

Canons of Dort – 2nd Head, Article 6-9–Atonement – 3 Points

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Today you will hear about 3 more principles of God's electing love.

Our headings are: Why do some not get Christ's Atonement? How do you get Christ's Atonement? How effective was Christ's Atonement?

Our goals are: That you will see your total hopelessness without Christ's atonement and that you will then love him all the more, not theoretically, but practically.

Why do some not get Christ's Atonement

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 灭亡 in unbelief, this is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross is deficient 缺失 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 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 him to their own loss. Look at another example of what Jesus said to Nicodemus, the church ruler. **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.

2. a. Some simply don't want salvation, even some raised in the church. They aren't saved because they don't want to be.
b. Never blame God when a man goes to hell. The blame must squarely be placed on man's rejection of God.
c. When you clearly 清楚的 proclaim the Gospel to someone but they reject it, don't be surprised. You should not be surprised that Muslims or Hindus or atheists 无神论者 or Buddhists reject the Gospel. It is the condition of the heart. They reject it because they don't want it and **rob themselves of salvation**.

3. Others reject accept atonement but reject definite atonement (that Christ died only for his chosen people) because they think that definite atonement is unfair 不公平 - unjust. They think Reformed Christians as cruel for teaching this doctrine. But definite atonement does not mean that the atonement is kept from the non-elect. Definite atonement 有限赎价 is preached to one and all. The key is how the non-believer responds to preaching about the atonement! If he rejects it, he is damned. If he receives it, he is saved. It's not God's fault. Look at how this is taught in Scriptures.

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**.

4. a. Seeing the wonder of Christ's definite atonement for you, shouldn't you support the preaching 宣讲 of the Word of God? Should you not invite others to come and hear the wonder of Christ's atonement? Shouldn't you be moved with compassion for the lost? Shouldn't you reject imitation evangelism for the full Gospel?
b. Further, you should be careful with relationships with Arminians – avoid marriages with them. Life will become very difficult if you differ on the fundamentals of doctrines 基础性的教义. 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?

How Do You Get Christ's Atonement

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 by faith (and show the effects by their lives) the atonement of Jesus as their own are saved. Christ's atonement for your sins is called his "**vicarious**" atonement. He did it in the place of you. 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. Someone might be really nice, but they are not saved except through the Christ's atonement. They could give large sums of money to charity, help orphans around the world, dig wells, but without the atonement, they will go to hell.

2. Your ability to believe comes from God. It 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 Christians in Corinth. He challenged them to see how useless they were 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 that digging wells and caring for lepers 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 the Arminian, however, your emphasis will be on improving living conditions with the hope that people will then choose Christ when they have a life of ease. This ignores that nature of the sinful beast in man without Christ. **Do you see how doctrines can influence missions and missions' strategy?** This is why missions have changed so much from the advent of the Pentecostal movement with their 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.

How Effective Was Christ's Atonement

Article 8: The Saving Effectiveness of Christ's Death - For it was the **entirely free plan** and very gracious will and intention of God the Father that the enlivening and saving effectiveness of the Son's costly death should work itself out in all his chosen ones, in order that he might grant justifying faith to them only and thereby lead them without fail to salvation. In other words, it was God's will that Christ through the blood of the cross (by which Christ confirmed the new covenant) should effectively redeem from every people, tribe, nation, and language all those and only those who were chosen from eternity to salvation and given to him by the Father; that God should grant them faith (which, like the Holy Spirit's other saving gifts, Christ acquired for them by his death). It was God's will that Christ should cleanse them by his blood from all their sins, both original and actual, whether committed before or after their coming to faith; that he should faithfully preserve them to the very end; and that he should finally present them to himself, a glorious people, without spot or wrinkle. 第八条 因为这是父神主权的旨意，与极恩惠的意愿与目的，叫他儿子极宝贵之死的复苏与拯救的效能临到所有选民，将称义信心的恩典唯独赐给他们，借此使他们确实得救；那就是，神的旨意乃是叫基督在十字架上所流的血，坚固了新约，并有效地从各民族、各国中拯救那些（唯独那些）从永远蒙选召的人得救，就是圣父所赐给他的那些人；他又赐给他们信心，这信心连同圣灵所有其他的恩赐，都是他借他的死所买来的；又除掉他们的原罪与本罪，不拘是他们相信以前或以后所犯的罪，都一并除清；并且既然信实地保守他们到底，就至终无瑕无疵，把他们带到神面前，得享永远的荣耀

1. This plan of Christ's vicarious atonement fully succeeded in what it was intended to do.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

我们知道，为了爱神的人，就是按他旨意蒙召的人的益处，万事都一同效力。因为神预先知道的人，他就预先命定他们和他儿子的形象一模一样，使他的儿子在许多弟兄中作长子。

There is a definite number – the elect – **with whom God works from beginning to end.** There is no uncertainty.

Matthew 1:21 ... and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

Jesus did not come to save all people (otherwise he would be a failure. He came to save "his" people, those his Father gave to him in the Covenant of Redemption.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

2. Arminians argue that Christ's atonement simply removed the hurdle障碍 of man being able to believe. They do a dance and treat salvation in two parts...**the acquisition获得 of salvation** (what Christ purchased for all) and the **application of salvation** (what individuals choose to do). They emphasize the dual labor in salvation. This is why they argue that **man is totally free to make the choice of whether to accept salvation or not.** (Arminians are semi-Pelagians. Pelagius was a heretic异端 of the 4-5th centuries and believed that man was not born sinful and therefore could of himself choose to accept or reject the atonement.) **Arminians are wrong on both points.**

a. Christ did not simply remove the hurdle to salvation and make salvation possible. Christ, our covenant keeper, fully earned salvation by meeting God's full demands of law for his people. He did what the 1st Adam did not do. (1Corinthians 15:22) God had a plan, a definite plan. And then Christ's applied salvation by his Holy Spirit. He moved man to receive Christ's work. There is no room in Christianity for dual labor in salvation. He did not simply talk about love...and see if man would reciprocate. His love was not theoretical. He actually loved in deed.

b. While man can be said to have free will, man of himself would not choose to embrace接受 Christ. He is enslaved to his own will. Arminians put too much credit on man, thinking he is not as hopeless as God says. Furthermore, if you were Arminian, you could believe that it is possible that Christ came to die and none could be saved. How abominable! **Arminius was a false teacher who pretended to be servant of God, but he was doing the Devil's work.** He was minimizing the work of God and **made Christ's work seem less needful.** This is a common way the Devil works. As you can see, the Reformed doctrine of atonement gives glory where it properly belongs – to your loving Savior.

Article 9: The Fulfillment of God's Plan - This plan, arising out of God's eternal love for the chosen ones, from the beginning of the world to the present time has been powerfully carried out and will also be carried out in the future, **the gates of hell seeking vainly to prevail against it** 阴间权柄所有无效的反抗. As a result, the chosen are gathered into one, all in their own time, and there is always a church of believers founded on the blood of Christ, who is the Savior of the church, and as the bridegroom of the bride laid down his life on the cross that the church might steadfastly love 坚贞的爱, faithfully worship, and praise him here and in all eternity.

3. During the time of Ahab the church became quite small, but God always preserved a remnant 余数. During the Dark Ages, the church was small, but God always kept a people for himself. That was his decree 谕旨 and none could stop it. There has been and will continue to be attacks against the church. But none can stop destroy. They surely will try, but they can't destroy it. Christ's elect can never be destroyed.

1Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the **devil walks about like a roaring lion,** seeking whom he may devour 你们要谨守、警醒。你们的仇敌魔鬼，好像吼叫的狮子走来走去，寻找可以吞吃的人。

One Muslim leader said that Jihad (holy war) will continue until every infidel 不信者 (you) bows to Allah (their god). Look at the language God to show that his will can never be thwarted 挫败...not by the Devil nor by any Muslim.

Isaiah 46: Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.

But the attacks can come from within as well.

2Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder! For **Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.**

4. God will continue to prevail 得胜. **He will preserve his children and his church.** He will destroy the gates of hell to preserve his church. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8) This is important in light of Muslim persecution of the church of Jesus Christ in many parts of the world. Do you see how their threats are useless? So definite atonement, properly taught, not only motivates proper worship, but is also removes fear! Christ's atonement completely saves.

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 减少 or removed.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: What wondrous love...what wondrous love God has shown to you in the atonement of Jesus Christ! How then do you respond? Love him. How do you love him? You obey his laws with heart, mind, and strength! You worship him. You pray to him. You teach others.

Finally: If you are not a Christian, let me give you this warning: There is no hope without the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. May this warning cause you to call out to God in heaven to accept Christ's atonement as yours. Then you will have a new life.