



Sermon Notes—PM

What Was the Intent of the Cross?

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John 6:35-40; Canons of Dort 2.8

Studies in the Canons of Dort #19

“Limited atonement.” It’s a doctrine we’ve all learned; it’s a doctrine it seems everyone is opposed to. But what really is it all about? Tonight we will meditate on the core of the issue: the intention of God the Father in sending his Son to the cross.

Canon 2.8 Outlined

For this was the sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father

that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation:

that is, it was the will of God,

- 1) that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and given to Him by the Father;*
- 2) that He should confer upon them faith, which, together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death;*
- 3) should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing;*
- 4) and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them, free from every spot and blemish, to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever.*

God Has a Will

The Father Communicated this Will to the Son

The Son Executed this Will

The Canons of the Synod of Dort: Some Facts

- What?* A “canon” (not cannon!) comes from a Greek word for “standard or rule.”
- When?* November 13, 1618–May 9, 1619
- Where?* Dordrecht (shortened, Dort), The Netherlands
- Who?* An international gathering (“synod”) of Reformed theologians, pastors, and elders from the Netherlands, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Germany (the French could not attend due to their Catholic king).
- Why?* To respond to the teaching of James Arminius’ followers on predestination, Christ’s redemption, the sinfulness of humanity, the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation, and the perseverance of the saints.
- How?* There are five “heads” or topics of doctrine that correspond to the original five points of the Remonstrants (so called because they made a *remonstrance*, or “protest”). Each “head” is divided into two parts: 1) the “articles” that state our doctrine, and 2) the “rejection of errors” that state our differences with the Arminian doctrine.

Outline of the Second Head of Doctrine:

The Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby

- I. *Common Christian Convictions (Articles 1–7)*
1. God’s justice requires satisfaction for sin (Article 1)
 2. God gives His Son who alone can provide satisfaction (Articles 2–3)
 3. Christ satisfies as God and man (Article 4)
 4. Call to believe is to be preached to everyone (Article 5)
 5. Cause of unbelief is in unbeliever, not in Christ (Article 6)
 6. Christ is cause of faith (Article 7)
- II. *The Doctrine of Christ’s Satisfaction (Articles 8–9)*
1. The Reformed Doctrine Defined (Article 8 cf. RE 1–5, 7)
 2. Elaboration: Christ Will Always Have a Church (Article 9 cf. RE 6)