

Systematic Theology session 34
Redeemed, Part 3

- The extent of the atonement: who did Christ die for?
 - Heretical view: Universalism.
 - The view of universalism that the atonement was designed and intended to actually save everyone, and everyone will eventually be saved by that atonement.
 - Taught by the third century theologian Origen, and is still in circulation (Rob Bell and the popular book Love Wins).
 - Erroneous view: Arminianism.
 - Named after Jacob Arminius of the 16th century.
 - Intent and design of the atonement is for all, but does not actually accomplish salvation by itself. The atonement just makes everyone “savable.”
 - God grants a kind of grace (“prevenient grace”) to everyone that makes them capable of saving faith, but the last step toward saving faith must be taken by the sinner alone.
 - People can resist this grace, and refuse to take this last step.
 - People can take the step of saving faith, become truly saved, but then walk away from God and lose salvation.
 - Arminianism is very popular, but wrong, despite its popularity.
 - Problems with Arminianism:
 - Takes an optimistic view of what a spiritually dead sinner can do.
 - If the atonement is substitutionary, and the atonement is designed for all, then Christ actually substituted for all. In that case, anyone lost and condemned in the final judgment is under “double jeopardy,” since his sins were already judged at the cross by the substitute, but he still has to pay for his own sins in the final judgment.
 - Everyone supposedly gets “prevenient grace,” enabling them to make a choice for saving faith. This confuses common grace and saving grace.
 - Under this theory, saving faith is not entirely a gift of God. The last step must be taken by the sinner, unassisted.
 - The “all” passages that Arminians cite mean that all sorts of people are among the elect, from every nation.
 - Erroneous view: Amyraldianism.
 - A halfway position between Arminianism and the Reformed view.
 - Christ actually bore the sins of all, but God elected some to receive the gift of faith.
 - The Reformed view: Limited Atonement (or Particular Atonement or Definite Atonement).
 - The design and intent of the atonement is for the elect, whom the Father gave to the Son (John 17:1-2, John 17:6, John 17:9, John 17:19, John 17:20-21).
 - Christ actually accomplished atonement for His people, the elect, at the cross.
 - The power of the atonement is not limited, but its design and intent are limited; the atonement is sufficient for all, but efficient for the elect.
 - We are still commanded to announce the gospel to all; we don’t know who the elect are, since that is the secret decree of God.

Intent of the Atonement			
Theory	Extent of atonement	Actual effect of atonement	Name of this position
Christ actually saved every person	Unlimited (everyone)	Unlimited (everyone)	Universal salvation, or universalism
Christ made possible the salvation of every person	Unlimited (everyone)	Limited to those who accept the gospel from free will (assisted by grace)	Arminianism
Christ made possible the salvation of every person	Unlimited (Christ bore the sins of everyone)	Limited (God only grants faith to the elect)	Amyraldianism (or hypothetical universalism)
Christ actually saved the elect	The elect (Christ died specifically for the elect, but the atonement is not limited in power)	Limited to the elect	Limited Atonement (or Particular Redemption, or Definite Atonement) (the Reformed view)