

Canons of Dort – 2nd Head of Doctrine, Art:1-4 – The Sole Satisfying Sacrifice

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Your child can probably text with a 99% accuracy – even without looking – and that might make you proud. You know *you* are not perfect so you are happy to accept 99% accuracy from your child.

Suppose a man kept 99% of God's law perfectly, would God be pleased? First, no one can keep any of God's law perfectly. Second, even if you did, God would not be pleased with 99% obedience. He is perfectly holy. He requires **100% obedience to his law**. More, to keep his law, you must have **faith in Christ** and **do it for the glory of Christ**. That is how high God's standard is.

So when Adam and Eve committed one sin, they were no longer perfect, and God was obligated to expel them from the Garden. They were cursed and condemned because they had sinned. God was greatly displeased with them. For them to come back close to God, someone better than they had to atone (take punishment) for their sins and satisfy the demands of God's justice. They couldn't be their own sacrifice! They were not good enough.

That is what you will hear about in the 2nd heading of the Canons of Dort – Christ atonement for sinners.

Our headings are:

The Necessity of Christ's Atonement

The Sufficiency of Christ's Atonement

Our goals are: **That you will understand the severity of God's justice and the satisfying sacrifice that Jesus was for you, and that you will then love and serve him better.**

The Necessity Christ's Atonement

Article 1: The Punishment Which God's Justice Requires: God is not only **supremely merciful, but also supremely just.** God's justice requires (as divinely revealed in the Word) that the sins we have committed against God's infinite majesty **be punished with both temporal and eternal punishments,** of soul as well as body. We cannot escape these punishments unless satisfaction is given to God's justice.

Article 2: The Satisfaction Made by Christ - Since, however, **we ourselves cannot give this satisfaction or deliver ourselves from God's anger,** God in boundless mercy has given us as a **guarantee the only begotten Son,** who was made to be sin and a curse for us, in our place, on the cross, in order that **he might give satisfaction for us.**

1. Your election is remarkable because a great and holy God cared for a meagre and sinful you.

Remember the background: God made man perfect but man willfully fell into transgression. Instead of loving God and his neighbor, Adam hated God and his neighbor

and loved himself. And regardless of what Whitney Houston said, the greatest love of all is not to love yourself.

Through Adam you then earned hell on earth and hell in hell for breaking God's law. This **punishment is inescapable**, unless someone better and holier than you took your punishment for you. That one who could take **your punishment and atone for your sins!**

This is what frustrates those of other religions. As Christians, you don't and can't claim to be able to satisfy God's justice and yet gain eternal life. You needed someone greater and better than you. Other religions teach their followers they can please God by their actions. They think highly of themselves and their abilities to please their gods. More, they have to acknowledge their gods have lower standards than Jehovah God. Muslims believe that their God wishes away sins by declaring them forgiven or by requiring that they do good things— **like giving Zakat – 2.5%** of their surplus or **paying the family of someone you murdered.**

If the true God did that, he would be unjust and a liar. But God is neither unjust. Sins require death.

2. The atonement for sins was always linked to justice, so this was not just a NT thing.

Long before Jesus, Isaiah linked atonement to justice.

Isaiah 1:27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her penitents with righteousness.

And you see in God's promises from Genesis 3, and in many, many signs and ceremonies in in the Old Testament. **Even unintentional sins needed to be forgiven**, and that is why you see animals being sacrificed for those sins. Leviticus 4.

3. Because you could not take God's punishment and be saved (you could only take his punishment and go to hell) God provided someone to do that for you – his only Begotten Son.

God picked you out and provided Jesus to take the full punishment for your sins. **He was your substitute.** Jesus atoned for you by facing God's justice – not Satan's justice.

2Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin **to be sin for us**, that we might **become the righteousness of God** in Him.

Galatians 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, **having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree")**,

Look at some other passages that cement the teaching of substitutionary atonement.

ASV -Job 17:3 Give now a pledge, **be surety** for me with thyself; Who is there that will strike hands with me

Job pleaded with the Lord to speak for him to clear his name. He absolutely knew he couldn't do it himself.

Psalm 119:122 Be surety for Your servant for good; Do not let the proud oppress me.

David pleaded with God to take his place and clear his name.

More, the sacrifices of the Old Testament were pictures of the ultimate Substitute, Jesus.

Hebrews 7: 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, **for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.**

Jesus himself claimed that he was that substitute.

Matthew 20:28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to **give His life a ransom for many.**"

The Apostle Paul claimed Jesus died in our place. So God does want atonement of a sinless substitute.

Romans 5:6 For when we were still without strength, in due time **Christ died for the ungodly.**

4. The reason you need to hear about the atonement is because it is under attack.

Many so-called churches today teach that **Jesus came to give a good example** – how to live as a good Christian. Many ministers in the United Church don't believe Jesus died on the cross. Many more don't believe the cross was necessary. The Archbishop lady of the Episcopal Church in Washington DC who was on TV recently attacking President Trump essentially does not believe in Christ's resurrection. She believes Jesus came to save the poor and to share wealth.

But Jesus came to die, out of pure love, and his death and resurrection were absolute necessities.

The Sufficiency of the Atonement

Article 3: The Infinite Value of Christ's Death - This death of God's Son is **the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins**; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole

world.

Article 4: Reasons for This Infinite Value - This death is of such great value and worth for the reason that the person who suffered it is, in order for Christ to be our Savior, not only a true and perfectly holy human, but also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Another reason is that this death was accompanied by the experience of God's wrath and curse, which we by our sins had fully deserved.

1. The result of Jesus' work is that the Father found full satisfaction for you and all his children in Jesus.

Christ's work included becoming a curse for you, and drinking the cup of God's wrath. The theological name is substitutionary or vicarious atonement.

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11 **He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.** By His knowledge My **righteous Servant shall justify many,** For He shall bear their iniquities.

If you are a fan of C.S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia, know he made one very serious mistake about the atonement. You would have seen Aslan give himself to the wicked witch to save the children. That is a false view of the atonement. Jesus was killed to satisfy God the Father, not the Devil.

2. While Christ's atoning work fully satisfied God's justice, is there anyone else who could satisfy God's justice?

No. Christ is the only means by which God's justice can be fully satisfied. See Acts 4:12 as well.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am **the** way, **the** truth, and **the** life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Arminians absolutely hated this type of language. But one man wrote: "Neither Buddhism, my ancestry, my race, my church attendance, or my status in life can settle my debt with God; only Christ can full satisfy this." Definitively! None of the **religions or philosophies has any saving benefits. The Bible describes them as "loss and refuse"** (garbage, sewage). Save those drowning in filth.

3. Christ's atonement was so sufficient that it did not have to be repeated - ever.

Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

If Christ's work has to be repeated it means that it was not good enough or pure enough. But it was! This is why the Roman Catholic Mass is such an abominable wickedness. The Roman Catholic Mass attacks the perfect nature of Christ's sacrifice. Don't ever participate in it!

4. Christ's substitutionary atonement was sufficient for the whole world.

Jesus died for all kinds of people – Jews, Chinese, Dutch, Africans. (For God so loved the world...) And **because he was not only man but God as well**, and therefore greater than the whole world combined, his death was of infinite value. **He could have saved the whole world** – every single man who has ever lived. So don't be prejudiced against anyone... Preach to every race...even the ones you think are bad! Let the bad be changed and become your brother.

5. Christ's substitutionary atonement was sufficient for the worst sins imaginable.

Because he suffered in the worst imaginable way, he could cover the worst imaginable sins.

Isaiah 1:18 ... "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.

6. Now look at why you need a proper view of the atonement.

Old Arminians believed after the Fall God gave man 10 laws to obey and be saved.

This is illogical, as the law was fully there before the Fall. (If there were no law there could be no sin.) The old Arminians then went on to say after God gave the law, he then realized man could not keep the law and so, being boxed in a corner, God had to come up with **a new plan** – to send Jesus – who came to obey the law for us. They didn't see Christ's death – his atonement - as really necessary. They argue that because he was killed, the law now starts from fresh. Christ death, for them, was simply a new beginning.

New Arminians are even more confusing. They rightly teach the atonement was necessary, but they wrongly teach the atonement was for every single person -even for Esau. Surely if Christ were a substitute for the whole world, then no one could go to hell! According to them, the one who goes to hell pays for what Christ already paid. **They teach God punishes 2 people for the same sin. They minimize the atonement.**

Do you see how offensive the Arminian doctrines are to God? The atonement is brushed aside as not really essential or weakened. Can you see why the church is weak? Can you see how this weakens the need for the full Gospel? Can you see how this affects worship? If you can't see the absolute necessity of Christ's atonement, one time for all time, then you will steal the glory of God. Will God bless a thief?

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ made atonement for you. His substitutionary atonement was fully sufficient to meet God's ultimate justice and was the only one in the history of humanity who was sufficient to satisfy God's justice.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

Do you cherish Christ's atonement for you? He did what no else could do or would do for you!

Do you show that you cherish what he has done for you? How can you do that?

Do you look forward to worshipping each Sunday and are you prepared with good rest and with great zeal to do so?

Do pray for and support the preaching of the Word so that the message of Christ's atonement for sinners will be heard everywhere? The world badly needs this message.

Finally, if you think you can be saved in any other way than by receiving what Christ has done by faith, you are fooling yourself. Stop fooling yourself. Ask God to give you faith to receive what Christ has done by his life and in his death. Only this will save you.