

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

Protestant Reformation Doctrines of Salvation

The Heights Church December 16, 2018

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – the essential differences

Five Points	Calvinists	Arminians
Total Depravity	Free Will was lost in the Fall.	Every natural born person was corrupted by the Fall but Free Will was not lost in the Fall.
Unconditional Election	God the Father chose a remnant of people based on his love/grace/mercy and not on the merits of each individual elect person.	God the Father elects those he omnisciently knew would come to faith by their own Free Will.
Limited Atonement	Jesus' atonement was only for the elect.	Jesus' atonement was for every person.
Irresistible Grace	The Holy Spirit changes the heart of the elect so that it is impossible for them to not believe in Christ.	The Holy Spirit tries to woo every person to believe in Christ but leaves the final choice up to each person's Free Will.
Perseverance of the Saints	The elect cannot lose their salvation.	A true believer can lose their salvation because of Free Will.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – the essential differences

- **Arminians and Roman Catholics think Salvation and Sanctification are both cooperative efforts of God and humans.**
- **Reformed people understand the Bible to say salvation is the work of God alone but Sanctification is a cooperative effort of God and humans**

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology - Total Depravity (Review)

For the mind that is set on the **flesh is hostile to God**, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, **it cannot**. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

(Romans 8:7-8)

For the word of **the cross is folly to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and **he is not able to understand them** because they are spiritually discerned. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Unconditional Election (Review)

And not only so, but also when **Rebekah had conceived children by one man**, our forefather Isaac, though they were **not yet born** and **had done nothing either good or bad**--in order that **God's purpose of election might continue**, not **because of works but because of him who calls**--she was told, "The older will serve the younger. "As it is written, "**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**" What shall we say then? **Is there injustice on God's part? By no means!** For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then **it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.** (Romans 9:10 – 16)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Unconditional Election (Review)

- The burning question Paul wrestles with in Romans 9-11 is why don't the Jews believe Jesus is the Messiah? So can Romans 9 be written off as Arminians attempt to do by saying it refers to nations and not individuals?
- **No, because:** But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the **children of God**, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (Romans 9:6 – 9)

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement*

- **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

- John Owen is generally regarded as the greatest Puritan theologian and the author of the best book ever written explaining/defending Limited Atonement: *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1647). His basic argument was:

If Jesus **died** for **all** men and for **every** man, so that he has **obtained for them all**, by his death on the cross, **redemption**. **Why are not all people saved?**

- “Arminians pretend, very speciously*, that Christ died for all men, yet, in effect, they make him die for no one man at all.”

— John Owen, [The Death of Christ](#)

*apparently good or right though lacking real merit; superficially pleasing or plausible: **Specious** arguments are pleasing to the eye but deceptive.



John Owen 1616 - 1683

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement

- Limited Atonement gives us the “L” in Tulip but it is not the best name. Arminians usually prefer **General** or **Universal Atonement** to describe their position while Reformed theologians have usually preferred **Definite Atonement**.
- Reformed theologians are either “Four Point Calvinists” (reject Limited Atonement but embrace the other four points) or “Five Point Calvinists.
- Except for Universalists the vast majority of “Evangelicals” agree that the atonement is limited in its efficacy to “True Believers” but was sufficient to cover the sins of everyone who ever lived.

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement*

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

* Reference *Five Points* by John Piper

Reformed vs Arminian Soteriology – Limited Atonement

- On the other hand if Jesus died only for the elect, then his death did not have to produce the same effect for everyone so that the cross could actually purchase irresistible grace, the new birth, faith and repentance for everyone of the elect.

Limited Atonement – The New Covenant

- The *New Covenant* (Jeremiah 31) teaches that the conditions of the *Old Covenant* will be secured by God's sovereign initiative. It cannot be broken by the recipients.

31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

32 **not like the covenant that I made with their fathers** on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **my covenant that they broke**, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: **I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD, for **they shall all know me**, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For **I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**"

Limited Atonement - The New Covenant

- Ezekiel makes a similar point in 11:19 - 20.

19 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

- and in 36:26 - 27

- **26** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

- **27** And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

- Moses had previously made a similar point in Deuteronomy 30:6.

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Limited Atonement - The New Covenant

- What had been promised in the OT becomes a reality in the NT.

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. (Luke 22:20)

In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood... (1 Corinthians 11:25)

This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. (Hebrews 7:22)

Therefore, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that **those who are called** may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since **a death has occurred that redeems them** from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. (Hebrews 9:15)

- The promises of the New Covenant are blood bought. The promises to create and keep a people for God are what Jesus died for. So there is a definite atonement for a definite group of people that is secured by Jesus' shed blood.