

**Discipleship:  
An  
Introduction to  
Systematic Theology and  
Apologetics**

**Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation**

**The Heights Church January 13, 2019**

## Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement\* (Review)

- **Article 2 of the Remonstrance:** That, accordingly, Jesus Christ the Savior of the **world**, died for **all men** and for **every man**, so that **he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins**; yet that **no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer**, according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16, “For God so loved the **world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” And in 1 John 2:2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.”

\* *The atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.*

# Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement (Review)

- The divide between Arminians and Calvinists is over:
  1. The extent of the atonement (Who did Jesus die for?) - **Synod of Dort**
  2. The nature of the atonement (What did Jesus achieve on the cross for those for whom he died?) - **The more important question.**
- If Jesus died for every human in the **same way for every person**, then the atonement did not decisively secure the salvation of anyone because not everyone believes. It only made everyone savable if someone chose (on their own) to believe *which was impossible for them to do because of moral inability* (Total Depravity).

## Limited Atonement\* – Jesus lays down his life for the sheep (Review)

- **14** I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, **15** just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16** And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. (John 10:14 – 16)
- **26** but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock. **27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. **28** I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. **29** My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. (John 10:26 – 29)
- The sheep are not everyone. They are a specific group that Christ died for. They believe in Jesus because they are sheep (given to Jesus by the father). They have been called and every sheep will have eternal life.

\* *The atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.*

## Limited Atonement – Jesus lays down his life for the sheep (Review)

**50** Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish." **51** He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, **52** and not for the nation only, but also to **gather into one** the **children of God** who are scattered abroad. (John 11:50 – 52)

- The gathering of the children of God in John 11:52 is the same idea as the “bringing” in John 10:16. Jesus did not die to create the possibility of salvation but rather to make it happen.
- In Revelation 5:9 John again shows a specific group of people is ransomed by Jesus’ shed blood covering all the people groups on earth as opposed to ransoming all people.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for **you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,**

## Limited Atonement – Jesus lays down his life for the sheep

- Arminian theologians going back to the Remonstrance point to John 3:16 and 1 John 2:2 to support their view of the atonement that Jesus died for every person in the world not a select group of people. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- Given the verses written by John that we have just studied that clearly support Limited Atonement we either have to conclude that John is conflicted, confused or careless in his choice of words concerning the Atonement or we need to determine how John 3:16 and 1 John 2:2 fits with the previous verses identified as supporting Limited Atonement and written by John.

## Limited Atonement – Jesus lays down his life for the sheep

"For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the **sins of the whole world**. (1 John 2:2)

**BUT**

**6** "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word... **9** I am praying for them. **I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me**, for they are yours (John 17:6, 9)

- "World" in John 3:16 and 1 John 2:2 cannot mean every person because Jesus only prays for those the Father gave him, namely the elect!

## Limited Atonement – Jesus lays down his life for the sheep

"For **God so loved the world**, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

- John 3:16 supports Limited Atonement because God gave his Son who atoned for everyone who believes not for everyone.
- John 3:16 also supports Preservation of the Saints because every believer should not perish but have eternal life.
- John 3:16 is also a double sola verse (faith alone in Christ alone).
- John 3:16 can be also construed to support the Arminian view to the extent that only believers receive the benefit of the atonement. However, it is silent regarding key Arminian claims that:
  1. the atonement applies equally to every person
  2. belief is by “Free Will” which is decisive over the actions of the Holy Spirit
  3. the possibility that anyone who truly believes could lose their salvation

## Limited Atonement – Jesus lays down his life for the sheep

- Comparing 1 John 2:2 to John 11:51 – 52

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the **sins of the whole world**. (1 John 2:2)

...he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to **gather into one** the **children of God** who are scattered abroad. (John 11:51-52)

- The “whole world” in 1 John 2:2 parallels children of God who are scattered abroad in John 11:51 – 52. The point is Jesus did not atone for one socioeconomic group, or nation, or race or culture and the like but for people from every tribe and language and people and nation,

## Limited Atonement – Jesus ransomed many people not all people

- In Revelation 5:9 the blood of Christ ransomed people from every tribe and language and people and nation, not a universal ransom of all people or a ransom of only one race, culture and the like as in Judaism.

for this is **my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many** for the forgiveness of sins. (Matthew 26:28)

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to **give his life as a ransom for many.**“ (Mark 10:45)

so Christ, having been offered once to **bear the sins of many**, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)

- **The same idea is prophesized by Isaiah** he **poured out his soul to death** and was numbered with the transgressors; yet **he bore the sin of many**, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

## Limited Atonement – Jesus died for the Church

- In Ephesians 5 Paul writes” **25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and **gave himself up for her, 26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.
- The point is that Jesus died for the church, the bride of Christ. This was not because he loved the entire world in the same way but that he loved the elect as a perfect husband loves his bride.

## Limited Atonement – Jesus died for the Church

- Finally, consider the logic of Romans 8:32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? It begs the answer that if God gave his son for “us” he will not withhold anything.
- Who are the “us?” They are the “foreknown, predestined, called, justified and glorified in Romans 8:29 – 31. In other words the elect, the sheep, the children of God and the bride of Christ.
- So the biblical doctrine of Limited Atonement is that the Atonement did not secure the possibility of salvation for every person but rather accomplished the salvation of the elect children of God. By God’s mercy he did for the elect what was impossible for them to do by their own efforts even if God wooed or assisted them.

# Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement

1. Therefore, the great problem with the Arminian view of the Atonement identified by John Owen remains:
  - If Jesus atoned for every sin of every person and unbelief is a sin that sends people to hell, then either:
    1. Jesus did not atone for unbelief (because unbelievers go to hell). SO HOW ARE BELIEVERS SAVED?
    2. God is unjust to send an unbeliever to hell (because Jesus atoned for unbelief)
  - Alternately: if Jesus atoned for every sin of every person and God wants every person to be saved then God is unable to accomplish what he desires because he either
    1. values human autonomy above his sovereignty or
    2. God is not sovereign

# Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Irresistible Grace

**Calvinism:** In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended. (Quoted from Romans an Interpretive Outline by David N Steele and Curtis C

## Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Irresistible Grace

**Arminianism:** The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man. (Quoted from Romans an Interpretive Outline by David N Steele and Curtis C Thomas ISBN 978-0-87552-443-6 Appendix D Pages 144-147)

## Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Irresistible Grace

- Article IV of the Remonstrance states:

That this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of a good, even to this extent, that the regenerate man himself, without that prevenient or assisting, awakening, following, and co-operative grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements, that can be conceived, must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But, as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, in as much as it is written concerning **many** that they have resisted the Holy Ghost,—Acts vii, and elsewhere in **many** places.