have gotten a fellowship, and I am going to the University of Aberdine to do some research for a little while." I think next summer, in connection with a mission organization that is loosely associated with the University over there.

Well, I thought that was a most interesting thing that he was in effect saying that the good old doctrine of election, and the doctrines that go with it, it is out of this kind of milieu that the great modern missionary movements have developed. And if there is

anything that seems to give the lie to the statement that if you believe in the doctrine of election and related doctrines, therefore you have no missionary zeal that seemed to say it. Well, as I was sitting at the table, he left and went out. He had already given me a good illustration, you see. And as he went out, one of our new professors of missions came in, and I was still sitting there a little dazed thinking about how I was going to use this on you, [laughter] and then I said this to the other man, who has been a missionary in the islands of the West Indies, and has been a missionary leader, and he said, "Yes, I think that is true, and furthermore, you will find that the Arminian theologians," and he doesn't believe this doctrine as totally as I do, so he's not a man that would accept all that I would say.

He says, "Not only that, but you will find that the Arminians," and then he went on and added the Pentecostals because the Pentecostals are Arminian just a special brand of the thing. He said, "You will find that the Arminians and the Pentecostals never do any work where someone has not been." In other words, they always come in, and they act as a kind of parasitic movement, and do work where others have already come. Now, I thought that was a very interesting thing. In other words, the putting the two together seemed to say that if you had this good doctrine, you'd missionary minded, and if you didn't have this doctrine, you wouldn't do it, but you would go in and try to take some of the sheep from those who had the good doctrine to follow your bad doctrine. I thought that was very interesting.

Now, I would like to see that scientifically demonstrated of course, and I hope that Dr. Peters is able to do so. But at any rate, under any circumstances, even if he could not do that totally, what he has obviously demonstrated is that it's possible for people to hold very strong doctrines concerning the election of the saints and Christ's death, and do missionary work. And that's not to mention, of course, that our greatest evangelist, in my opinion, the greatest evangelist who ever has preached in the United States was George Whitfield, the man who believed in double predestination, in a most certain and definite

way. And who also was said, by those who heard him preach often, to hardly every fail to conclude a sermon without breaking out into tears of compassion for the lost.

Well, we have been discussing, in our last study, I believe, the argument from the term "all" or "every" and then we discussed the argument from the term "world." And we were I believe discussing this particular argument. Now, these are biblical arguments that are designed by their proponents to say that Jesus Christ died for all. Now, I want to talk first of all tonight about John 3:16, so if you have that passage before you, I want to say a few words about it. First of all, in connection with John 3:16, you'll notice, of course, the obvious problem with this text. If we say that Jesus Christ died for the elect, then what did the Bible mean when it said, "So, did God love the world that he gave his only begotten Son that every one who believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Does not that seem, to say that God solved the world that he gave his only begotten Son for the world? I think we should begin any discussion of John 3:16 by pointing out that the purpose of this well known verse is to praise the greatness of God's love. We all, in reading of this text, would surely say that. We would say that this text is designed to show us how great God does love. And that is especially stressed in the original text, because the adverb so is the first word in the sentence, "For so did God love the world." That's the way that our Lord said, or John wrote it. "For so did God love the world," a great deal of stress is laid upon the fact that God so loved the world. In other words, it has to do with the degree of his love.

But if we say that God's love has an obvious greatness about it, in what way is God's love so great? Does this text; is the intention of the text to say that the love of God is great quantitatively? Is it that God so loved the world that is he so loved everybody in the world? Is that the way we are to measure the greatness of the love of God? Is it quantitative love? If so, Professor Warfield used to like to say, "If that's so, then we're really directed to the greatness of the world, rather than the love of God." I don't think

that necessarily follows, but nevertheless when we say "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," we do say a great deal about the quantitative greatness of the world. It's so broad and has so many people in it. But what has this love done for the world, according to our text? Well, those who believe that Christ died for the world say, it has made the world savable. But what does our text go on to say, "For" to explain, "For God did not send his Son into the world that he might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

Now, it is specifically stated here, that the world should be saved by him. Has the world been saved by him? Well, no. These two opponents agree that the world has not been saved by God's love. Well, then what's so great about God's love? Well, just that it encompasses a great number of people. But if this text is designed to stress the greatness of God's love, would it not be stressed even greater if the world were saved through that love. Professor Warfield says, "God didn't send his Son to judge the world, but that the world should be saved by him. That is God did not send his Son into the world for the purpose of judging the world, but for the purpose of saving the world. A declaration which could not be true if despite his coming, the world were lost and only a select few saved out of it. The purposes of God do not fail." So, we have a text that says that God sent his Son into the world that the world might be saved, but the world is not saved. And so, in effect the purposes of God are frustrated, and it would seem to me, that the total result of this is a depreciation of the significance of the greatness of God and his love. So, I don't think that will do.

Is it possible then that we should say that this text means that God's love is great qualitatively rather than quantitatively? It's the world and its sinful condition in the moral sense that is in view. God so loves this corrupt and sinful world that his love is able to prevail over a holy God's abhorrence of sin, and save it. This perishing world of Jews and Gentiles is the object of divine love. In other words, it is not so much how many people he loves, but that his love is so great that even he, a holy God who abhors sin,

hates sin, will not look upon sin, apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ, is nevertheless in spite of the difficulty of his just and holy nature, able to love and save the world. Professor Warfield says the key to the passage lies therefore, in the significance of the term world. It's not here a term of extension, that is a term of quantity, a term of breadth, as a term of intensity. Its primary connotation is ethical, and the point of its employment is not to suggest that the world is so big that it takes a great deal of love to embrace it, but that the world is so bad, that it takes a great kind of love to love it at all. And much more to love it as God has loved it when he gave his Son for it.

In other words, what the passage is designed to do, is not to arouse in our hearts a wondering sense of the marvel and mystery of the love of God for the sinful world conceived quantitatively, but qualitatively. This sinful world is the object of God's love, so much so that he overcame by his own activity, the oppositions of his own holy nature in the gift of the Son of God, who bore the punishment for sinners, and through this sacrifice the love has reached to the depths of the sinful heart of men, and has saved the world. Well, then I think I understand a little more, perhaps, the greatness of God's love.

Now, I do think that we have to say that God so loved the world of the elect. It has been said, for God so loved the world of the elect, I don't really think that that is what John or our Lord is saying. I think that what he is saying is simply, that he has so loved the world in the sense that all kinds of individuals in the world are included within this love. That the elect make up some from every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation, some a Jew, some a Gentile. God so loved the world in that sense. So, it means the corrupt society of humanity under Satan's power and at enmity with God, the world, qualitatively. In this same gospel remember, the Lord Jesus is called the Savior of the world. And it's in that sense, in the sense in which all of the boundaries of Judaism are broken, and the love of God extends out to the Gentiles. Salvation is of the Jews, but it has not reached out to the Gentiles, as John later teaches in his gospel. So then, I do not

think that this text, "for God so loved the world" is a text that a man who believes in universal atonement may use for his text. I rather think that it belongs on the other side.

Let's turn over to another one, 1 John chapter 2, verses 1 and 2. This is another text that is often brought forward by those who oppose a definite atonement. And this too is an argument from the term "world." "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just." Or the righteous, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also concerning the sins of the whole world." This is one of the bell weather texts of universal atonement. It really would suit universalism perfectly by its language. On the other hand, I think there are several reasons why John said, "for the whole world." First of all, he wanted to set forth the scope of the propitiation. It was not limited to the disciples, he had just said in chapter 1 verses 1 through 3, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."

He's talking about the apostolic testimony. He's talking about himself, and Peter, and James, and the others. We have handled him, "(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us." That is, we apostles, with us who are apostles, "and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." So he wants to say that this propitiation is not limited to the disciple of the Lord, the apostles, nor is it limited to other believers who are under the influence of the apostles, as he has just said in verses 3 and 4. The propitiation is ethnically universal. It is for Jew and Gentile, and so when he writes here, propitiation for our sins, but not for ours only but for the whole world, he means that Jesus Christ is not a Savior for Jews alone, but also for Gentiles. Now, he may have wanted, I prefer that interpretation, he may have wanted to stress the exclusiveness of our Lord as the propitiation. Therefore, there is no other

propitiation. He may have wanted to say this is propitiation for the world. That is, there is no other propitiation in the whole of the world, but this propitiation.

John Calvin said, with reference to this, that in the schools they talk about the work of Jesus Christ being sufficient for all, but efficient for the elect. He said, "I admit that that is a biblical doctrine." But he said, "I don't accept it for this text." Some have thought that that was his interpretation that is just simply saying that he is sufficient for the whole world. Now, it is also possible to say that he wanted to set forth the perpetuity, the enduring nature of the propitiation, so when he says he's the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, that is we who are living, but for the sins of the whole world. He means all of those other believers who shall believe down through the years, so, for ours, yes, but not for ours only, for the sins of the whole world. That is, all who through the nineteen hundred years, the nineteen centuries will believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. And they would be ones who would be scattered through the various regions of the earth.

But I personally prefer the first explanation. It makes sense in the light of the context, and remember 1 John was written by a Jew, who had grown up in the midst of Jews, who had had a Jew, our Lord, minister to him. He is the one who wrote, "Salvation is of the Jews." And for him to come to the understanding of the fact that this salvation was a salvation for Gentiles as well, well, that required quite a transformation. And that is evidenced by the transformation Peter had to undergo in the Book of Acts. How difficult it was for him to come to understand that Gentiles were saved just like Jews. And so here, he's the propitiation for our sins, but he's also the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, Gentiles as well.

Now, I personally feel that that, I say, is the best explanation. I therefore, do not believe that these arguments from the term all or every, or arguments from the term world are convincing arguments at all. In fact, as I go through them, they seem to say just as strongly that the other view is correct, In fact, in my opinion stronger. The argument from

passages that are said to teach a universal saving will. Now think about that for a moment, it is claimed by those who believe in universal atonement that there are passages in the Bible that appear to each that God's will to save men is universal. There are passages that are said to teach a universal saving will, that is that God wills to save all men, wills to save universally.

Now, of course, if a man believes this, and he doesn't believe that all men are saved, then he must qualify that by saying they don't come, even though the universal saving will exists because of their resistance of the will of God or to the will of God. Now, this poses a few problems. If we say that God has a universal saving will, of course for me that would say that everybody is going to be saved. Because I remember a statement that Paul made, "Who hath resisted his will?" That's in Romans chapter 9, in verse 19, "For who hath resisted his will?"

And furthermore, the term that is used there is the strongest term for will in the New Testament. There are two great words, *thel* and *boul ma*. *Boul ma* is the strongest word. That is the word that is used there, *boul ma*. "Who hath resisted his will?" Paul said. So you see if we say that God has a universal saving will, but men don't all come because they can resist, then we have a little problem there. Then on the other had, if we say that he wills the salvation of all men, all must come because Paul also states in Romans chapter 8 that everybody who comes, comes according to the purpose of God. Remember our text, Romans chapter 8, verse 28; you like that text don't you? So, do I. Notice what it says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Every man who comes to Jesus Christ is the product of the purpose of God, the saving purpose of God. Every man is a product of that purpose.

Well, then if we say that God purposes to save all men, then we have a problem either way. Furthermore, it would seem to me to escape the salvation of everybody, by saying that God has a universal saving will. We would have to reduce the sense of will to

the sense of wish. That is, God wishes all men to be saved, but we can resist his will, will in the sense of wish, but we can resist his will, which means only that God wishes all men to be saved. He does not have a will that determines the salvation of men. Well, that's all we're saying. That's all we want to say. That's exactly what I'd like to say, that God saves whom he wills, although he himself has a benevolent desire for all men. That's exactly what the opponents say. Well, that is many of such texts only express the general benevolence of God toward men. It might also be affirmed that such a view introduces a serious contradiction between the decretive and preceptive will of God, too, with respect to both the elect and the non-elect. Because this view would seem to say that what God is doing on one hand is contrary to what he does on the other.

Let me show you what I mean. We all know that the Bible teaches, do we not, that there are two wills of God. His decretive will which determines everything that comes to pass upon the earth. Ephesians 1:11 says, that "He works all things according to the counsel of his own will." All things according to the counsel of his own will. So, there we are told that God has decreed he has determined all things according to the counsel of his will. That is decretive will, but the Bible also speaks of things that are in accord with his nature, that is that he approves of ethically, morally. The Ten Commandments are expressions of the will of God in the sense that they please him. They are in accord with his moral nature. Or righteousness, that men do righteousness is in accordance with his moral nature. But if we say that God has a universal saving will, but that men may resist it and at the same time hold that he does will the salvation of the elect, we have him willing one thing on one hand, and willing the contrary on the other. In other words, we introduce the contradiction within the will of God.

Turitan says that it may also be affirmed that such a view introduces a serious contradiction between the decretive and preceptive wills of God with respect to both elect and non-elect. Well, I say these things now to introduce to you these texts. So, we're going to look at two or three of the texts. The first text I want to look at is Ezekiel

chapter 33, in verse 11. This is not, I don't think, one of the most important, but we'll look at it just for the sake of thoroughness. I want to answer everything in this book, as Augustine denied that he was doing. Ezekiel chapter 33, verse 11. I know you're all familiar with Ezekiel, and probably can think through all the chapters of his book. Perhaps, some of you don't even have to turn, but chapter 33, and verse 11, does read this way. I can tell by the way you're smiling that that was not true of all of you in this room. "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?" Now, this text says simply that God takes delight in the salvation of the sinner. This does not say anything more, unless we can say the opposite. God does to take delight in the condemnation of the sinner.

Second text, more important, 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 4; 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 4, again I want to read this text from the Greek text. 1 Timothy chapter 2, and verse 4, Paul writes, now your text reads, I think reads, "Who would have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Or if you have some modern version something different, as Paul wrote it, he says simply, "Who wishes all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." What is the reference of all men? Well, let's look at the context. "Therefore, first of all, I beseech you that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." All men without exception? No, that isn't exactly what he's speaking about because he begins to talk about the specifics in the next verse. He says "For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and gravity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God. Who would have all men to be saved."

Now, all men in the light of the context most likely means all kinds of men, even kings, even those in authority, men of all categories, even such unlikely objects of divine grace as presidents and cabinets. This text doesn't have anything to do with the salvation of every single man. It's all kinds of men. The all men of verse one is further expanded

and explained. Now, also in connection with this, the term for will is that weaker term for will.

Now, if we take this to mean the will of God, decretively, then of course it means that he wills that all types of men be saved, even kings. So pray for all kinds of men as you should be led by the Spirit to pray for them. Don't think because he's President that he cannot be saved, but on the other hand if this simply means who desires all men to be saved. Then, of course, it's saying the same thing that Ezekiel is saying, that is that God has a benevolent desire that men be saved. Under any circumstances, this text could be a proof of universal atonement.

Now we come to another text, 2 Peter chapter 3, and verse 9. Now, this is one that is always cited. And this one, by the way, they got me into a discussion last weekend at this camp. One of the men just sought me out, and he was a preacher. He just sought me out and asked me this question, so I had to answer. And in the course of our discussion, he raised the same objections, and specifically about this verse here, and so I took great delight in explaining this verse. [Laughter] In fact, when he mentioned it that started me into a rather lengthy explanation. Its 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 9, 2 Peter chapter 3, verse 9. Now, this is a notorious crux interpretum, it is a passage which interpreters have wrestled with constantly. In my opinion, this text does not refer to God's benevolent will toward all men. Let me read it, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to you, not willing that any should perish, but that all should have room for repentance."

Now, then does not that text say as plain as day, I am not, does not this say that it is God's universal will that men be saved, and all men. He is not willing that any should perish, and further, I cannot give him my objection. Oh that's the word for will that means wish, because it's the strongest word for willing found. The same word that is found in Romans 9:19. So, I cannot say, not wishing that any should perish. I cannot use that explanation, I must say not "willing that any should perish." So, I must say this refers

to God's decretive will. He is not willing in the strongest way that any should perish. But if I should say that, that would overthrow their view, because then they would have to say that everybody is going to be saved. He is not willing; he hasn't determined that any should perish. Oh no, you don't want to believe that, unless you are a Universalist, and my friends are not Universalists. They just want to say that he is not willing that any should perish, but I want to pin him to the wall, okay, it does mean not willing that any one should perish, then why is not everyone saved? He can only answer, "We can resist his will." That's the only thing he can answer. So, I say, "Who hath resisted his will?"

But really, this text doesn't mean that. It means something else. It does mean not willing that any, well what does any mean? Any what? Well, to answer a problem like this, what do you have to do? You look at the context. You read the passage. You don't select this text out of its context, so we ought to notice a few particulars. Now, Peter has begun by telling them that he wants them to be sure to remember the things that the prophets have spoken and the things the apostle have spoken. In other words he says, in the last days you're going to discover that the thing that will keep you above the difficulties of the last days is the word of God. This is a most striking thing, that in all of the epistles in which the apostles refer to the last days, they say that the solution for the problem of the last days does not lie in some Christian psychiatrist or Christian psychologist.

I am not affirming that there are not conditions under which such may be useful to Christians, but that the hope of Christians does not rest in anything human. Good advice, regardless where it may come from, the hope of Christians in the last days, their stay amid the troubles of the last days is the word of God. Every one of them says this. Timothy says the same thing that Peter does. They all say this. In the last days, you'd better stick close to the word of God. That's the answer. All right, now Peter says that, because he said, there are going to come some scoffers. And they are going to deny the Lord's coming. They're going to say in the 4th verse, "Where is the promise of his

coming? For from the time when the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." In other words, they're going to say, "You Christians you talk about the second coming of Christ, I see no evidence of the coming of Christ at all." Everything has just moved according to cause and effect ever since the creation of the world. We're living in a closed universe. Scoffers are going to say, Peter says, that believers cannot account for the elapsed time. He will say right here, verses 8, they cannot account for the two thousand years in which nothing has happened, and they cannot account for the undisturbed creation.

This is a most remarkable prophecy, because it says many hundreds ago, of course that in the last days there is going to be circulating a doctrine of uniformity. And if you know anything about scientific thought, you know that a doctrine of uniformity is part of scientific thinking. And he is going to say, that is what they are going to say, everything is going to continue as it has since the creation. Now, his answer is going to be, Peter says this is the way I want you to answer them, those men have forgotten a couple of things. Number one, they have forgotten the flood. All things did not continue as they were from the creation. The flood came. And further, those men have forgotten the fire of the last days, when God is going to enter into the universe, and he is going to so transform it that he going to produce a new heaven and a new earth by a great conflagration. There are a lot of Bible teachers who think this is an atomic conflagration. We don't have to think that. It's just going to happen, that's all.

Now, then in saying this he has answered the question about the undisturbed creation. It's not true in the past, and it won't be true in the future. God is going to intervene. Now, what about these thousands of years? Well, he says in the 8th verse, don't forget this, that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Why did he introduce that? Why just to let us know that the promise of the second coming made by our Lord and the apostles, is for us just as if it were made day before yesterday two thousand years ago. When God says something, one thousand, two

thousand years, twenty thousand years, it doesn't make a bit of difference. It is just as certain then, as it was when he uttered it. You forget the nature of God's promises. Well, they might say, why the delay? That brings us to verse 9, that brings us exactly to the text, and he says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness;" he's not slow, he's not the kind of fellow that says, oh I know I did make a promise a long time ago, just give me a time, leave me alone, I've got some things I have to do. I'll bring it pass ultimately. He is not a fellow who delays.

My wife could give a beautiful exposition of this, because she just keeps after me about everything that I have to do, in fact, she is most perfect nagger that I have ever run across in my life, and I am thankful for it. Do you know why, because I wouldn't get half the things done that I should get done if she did not nag me, and she is beautiful at doing it, and I like it, I just enjoy it. I know she's going to keep after me. I can just read that paper and not take out the garbage or whatever it may be, because I know that there is no chance that she will forget it, that that will come all during the night, and I may wind up taking it out at ten minutes to twelve, but nevertheless she will be right after me.

Now, the Lord's not like I am, he doesn't delay like that. He doesn't say, as he reads the paper, I'm going to do it, I'm going to do it, don't bother me. I'm going to do it when the program's over, or whatever it may be. He's not like that. He is longsuffering to you." Who are the you? Well, I just read in verse 8, "Now don't forget this one thing, beloved." These are believers. He's talking about you believers. He's saying the Lord is not slack concerning his promise with reference to you not willing that any," any what? Why, any of you, that's what it is, any of you.

You Christians, and of you elect, that's why he's been delaying for nineteen hundred years, "not willing that any of you should perish, but that all of you should have room for repentance." How would you have liked it, my Christian friend if God should have fulfilled his promise about the second coming two hundred years ago? You wouldn't like that would you? You would have been left out. He has a company of elect

people. They're known to him. Their names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and so he is long suffering, not willing that's his decretive will, concerning the elect. Not willing that any of you should perish, but that all of you should have room, have opportunity for repentance, and be saved.

Why this text is one of the greatest texts for election in all of the Bible. I cannot wait for someone to bring that up as an objection, because there's a great truth here, and by the way, we talked about this remember, in connection with our Lord's statement from the cross. Father, forgive them for they not know what they do. And remember, we saw that that text really meant, Father, let them go, release them for they know not what they do. And our Lord's prayer was answered, and judgment was not executed immediately in fact, we are living in the answer to our Lord's prayer, for it was a prayer for the apostle's converts and the converts of the apostle's converts, and included among them were Augustine, and Calvin, and Luther, and Wesley, and Whitfield, and Johnson, and Nixon, and Pryor and all the rest. That's what this is speaking about too, that all should have room for repentance. That's the answer to the prayer that our Lord prayer, "Let them go, release them for they know not what they do." Men are guilty, but because they do not know they're guilty, God has given them a time, and the elect are brought to our Lord Jesus through that time.

Next time, the argument from passages said to teach that some for whom Christ died may perish. We'll deal with 1 Corinthians 8:11, Hebrews 10:29, 2 Peter 2:1, and then we're going to talk about some positive reasons, theological, and biblical for a definite atonement. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these texts of Scripture which are so comforting to us, letting us know that the things that happen in this universe are not a surprise to Thee. Thou art not surprised that there are things floating around in space that the instruments of man's makings are out amongst the planets of Thy creation. Thou art

the great and sovereign God, and Thou dost work all things according to the counsel of Thine will. Thy purposes do not fail, and Thy purposes encompass the elect.

We thank Thee that Thou hast reached us by Thy grace, over our resistance, and Thou hast drawn us into the fellowship with the Son of God, and what a blessed fellowship this is. We praise Thee Lord for the salvation that we possess and for the joy that it is to us, and for the way in which it sustains us in the experiences of life, and Lord we look forward to the day when we shall enjoy it even fuller in Thy presence. Go with us, and we pray that these great truths which mean so much to us may move us as others have been moved down through the years to proclaim the glorious grace of...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]