THE ATONEMENT: EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE AND ASSESSMENT OF THE LIMITED AND UNLIMITED VIEWS

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Introduction

The atonement is a doctrine which has long been both adored, debated, misunderstood, and even hated. “When Jesus Christ commissioned His disciples to preach the gospel, He sent them with a message that collided with the cultural sensibilities of the day. His death and resurrection were the basis for the forgiveness of sin, yet both Jews and Gentiles found the manner of His death––crucifixion––to be a severe impediment to receiving the gospel because they viewed crucified men with complete disdain.”[1] There are two things that must immediately be observed. First, the gospel of redemption through Jesus Christ is adored by the disciples for scripture tells us they joyfully and boldly proclaimed this message even in the face of harsh persecution[2]. Second, we see that the message itself was foolishness to the world. The Greeks viewed those who were killed by crucifixion as the worst type of criminal while the Jews believed that anyone who was hanged on a tree was accursed[3]. It is clear through the evidence of scripture that the cross is adored by those who believe and disdained and misunderstood by those who do not. While the significance of the cross is understood by all who truly believe, there is much debate that has existed throughout church history on this subject. John Owen writes, “the agent in, and chief author of, this great work of our redemption is the whole blessed trinity; for all the

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[1] *Green, Donald. "The Folly of the Cross." The Master's Seminary Spring Journal (2004): 1. Www.tms.edu. The Master's Seminary, 2004. Web. 4 July 2016. <https://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj15c.pdf>.*

[2] *Acts 5:40-42, Acts 14:19-22, Acts 16, 2 Corinthians 11:24-28,. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

[3] *Deuteronomy 21:23. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

works which outwardly are of the deity are undivided and belong equally to each person, their distinct manner of subsistence and order being observed”[4]. It must be established from the very beginning that this doctrine is a Trinitarian doctrine and it must never be viewed otherwise. Down through church history perhaps the only thing universally agreed upon regarding the atonement is the fact that Christ died. The nature, and extent of the atonement however, has caused much debate and even schism among the church. Many people have debated this issue and come to the conclusion that regardless of the opposition’s view, it is not necessary to cause division by debating this doctrine and as a result the discussion is dropped altogether. Others have simply invented new doctrines altogether that are devoid of any controversy or hard truths. In order to get an accurate grasp of this doctrine there are a few basic aspects of the atonement that need to be examined. First, the meaning of the word “atonement” should be examined. What does it mean and what is the scriptural meaning behind it? For this point, an examination will be made of the types and shadows of the Old Testament as well as the references in the New Testament to propitiation. Secondly, what was the necessity of the atonement? An examination will be made to see the nature of sin, the sad state of man, and the reason that the atonement was necessary. Third, the purpose of the atonement will be discussed. Did God intend something definite by it and what was Christ’s purpose in dying? Also to be examined

[4] *Owen, John. "Book 1." The Death of Death in the Death of Christ: A Treatise in Which the Whole Controversy about Universal Redemption Is Fully Discussed. London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959. 18. Print.*

in this section are unscriptural views of the atonement. These heresies abound in plenty and will be briefly dealt with in order to maintain an accurate view of the death that Christ died. Fourth, there should be an examination of the extent of the atonement to see what was accomplished. In this section we will begin to unpack the limited and unlimited atonement debate and compare the views against scripture so see what God's word says on the matter for ultimately scripture is the final word on all matters. Many theologians have invented new and alternative ways of thinking about and looking at the atonement. These theories and beliefs must be measured against scripture to see if they hold any weight and if we should view them with any sense of credibility. The theories that will be primarily addressed are the limited atonement view, and the unlimited atonement view. Each view will be carefully dissected in light of scripture and an assertion will be made regarding which view is biblically correct. Finally, in light of the research contained herein, an assertion shall be made regarding this research and a conclusion will be drawn which explains the personal ramifications for the asserted doctrinal belief as well as the consequences for believing otherwise. Charles Spurgeon once famously stated "The doctrine of redemption is one of the most important doctrines of the system of faith. A mistake on this point will inevitably lead to a mistake through the entire system of our belief"[5]. This doctrine is critically important to the faith and is well deserving of a thorough examination. Without further ado, let us set out in our endeavor to gain a voluminous understanding of this doctrine

[5] *Spurgeon, Charles H. Particular Redemption. Pensacola: Chapel Library, 2014. Print.*

while keeping in mind that we do all things to the glory of God and Him alone. May He get all the glory and may He be honored by the writing to follow.

Atonement Defined and Examined

The Oxford Reference Dictionary defines the word “atonement” as “the reconciliation or restoration of friendly relations between God and sinners”[6]. The Lexham Bible Dictionary similarly defines the atonement as “the means of reconciliation between God and people”[7]. It should be noted that etymologically, this word originated as an English word in the 16th century and was first used by John Wycliff[8]. The process he described and intended, was literally the “at-onement” between God and man. This quite literally means the reunification of God and sinful, broken mankind. In both of these definitions we see a common theme: atonement is the means of reconciliation between God and man and without the atonement, no man could be saved. That atonement is the means of reconciliation and salvation between God and man is the universal point of agreement across all views of the atonement.

In the Old Testament we see a great anticipation of this reconciliation. It must be assumed and it should not be understated that all scripture points to Jesus Christ, and it must be understood that he alone is the center of all

[6] "*atonement, n.*" *OED Online. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 3 July 2016.*
[7] *Barry, John D. "Atonement." Lexham Bible Dictionary. 2015 ed. Bellingham: Lexham, 2015. Print.*
[8] "*atone, v.*" *OED Online. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 3 July 2016.*

scripture. We see in the Old Testament many types and shadows that pointed to a Messiah who would bring restoration and redemption. “Genesis 3:15 is frequently identified as the protoevangelium — the first annunciation of the gospel”[9]. This first “gospel” stated that the ultimate end of Satan would come through a person not an animal. This implies the animal sacrifices to come were a picture of the ultimate sacrifice of the “seed of the woman.” This also implies that since sin entered through one man (Adam) the forgiveness of sin would also come through one man to come (the seed of the woman). Henry Halley writes in his famous *Bible Handbook*, “Here, right at the start of the Bible story, is the foregleam of Christ; and, as the pages pass, hints, foregleams, glimpses, pictures, and plain statements become clearer and more abundant, so that, as we come to the end of the Old Testament, there has been drawn a fairly complete picture of Christ”[10]. We further see shadows of things to come in Exodus 12 when the Passover lamb is introduced, Leviticus 1-7 when the sacrificial system is implemented and we see the slain lamb prophesied about in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 is one of the strongest passages on this issue. Here, the language of forgiveness is centered on a Person, who gives Himself as the offering for sin thus bypassing the sacrificial system altogether. In summary, “the Old Testament viewed a number of offerings and sacrifices as atoning. God however, did not need appeasement, but rather, atonement removed the

[9] *Willis, Mike. "Genesis 3:15 — The Protoevangelium." Genesis 3:15 — The Protoevangelium. Truth Magazine, 6 July 2000. Web. 03 July 2016. <http://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume44/V4407060002.htm>.*
[10] *Halley, Henry H. "Genesis." Bible Handbook; an Abbreviated Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub House, 1962. 29. Print.*

sinful barrier to the covenant relationship"[11]. The entire Old Testament points forward to Christ and reflects the plan of redemption that God had divinely ordained before the foundation of the world.

In the New Testament we see two things regarding the Atonement. First, we see the fulfillment of the Old Testament law in the person and work of Christ Jesus and second, we see a replacement of the old order with the new covenant. Hebrews 9:11 tells us that Jesus appeared as a high priest and through his own blood, rather than the blood and goats of the sacrificial system, obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 10:1-10 goes on to state,

> *"For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE TAKEN NO PLEASURE. "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.' After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED,*

[11] *Achtemeier, Paul J. Harper Collins Bible Dictionary. New York, NY.Harper & Row96-25424., 1996. Print.*

> *NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them" (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*[12]

In Christ we see the fulfillment of the old covenant through his perfect sinless life, his satisfaction of the Father through his perfect atonement for sin, and the replacement of the old order of sacrifices and burnt offerings with the new covenant of his blood. Through this fulfilment of the old covenant, we see the love of God on display as "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"[13]. The God of the universe stepped down into history and made a way for rebellious mankind to be reconciled to Him. That way is Jesus Christ and him alone for he is the way the truth and the life and no man comes to the father except through him.[14]

Necessity of the Atonement

In the beginning of time, man was created in a state of perfect innocence and walked in a state of harmony and fellowship with God. Scripture tells us however, that Adam was tempted, gave in to his temptation, and sinned against his holy creator. The results of this fall were disastrous. As a result of the fall of Adam, all men are born into this world with a sinful nature and at enmity with God. Romans 5:12 says "Therefore, just as through one man

[12] *Hebrews 10:1-10. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print.*
[13] *John 1:14. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print.*
[14] *John 14:6. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print.*

sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned"[15].When Adam sinned, this state of innocence was ruined, the fellowship he enjoyed with creator God was broken, death and destruction were introduced into the world, and a separation occurred between man and God. These consequences are a dreadful reminder of the serious and treasonous nature of sin. It is altogether horrific news indeed that all men by virtue of being born have entered into this sinful and fallen existence. Sin is a damnable thing and it possesses both temporal consequences as well as eternal. The eternal consequence of sin is an eternity spent separated from God in eternal torment. This terrible location is hell and it is a horrendous demise for all who enter. This reality initiates the unquestionable need for reconciliation between God and man.

When we examine sin, we see how horrendous it is by nature and as a result we are forced to grapple with the necessary consequences. A truly holy God must judge those who commit sin. Paul explained to the Romans that "sin is not imputed when there is no law"[16]. God reveals Himself both through the consciences of men (the law being written on the hearts of all men), and also through his divinely revealed word. In this position of authority God disseminates the law to man as a reflection of His holy character and the standard by which man is to be judged. This law is therefore the criteria by which sin is defined and known. As Paul wrote;

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[15] *Romans 5:12. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print.*
[16] *Romans 5:13. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

"through the law comes the knowledge of sin"[17], and "I would not have come to know sin except through the law"[18]. John put it succinctly as well: "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness"[19]. To say that all men have sinned is to say that all men have transgressed God's prohibitions and commands and have failed to conform to His standard of perfection. All men are law-breakers. Due to the fact that the law reveals God's glorious and holy character, those who break the law "fall short of the glory of God"[20]. This brings us to the courtroom of the almighty. If all men have sinned and fallen short of God's standard, then in what way will a Holy God be satisfied? Genesis 18:25 tells us that God is the just judge of all the earth and Habbakuk 1:13 tells us that He cannot tolerate evil. God must be true to His own character and impose a penalty upon those who are guilty of violating His commandments. Standing under the moral jurisdiction of God's law, "every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God"[21]. If He were to mark our iniquities, not one person could stand[22]. Even if we have stumbled at only one point in the law we are "guilty of breaking all of it"[23]. As a result, we stand under the

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[17] *Romans 3:20. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[18] *Romans 7:7. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[19] *1 John 3:4. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[20] *Romans 3:23. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[21] *Romans 3:19. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[22] *Psalm 130:3. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[23] *James 2:10. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

condemnation of God and are in dire need of a savior from our sin and the rightly deserved condemnation for that sin.

Christ's atoning sacrifice was necessary because no man is able to stand before God on his own merit. Romans 3:10-12 states "there is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good"[24]. All human beings are completely incapable of satisfying a holy God. Man has always needed an intercessory high priest to remove the barrier of sin that causes separation between us and God. In order to be reconciled to God, mankind needed a perfect substitute to satisfy the demands of God and to intercede on our behalf. Jesus' atoning death did two things in regards to the law: first, it fulfilled the law perfectly[25], and second, it redeemed us from the curse of the law[26]. In regards to the fulfillment of the law, this is significant because there is an order of all things in scripture. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:45-46 "the first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam (Jesus) became a life giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual"[27]. In the same way, the old covenant was a physical covenant of sacrifice and burnt offerings while the new covenant is spiritual and is comprised of the blood of Christ and remembered through the sacraments

[24] *Romans 3:10-12. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[25] *Matthew 5:17. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[26] *Galatians 3:13. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[27] *1 Corinthians15:45-56. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

of baptism and communion. As the fulfillment of the old covenant and the bearer of the curse of the law, Christ is the great high priest and his office supersedes that of every other earthly member who ever held the office of high priest. He alone was able to pour out his own physical blood as an atonement rather than a symbolic sacrifice for he himself was the fulfillment of all prophecy and foreshadowing. He perfectly fulfilled the perfect standard and will of his father and as a result was perfectly able to be our propitiation.

Purpose of the Atonement

Before we examine the purpose of the atonement, we must first examine Christ's death. The death of Christ was a natural death. Jesus experienced a literal and physical death. Secondly, Jesus experienced an abnormal and supernatural death. Scripture tells us that the wages of sin is death[28]. Jesus however, knew no sin. This fact makes his death incredibly abnormal. Scripture provides the answer to this strange paradox when Paul tells the church at Corinth "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"[29]. While Jesus never sinned, he took our sins upon himself and as a result he tasted the death of a natural man. Additionally, his death was not only abnormal but it was supernatural in nature as well. While Jesus died the death of a natural

[28] *Romans 6:23. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[29] *2 Corinthians 5:21. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

man, his death was far from that of a natural man. The reason being for this is that unlike natural man who knows not the time or hour when he will die, scripture tells us that Jesus gave up his life on his own volition. John tells us in his gospel that Jesus told the disciples before he died that he was laying down his life so he could take it back up again and that he was laying his life down on his own initiative[30]. In Matthew we see this clearly evidenced by the manner in which Jesus died. It was not unusual for people to survive for days upon being crucified yet Jesus died after merely 6 hours. This was not due to a lack of strength either for scripture tells us that Jesus cried out with a loud voice and then yielded up his spirit[31]. Jesus truly gave up his life and it was not taken from him for he died with strength yet in him and even enough strength to cry out in a loud voice. The third and final significant aspect of Christ's death was the predetermined nature of it. Shortly after Pentecost, Peter delivered a sermon to a large group of people and in that sermon he informed them that the death of Jesus was the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God[32]. Peter would later write in 1 Peter 1:20 that in fact Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the earth[33]. The death of Christ was purposeful from before the foundation of the earth. It was marked out in history and it was predetermined and part of the sovereign and perfect will of God. Here we see the love of God displayed

[30] *John 10:17-18. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[31] *Matthew 27:50. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[32] *Acts 2:23. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[33] *1 Peter 1:20. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us and this provision had been made long before we even existed! With this scripture in hand we can easily depose of several faulty views of Christ's death. First that it was an accidental death. The predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God is far from accidental and therefore, to believe that Christ's death was accidental is to plainly reject scripture. Secondly, Christ was no martyr. He plainly tells us that he gave his life up for his sheep on his own initiative so that he could take it back up again. Rather than being a martyr, he is a great high priest who made a propitiation for our sins with his own blood. Third, Christ's death was not a moral example. Many people will argue that Christ died in order to provide an example for humanity to follow in order to improve. This idea is faulty because Christ died to save sinners, not for sinners to improve their own state of being. If Christ died as an example for people to look upon and be improved, then the people who crucified him would have been extremely well off. We know this however, to be entirely false and degrading to the death Christ died. Fourth, many of the early church fathers even some recent scholars have argued what is called the ransom theory. While Christ's death was indeed a ransom for the many, [34] the actual "ransom theory" argues correctly that Christ was a ransom for the many and incorrectly that this ransom was paid to Satan in order to recover lost souls. This theory is incorrect because it makes Satan a beneficiary of the atonement. We know this to be false because scripture tells us explicitly

[34] *1 Timothy 2:6. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

that Christ's death and resurrection was instrumental and critical to the defeat of Satan. Christ crushed the head of the serpent through this defeat and to make the serpent a beneficiary rather than a crushed enemy subject of Christ is to give the devil far too much credit. The death of Christ was not a transaction of sorts as we understand it. Rather, it was a cosmic liberation and redemption brought about by the work of Christ on the cross. Satan was not paid off by Christ but rather was crushed and defeated.

With the nature of Christ's death in view and the reasons why he did not die explained, the true purpose of Christ's death and what the Father intended by it must now be examined. The first reason why Christ died was to save sinners. Jesus tells us in his own words in the gospel of Luke that he came to seek and to save that which was lost[35]. This reconciliation between God and man was Jesus primary mission on the earth. John Owen writes in his famous polemical work *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ,* "Thus clear, then, and apparent, is the intention and design of Christ and his father in this great work, even what it was, and towards whom- namely, to save us, to deliver us from the evil world, to purge and wash us, to make us holy, zealous, fruitful in good works, to render us acceptable, and to bring us unto God"[36]. We see here in the act of reconciliation four things that occur biblically and are a direct result of Christ's death. First, justification is procured by the removal of sin and guilt and a pardon is granted by the

[35] *Luke 19:10. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[36] *Owen, John. "Book 1." The Death of Death in the Death of Christ: A Treatise in Which the Whole Controversy about Universal Redemption Is Fully Discussed. London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1959. 13. Print.*

father. Colossians 1:14 tells us that God rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin[37]. Secondly, we find sanctification accomplished in the work on the cross. Hebrews 9:14 says, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?[38] This stripping off of the old self and replacing it with the righteousness is the essence of sanctification. It is a process whereby a believer is made more like Christ and it is possible only through the death of Christ and the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit. Scripture tells us that Christ is the only mediator through God and man and this is because he gave himself as a ransom for all[39]. In a short while we shall examine the controversy between the words "all" and "world" but for now suffice it to say Christ is the ransom and through him we have our justification, sanctification and a perfect mediator between us and God. The third thing that Christ's death accomplished is adoption. Paul wrote to the Galatians that God sent for His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that he might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons[40]. This is incredibly significant because adoption is a permanent thing. In the Jewish culture of that day, if one was

[37] *Colossians 1:14. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[38] *Hebrews 9:14. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[39] *1 Timothy 2:5-6. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[40] *Galatians 4:5. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

adopted they could never be “un-adopted” or disowned. It was a permanent action that could never be reversed and in this portion of scripture we see that we are both redeemed from the law and adopted as sons through Christ Jesus. It is on no merit of our own that this is achieved but only by the sovereign grace of God. This also shows us the permanence of the justification and sanctification as it is sealed by permanent adoption. Those whom the father saves are eternally secure in their adoption and as Paul writes in Philippians “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ”[41]. So far we have seen that we are justified through the atonement of Christ Jesus, sanctified through the washing of his blood, and are eternally secure in our adoption as sons. Lastly, through the redemption, Ephesians 1:14-15 tells us that we are given and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance[42]. 1 Peter 1:3-4 is perhaps even more explicit regarding this inheritance as Peter writes “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is undefiled and will not fade away”[43]. Hebrews 9:15 also speaks of this eternal inheritance which awaits those who are called and redeemed by Christ Jesus. In summary, the death of Christ Jesus

[41] *Philippians 1:6. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[42] *Ephesians 1:14. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[43] *1 Peter 1:3-4. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

accomplished reconciliation between God and man, justification of undeserving sinners, sanctification of the redeemed, adoption as sons for all the redeemed, and an eternal inheritance for all of the sons of God.

Extent of the Atonement

When dealing with the extent of anything the question must be asked what did the event in question accomplish? In this case, the question that must be dealt with is that which asks if Christ's death made salvation a possibility for all or did he actually and definitely secure a redemption for some. The Canons of Dort were series of points of doctrine which were established stemming from the Synod of Dort which was held in the Netherlands from 1618-1619. The original controversy which brought about this synod stemmed from a doctrinal disagreement between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius during what was called the "Remonstrance". This disagreement occurred in 1610 and in 1618 a Synod was called together to decide which stance was biblical. The Canons of Dort were the outcome of this synod and "the original preface called them a 'judgment, in which both the true view, agreeing with God's Word, concerning the aforesaid five points of doctrine is explained, and the false view, disagreeing with God's Word, is rejected"[44]. The Canons state the following regarding the atoning death of Jesus Christ, "This death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and worth,

[44] *The Canons of Dort. 1. n.d. Www.prts.edu. Puritan Reformed Seminary. Web. 4 July 2016. <https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Canons-of-Dort-with-Intro.pdf>.*

abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. This death is of such great value and worth because the person who submitted to it is not only a true and perfectly holy man, but also the only-begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for these qualifications were necessary for our Savior. Further, this death is of such great value and worth because it was accompanied by a sense of the wrath and curse of God, which we by our sins had deserved"[45]. Historically there has been much controversy regarding the extent of the atonement. This controversy has largely been between the Arminian and Calvinist camps as Arminians have long accused the Calvinists of limiting the power of the atonement and Calvinists have accused Arminians of limiting the power of the atonement and by so doing degrading the death that Christ died. Calvinists argue that limited atonement does not teach that the atonement was limited in power but rather was limited in its purpose. What is meant by this statement is that the atonement is sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect. We also see in Revelation 5:9 that Christ is redeeming a group of people from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation[46]. It stands to reason then that we must ask the question for whom did Christ die? We see that salvation is offered to all men as common grace and scripture seems to be saying that Christ died for all men but is this really the case? Although there seem to be many contradictory verses in the Bible on this issue (i.e 1 John 2:2 and John 17:9) we know that God is not

[45] *IBID. 7*
[46] *Revelation 5:9. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

contradictory and there can be only one right way of viewing this issue. In the previous section we discussed the purpose of the atonement. The concluded purpose was that Christ died for sinners and his death provides reconciliation between God and man. The issue at hand then is what is the extent of this reconciliation. Is this reconciliation applied to all men or only some? Did Christ's death actually accomplish salvation for anyone? Or did his death merely make salvation possible for all men? This is the issue at hand that must be addressed.

Before proceeding to examine the unlimited and limited views, it seems prudent that an examination should be made of the words "all" and "world". There is much controversy over these two words and the controversy largely determines how the two camps view the extent of the atonement. The first word we will examine is the word "world" or in the original Greek, "kosmos". Throughout scripture this word "kosmos" is used in many different ways to mean several different things. In Acts 17:24 Paul states, "the God who made the world and all things in it since He is the Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands"[47]. Here we see that the word world refers to the physical universe that God has created. Another instance of the word world refers to the earth. John 13:1 says "Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that he would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved

[47] *Acts 17:24. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end"[48]. When scripture refers to departing this world it is referring to Jesus death and his leaving this physical earth. The reference to his own who were in the world refers to his followers who would remain on the earth after he departed. A third use of the word world refers to the entirety of humanity. This can be exemplified in Romans 3:19 when Paul states "now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God"[49]. All of mankind without exception is accountable to God. This includes both the elect and the reprobate. A fourth example of the word world is of humanity without believers being included. John 15:18 says "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you"[50]. We know that believers do not hate Christ but rather adore him so this cannot refer to all humanity indiscriminately. It is specific in its scope and nature and is referring to the unbelievers who hate God. Finally, the word world is used to refer to believers only. John 3:16 is the principle example of this use of the word. AW Pink in his famous work *The Sovereignty of God says* "That 'the world' in John 3:16 refers to the world of believers (God's elect), in contradiction from 'the world of the ungodly' (2 Peter 2:5), is established (and) unequivocally established by a comparison of the other passages

[48] *John 13:1. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[49] *Romans 3:19. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[50] *John 15:18. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

which speak of God's love'. In comparison to the verses that speak of God's love for His elect, the wicked God pities (Matthew 18:33) and He is kind to the ungrateful and evil (Luke 6:35). The Lord endures with longsuffering the vessels prepared for wrath (Romans 9:22) but 'His own' God loves! (Romans 5:8, Hebrews 12:6)"[51]. It should also be stated that the word world in 1 John 2:2, while frequently used as a proof text for the unlimited atonement view, goes beyond their stated purpose of salvation being possible for all men to prove universalism if used in the context they mean it. This verse must be kept in the context that it is given and that is referring to gentile believers all over the world in addition to the Jewish believers. John 11:51-52 provides insight into this interpretation when John says "now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that he might gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad"[52]. This verse shows that Jesus was going to die not only for the Jewish believers but also the Gentile believers who were scattered abroad. Revelations 5:9 confirms this saying that Jesus purchased for God with his blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Arminianism was born in the 17th century in Netherland as a primary result of the theological beliefs of Jacob Arminius. The basic tenants of the Arminian Doctrine can be summarized in what is known as the

[51] *Pink, Arthur Walkington. "The Meaning of "Kosmos" in John 3:16." The Sovereignty of God. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965. 314. Print.*
[52] *John 11:51-52. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

“Remonstrance”. “The peculiar tenets are contained in the five points or articles which the Arminians in their 'Remonstrance' laid before the estates of Holland in 1610. They relate to predestination, the extent of the atonement, the nature of faith, the resistibility of grace, and the perseverance of saints.”[53] The subject of the atonement and the extent of it, is addressed in the 2nd Article of the Remonstrate entitled, “Universal Atonement”. It states, “Christ, the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, and his grace is extended to all. His atoning sacrifice is in and of itself sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and is intended for all by God the Father. But it’s inherent sufficiency does not necessarily imply its actual efficiency. The grace of God may be resisted, and only those who accept it by faith are actually saved. He who is lost, is lost by his own guilt (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2)”[54]. The Arminian will normally argue that Christ’s death is sufficient for all men, but it must be joined with faith and repentance in order to take away the condemnation of God for our sin. Charles Ryrie states in his famous work *Basic Theology, “*God’s provision of reconciliation is universal. Because of the death of Christ, the position of the world was changed- people were now able to be saved… God took the initiative and reconciled the world to Himself. This was done by the death of Christ, and that provision changed the world into a savable position

[53] *Philip Schaff. “The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes. Volume 1, 6th ed. Chapter Seven, Subtitle 66, The Remonstrance, Pg. 516,” Christian Classics Ethereal Library, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.ix.iii.v.html*
[54] *Philip Schaff,. “The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes. Volume 1, 6th ed. Chapter Seven, Subtitle 66, The Remonstrance, Pg. 518,” Christian Classics Ethereal Library, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.ix.iii.v.html.*

before God. Yet though the world has been reconciled, man needs to be reconciled by changing his position about Christ. Then and only then, is his condition before God changed”[55] Ryrie argues very adamantly that God provided a universal means of reconciliation through Christ but that Christ’s death did not actually accomplish this reconciliation. Rather, it opened the door for all men to be saved and reconciliation is realized when men place their faith in Jesus Christ. In an article Ryrie wrote for the Society of Evangelical Arminians, Ryrie succinctly states his view when he says “The Atonement of Christ paid for the sins of the whole world, but the individual must appropriate that payment through faith. The world was reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:19), but those reconciled people need to be reconciled to God (v. 20)”[56]. In an article written by Gary Shultz of the Dallas Theological Seminary, the argument is made that “Christ paid the penalty for the sin of all people in the Atonement and it is the foundation of the other purposes that God had for the nonelect when He sent Christ to die on the cross”[57]. He goes on to say that “it is also the most contentious of these purposes among theologians, since it directly contradicts particular redemption”[58] His Biblical exegesis comes from 1 John and he states, “Strong biblical support exists, however, for this purpose. Christ's payment for all sin is clearly stated in 1 John 2:1-2. "My little children, I am writing

[55] *Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. "The Meaning of the Death of Christ." Basic Theology. Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1986. 294. Print.*
[56] *Ryrie, Charles. "“The Extent of the Atonement”." Society of Evangelical Arminians. The Society of Evangelical Arminians, 15 June 2008. Web. 04 July 2016. <http://evangelicalarminians.org/ryrie-charles-the-extent-of-the-atonement/>.*
[57] *Shultz, Gary L Jr. "God's Purposes In The Atonement For The Nonelect." Bibliotheca Sacra 165.658 (2008): 145-163. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials. Web. 4 July 2016.*
[58] *IBID, Shultz*

these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world"[59]. Likewise, Robert Lightner who wrote the famous work *The Death Christ Died: The Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement* writes "the death Christ died was a death in the place of all men- a death which accomplished a work which completely satisfied God the Father. It was a death which provided life for every member of Adam's lost race who has ever lived or ever shall live- a death that made it possible for the Father to be just and at the same time the justifier of any sinner who does nothing more than receive Christ as personal savior"[60]. This is the crux of the Arminian argument regarding the extent of the atonement: the atoning work has been accomplished through Christ's work on the cross, and the sins of mankind have been atoned for. Mankind has been reconciled to God, but man must accept this for himself in order for the atonement to be made effectual and personal to his own life.

In contrast, the reformed view has quite a different view of the atonement altogether. While the Arminian view states that salvation is a possibility, the reformed or Calvinistic view states that Christ had a definite objective and purpose, and it is believed that this purpose was definitely and completely accomplished in his work on the cross. Rather than completing the work of reconciliation and leaving the door open for

[59] *IBID, Shultz*
[60] *Lightner, Robert Paul. "Conclusion." The Death Christ Died: A Biblical Case for Unlimited Atonement. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998. 147-48. Print.*

salvation, this work is seen as one in the same and his atonement is seen as propitiating God and expiating the sins of the elect. In a sermon on the atonement Charles Spurgeon wrote,

> "We hold that when Christ died He had an object in view, and that object will most assuredly and beyond a doubt be accomplished. We measure the design of Christ's death by the effect of it. [Someone may ask] us, "What did Christ design to do by His death?" We answer that question by asking him another: "What has Christ done, or what will Christ do by His death?" For we declare that the measure of the effect of Christ's love is the measure of the design of it. We cannot so belie our reason as to think that the intention of Almighty God could be frustrated, or that the design of so great a thing as the atonement can, by any way whatever, be missed of. We hold—we are not afraid to say what we believe—that Christ came into this world with the intention of saving "a multitude which no man can number" (Rev 7:9-10); and we believe that, as the result of this, every person for whom He died must, beyond the shadow of a doubt, be cleansed from sin, and stand, washed in blood, before the Father's throne (Rev 1:5; 7:14). We do not believe that Christ made any effectual atonement for those who are forever damned. We dare not think that the blood of Christ was ever shed with the intention of saving those whom God foreknew never could be saved, and some of whom were even in hell when Christ, according to some men's account, died to save them"[61].

[61] *IBID, Spurgeon, 6*

The reformed view of the atonement holds that the eternal purpose of God could in no way be frustrated by the resistant will of man. It is held that Christ came into this world to definitely secure his elect sheep through the atonement and this purpose was totally completed. It also holds that God did not die for all men as the unlimited view holds otherwise those who are in hell would be covered by the blood of Christ. John Owen commented on this point in *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* when he says "to what purpose serves a general ransom, but only to assert that Almighty God would have the precious blood of His dear son poured out for innumerable souls whom he will not have to share in any drop thereof, and so, in respect of them, to be spilt in vain, or else to be shed for them only that they may be further damned"[62]. The reformed view holds that if all men are covered by the atonement of Christ and it is not only sufficient but also efficacious to them, then either God and Jesus Christ failed in accomplishing their purpose of obtaining salvation or all men will be saved. Limited atonement rejects this conclusion and holds that Christ did have an absolute aim, objective and purpose in the atonement and it was totally and completely accomplished. John 10 is perhaps the most explicit scripture that points to this defining purpose. It also answers the question that many people have regarding who Jesus was referring to in Matthew 20:28 when he tells his disciples that his purpose is to give his life for many. John 10:14-18 says, "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the

[62] *IBID Owen, 2*

sheep. 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. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father." The charge and authority given here by the father to the son is to lay down his life as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners and to take his life back up again on his own accord. In John 10:15 and Titus 2:14, Jesus tells us explicitly who he is laying his life down for and it is us (his elect sheep and possession). Titus 2:14 says that Christ gave himself up for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works and Acts 20:28 tells us that God purchased the church with His own blood. Matthew 25:32-33 distinguishes between the sheep who will be saved and the goats who will be eternally condemned and Jesus nowhere tells us that his death was for the goats as well as the sheep. In fact, John 6:37 says that the only ones who are saved are the ones whom the Father gives to the Son. to Jesus' If this scripture is compared with the high priestly prayer in the garden of Gethsemane before his crucifixion, we can plainly see in scripture that Christ's purpose was to lay his life down for those whom His father would give him. John 17:9 says, "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom you have given Me; for they are yours." In summary, the reformed view holds that

Jesus died to make salvation a guarantee rather than a possibility and this purpose was definitely accomplished.

Personal Interpretation and Conclusion

In conclusion, the atonement is no small thing. It is incredibly powerful and beautiful and it should cause the regenerate to rejoice at the sovereign grace of God. The differentiation on atonement between the reformed view and that of the Arminian view inevitably leads us to radically differing thoughts on “irresistible grace” (Calvinism) and “resistible grace” (Arminianism); unconditional election (Calvinism) and conditional election (Arminianism). I believe this issue is so important it cuts to the very heart of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. The doctrine of the atonement so effects every other branch of doctrine that to possess an inaccurate or incorrect belief in this area could have disastrous effects in the life of an individual. I have attempted to give a thorough and fair overview of this extensive and weighty doctrine. There is much more that could be written here and if time were more readily available it would no doubt be very easy to fill volumes with research on this subject. I have attempted to clearly and concisely contrast two strongly opposing views to see how they compare with scripture. Unlimited atonement as we have seen, argues that the atoning work has been accomplished through Christ’s work on the cross, and the sins of mankind have been atoned for. Mankind has been reconciled to God, but man must accept this for himself in order for the atonement to

be made effectual and personal to his own life. The limited view on the other hand holds that the scope of Christ's atoning work on the cross was a particular work given only to the elect. On one hand we see a view that believes Christ died for all men of Adam's race indiscriminately, and on the other hand we see a view that believes that Christ laid down his life to specifically redeem his elect church. The accusation of the Arminian to the Calvinist is that the Calvinist limits the power of the atonement and the accusation of the Calvinist to the Arminian is that their view is degrading to the worth and value of the death of Christ. There is much strife in this debate as the two sides are miles apart on a critical doctrine of the Christian faith.

It is my deep conviction that the limited atonement view is correct. I affirm that the doctrine of limited atonement is not limited in its power but rather limited in its scope. Make no mistake, limited atonement does not limit the effect of the atonement nor the purpose or its sufficiency but rather magnifies the purpose and effect. The limited atonement view rightly believes that the atonement is sufficient for all men but efficacious only to the elect. John 6:37-39 states "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day"[63]. I affirm the belief that the

[63] *John 6:37-39. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

unlimited view of atonement is demeaning to the worth, value, and purpose of the atonement. At the beginning it was pointed out that the crucifixion of Jesus was the pre-determined plan of God before the foundation of the world. To deny that God had a definite purpose in what He was doing in the atonement or to deny that it was accomplishing anything in particular is, in my opinion, dreadful! Yet this is what the unlimited view of atonement does. It says that the atonement is not efficacious until man applies his faith. It says that Christ has opened the door for reconciliation to be a possibility to all who believe, but that reconciliation is indefinite. To answer our primary question of "in whose place did Christ die", the limited or as I prefer to call it definite atonement view, states that Christ accomplished his Father's will by laying down his life sacrificially and by so doing definitely secured the salvation of the elect sheep given to him by the father. In this view the atonement is complete and not indefinite. I believe the unlimited view takes glory from God and gives it to man because it is man's faith that applies the atonement to himself while the definite atonement view gives ultimate glory to God because all salvation is of Him and by Him alone. John Owen addresses this point when he writes "we affirm, that all the glory of God which is pretended to be asserted by the general ransom, however it may seem glorious to the purblind nature, is indeed a sinful flourish, for the obscuring of that glory wherein God is delighted"[64]. The unlimited view says the atonement is available but only efficacious when the will of man is joined with it and the definite view says the atonement has been accepted

[64] *IBID. Owen, 6*

by God and applied to the elect. The unlimited view stresses the importance of man in applying the atonement through his faith and the definite view stresses the foreordained sovereignty of God in all things. In one sense there remains work yet to be done and on the other hand the work has already been done! I firmly argue that Christ did not die a pointless death. He did not die to merely bring men into a savable state, but rather he died to actually save them. There was intent and purpose in the atonement and this intent and purpose was fully and definitely accomplished. It is a difficult doctrine but a true doctrine that God has not been pleased to save all men (Romans 9:13-23). If God, who is not a respecter of persons, has not been pleased to save all men, then how is it possible to biblically assert that the atonement of Christ was intended for all men? It is assuredly sufficient and this is not denied but it is impossible for the atonement to be efficient for all men. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 says, "Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God"[65]. In this passage we see clearly that through the reconciliation of God through Christ Jesus the elect's sins are not counted against them. Hebrews

[65] *2 Corinthians 5:18-20. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

9:12 tells us that Christ obtained for the elect eternal redemption. How could the Arminian argue for unlimited atonement and yet say that some men will still go to hell? This argument means that the sin of unbelief has not been completely paid for, Christ's atonement is incomplete, and there are those under the atonement who will be lost. Was Christ's death intended to atone for all sin or just some? The Arminian cannot answer this question biblically. 1 Peter 3:18 tells us that "Christ died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God"[66]. Scripture tells us plainly that Christ died for sin once and the necessary atonement for sin was made in that one time. God was completely satisfied with this atonement and those who are justified receive the imputed righteousness of Christ. Christ is our high priest and mediator before God and he fully accomplished the necessary work to justify all of the elect. The word justification is a legal word and is defined as "the action whereby human beings are freed from the penalty of sin and accounted or declared righteous in the eyes of God"[67]. This justification and the redemption to follow was once for all obtained for the elect by Christ in the atoning work on the cross. This means that every sin is removed from our record and instead the imputed righteousness of Christ is imputed to us and in the eyes of God we are looked upon as having Christ's righteousness. This is the essence of justification and this means that every sin including the sin of unbelief is atoned for and taking care of for the elect. This is good news

[66] *1 Peter 3:18. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*
[67] "*justification, n.*" *OED Online. Oxford University Press, June 2016. Web. 4 July 2016.*

because it means that no elect sheep of Christ's can ever be lost! Over and over in scripture we see Christ emphatically informing the people who would listen that his intent was to save his people from their sins. Christ came to save sinners and while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Nowhere in scripture does it say that Christ died to make salvation a possibility. No, on the contrary, he came to actually save! The Arminian will usually counter this argument by stating John 3:16 says God so loved the world that whoever believes in Him will have eternal life. Their argument is that it takes faith in order to receive the benefits of the atonement (justification, sanctification, adoption, redemption and eternal inheritance). However, in John 6:44 Jesus tells us explicitly that "no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise them up on the last day"[68]. Here it is made clear that no one can believe unless the Father draws him first and the ones the Father draws are the elect. Therefore, the ones the Father draws are the elect sheep whom Jesus will definitely save on the last day because he definitely atoned for their sins at Calvary. The Westminster Confession of Faith states "Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed in Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted,

[68] *John 6:44. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

sanctified, and saved, but the elect only”[69]. In light of all the scriptural proof that we have of God’s separate treatment of His elect compared the un-elect, it seems to be a logical and exegetical fallacy to claim that Christ’s atoning death applies in the same manner to both believers and unbelievers. That all men benefit in the same manner from Christ’s atonement is in actuality a limitation of the power and glory of the atonement on the part of the Arminian. The Arminian effectively limits the extent of the atonement because by itself it has no power to save. Put very simply, the Arminian atonement posits that salvation is possible for all but certain for none. This is a severe limitation and in the words of Charles Spurgeon, “I would rather believe a limited atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than a universal atonement that is not efficacious for anybody, except the will of men be joined with it.”[70] I believe the atonement is of primary importance to the Christian faith. A right view of what Christ has accomplished will leave us humbled and constantly seeking repentance. An incorrect view, will cause us to be puffed up in pride at our accomplishment rather than looking to what has been accomplished by Christ. A wrong view of this doctrine takes glory that rightfully belongs to God and gives it to man. This is idolatry and I believe the consequences to be incredibly severe for worshiping a false god made with our imaginations. The Arminian doctrine of the atonement is idolatrous at its heart because it creates a god

[69] *"Westminster Confession of Faith." Westminster Confession of Faith. Chapter III, Heading VI Web. 04 July 2016. <http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/index.html>.*
[70] *Bingham, Nathan. "Charles Spurgeon on Calvinism- "Definite Atonement"" Weblog post. Ligonier.org. Ligonier Ministries, 28 Mar. 2012. Web. 4 July 2016. <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/charles-spurgeon-calvinism-definite-atonement/>.*

who is found nowhere in scripture. It makes God either unjust or a respecter of persons and neither of these can be true. It also gives free will to man in the act of salvation and this is antithetical to the words in scripture regarding the spiritual deadness and inability for man to save himself. I reject any theological system which gives credit to man where it is due to God and for this primary reason as well as the aforementioned scripture I reject unlimited atonement and Arminianism as a whole as unbiblical and contrary to scripture. The purpose of God was established before the world began and God’s purpose for Christ’s death therefore also was established and sovereignly preordained. The atonement was no after thought of God’s but in reality was a divinely decreed event and its purpose was fully and definitely accomplished.

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[14] *John 14:6. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print.*

[15] *Romans 5:12. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print.*

[16] *Romans 5:13. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

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[24] *Romans 3:10-12. New American Standard Bible. 1995th Vers. LaHabra: Lockman Foundation, 2013. Print*

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