



WHY DO WE BELIEVE *THAT* ?

Introduction to Reformed Theology

Class 14

ULTIP, PART 3

Education Year 2024-2025

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Review – ULTIP Part 2

- Clarification on the decree and execution of the decree of God.
- Arminian position on election (and other points of doctrine)
 - Need of prevenient grace that is resistible.



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“Limited Atonement”

- We can't label our doctrines to fit into a cute acronym!
 - Christ's death on the cross (his atonement) of was infinite value, but it is only applied to a specific people.
 - Better term: **Definite** or **Particular Redemption**
- The question revolves around the extent of the atonement. Who did Christ die for, or who gets the benefits of his death?
 - Berkhof, “Christ suffered and died for the purpose of saving only the elect, and that purpose is actually accomplished. Christ not merely made salvation possible but really saves to the uttermost every one of those for whom he laid down His life.”¹
 - The key is “saves to the uttermost” – nothing is left out for the elect.

1. Berkhof, *Summary*, ____



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Extent of the Atonement

- Horton: Three Options¹
 1. Christ's death redeemed every person.
 - For God so loved the world, right?
 - Condemned in the sixth century.
 2. Christ's death made the salvation of every person possible
 - Christ didn't *accomplish* redemption, but made now God can offer salvation to everybody.
 - All men are savable.
 - Closer to the Arminian position (somewhat unified), if they accept prevenient grace and decide to have faith.
 - Amyraldianism – Christ bore the sins of every person without exception, but only some are elected to receive the benefits.
 3. Christ redeemed the elect
 - On the cross all of the elect are redeemed.

Horton, *For Calvinism*, 90-92.



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Extent of the Atonement

- CD II.3, “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.”
 - “Sufficient for the whole world but efficient for the elect alone.”
 - “An old system that doesn’t limit the sufficiency or the availability of Christ’s saving work. Rather it holds that the specific intention of Christ as he went to the cross was to save his elect.”¹
- John Owen’s summary of the options.²
Christ died for...
 1. ...all of the sins of all people.
 2. ...some of the sins of all people.
 3. ...all of the sins of some people.

1. Horton, *For Calvinism*, 92.
2. Ibid.



Particular Redemption

- Why we go for the “third options”, Christ redeemed the elect and Christ died for all the sins of some people.¹
 - Because Christ’s death actually saves.
 - There is nothing left for us to do.
 - Horton makes a very important point about evangelistic calls in the NT and their being joyful and full of comfort! Christ did it all (nothing for us to do)! Believe in him!
 - The relationship between the Trinity and redemption
 - Covenant of Redemption – a certain and particular people given to Christ and the Spirit applying his work to them.
 - This view places the focus entirely on Christ rather than on the believer.
 - There is an assurance of our faith as a result.
 - Some errant Reformed Theology (i.e. Federal Vision Theology) can take this away. Lord willing, more on that in another class.

1. Horton, *For Calvinism*, 92-95.



Definite Redemption

- Matthew 26:28

- ...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out *for many* for the forgiveness of sins (emphasis added).

- John 10:14-16

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.



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Definite Redemption

- John 17:1-2, 6, 9

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him (1-2).

"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word (6).

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours (9).

- Romans 14:15

- For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy *the one for whom Christ died* (emphasis added).



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Definite Redemption

- Romans 8:30-34

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died-- more than that, who was raised-- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

- It is instructive that “faith” is not included in the “Golden Chain of Salvation.”
 - God predestines, calls, and then they are justified. There is no doubt. Prevenient grace doesn't fit into this equation, but breaks the chain.
 - After being justified, Paul skips over sanctification and goes right to glorification, and writes about it in the past tense!
 - God gave up Christ for *us* all.



Definite Redemption

- Ephesians 1:4-13 – all the spiritual blessings that we have “In Christ.”

- There is a particular people and a particular relationship behind all of these blessings.
- The Arminians claim that Ephesians 1 is “corporate” not “individual”, but that doesn't fit with the nature of what Paul is saying in the rest of the book. He is talking to individual Christians.

- Colossians 2:14

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

- Those whom God made alive have their sins forgiven. How? By nailing them to the cross so that the legal demands of the law and the record of debt could be canceled.



Canons of Dort

- Head II. I, 6, 8-9
 - RE I



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What about “the World” and “All”

- There are numerous Scripture passages that speak about God saving “the world” or “all.”
 - John 1:29 - The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
 - John 3:16 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - 1 Timothy 2:4 - ...who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
 - 2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.



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“World” or “All”

- Berkhof, “The objectors proceed on the assumption that the word ‘world’ in these passages always denotes all the individuals that constitute the world of humanity. But the word does not always have this meaning; its meaning is certainly more limited in Luke 2:1; 12:19 (?). In the passages referred to it may simply serve to indicate that Christ died, not merely for the Jews, but for people of all the nations of the world.”¹
- But the word ‘all’ some-times has a restricted meaning in Scripture, denoting all of a particular class, I Cor. 15:22; Eph. 1:23, or all kinds of classes, Tit, 2:11. If it were always taken in the absolute sense in the passages referred to by the objectors, some of these passages would teach that all men are actually saved, something which they themselves do not believe, cf. Rom. 5:18; I Cor. 15:22; Heb. 2:9, cf. v. 10.”²

1. Berkhof, *Manual*, 217.
2. Ibid. 217-218.



“World” or “All”

- Horton, “That Scripture explicitly teaches Christ's death for the world has never been in doubt among Calvinists; in fact, it has been celebrated as wonderful ‘glad tidings.’ We often take for granted that Gentiles are made joint-heirs with Christ, spiritual children of Abraham along with believing Jews. However, this was a radical message for first-century Jews and Gentiles. It lay at the heart of ‘the mystery of Christ’ unfolded by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-3:13), and his opposition from some Jewish Christians. This mystery of Jews and Gentiles united in Christ prompted the controversy that was resolved at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15.”¹
- “However, throughout redemptive history, ‘salvation’ always came through a remnant.”²

1. Horton, *For Calvinism*, 96.
2. Ibid.



Arminian Opposition in Part

- This is the part of TULIP that most Arminians find so offensive.
 - If you ever hear of “Four-point Calvinists” (I don’t like those terms!) they most likely reject “Definite Redemption”
- Olson in *Arminian Theology* and *Against Calvinism* returns to the idea that God is love, “Doesn’t the Bible reveal God’s universal love for humanity? Why would God send Christ to die for only some people when Scripture clearly says that he loved the whole world and is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:9).”¹
- “Arminians believe that Christ’s death on the cross provided *possible* salvation for everyone, but it is actualized only when humans’ (sic) accept it through repentance and faith.”²

1. Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 223.
2. *Ibid.*, 222.



This Isn't Fair

- Horton, “In Romans 9, the apostle Paul answers the ‘fairness’ objection in relation to election simply by pointing to God's sovereign freedom to choose whom he will out of a mass of condemned humanity. *And that is the point, Christ did not die for neutral creatures, but for sinners—enemies, hostile rebels.* God's great love for humanity is manifest in the fact that even before Adam freely disobeyed God and enslaved himself and us to sin, the Father gave a people to the Son and gave his Son for his people God was under no obligation to save any of his enemies, but even while we raged against him, he loved us and sent his Son for our salvation. Grace is not grace if it is compelled—even by an inner necessity of God's being. God could have justly condemned us all: that is the presupposition of grace and mercy.”¹

1. Horton, *For Calvinism*, 98 (emphasis added).



Total Depravity

- What we mean / Definition: Every part of our being (body, soul, mind, will, affections, etc.) is tainted by sin. There is not a single part of us that remains “purely good.”
- What we don’t mean: That men are as bad as they can be.
 - That is “Utter Depravity”
 - We have to be on guard, because sometimes people think this is what we mean.
- Berkhof, “This does not mean that every man is as bad as he can be, cannot do good in any sense of the word, and has absolutely no sense of admiration for the true, the good, and the beautiful; but simply that the inherent corruption extends to every part of man's nature, and that there is in him no spiritual good, that is good in relation to God, at all, but only moral perversion.”¹

1. Berkhof, *Manual*, 146.



Total Depravity

- Psalm 14:1-3 (cf. Ps 53:1-3; Rom 3:10-12)
The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.
- Jeremiah 17:9
The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
- Ephesians 2:1
And you were dead in the trespasses and sins...
- Titus 1:15
To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled.



Age of Accountability? Innocent Children?

- Pelagius thought that children are born innocent, they only sin because they imitate sinners.
 - No, we sin, because we are sinners!



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Total Inability

- Man, in his natural, unregenerate state cannot come to faith in Christ on his own.
 - Berkhof, "man cannot change his fundamental preference for sin to love for God..."¹
- Ezekiel 37:3-5

And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live."

¹ Berkhof, *Manual*, 146.



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Total Depravity / Inability

- HC 5, 7, 8
- BC 14, "... having corrupted his entire nature. ...So he made himself guilty and subject to physical and spiritual death, having become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways."
- CD III/IV.I-3



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Total Depravity

- The original Arminians pretty much didn't have a problem with how the Reformed formulated "Total Depravity."
 - But the Reformed did have a problem with the resistible grace aspect of the Remonstrants teaching because it took away from Total Depravity.
 - Why the Canons of Dort combine heads three and four.
 - Olson doesn't have a chapter against Total Depravity in *Against Calvinism* and "depravity" doesn't make it into the index of *Arminian Theology*.
 - However, he does say, "This account of the human condition is important to keep in mind because it is *why* Calvinists argue that no one can be saved without unconditional election and irresistible grace."¹

1. Olson, *Against Calvinism*, 43.



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Total Inability

- People are unable to come to faith on their own, they need to be regenerated/born again by the Spirit.
 - Ran into this a lot with the Arminian opposition to Unconditional Election. They would agree with us to a point by claiming the need for prevenient grace to overcome that inability.
- HC 8
- Psalm 14, Romans 3



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Next Week

- Irresistible Grace



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