

d. Hebrews 2:9

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

The objector believes that this Scripture teaches that God's grace has been bestowed upon all men, in that Christ has experienced death in behalf of every man, with the result that salvation is now freely available to all men; and that this teaching conflicts with the doctrine of an unconditional election, which seems logically to imply man's total inability and an atonement particularly designed to accomplish the salvation of the elect.

The crucial question would seem to be this: is there a sense in which, in some way, every man benefits from Christ's death?

Now it is obvious that there is a sense in which only some men benefit from Christ's death. Scripture clearly teaches that only those who are savingly united to Christ share in the saving benefits of His Redemption. However, is there a sense in which Christ's death is itself a manifestation of the grace of God ("that he by the grace of God should taste death"), and at the same time is the basis upon which God can manifest both His common grace and His special grace ("should taste death for every man")?

If by God's grace Christ tasted death for every man, and every man benefits in some way from His death, then presumably He intended that every man should benefit in some way from His death. But the real question is this: Did Christ intend that every man should benefit from His death in way only; namely, by being saved? Did Christ by His death purchase other, nonsaving benefits for all men? Did He intend that every man should benefit from His death by these other benefits? And did He also intend that some men should benefit from His death by being saved?

But what are some of these nonsaving benefits which are common to all men by means of Christ's death? A few of them may be mentioned: (1) the execution of the sentence of death upon the sinner is deferred; (2) sin in the lives of individuals and in society is restrained; (3) some sense of and appreciation for the true, the good, and the beautiful are retained by human beings; (4) some enablement to perform civil righteousness and outwardly good works is retained by human beings; (5) a multitude of natural protections and blessings and good gifts from God are received by human beings every day. All of these benefits are in some sense dependent upon Christ's death; all of these benefits were intended by Christ by means of His death; therefore Christ by God's grace indeed tasted death for every man.

This Scripture, then, may be seen to have both a universal and a particular reference. He tasted death so that He might bestow the blessings of common grace upon all men; He also tasted death so that He might bestow the blessings of special (saving) grace upon those whom He had chosen before the foundation of the world.

e. II Peter 2:1

"false teachers . . . even denying the Master that bought them."

There is a sense in which Christ by His atoning death paid the price to buy out of slavery to sin and its results all mankind. Many benefits come to fallen mankind in general by virtue of Christ's saving work. These benefits place obligations on all men, in addition to the obligations human beings incur by virtue of their creation.