

INTRODUCTION

What this book is about

The Bible says that the death of Jesus Christ was like a payment to set men free from sin. So far so good; but now there is a problem! Did Christ's death free all men, or only some men, from their sin? Christians are divided in their views. Some say one thing, some say the other. So what does the Bible say? That is what we need to find out.

If we say Christ's death was for everyone, then we cannot at the same time say it was only for those people whom God had chosen. If Christ died for everyone, God had no need to choose a special people, had he? On the other hand, if we say that God did choose a special people — as the Bible teaches — then it would have been pointless for Christ to die for everyone, wouldn't it?

If we say Christ's death was a ransom, or payment, for all the human race, then, either:

1. all men must have the power to accept or reject that ransom for themselves; or:
2. all men must actually be ransomed by Christ, whether they know it or not.

Christ's death for all men could only be realistic, if one of these statements is true. But the first suggestion denies the Bible teaching that men are helplessly dead in sin and in themselves have no power to come to Christ. The second suggestion denies the Bible teaching that some men are lost for ever. Obviously, there are grave difficulties about suggesting that Christ's death was for all men.

Why is it, then, that some people say that Christ's death was for everyone? There seem to be five possible reasons:

1. It seems to make God more "attractive", if they say Christ's death was for everyone.
2. It seems to make God's love "greater", if they say he loves all men equally.
3. It seems to make Christ's death more "valuable", if they can say that it was a payment for the sins of everyone.
4. The Bible seems to use the words "all" and "the world" as though they mean "everyone".
5. Some may just want to say Christ's death was for everyone, so that they can be included, although they do not want to change the ungodly way they are living!

In this book:

We are going to see why these five reasons are wrong, and what the Bible does teach about the purpose of the death of Jesus Christ.