

The Reformed Faith

Week 4 - Intentional Atonement

What We Believe

1. Read John 17. What has the Father given to the Son?
2. What has the Son given to his followers?
3. Who is Jesus praying for? Who is Jesus not praying for?
4. What is Jesus asking the Father to do for those he's given to the Son?

Reformed Theologians - John Calvin

John Calvin (1509–1564), a French theologian and reformer, profoundly shaped Reformed theology during the Protestant Reformation. Based in Geneva, he systematized Protestant thought through his seminal work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536). Calvin emphasized God's sovereignty, predestination, and human depravity, articulating doctrines like total depravity, unconditional election, and perseverance of the saints (TULIP). His focus on sola scriptura and disciplined church governance influenced Reformed churches worldwide. Calvin's teachings on worship, ethics, and the role of the church in society inspired later reformers and shaped the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), cementing his legacy in Reformed theology.

Creeds and Confessions - Apostle's Creed

The Apostles' Creed, originating in the 2nd century, evolved from early baptismal confessions in Rome, reaching its current form by the 4th century. Though not written by the apostles, it summarizes core Christian beliefs: the Trinity, God's creation, Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and return, and the Holy Spirit's work in the church. Its concise, ecumenical text affirms essential doctrines. In the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), the Apostles' Creed is a foundational ecumenical creed, used in worship, baptisms, and catechesis alongside the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, guiding believers in proclaiming and teaching orthodox Christian faith.

Catechism Corner - Canons of Dort 1st Article 8-10

Article 8: A Single Decree of Election

This election is not of many kinds, but one and the same for all who were to be saved in the Old and the New Testament. For Scripture declares that there is a single good pleasure, purpose, and plan of God's will, by which he chose us from eternity both to grace and to glory, both to salvation and to the way of salvation, which God prepared in advance for us to walk in.

Article 9: Election Not Based on Foreseen Faith

This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or

condition in the person to be chosen, but rather for the purpose of faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, and so on. Accordingly, election is the source of every saving good. Faith, holiness, and the other saving gifts, and at last eternal life itself, flow forth from election as its fruits and effects. As the apostle says, “He chose us” (not because we were, but) “so that we should be holy and blameless before him in love” (Eph. 1:4).

Article 10: Election Based on God’s Good Pleasure

But the cause of this undeserved election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve God’s choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves adopting certain particular persons from among the common mass of sinners as God’s own possession. As Scripture says, “When the children were not yet born, and had done nothing either good or bad . . . , she (Rebecca) was told, ‘The older will serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated’” (Rom. 9:11-13). Also, “All who were appointed for eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

What is “Solus Christus”?

“Solus Christus” is Latin for “Christ Alone”

Solus Christus is a Latin phrase meaning “Christ alone,” which is one of the five core principles of the Protestant Reformation. It means that salvation is obtained through Jesus Christ alone, without the need for intermediaries like saints or priests, and that Christ is the sole mediator between God and humanity. This doctrine holds that Christ’s person and work are the sole source of redemption and that his authority as God and savior is supreme.

Salvation: Salvation is not earned through human works or merit, but is a gift received through faith in Christ’s atoning sacrifice.

Mediator: Christ is the only intermediary between God and people, and no other person, such as a priest, pope, or saint, is needed to access God’s grace.

Authority: Jesus Christ is the only authority for Christian faith and life. His person and work, as revealed in Scripture, are the center of the gospel.

Uniqueness: The doctrine is considered exclusive because it asserts that there is no other path to salvation than through Jesus Christ.

God Speaks to Us

1. Jesus’ prayer to the Father is not for the world, but for those the Father has given him. What general theme applies to all the supplications Jesus made to the Father? Refer to your list from “What We Believe” Question #4 for the answer.
2. Jesus didn’t pray for salvation of the lost. He prayed for those the Father has given him. Does this mean we shouldn’t pray for the lost? Explain your answer.

God Speaks to Our Family

1. Jesus uses the word “world” 18 times in John 17. The Greek word used for “world” has eight different definitions. For most of the uses in our text, the definition is everything that “appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e. lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined and depraved...” What can we tell about the character of God that he sent his perfect, holy, righteous Son into the world to pull us out of the world?
2. How can we help our children, grandchildren, and young people in the church avoid the world while they live and breathe in it?

God Speaks in Worship

1. How does our worship reflect the fact that we’re in the world but not of the world?
2. Jesus intentionally atoned for the sins of the church. Is worship for the unsaved? Why or why not?

The Gospel Call

1. If we are chosen by God, then why do we need to share the gospel with others?
2. Reformed Christians have been called “the frozen chosen” due to the lack of evangelistic fervor. Is this a problem of orthodoxy (correct belief) or orthopraxy (correct practice)? Explain your answer.

