

## LIMITED ATONEMENT

M. Jay Bennett  
Providence Church  
November 5, 2006

- 1) **The Question:** For whom did Christ die? (Intention) Or how is the benefit of Christ's redemptive work applied to sinners? (Application)
- 2) **History**
  - a) The formulation of TULIP
    - i) Five Articles of the Remonstrance
    - ii) The response- The Synod of Dordrecht (Dordt)
  - b) The formulation of the doctrine of the work of Christ (highlights).
    - i) Ancient Church (100-500)
    - ii) Medieval Church (500-1500)
    - iii) Reformation Church (1500-1700)
- 3) **Systematics**
  - a) Three basic theories of the nature of the atonement
    - i) Ransom to Satan
    - ii) Penal substitution
    - iii) Moral Example
  - b) Basic theories of the application of the atonement.
    - i) Roman Catholicism- the benefits of the atonement are applied by the exercise of the sacraments (good works). God intended to make redemption **possible** through Christ's death. Aided by God, man applies the benefit of the atonement to himself.
    - ii) Arminianism- the benefits of the atonement are applied by the exercise of faith (viewed as a good work). God intended to make redemption **possible** through Christ's death. Aided by God, man applies the benefit of the atonement to himself.
    - iii) Calvinism- the benefits of the atonement are applied by God alone (good works are the result of its application, not the condition of it). God intended to make redemption **actual** through Christ's death. God applies the benefit of the atonement to man.
  - c) Three approaches to viewing the atonement-
    - i) The perspective of sinners (the offender)
    - ii) The perspective of God (the offended)
    - iii) The perspective of how God relates to his creatures (the covenants).
  - d) Some logical problems with unlimited atonement (adapted from John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*)-
    - i) If Christ died for the sin of all men, and it is a sin to not believe on him, then why are unbelievers not automatically forgiven of their sin?
    - ii) If Christ only died for some of the sins of all men (perhaps, excluding the sin of unbelief), then how can anyone ever be saved? How is that un-atoned sin atoned for? Do I atone for it myself by saying I'm sorry?
    - iii) If Christ died for the sin of all men, then God must be propitiated concerning the sin of all men, so why do men go to Hell?
  - e) Some biblical passages-
    - i) Isaiah 53:8

- ii) Matthew 1:21; 20:28
  - iii) Luke 1:68
  - iv) John 10:11; 13:1; 17:1-2, 9
  - v) Galatians 3:13
  - vi) Ephesians 1:3-14; 5:25
  - vii) Romans 8:18-32
- 4) **The Answer:** Christ died for the elect. The triune God alone applies the benefit of Christ's redemptive work to sinners.
- 5) **Practice**
- a) Humility- "Cross-centered living." (Faith and Repentance)
  - b) Prayer- "Trusting in the mediation of Christ."
  - c) Assurance- "Resting in the sovereign grace of God."
  - d) Evangelism- "Confidence in the God of the Gospel."
  - e) Service- "Bearing the fruit of the Spirit that Christ purchased for us."
  - f) Adoration- "Loving the God who saved us."