

## **Canons: 2nd Head, Articles 5-7-How to Get Benefits of Christ's Atonement**

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: Everyone likes benefits! And Canada offers a lot. There are CERB benefits, unemployment benefits, child care benefits, unemployment benefits, and even staycation benefits. And all those who qualify for them, get them. But there is one benefit that **everyone needs** but for which **none qualifies**: everyone needs **the vicarious atonement of Jesus**.

Is there a way to get the benefits of the atonement? Yes. This is what you will hear about today.

Our headings are:

**You must proclaim the atonement for all**

**If you reject the atonement, you are damned**

**If you accept the atonement, you are saved**

Our goals are: **That you will learn the value of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, receive it yourself, and proclaim it to the world.**

### **You must Proclaim the atonement for all**

**Article 5: The Mandate to Proclaim the Gospel to All** - Moreover, it is the promise of the gospel that **whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life**. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, **ought to be announced and declared without differentiation or discrimination to all nations** and people, to whom God in good pleasure sends the gospel.

#### **1. Christians, one and all, should work for the proclamation of the message of the atonement of Jesus to the entire world.**

Arminians say Reformed Christians who believe in election, don't need to preach anymore.

**False! God works election through the preaching.** And **the atonement is central in the preaching!**

"How anyone believe without a preacher?" Romans 10. The preacher's feet are beautiful!

**Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,** who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things...

It is true Reformed people are **sometimes reluctant to evangelize, but that is our sin;** that is not the teaching of God's Word. How would people learn of the atonement? Suppose you had some great employment benefits at your job but never heard of them, what use are those to you?

#### **2. As an example of the necessity of proclamation of the atonement, consider God had one begotten Son and he sent him as a missionary!**

**Jesus was even called the "Word of God." (John 1).**

Mathew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..."

**Then Jesus sent out his disciples to preach-to be missionaries to the world.**

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

**In Joel 2, the spread of the Gospel to the world is described as showers of blessings -spreading the nourishing and saving Word of God.** The atonement is the center of the Gospel.

#### **3. If you can't go, send; send missionaries with your money and your prayers and encouragement.**

**Don't say you support a missionary if you don't do at least one of these things for him.** Yes, if you are able, **financially support** him. How about sending **an e-mail of encouragement?** You don't even have to write letters as in the old days and hope they arrive. **Texting** is free for most. Don't let a day go by without **praying** for at least 1 missionary. Use the newsletters we distribute so you can pray with knowledge.

### **If you reject the atonement, you are damned**

**Article 6: Unbelief, a Human Responsibility:** However, **though many who have been called through the gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief,**

this is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient or insufficient, but because **they themselves are at fault.**

**1. God calls mankind through his Word to turn to him and be saved, but some, of their own sinful desires, reject his call, so they are condemned to hell.**

Look at one of the worst examples of this.

**Matthew 27:22** Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" 23 Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!" 24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "**I am innocent of the blood of this just Person.** You see to it." 25 **And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."**

**The Jews rejected Jesus to their own loss** and they even called on the Lord to reject their children.

One more example of what Jesus said to **Nicodemus**, a church ruler, of those who don't believe the Gospel.

**John 3:18** "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he **who does not believe is condemned already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil.

**Spiritual leaders who lack knowledge of the necessity of the atonement are leading others to hell.**

**2. Why is it some reject the Gospel and the vicarious atonement of Jesus for sinners?**

**They simply don't want salvation.** Even some raised in the church don't want salvation. (I saw a man with a poster that said: Send Jesus, so we'll kill him again. He clearly rejected Jesus and wanted him dead. He wasn't thinking of the benefits of the atonement.) So some aren't saved because they don't want to be.

**Those who don't want God's salvation cannot in all honesty blame God for sending them to hell.**

**And don't be surprised if some, like Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists reject the message of Christ's work!** They reject God's salvation because they don't want it! Be patient, pray for, and preach to them so their hearts will be opened.

**3. Others accept the atonement of Jesus for sins, but they reject definite atonement (that Christ died only for his chosen people) because they think definite atonement is unfair - unjust.**

But definite atonement does not mean the atonement is kept from the non-elect. **The key is how a non-believer responds to preaching about the atonement!** If he receives it, he is saved. It's not God's fault if he rejects it. Look again:

**Hebrews 3:7** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, **if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion**, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, '**They shall not enter My rest.**'"

Those who reject definite atonement **rob themselves of the fullness of God's love.** God did not rob them.

**4. Seeing the hopelessness of man without the atonement of Jesus, here are some implications for you:**

**Show compassion for the lost. Reject imitation evangelism** for the full Gospel. **Reject the social Gospel** for the full Gospel. **Reject friendship evangelism** for the full Gospel. **Invite and pick-up others so they can come and hear the wonder of Christ's atonement!**

**5. Be careful with your relationships with Arminians – avoid marriages with them, for instance.**

**Life will become difficult if you differ on fundamental doctrines.** (Disagreement on less important doctrines are less troublesome.) But if you disagree on important things, your worship will be different. Your love for God will be different. If you don't know the greatness of God's love, you will never be able to love him back properly. **If a husband and wife view the atonement differently, how can they have the same zeal for the Lord?** One may love evangelism and one might be indifferent!

## **If you accept the atonement, you are saved**

**Article 7: Faith, a Gift of God** - But all who **genuinely believe** and are delivered and saved by Christ's death from their sins and from destruction **receive this favor solely from God's grace**—which God owes to no one—given to them in Christ from eternity.

**1. Those who receive Christ's atonement by faith as their own (and show faith's effect by their lives), are saved.**

**Christ died in your place.** He fully *propitiated God's anger*. He fully *expiated your sins*. He fully reconciled you to his Father. There is no other way to be saved. **Your neighbor might be really nice, but she is not saved except through Christ's atonement.** She could give money to charity, help orphans around the world, help care for returning soldiers, dig wells in Africa, and raise her children to be respectful, but without the atonement, she will go to hell.

**2. Don't take credit for the fact you believe and are saved by Christ's atonement, because, after all, even your ability to believe comes from God.**

**Faith is a gift. It is not in you. It is not natural.** You are a natural rebel without God.

**Philippians 1:29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him,** but also to suffer for His sake,

Apostle Paul put it bluntly to the Corinthians: They were useless without Christ.

**1Corinthians 4:7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?**

**3. More important than digging wells and helping earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria is the need to bring the message of Christ's vicarious atonement to a lost world.**

This must be your priority. **If you think like Arminians, however, your emphasis will be on improving living conditions with the hope people will get morally better and then choose Christ when they have a life of ease.** (This is provably false.) This **ignores that nature of the sinful beast** in man without Christ. This is the view of liberal Christians. They want equal pay, an end to racism, improved economic opportunities, after-school programs for youths, even preferential treatment, as if these were magical pills that would make sinful hearts better. **But throughout history the church thrived when isolated** from businesses, when **justice was denied**, when they were **poor**, when there was **slavery**, and when there was **political upheaval**. So while it is good to have some of those social issues fixed, they are not the Gospel! **Do you see how doctrines can influence missions and missions' strategy?** This is why missions have changed so much in churches with weak doctrines. And when one combines poor doctrine with ill-equipped people, like the student missionary movement of the 1800's, weak churches arise...and less praise goes up to heaven. We then minimize the work of Christ's vicarious atonement!

## **Conclusion:**

Some do not get the benefits of Christ's atonement because **they don't want it**. But many get the benefits of Christ's atonement when **they receive it by faith** – a faith that God gives through the hearing and believing of his Word. This atonement, once received, **can never be diminished or removed**. It saves forever.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

**1. What wondrous love! What wondrous love God has shown to you in the atonement of Jesus Christ!** And even the hands to receive it (faith) he gave to you!

**2. How then do you respond? Love him.** How do you love him? You obey his laws with heart, mind, and strength! You teach your children. You love his children. You worship him. You pray to him.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, I warn you: There is no hope without the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. May this warning cause you to call to God in heaven to accept Christ's atonement as yours. Then you will have eternal life. Without eternal life is eternal death – eternal separation from God. No sensible person wants that. Choose life!