

## Here We Stand: Particular Redemption

### INTRODUCTION

- Tonight we are picking up on what may be arguably the most controversial point; the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter “L”, Limited Atonement; or perhaps more accurately titled “Definite Atonement” or “Particular Redemption”.
- The question we want to answer is this, *“For whom did Christ die?” “Does the death of Christ make salvation merely **possible** for anyone and everyone? Or does Christ’s death **secure** the salvation for those for whom it was intended?”*
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> point of contention from the Arminian believers was this, *“Christ’s death did not ensure the salvation of anyone, for it did not secure the gift of faith, (for the Remonstrance there was no gift); what it did was rather to create a possibility of salvation for everyone if they would only choose to believe.”*
- Arminianism is saying is that Christ’s death did not secure and guarantee salvation to anyone. Christ’s death makes salvation “possible” for everyone, but certain for no one. They say, Christ’s death was a universal atonement...He died for everyone without exception...**however**...that death does not secure anyone’s salvation, unless the person responds to it and receives it in faith.
- The Reformers responded to this claim for universal atonement by stating that the death of Christ was a “Limited atonement”! The Reformers argued that Christ’s death is particular in its design; it is intended, not for everyone universally, but for the elect particularly; therefore, Christ’s death will actually secure their salvation. So it is a particular or definite atonement!
- The Arminian says Christ died for every single person without exception. The Calvinist says, Christ died for the elect only.
- **It is critical to understand that both “limit” the atonement!**
- The Calvinist uses the term “Limited Atonement” to mean that the “extent” or “the design” of the atonement is limited;...not its power! The Calvinist believes that the death of Christ is unlimited in its power! Christ’s death is sufficient to atone for the sins of every person who ever lived! There is no limiting its ability! The Calvinist limits its design. The Calvinist says the death of Christ will not save everybody, not because its not powerful enough to do so, but because it was never designed to do so.

- The Arminian also “limits” the atonement. They limit its power. They do not limit its intent or design, no the Arminian says Christ died for all! But the Arminian does limit its power. In asserting that Christ actually died for every sin of every sinner, the benefit of that death does not apply to the sinner, unless the sinner exercises their free will to accept it. Even though Christ demonstrated infinite power in dying for every sinner; some sinners will *limit* Christ’s power by the freedom of their wills. Even though Jesus cancelled their debt, that won’t benefit them because they refuse to believe it.

*“The question of the extent of the atonement, as it has been awkwardly called, has been one of the most difficult in the whole range of Calvinistic theology. The man who should profess to see no force to the objections of our view, would only betray the shallowness of his mind and knowledge. And therefore it behooves us to approach this subject with great humility, recognizing that some of the choicest servants of God have held to a differing view.”*

**R.L. Dabney**

### **Trinitarian Theology**

- The religion of the Bible is clearly Trinitarian! The Godhead (all 3 Persons of the Trinity) always work in perfect harmony in accomplishing all their purpose! This is seen in natural creation and the new creation.
- The number one reason to believe in a limited or definite atonement...is the unity of God. When answering the question, “*For whom did Christ die?*”, we must never think that Jesus came to die for people that the Father had not first purposed to give Him.
- The historic reformed view is that the reason Jesus Christ’s death is “limited”; the reason why it is designed or intended to actually secure forgiveness for the “elect” only; is b/c the Trinity always acts in unity!

### **Scriptural Evidence**

- John 6:37-40, “*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*”
- Jesus death is limited in its design because it is directly connected to the people the Father specifically loves! The death of Christ is particular because it is intended for all the Father particularly elected.

- John 10:11, *"I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."* V.26, *"But you do not believe b/c you are not part of My flock."*
- The reason those Jews were not part of His flock was not because they didn't believe. They were not given Him by the Father. But all who are given to Christ by the Father are part of the flock. Those are the sheep the Shepherd specifically dies for.
- John 17:1, *"Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son that the Son may glorify You, since You have given Him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom You have given Him."* V.6, *"I have manifested Your name to the people You gave Me out of the world. Yours they were and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word."* V.9, *"I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those who You have given Me, for they were Yours. All mine are Yours, and Yours mine, and I am glorified in them."*
- The Father's people are Christ's people. The people for whom the Father chose to give the Son are the very same people the Son comes to rescue and bring back to the Father!

### **An aerial overview of Hebrews**

- Hebrews 1:1, *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"*
- The Son of God fulfills all 3 of the great OT offices of a Prophet, Priest and King!
- Yet, it is the office of High Priest that the author of Hebrews focuses his attention. The author of Hebrews wants to amplify Christ not only as the final and ultimate HP, but as the final and ultimate sacrifice!
- The sacrifice the HP offered and the intercession the HP made in relation to that sacrifice; was for no one but the covenant people.
- The bloody sacrifice and the intercession of the HP are united! They go together in providing atonement for the people. Death of a sacrifice and intercession of a Mediator work in perfect harmony together to reconcile a certain people group to God!

- Hebrews 2:9, *“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.” Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*
  
- Hebrews 7:25, *“Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.*
  
- Hebrews 8:1, *“Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven”, V.6, “But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.*
  
- Hebrews 9:11, *“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. V.24, “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

- Hebrews 10:12, *“But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God”*
- The intercession that Christ makes is in direct proportion to His propitiation. See, in the NC the sacrifice and the HP are One! You cannot divide or separate the bloody sacrifice (the atonement) from the intercessory prayer that is made for the people for whom the sacrifice was offered! You cannot rupture the two.
- In other words, we cannot say Christ’s death was for every human being without exception, that his death propitiated and removed Gods wrath for everyone; yet in the next breath say that Christ is only interceding for those who believe!
- If Christ died and propitiated the sin of every man, then Christ of necessity must be interceding and saving to the uttermost every man! The death of Christ was specific in its design for it was designed not to make salvation possible, but to make salvation actual!
- As we cannot divide the unity of the Trinity in their purpose to save the elect, so we cannot divide the unity between the intercession of the HP and the sacrifice of the HP for the elect! The unity of the Trinity, the perfect harmony between the “will” of the Father and the Son, is one!

### **Implications for Both**

- Now what about texts like John 3:16, I Tim. 2:3-4, II Peter 2:1, and others? See addendum.
- It is the Arminian view of Christ’s death that “actually” makes God...UNJUST! Why? Because in their system God would actually be punishing the same sins twice! He would be exacting the same payment for sin twice. He would be an unjust Judge!
- Calvinism on the other hand says with the Apostle, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!”* No condemnation! Not now, not ever! No threat of it and no possibility of it. WHY? B/c Christ actually secured the reversal of our verdict by His death!
- The death of Jesus Christ is not universal in its design; it was specific in its design; it is in this sense that it is limited. Not limited in power but limited in scope. It’s limited to all the Father gave the Son. And the Son loses none that the Father gives Him! He dies for them and He will raise them up on the last day!

## ADDENDUM

### Passages Arminians use to support Universal Atonement

\*It should be noted that historical Arminianism never taught that Christ paid the “*penalty*” for our sins but that He suffered for them\*

*“Many Arminians whose theology is not very precise say that Christ paid the penalty for our sins. Yet such a view is foreign to Arminianism, which teaches that Christ suffered for us. Arminians teach that what Christ did, He did for every person; therefore what He did could not have been to pay the penalty, since no one would then ever go into eternal perdition.”*

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(*School self-consciously Arminian*)

1. John 3:16, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”*
  - Arminians argue this verse proves that God loves everyone and the atonement of Christ is universal since God is said to be loving the “world.”
  - The word “world” is used some ten different ways in Scripture.
  - Calvinists believe this passage teaches that God is demonstrating His love to the world because Christ’s death will not just save the Jews (only people God covenantally loved) but that He will also save Gentiles. God’s love to the world is a fulfillment to Abraham that through him all the nations would be blessed. This doesn’t teach universal atonement in that Christ died for every person without exception, but that the atonement is universal in that God will save people *out of* every tribe, tongue, language and nation (Rev. 5:9).
2. I Timothy 2:3-4, *“This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*
  - Arminians say this is clearly revealing God’s will that He desires all men without exception to be saved and therefore if He wills that then Christ must have died for them.
  - Arminians interpret verses that use the universal terms like the word “all, whole and world” to infer that God intends to save every person without exception.
  - Calvinists argue that the Bible (like us) uses universal terms when it doesn’t intend to mean a universal fact (ex: Luke 2:1 “all” the Roman world should be taxed, not “all” the world, as in every person everywhere).
  - Calvinists believe this verse can either mean God has a general benevolence in that He takes no delight in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11), or that God desires “all” types of people from all stations in life (see context of vs 1-2).

3. II Peter 2:1, *“But false prophets also rose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.”*
  - Arminians say Christ died for all because it is said here that these people deny the Master who “bought them”. They understand this to mean Christ died for them, He purchased them with His own blood.
  - First, it should be carefully noted that the word for Master is not “Kurios” in the Greek, which is most often used of Christ as Lord to His people. The word is “despotes” in Greek, meaning Ruler, Owner or Creator.
  - The Calvinist believes that these false teachers although claiming to be bought by Christ, they despise the Lordship of Christ in practice. It was the false teachers claim that Christ bought them.
  - Peter’s intent here is to highlight the responsibility of false teachers not advance a theory on the nature of the atonement.
  
4. II Peter 3:9, *“The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any of you should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”*
  - Arminians see this as a proof text for universal atonement, since God doesn’t wish/desire that “any” should perish and that “all” reach repentance.
  - The Calvinist understands the “all” as the elect who have been misled by false teachers (ch. 2). The “you”, “any of you” refers back to the “us” of ch. 1:3. The elect are in view here. The recipients of this letter are being referred to here; and the recipients are the “elect” (1 Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:1-3).
  
5. I John 2:2, *“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”*
  - Arminians again sees this as a proof text that Christ died for every person in the world.
  - Calvinist understands this to mean that John, a Jew, is writing His gospel and now these letters (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John) to the world. In other words, John’s gospel is going not just to Israel, but now to the world...to the ends of the earth. The sacrifice of Christ, the propitiation He made for sin, is not exclusively for the Jewish nation, it is for the world. NOT every person who ever lived, but for people all over the world.
  - IF this text, and the others like it, teach what Arminians say it teaches, that Christ died for every sin of every sinner, then this teaches universalism. And universalism teaches that every one will be saved. The Bible does not teach that.