
Mission 119 Ministries

**DECONSTRUCTING CALVINISM
EPISODE 3: WHAT IS LIMITED
ATONEMENT?**

Hutson Smelley

www.sermonaudio.com/forestbranch

SERIES GOALS

- **Short, focused lessons**
 - **Explain Calvinism**
 - **Address claims of Calvinism**
 - **Exegetically**
 - **Historical**
 - **Philosophically**
-

EPISODE GOAL

- **Explain what the doctrine of limited atonement is**
 - **Consider some implications**
 - **List popular proof texts for limited atonement**
-

LIMITED ATONEMENT

Historical or mainline Calvinism has consistently maintained that Christ's redeeming work was definite in *design and accomplishment*—that it was intended to render complete satisfaction for certain specified sinners, and that it actually secured salvation for these individuals and no one else. (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, pp. 39-40)

LIMITED ATONEMENT

God decreed to create the race, to permit the fall, and then, in His infinite compassion, He elected out of the fallen an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ, to be delivered from this ruin; and for them Christ was sent, to make full penal satisfaction for their unrighteousness, and purchase for them all graces of effectual calling and spiritual life and bodily resurrection, which make up a complete redemption, by His righteousness and intercession founded thereon. (R.L. Dabney, *Syllabus and Notes of the Course of Systematic and Polemic Theology*, p. 520)

LIMITED ATONEMENT

It is generally admitted that the satisfaction rendered by Christ was in itself sufficient for the salvation of all men, though they do not attain unto salvation... In distinction from them [non-Reformed] the Reformed churches believe in a limited atonement. They maintain that it was the intention of both the Father and the Son to save only the elect, a purpose that is actually accomplished... (Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, p. 216)

LIMITED ATONEMENT

When we speak of the meritorious work of Christ on the cross, do we rightfully say the He died for all men equally and alike (as say the Arminians), or do we more accurately state (with the Calvinists) that Christ died for the elect only? (Duane Edward Spencer, *TULIP*, p. 45)

THE DEBATE AMONG CALVINISTS

- **Common to hear someone describe himself or herself as a 4-point or 5-point Calvinist**
 - **The description indicates either that they accept all five major tenets of Calvinism, or only four of them**
 - **But usually a 4-point Calvinist rejects limited atonement**
 - **Very common for Calvinists to reject limited atonement because it is exegetically unfounded**
 - **Those who defend limited atonement rest more weight on philosophical argument than scriptural support**
-

SOME IMPLICATIONS

- **Eternal salvation fully secured at the cross, so what is the role of faith?**
 - **If the Bible does not explicitly teach limited atonement, why not?**
 - **How does limited atonement affect the integrity of what I say in preaching the gospel?**
 - **How can I know if Jesus died for me?**
 - **Is this view consistent with OT types?**
-

POPULAR PROOF TEXTS

- **PILLAR PROOF TEXTS: John 10:11, 15**
 - **“less than all” verses: Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 1:21, 20:28, 26:28; John 10:15; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 9:28; Acts 20:28**
-