

Chapter 1 : John Calvin's view of Limited Atonement by Dr. Roger Nicole | A Puritan's Mind

It has here been argued that there are in Calvin's teaching the main elements of the doctrine of limited atonement. Such a doctrine does not attempt to limit the atonement in an unnatural way, or to restrict the efficacy of Christ's death, but to emphasize that Christ's death actually redeemed, and did not make redemption merely possible.

Since Calvinism falsely teaches that God forces the elect to believe, it is no wonder that Calvin thought he could also force the citizens of Geneva to all become the elect. Not becoming one of the elect was punishable by death or expulsion from Geneva. Calvin exercised forced regeneration on the citizens of Geneva, because that is what his theology teaches. Michael Servetus, a Spaniard, physician, scientist and Bible scholar, was born in Villanova in . He was credited with the discovery of the pulmonary circulation of the blood from the right chamber of the heart through the lungs and back to the left chamber of the heart. The thirty-eight official charges included rejection of the Trinity and infant baptism. Servetus pleaded to be beheaded instead of the more brutal method of burning at the stake, but Calvin and the city council refused the quicker death method. Other Protestant churches throughout Switzerland advised Calvin that Servetus be condemned but not executed. Calvin ignored their pleas and Servetus was burned at the stake on October 27, . John Calvin insisted that his men use green wood for the fire because it burned slower. Servetus was screaming as he was literally baked alive from the feet upward and suffered the heat of the flames for 30 minutes before finally succumbing to one of the most painful and brutal death methods possible. Servetus had written a theology book, a copy of which Calvin had strapped to the chest of Servetus. John Calvin celebrated and bragged of his killing of Servetus. Many theological and state leaders criticized Calvin for the unwarranted killing of Servetus, but it fell on deaf ears as Calvin advised others to do the same. Calvin wrote much in following years in a continual attempt to justify his burning of Servetus. Some people claim Calvin favored beheading, but this does not fit charges of heresy for which the punishment, as written by Calvin earlier, was to be burning at the stake. Calvin had made a vow years earlier that Servetus would never leave Geneva alive if he were ever captured, and Calvin held true to his pledge. Truly John Calvin is burning in Hell for his heresy, blasphemy of God and murder of many. More or less Unitarian in their views, they were required to sign a confession drawn up by Calvin in . Gentile signed it reluctantly, but in the upshot he was condemned and imprisoned as a perjurer. He escaped only to be incarcerated twice at Berne where, in , he was beheaded. Calvin also had thirty-four 34 women burned at the stake after accusing them of being witches who caused a plague that had swept through Geneva in . The number of people murdered by John Calvin has been a dispute -- not the fact that he murdered them. Jesus and all of the Apostles would have abhorred and condemned these blatant mass murders. Between , they banished seventy-six 76 and fifty-eight 58 executions took place, including thirty-four 34 women, who were burned at the stake for spreading the plague by magical means. A Biography by Bernard Cottret. His body was then dragged to the middle of town and burned. The Council followed his directive happily and urged the executioner to "be more diligent in cutting off the hands of malefactors. Most of the tortured refused to confess. Means of death varied a little to include decapitation. All under the crime of spreading the plague. Some committed suicide in their cells to avoid torture, afterward the rest were handcuffed. One woman then through herself through a window. Belot was chained and tortured. She was incarcerated for refusal to testify. He was arrested and tortured until he admitted to the crime. He was then executed. In Calvin wrote "Dogs bark at me on all sides. Calvin himself kept historical records that have survived to this day. John Calvin had no love, compassion, patience or tolerance for those who did not believe his Institutes. To his dying day Calvin preached and taught from his works. By no means an aged man, he was worn out in these frequent controversies. On April 25, , he made his will, leaving French crowns, of which he bequeathed ten to his college, ten to the poor, and the remainder to his nephews and nieces. His last letter was addressed to Farel. He was buried without pomp in a spot which is not now ascertainable. In the year a monument of expiation was erected to Servetus in the Place Champel. Geneva has long since ceased to be the center of Calvinism. In all of his writings is not found a clear declaration of his salvation by faith in the birth, life, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Calvin was a cruel, murderous tyrant who considered himself

to be the pope of Geneva. The Bible never advocates harming an individual due to his unbelief or lack of understanding. Jesus taught to "turn the other cheek" instead. None of the Apostles taught action against unbelievers but instead taught the believer to seek them out and present the gospel in love. He became more murderous and cruel during his rule in Geneva. He showed no inclination to be conformed to the image of Christ as described in Scripture for those who have been saved. Notice that Romans 8: One should not have to study the works of John Calvin but should study his life first in order to arrive at the conclusion that he was an ungodly man who could only produce a distorted doctrine that opposes the true teachings of Scripture. Therefore, Calvin wrote commentary notes in the margin of the Bible to be used as the interpretation of the Scripture. A present-day review of these marginal notes shows they present doctrine that is not supported by the text. This commentary Bible with marginal notes came to be known as the Geneva Bible. Beza published the Geneva Bible in English between and He has been accused of having a theological bias and making other random changes in the translation. The source manuscripts for the work appear to have been the Textus Receptus and other Byzantine Greek manuscripts. The marginal notes give an allegorical or philosophical explanation of Scripture rather than a literal explanation of the text. The Roman Catholic Church was enraged by the notes, because they deemed the act of confession of sin to men, the Catholic Bishops, as unjustified by Holy Scripture. Calvin can be congratulated for at least getting that doctrine correct. The Geneva Bible and the doctrines of John Calvin spread across Europe as church leaders used the marginal notes as the basis for their lectures and preaching. King James I was opposed to Calvinistic Presbyterianism and some claim he was infuriated by the Geneva Bible, because the marginal notes allowed disobedience to the King. This claim can be largely dismissed, because Calvin ruled as "King" of Geneva and allowed absolutely no disobedience. In the famous Hampton Court Conference, Dr. John Reynolds a Puritan requested that King James authorize the printing of a new Bible without the marginal notes. He authorized work to begin on the new Bible in with a team of fifty-four theologians and scholars, and it was printed in The Bible was to be a new translation from the Greek. The Remonstrants drew up five statements of doctrine in which they set forth their own views. The approval of the Calvinist position was sealed by a packed prejudiced Synod before it began, and the Calvinists relished the victory by murdering many of their opponents as they fled for their lives. This appeared to be a great victory for Calvinism at the time, but it has since been shown to have been the high point in their theological domination. Neither Jesus nor any of the Apostles raised a finger against those who disagreed with them, but Calvinists continued to use the sword, beheading axe and burning at the stake as methods to eliminate any opposition well after the passing of John Calvin. Charles I succeeded King James in England. The Calvinists gained control of the English Parliament and waged a civil war against the king. They abolished episcopacy, ejected two thousand royalist ministers, summoned the Westminster Assembly, executed Archbishop Laud, and eventually executed the King himself in He simply claimed the sovereignty of God allowed it. John Calvin falsely taught that God "elects" some people from eternity past to be saved while damning all of the others to an eternal Hell with no hope of being saved. This false doctrine is directly opposite to the Bible which teaches that God is "not willing that any should perish. Certainly God is sovereign. Certainly God is sovereign according to the definition of sovereign in a dictionary. God is Number One -- the Most High, but God does not control every event and action of mankind as if people were puppets, as claimed by John Calvin. The Scripture verses below clearly show that the unbelief of the Children of Israel in the wilderness "limited the Holy One of Israel. Scripture says He can be limited. God could not secure the entry of the Children of Israel into the promised land as He desired because they would not move forward. So God left them in the wilderness for 40 years because of their unbelief, arrogance and rebellion. Calvinism has been called "the archenemy of soul-winning" and rightly so. This doctrine causes one to question the need for presenting the gospel. If Calvinism were true, why bother? But soul winning is not the major tragedy of Calvinism. Failure to present the gospel of Christ is the real problem. One can easily notice that Calvinists discuss and present Calvinism with the notion that they are presenting the gospel. They quote the writings of Calvin and his followers and quote those Bible verses they feel are most supportive of Calvinism. The Bible is not taught directly and without bias. Teaching was done from the marginal notes in lieu of the Scriptural text. We will see in our study of Limited Atonement that Calvinism presents a false gospel.

Chapter 2 : Atonement in Christianity - Wikipedia

Calvin thus adopted the 'threefold office' (munus triplex), for it connected Christ's office to the three ancient offices of Israel: priest, prophet and king. By this Calvin wanted to achieve one simple goal: to unite Christ's redemptive work of atonement to His role as Mediator (see Institutes).

Introduction For many years, Calvinism was at the heart of my belief system. It was unquestionable that man could not believe the gospel. Man, I held, was totally unable even to cry out for mercy. The Fall had rendered him incapable of receiving its remedy. Even his best acts were filthy rags, detestable before God. What was needed was a work of Efficacious Grace - a miracle, in fact - that would remove the heart of stone and bestow saving faith. This I deemed "sound doctrine. They were somehow more worthy of respect. They had an inherently greater demand on my attention and belief. Clark Pinnock describes a similar attitude he developed in the course of his faith-journey: Theirs were the books that were sold in the Inter-Varsity bookroom I frequented. They were the ones I was told to listen to; sound theology was what they would teach me. As with many Calvinists, my spiritual autobiography had two distinct peaks: My spiritual pedigree contained some of the brightest lights the faith has ever known: I was in good company. Years later, however, I seriously re-examined my beloved "five points. To question this point of the system is to question all of it. The last four points of Calvinism rest squarely upon the first, Total Inability. Once that dogma is removed, the entire superstructure crashes under its own weight. For those unfamiliar with the five points, I will here briefly define them: Man has sunk so far through the Fall that he is no longer capable of believing the gospel. He can no more repent and believe than a dead man can rise up and walk. This is all the result of the sin of Adam, who communicated th is absolute inability, this loss of free will, to all his posterity. God has, before the creation of the world, selected a portion of humanity to be saved. This election is irrespective of any foreseen merits or faith. It is only according to the good pleasure of His will. Jesus on Calvary bore the full punishment due his elect, ensuring their final salvation. He did not die for the non-elect, who are excluded and hopelessly reprobated. God moves upon the helpless sinner before he has a single thought of responding to the good news. Grace renews the spiritually dead will, imparts a new nature and infallibly draws the sinner to Christ. Regeneration, or the new birth, occurs before belief in Christ. Faith, in fact, is a gift imparted to the sinner, who is entirely passive in this act. No one who truly begins the life of faith will ever fall away and perish. This, I believe, is an accurate portrayal of the system, free of caricature. Throughout this paper, many quotes from Calvinist authors should bear this out. Total Inability As stated earlier, the other points rise and fall with Total Inability. They are its logical corollary. In fact, one of the attractive aspects of Calvinism is its remarkable consistency. Each point buttresses the others. That makes it fairly easy to defend. This is especially true if one grants the very first point of Total Inability. For that reason, I will spend much more time analyzing this point than the other four. It has left him incapable of doing anything good, or even desiring it. Hence, he is disabled and can neither will nor obey any spiritual command - even the invitation to receive Christ. John Calvin sums this up in stark language: Every man, therefore, is born unable to respond to God. Calvinist theologian Augustus Strong notes: The Calvinist, because of his doctrine of Total Inability, denies that man has a free will. All sin-born humanity, without exception, has a will wholly enslaved to always doing what is wrong and unspiritual. If this is true, we would surely expect to find some mention of it in the Genesis account. There are other curses listed. God pronounced the death sentence, which He defined as a return to the dust Gen. Such language obviously denotes a physical death, not a loss of spiritual ability or a death to God. God decreed the presence of "thorns and thistles" to make toil more difficult v. He told the woman that she must endure great pain in childbearing v. Both of these curses are trivial compared to what would be the most debilitating curse of all: Henceforth such is the change I make in your natures: The moment their souls shall go forth from my hand What an awful blot would such a curse be on the first pages of Scripture! His expulsion from the Garden with its Tree of Life removed him from the source of immortality and made death certain. This is also true of his posterity. But the transmission of Total Inability toward God is nowhere conveyed in the text. Two primary texts adduced to prove the doctrine of Original Sin Rom. Nowhere are we told that an

invincible tendency to resist God was imparted to the race through the offense of one. If there were a place we would expect to find the doctrine, it would be in one of those passages dealing with the relationship between Adam and his descendants. But there is not a trace of such teaching there. The Calvinist doctrine raises a more basic question for our consideration: Where do the Scriptures teach that man had a holy, pure nature that became corrupted and transmitted to his posterity? Calvinists, and most Christians, for that matter, assume that God made Adam morally perfect. The London Confession of Faith presupposes this when it says that God "created man after His own Image, filled with all meet perfection of nature, and free from all sin" Section IV. But where does the Bible convey this bit of information? It is reasonable to affirm that Adam and Eve were created with an original innocence. Their eyes were then opened to good and evil, prompting them to hide from their Creator Gen. But it is another thing altogether to say that they fell from a state of moral perfection to total depravity. Many of the 17th century Polish Brethren denied that God created Adam either immortal or morally perfect. A document drawn up by Faustus Socinus and others expresses this thought: This is to be denied; For why did Adam sin if it is as they say? God created nothing perfect. Barnabas was "a good man" Acts After all, how could God create beings who "drink evil like water" Job While there is no denying the universal sinfulness of man, it should be noted that most of these extreme statements are from prophets and inspired poets who are expressing either outrage or brokenness of spirit. This tendency, we believe, was in Adam as well as every man who followed him. There is no exegetical reason to suppose otherwise. The Racovian Catechism notes how the character of people - both good and bad - is sometimes expressed poetically in extreme speech denoting a "from the womb" condition: Every person has folly bound up in the heart from earliest days Prov. But was Adam any different? The burden of proof is on the Calvinists to show that he was. The Scriptures never say so, and it is not our responsibility to prove a negative a logical impossibility. This is a serious difficulty. He lost perfection through sin and assumed a nature totally corrupted and alienated from God, a nature imparted to all mankind as a curse. But the Scriptural evidence for these contentions is, at best, scant. For the most part, the doctrine is assumed unquestionably. Calvin received it in toto from his medieval legacy, as has each successive generation of theologians since. A doctrine that forms such a colossal foundation-stone for the system should have unequivocal proof in the Bible. If a theology is based on an unproven philosophic assumption how can the rest of the system be trustworthy? The Calvinist cannot expect us to believe him unless the consistent tenor of Scripture tells us: Total Inability and the Gospel The Total Inability passed to us makes it impossible for us to comply with the command to believe in Christ. The most obvious fault with this doctrine is that it makes the gospel an unreasonable demand.

Chapter 3 : Calvinism Critiqued by a Former Calvinist

Calvinism gets its name from John Calvin. One of the tenets of Calvinism is "Limited Atonement", the idea that Christ died for the elect, not for all. calendrierdelascience.comr, this does not appear to be what Calvin taught.

I see three questions beneath your one question, and I will handle them each separately. Are Calvinists allowed to disagree with Calvin? So in that sense, if Calvin taught something different than Calvinists, who cares? Many of them would care, but more because they want to know why they hold a different position than he does than because they need to agree with him. He is not a prophet. The most important question for a Calvinist is not, "Does John Calvin teach limited atonement? Both sides of the debate claim him. Calvin also often stresses that Christ secured blessings "for the elect. I should like to know how the wicked can eat the flesh of Christ which was not crucified for them, and how they can drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins. His strongest argument, in my opinion, is this: What happened in these fifty-five years to cause the Reformed community to make such a drastic shift? There are two confounding issues here: Calvin used Biblical vocabulary and left himself open to interpretation on some issues in much the same way Scripture itself is open to interpretation. However, the Wikipedia article does mention that there is support for the doctrine in theologians predating Calvin. Why do Calvinists hold to limited atonement? From a theological point of view, Calvinism is a systematic theology. John Hendryx of Monergism. Sproul says that four-point Calvinists always, on investigation, turn out to be " no-point Calvinists. From a historical perspective, as with all confessional forms of Christianity, time revealed new challenges to the system that needed to be answered. Jacob Arminius placed himself in opposition to Calvin and the system of theology expressed in the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism. The Dutch church needed to figure out, together, how to respond to his challenge. So they drew up the Articles of Dort, now remembered for giving us the five points of Calvinism, which answered the five points given in the Articles of Remonstrance. The development of the doctrine of limited atonement was simply a fleshing-out of the theological system developed by Calvin and his successors.

Chapter 4 : Triablogue: Calvin's doctrine of the atonement

May Calvin's thought instruct us today as we strive to preach and teach a more beautiful and complete doctrine of atonement. Derek Rishmawy is a systematic theology PhD student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

There is no new theology. There are new books published every month. Does Calvin believe in limited Atonement or not? Many say that Calvin did not believe it. Nicole proves them quite wrong, but not without careful efforts. This topic has received considerable attention in the recent past, perhaps in view of R. It is often stated⁴⁶ and with considerable propriety⁴⁷ that Calvin did not write an explicit treatment concerning the extent of the atonement, in fact did not deal with this precise issue in the terms to which Reformed theology has been accustomed. It must be owned, of course, that the question had received some attention before Calvin. Certain other Reformed theologians, contemporaries of Calvin or flourishing in the late sixteenth or the beginning of the seventeenth century, expressed a clear endorsement of definite atonement: Some, indeed, appear actually counterproductive, especially if replaced in their original context. But Calvin was so strongly oriented here that he appears to have forgotten that Heshusius would not share his presuppositions! Furthermore, the close connection between the sacrifice of Christ and saving union with Christ militates in favor of definite atonement. In Brian G. Armstrong in his very able work *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*,²⁰ expressed the view that Amyraut was a true representative of the original Calvinian thought and that his opponents DuMoulin, Rivet, Spanheim, etc. Douty published in a volume entitled *The Death of Christ: A Treatise Which Considers the Question: The important words are as follows: An unpublished page Th. His Influence in the Western World, 29* a work otherwise in line with traditional Calvinism. Stanford Reid,³¹ and especially Paul Helm. Frankly, it is easier to believe that Kendall is wrong rather than this whole galaxy of theologians! The close connection posited by Kendall between universal atonement and the assurance of faith must also be challenged, for universal atonement is neither necessary nor sufficient for assurance. It is not necessary since my understanding of how the work of Christ affects others is not essential for a perception of how it affects me. Here he quotes largely the same passages of Calvin we have encountered earlier,³⁵ one of which is so wrested from its context as to appear to have a meaning opposite to that which Calvin explicitly delineated. In the midst of so many questionable tenets of Trent it is understandable that Calvin would not interpose an objection at this point. Kendall avers that Calvin distinguished sharply between expiation, which is universal, and intercession, which is particular, as well as election. Altogether we find Kendall flatly asserting that Calvin held to universal atonement on the basis of a handful of statements which are not compelling, to say the least, and of a logical nexus between assurance and universal atonement, which remains wholly unconvincing. In an Appendix to his Ph. It provides more quotations of Calvin related to this precise issue than any previous writer; it discusses adequately and fairly the arguments advanced by those who have published materials in this area; it has extensive bibliographies of previous studies; it takes cognizance of three Aberdeen doctoral dissertations that were not available to me by Robert Letham, Robert Doyle, and M. Daniel makes a comment to the effect that most of the contenders in this area tend to ascribe to Calvin the view which they hold themselves, that is to say, they appear to have yielded to the temptation to annex Calvin in support of their own position! One may hope, however, that in spite of a natural bias there is enough objectivity in both presentations to make them of some value. It contains two articles by authors who assert that Calvin taught universal atonement J. Charles Bell, one by P. Helm who denies it, and one by Tony Lane, who leaves the matter in some suspense. Charles Bell⁴⁷ examines certain Calvin passages which are quoted to support a view of definite atonement. He argues that they do not carry conviction, especially if it be acknowledged that in his biblicism Calvin did not recoil from accepting the tension between particular election and universal atonement. It is not surprising that he names favorably Barth, Moltmann, and Rahner⁵⁰ to whom he infelicitously conjoins the name of the Jansenist Pascal and quotes with great approval James Orr in a passage of *Progress of Dogma* where Orr is critical of Calvin as well as of the later Calvinists! What Torrance advocates here can in any case not be promoted in the name of Calvin, even if some perplexity remains as to what his exact teaching may have been concerning the extent of the atonement

and the nature and number of the covenants. Paul Helm,⁵² whose work has already been noted with reference to a critical appraisal of R. Kendall, wrote a stimulating article dealing with the Covenant principle before Calvin, in Calvin, and after Calvin. The later emphases, he avers, were stimulated by the need to respond to the onset of Arminianism, but the fundamental principles were in place in Calvin and a number of others well before the beginning of the seventeenth century. It would be difficult to imagine two articles more sharply conflicting than J. On the specific question of definite atonement, Lane presents the arguments on both sides of the aisle and leaves the matter unresolved. Sinful man still functions as a human being, but his faculties have been so encompassed and enmeshed by evil, his mind so darkened, his emotions so debased, his will so weakened and misdirected, that he has become totally unable to extricate himself from his plight and even to desire, on his initiative, to be delivered and restored to the fellowship of God. Thus only the efficacious, creative grace of God can accomplish the miracle of regeneration by which a man, on the initiative of God and the sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit, is effectually changed at the very core of his being, and his dominant disposition oriented toward God. Whenever God does accomplish this miracle he also safeguards the new life thus implanted and brings it to ultimate maturity; thus grace is seen as indefectible or inamissible. All of these positions are so clearly delineated and so frequently asserted in Calvin that it appears unnecessary to attempt here to substantiate them by quotations of, or even references to, the texts. Is Christ as mediator, in the thought of Calvin, the representative of mankind at large, or did he come into this world principally as the head of the covenant of grace and specifically for the purpose of representing and redeeming the elect? The answer to this question may not be as easy as may appear at first. In the first place, Calvin does not discuss it, at least not in the terms to which we may have grown accustomed, in that part of the Institutes where he deals with the sacrifice of Christ.² Secondly, a certain ambiguity resides in some terms which are of crucial importance in this connection. It is not always easy to determine with assurance what is the frame of reference in view: Some would contend that such a call presupposes a universal provision, and tends to coalesce with it. Others insist that it is not so, and that the universal statements in Calvin are keyed to the scope of the external call and should be related to this only. The desire to have the support of this most capable theologian, or conversely, to appear as different as possible from him, has no doubt exerted some influence upon the conclusions reached by individual scholars. Those who have asserted that Calvin held to a universal atonement have advanced mainly the following arguments: In asserting, as he does repeatedly, the legitimacy of a universal, indiscriminate offer of salvation to any and to all, Calvin, they urge, presupposes a universal atonement as the logical necessary foundation for such a call. To this we reply in acknowledging readily that Calvin does indeed assert the propriety of, yea, the divine mandate for an indiscriminate call to salvation addressed to any and all human beings that may be reached by language. We furthermore believe that Calvin was right in line with Scripture, and that those who would restrict the call to the elect are mistaken. But the proposition that the prerequisite for an indiscriminate call is a universal provision, which is the base of the whole argument, appears to us palpably and demonstrably false. Most of the well-meant offers and invitations, human as well as divine, are not grounded in coextensive provision! All that is really requisite for a well-meant offer is that, if the terms of the offer be complied with, that which was offered will in fact be delivered. This is precisely what occurs with the gospel John 6: Whether or not God has made a provision for those who do not come has nothing to do with the sincerity of the offer. No solid argument can therefore be built in favor of universal atonement on this basis. To this we reply that with respect to Ezek The very strong language Calvin uses in his comments on these passages relates to the obligation to present an indiscriminate universal invitation, as already noted under 2 above. Calvin, they urge, asserts with Scripture that some for whom Christ died may perish Rom These texts, perhaps more than any others in Scripture, give the advocate of definite atonement reason to pause and ponder. And Calvin does not, either in his commentaries or in the Institutes, provide any explanation of their relationship to the extent of the atonement. To this we reply that in the context of the problem of weaker brothers, Paul affirms that they will not perish but God will make them to stand Rom The warnings of Hebrews and 2 Peter, on the other hand, do relate to people who will ultimately be lost. If these apostates are thought to have been regenerate at any time, however, it would appear that the scope of the atonement exceeds the scope of ultimate salvation. This would also raise a difficulty with

the doctrine of perseverance. The solution may be found in viewing the description of Hebrews and 2 Peter as expressing what the apostates at one time professed to have rather than what they had in fact. This is in any case what Calvin has opted for, as is apparent when he calls the offenders of Heb Other passages prove beyond dispute that he did believe in it! Calvin, they urge, did repeatedly assert universal atonement as is manifested from the following categories of statements culled from the Institutes, the commentaries, the sermons, and the tracts. Although Christ suffered for the sins of the world, and is offered by the goodness of God without distinction to all, yet not all receive him. He must be condemned, indeed, not for having preached the Gospel, but for us He must be oppressedâ€œ. He was there, as it were, in the person of all cursed ones and of all transgressorsâ€œ. He was there in our nameâ€œ. He forgot Himself in order to acquit us before Godâ€œ. It was all one to suffer the shames and disgraces of the world, provided that our sins be abolished and we be absolved from our condemnation. Christ was there in the place of all sinners. So we see that Jesus Christ was laden with all our sins and iniquities. The context would be determinative in each instance. In some cases Calvin makes it clear that he contrasts the broad scope from which the elect are drawn, with a narrow-minded outlook that would restrict salvation to the Jews,⁸³ or to a few people. See for instance Rom 5: Neither the Scripture nor Calvin can be fairly interpreted to teach universal salvation, but the passages advanced as supporting universal atonement simply do not stop there. It is of course legitimate to distinguish, as Calvin clearly does, between impetration and application,⁹⁸ but it is improper to separate these, since they always go together. And indeed, our Lord Jesus was offered to all the world. And this is its meaning also in Romans 5: What is stated, however, is not different from the passages noted under 5c and the same kind of response would apply. No nation of the earth and no rank of society is excluded from salvation, since God wills to offer the Gospel to all without exceptionâ€œ. He is speaking of classes and not of individuals, and his only concern is to include princes and foreign nations in this number. He does not mean individuals, but rather all classes of men. It seems difficult to imagine that Calvin would posit as the purpose of Christ an indefinite, hypothetical redemption, when at so many other points it is plainly apparent that the specific elective purpose of God is the controlling feature of his outlook. To assume a hypothetical redemptive purpose more inclusive than the election of grace is doing precisely what he precludes.

Calvin, not being a universalist, could be said to be committed to definite atonement, even though he does not commit himself to definite atonement. And, it could be added, there is a sound reason for this.

William VanDoodewaard for partial completion of course requirements for Historical Theology Reformation Church History 3, Words By: Michael Seal Fall Introduction It is commonplace today to hear much discussion concerning the relation of John Calvin to the Calvinists. For sake of definition, Calvinists are those who today follow the tradition of reformed theology set forth by Calvin and other reformers. Recently, there has been much debate as to whether Calvin himself would actually agree with those that identify themselves with him, that is, the Calvinists. Certainly, there have been many theological developments since the 16th century, and there are obviously things which Calvin did not speak concerning. For instance, we could not rightly call John Calvin an opponent of premillennial dispensationalism, as the system did not exist at the time. There have also been other such innovations within the realm of systematic theology of which Calvin never wrote. Here, we have the problem of using colloquial terms that are familiar to us in the 21st century, and trying to identify those in centuries past whom we believe might have agreed with us. Richard Muller has noted: This doctrine, as with other aspects of reformed theology, is a trendy debate amongst systematic and historical theologians. Did Calvin believe that the atonement was limited? If so, limited to whom? These questions will be contemplated throughout the rest of this research. To clarify, this research is not debating whether or not Calvin was a Calvinist; nor is it asking whether Calvin would consistently agree with all of what we know today as reformed theology. Further, this research is not attempting to answer the question of whether or not Calvinism in general, or limited atonement in particular are biblical doctrines. As Calvin never had the inclination to 1Muller, Richard A. This lecture was given by Dr. It is fascinating to see the writings of those who hold that Calvin had a universal view of the atonement. At present, this is one subject that is often argued in Southern Baptists circles. Within the Southern Baptist Convention there has been some movement toward reformation in the Convention. As blogged by Andrew Lindsey: Norman Geisler concerning whether or not Calvin held to limited atonement, and thus was a Calvinist. They seem to think that one of the best ways to combat this problem is to show that Calvin did not believe in limited atonement. Even if this were true, it is doubtful that all of the evangelical Calvinists would abandon the system if it were proven that they disagreed with Calvin on the atonement. Many in the reformed camp disagree with Calvin on various issues. Perhaps Geisler, and Allan are underestimating the fact the vast majority of the Calvinists they are trying to persuade follow Calvin only as far as he follows Scripture, and thus, if their argument concerning Calvin and the atonement is correct, it would still take a solid exegetical argument in order to change the minds of those who consider themselves Calvinists. Geisler, for instance has a whole appendix devoted 5 Lindsey, Andrew, John 3: Message on Limited Atonement by Dr. David Allen, as blogged at <http://> We should note, however, that Paul does not here contrast the larger number with the many, for he is not speaking of the great number of mankind, but he argues that since the sin of Adam destroyed many all , the righteousness of Christ will be no less effective for the salvation of many all. In no other way can faithful souls be satisfied, if they cannot believe that God is pleased in their regard. The word many does not mean a part of the world only, but the whole human race: It is incontestable that Christ came for the expiation of the sins of the whole world. Eternal Predestination of God, IX. On a more scholarly level, Dr. Kendall has argued that Calvin himself is diametrically opposed to Calvinism, particularly the theological contributions of Beza, concerning the nature of the atonement. As far as Dr. Certainly Beza had a more developed concept of the doctrine of the atonement. This is shown in some of his published work as early as ,13 which happens to be the year before Calvin died. It is interesting to note that there is no account of a rift between Calvin and Beza on this point of theology, which is significant, as Calvin had no qualms about correcting those with whom he disagreed. Oxford University Press, , Nevertheless, Kendall again comes at the issue from the standpoint of assurance in regard to Beza. Whether or not these two friends and contemporaries were indeed at odds with each other on this issue will continue to be evaluated in the next section. Calvin and the Evidence that he held to Limited

Atonement Just as there are many who hold that Calvin taught a universal atonement, there are also many who believe he taught a limited atonement. The universal term all must always be referred to classes: Since, therefore, he wishes the benefit of his death 14 Kendall, R. Concerning this passage from Calvin, Dr. Roger Nicole has noted the following: Certain Evangelical theologians such as A. Studies in the atonement, Sterling, VA: In the Institutes we find Calvin to say: That Christ, by his obedience, truly purchased and merited grace for us with the Father, is accurately inferred from several passages of Scripture. I take it for granted, that if Christ satisfied for our sins, if he paid the penalty due by us, if he appeased God by his obedience; in fine, if he suffered the just for the unjust, salvation was obtained for us by his righteousness; which is just equivalent to meriting. But there is no room for reconciliation unless where offence has preceded. The meaning, therefore, is, that God, to whom we were hateful through sin, was appeased by the death of his Son, and made propitious to us. For the meaning is "As by the sin of Adam we were alienated from God and doomed to destruction, so by the obedience of Christ we are restored to his favour as if we were righteous. Is an unregenerate and reprobate man able to say that he has been restored to favor with God? The grace that has been purchased has been applied to those it has been purchased for. It is important to note that while Calvin does in some places use universal language; here he certainly does not. Here, Calvin speaks only of the benefits being applied to believers. Theologically, this lines up with the reformed view of the atonement. Certainly forgiveness of sin is a benefit of the work of Christ, and if the benefits are indeed only applied to the elect, than it stands to reason that the work of Christ was done with only the elect in view. The preceding passage is not the only one where Calvin alludes to his position on the atonement. In multiple passages throughout the Institutes, Calvin often emphasized that God loved the elect, planning their salvation and holiness, while hating the reprobate, planning their sin and eternal damnation. In Book III of the Institutes Calvin gives extensive defense of his doctrine of reprobation, which again, seems to cause us to interpret him as being a believer in particular redemption. Another passage from the Institutes reads: For while we maintain that none perish without deserving it, and that it is owing to the free goodness of God that some are delivered, enough has been said for the display of his glory; there is not the least occasion for our caviling. The supreme Disposer then makes way for his own predestination, when depriving those whom he has reprobated of the communication of his light, he leaves them in blindness. Every day furnishes instances of the latter case, and many of them are set before us in Scripture. Among a hundred to whom the same discourse is delivered, twenty, perhaps, receive it with the prompt obedience of faith; the others set no value upon it, or deride, or spurn, or abominate it. If it is said that this diversity is owing to the malice and perversity of the latter, the answer is not satisfactory: It is possible that Calvin could have been extremely inconsistent on this point, but it is not likely. In this work, Calvin notes the following: But the first thing to be explained is how Christ if present with unbelievers, to be the spiritual food for their souls, and in short the life and salvation of the world. As he adheres so doggedly to the words, I should like to know how the wicked can eat the flesh of Christ which was not crucified for them, and how they can drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins? Roger Nicole has aptly noted the following: But Calvin was so strongly oriented here that he appears to have forgotten that Heshusius would not share his presuppositions! Having weighed the evidence both in favor and against Calvin understanding the atonement as particular, or limited, it seems most likely that he indeed was convinced that Christ died to expiate the sins of the elect alone. Though at times he did use universal language concerning the atonement, the language he used is no more ambiguous than Scripture itself on the issue. Further, when viewed along with the rest of his theology, at very least we can say that the doctrine of limited atonement is consistent with the rest of his theology. Though he did not explicitly write on the subject, if we view Calvin as being consistent we would have to come to the conclusion that his view of the atonement was limited. This evidence notwithstanding, as those who follow in the traditions of the reformers in general, and Calvin in particular, it should be noted that we must only follow Calvin as far as he followed Scripture. Calvin is not the final word on any given topic; Scripture is. Thus, even if it were somehow proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that Calvin held to a universal atonement, we need not follow Calvin to that error, as he himself would have wanted us follow Scripture where he has been mistaken. Calvin, John, Translated and Edited by Rev. Lindsey, Andrew, John 3: What the renowned pastor and teacher said about the cross of Christ, Christian

Focus Publications Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michael, The Extent of the Atonement:

Chapter 6 : The Five Points of Calvinism: Limited Atonement

This deals with Calvin's doctrine of the atonement as a whole, but it contains significant statements about Calvin's view of the extent of the atonement. Van Buren emphasized Calvin's endorsement of the substitutionary character of the priestly work of Christ.

In order to better understand Amyraldism, it is beneficial to recap what Calvinism is. Classic Calvinism centers on the so-called five points of Calvinism, which are summarized below: Total Depravity – Man, in his fallen state, is completely incapable of doing any good that is acceptable to God. Therefore, God must sovereignly choose those who will be saved. His decision to elect individuals for salvation is unconditional. Limited Atonement – In order to save those whom God has unconditionally elected, atonement for their sin had to be made. God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to atone for the sins of the elect and secure their pardon by His death on the cross. Irresistible Grace – The Holy Spirit applies the finished work of salvation to the elect by irresistibly drawing them to faith and repentance. This saving call of the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted and is referred to as an efficacious call. Perseverance of the Saints – Those whom God has elected, atoned for, and efficaciously called are preserved in faith until the last day. They will never fall away because God has secured them with the seal of the Holy Spirit. The saints persevere because God preserves them. As mentioned above, the particular point that Amyraldism denies is the third point, limited atonement. Amyraldism preserves the doctrine of unconditional election even while teaching unlimited atonement this way: Amyraldism is somewhere between Calvinism and Arminianism when it comes to the extent of the atonement. Amyraldism teaches that Christ died for all men, but God only applies this salvation to those whom He has chosen. But Amyraldism is not without its own difficulty: Those in hell are not the elect, according to Amyraldism, so did God pass over people for whom Christ died? But this salvation has a condition: Amyraldism, or four-point Calvinism, is popular today among many evangelicals, including independent Bible churches, Baptists, and some Presbyterians. Four-point Calvinism is also the official position of Got Questions Ministries, as we hold the view that the extent of the atonement was unlimited.

Chapter 7 : Satisfaction theory of atonement - Wikipedia

Nicole, Roger, John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement, Westminster Theological Journal, , Peterson, Robert A. Sr., Calvin and the Atonement: What the renowned pastor and teacher said about the cross of Christ, Christian Focus Publications

Anselm speaks of human sin as defrauding God of the honour he is due. As it was beyond the call of duty for Christ, it is more honour than he was obliged to give. The key difference here is that for Anselm, satisfaction is an alternative to punishment, "The honor taken away must be repaid, or punishment must follow. In Calvinist Penal Substitution, it is the punishment which satisfies the demands of justice. Both affirm the substitutionary and vicarious nature of the atonement, but penal substitution offers a specific explanation as to what the suffering is for: However, the specific interpretation differed as to what this suffering for sinners meant. Thus while the idea of substitutionary atonement is present in nearly all atonement theories[citation needed], the specific idea of satisfaction and penal substitution are later developments in the Latin church. Anselm links the atonement and the incarnation[edit] St. Anselm of Canterbury St. Anselm of Canterbury first articulated the satisfaction view in his *Cur Deus Homo?* Why should the Son of God have to become a human to pay a ransom? Why should God owe anything at all to Satan? Instead, Anselm suggested that we owe God a debt of honor: This is justice, or uprightness of will, which makes a being just or upright in heart, that is, in will; and this is the sole and complete debt of honor which we owe to God, and which God requires of us. Anselm did not speak directly to the later Calvinist concern for the scope of the satisfaction for sins, whether it was paid for all mankind universally or only for limited individuals, but indirectly his language suggests the former. Thomas Aquinas codifies the substitution theory[edit] St. Thomas Aquinas considers the atonement in the *Summa Theologiae* [10] into what is now the standard Catholic understanding of atonement. In his section on man, he considers whether punishment is good and appropriate. He concludes that punishment is a morally good response to sin: So the function of satisfaction for Aquinas is not to placate a wrathful God or in some other way remove the constraints which compel God to damn sinners. Instead, the function of satisfaction is to restore a sinner to a state of harmony with God by repairing or restoring in the sinner what sin has damaged. Rather than seeing the debt as one of honor, he sees the debt as a moral injustice to be righted. Aquinas also articulated the ideas of salvation that are now standard within the Catholic Church: If, however, we speak of punishment inflicted on account of sin, inasmuch as it is penal, then each one is punished for his own sin only, because the sinful act is something personal. Aquinas refers to the practice saying, "A satisfactory punishment is imposed upon penitents" [19] and defines this idea of "Satisfactory Punishment" penance as a compensation of self-inflicted pain in equal measure to the pleasure derived from the sin. First to pay a debt, and second "to serve as a remedy for the avoidance of sin". While Anselm said we could never pay this because any good we could do was owed to God anyway, Aquinas says that in addition to our due of obedience we can make up for our debt through acts of penance "man owes God all that he is able to give him Unlike Anselm, Aquinas claims that we can make satisfaction for our own sin, and that our problem is not our personal sin, but original sin. Why does he do that? Calvin attributes atonement to individuals[edit] John Calvin Main article: Penal substitution John Calvin was one of the first systematic theologians of the Reformation. That is, when Jesus died on the cross, his death paid the penalty at that time for the sins of all those who are saved. The Calvinist understanding of the atonement and satisfaction is penal substitution: John Stott has stressed that this must be understood not as the Son placating the Father, but rather in Trinitarian terms of the Godhead initiating and carrying out the atonement, motivated by a desire to save humanity. Thus the key distinction of penal substitution is the idea that restitution is made through punishment. However, because Christ paid for sins when he died, it is not possible for those for whom he died to fail to receive the benefits: Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. The Governmental view is the basis for the salvation theories of Protestant denominations who stress freedom of the will as in Arminianism.

Chapter 8 : The Five Points of Calvinism, TULIP

The satisfaction theory of atonement is a theory in Christian theology that Jesus Christ suffered crucifixion as a substitute for human sin, satisfying God's just wrath against humankind's transgression due to Christ's infinite merit.

The whole article, inclusive of the supporting material, is well worth reading. For whom did Christ die? On his view there are some people whose sins Christ actually remitted by his death. In the second place, all the elect, and they alone, have their sins actually remitted by the death of Christ. That is to say, the effect of the death of Christ is to atone for the sins of a definite number of people and in this sense it is proper to speak of limited atonement. The third key idea is that Calvin expressly teaches that it was the intention of Christ, in dying, to procure an atonement for the elect. The salvation of the elect is something that can be directly related to what Christ by his death intended. There is not a trace of a sharp break between the earthly death and the heavenly intercession of Christ. It is not something additional to his death which has independent value and efficacy. This needs to be stressed in view of the fact that, as we shall see later, R. Kendall holds that in Calvin there is a sharp distinction to be drawn between the death and the heavenly intercession of Christ. This view is quite without foundation. In the second place Calvin teaches that Christ redeems by satisfying divine justice in a way that is mysterious and not fully comprehensible. The explanation of this mystery is to be sought in the first chapter of the letter to the Ephesians. There, after Paul has taught us that we were chosen in Christ, he adds at the same time that we acquired favour in the same Christ Eph. How did God begin to embrace with his favour those whom he had loved before the creation of the world? Whatever the scope of the death of Christ, it was a satisfaction for sins. Rather, Christ effected redemption by his death. If these expressions mean anything, they mean that divine justice has been satisfied for those whom the death of Christ benefits, whoever they may be. Because of this, salvation may be personally appropriated by faith alone. According to Calvin, all and only the elect have their sins remitted. God the Father has gathered the elect indissolubly together in Christ. Salvation is effectual only for the elect. According to Calvin, then, the elect are saved through Christ, all the elect, and only the elect. Bearing in mind what has so far been learned about Calvin, it might be argued that he was committed to definite or limited atonement even though he has not committed himself, in express terms, to such a view. For it might be said that since, for Calvin, all for whom Christ died are saved, and not all men are saved, it follows that Christ did not die for all men. That is, an argument such as J. If we are going to affirm penal substitution for all without exception we must either infer universal salvation, or else, to evade this inference, deny the saving efficacy of the substitution for anyone; and if we are going to affirm penal substitution as an effective saving act of God we must either infer universal salvation or else, to evade this inference, restrict the scope of the substitution, making it a substitution for some, not all. Calvin, not being a universalist, could be said to be committed to definite atonement, even though he does not commit himself to definite atonement. And, it could be added, there is a sound reason for this. There was no occasion for Calvin to enter into argument about the matter, for before the Arminian controversy the extent of the atonement had not been debated expressly within the Reformed churches. However, plausible though such a line of argument may seem, it is possible to show that Calvin did not leave others to draw such conclusions. He drew them himself. There are passages in Calvin which show that he held the doctrine of limited atonement, even though the doctrine does not gain the prominence in his writings that it did during later controversies. How can this be? It is not only because they have chosen to be his, as we have already seen. They are elected to salvation. Rather, as Calvin hints, Christ cares for those whom the Father has given him, his people, by being their Redeemer. Not simply by being a Redeemer, but by being their Redeemer. And who are these? They are the sheep to whom the Shepherd gives eternal life. On the basis of such a distinction it might be said that while Christ diffused life to some, and his benefits belong only to some, he died for all. But this is to draw distinctions where none in fact exist. And why should Christ be said to die for all, or for the whole world, if the purpose of his death, the provision of life, is to be confined to the elect? But there is still more evidence. Christ keeps those, and only those, entrusted to his care by the Father in such a way that not one of them will perish. How is this possible in any way that will not involve his death for them in particular? If Christ keeps

only the elect, and did not die for the wicked, is it not reasonable to conclude that he died only for the elect? Christ, according to Calvin, has the task of gathering together all the children of God, the elect, in one by his death. Is it not reasonable to conclude that Christ did this knowingly and intentionally, and that by his death he intended to save the elect only? It is not a natural religious instinct, nor is it as some would say gullibility. Faith is imparted to us by God himself, by God the Holy Spirit. Faith relies upon the promise of God. It presupposes divine revelation, and involves the use of the mind, not its disengagement. Calvin does not oppose faith and reason, for reason is necessary to understand the divine revelation. But what is more important for present purposes is what Calvin says about the relation between faith and knowledge. It is this that has aroused much interest over the years, and still prompts controversy. A number of scholars regard it as unquestionable that at this point there is a major break between Calvin and the Puritans. For in his definition Calvin appears to be defining faith in terms of knowledge, whereas the Puritans certainly did not. It is therefore important to take care to understand what Calvin is saying here, and elsewhere in his writings. It is not simply that saving faith involved the assurance, or confidence, that what is believed is undoubtedly the promise of God. If faith involves assurance, then all who believe must have this confidence about themselves in relation to God. If they fail to have this confidence than they cannot truly be believers. Such faith involves more than believing in a general sense that the promise is addressed to us, it is believing that it applies to us. It is important to recognize that Calvin is not offering a casual, throw-away view. Nevertheless, it is equally important to recognize that this short definition is not the only thing that Calvin says about faith. In order to set his definition in a broader context attention will now be paid to what he says after this definition occurs in the Institutes, and then to what he says about the knowledge of election. It can be seen from this that Calvin qualifies his definition of faith in terms of knowledge in important ways. Having and retaining faith is part of a struggle with natural unbelief. The degree of confidence that accompanies it fluctuates. Further, Calvin is well aware that these further remarks of his amount to an important modification of the original definition. It is not as if there is a conflict of evidence in Calvin which he does not recognize. But, it may be asked, if Calvin defines faith in terms of assurance, how can he allow for the possibility of faith without assurance? Is he flatly contradicting himself within a few pages, or is there a way of reconciling the different things that he says? For, as we have just seen, he is sometimes happy to allow that there may be faith without assurance, and indeed that all faith is incompletely assured. And yet, if he defines faith in terms of assurance, then no one can have faith who lacks assurance. But if so, how can he say that faith may co-exist with doubt? A clue to the answer to this difficulty is to be found in the second of the two quotations given above. This is not strictly true. In areas of malnutrition many unfortunate people live close to starvation. But while not strictly true, the assertion enshrines a recommendation. It is as if it were being said that no persons can flourish without a properly balanced diet, though they may exist without one. Similarly, Calvin is recommending to his Christian readers not to be satisfied with a degree of faith that is without assurance. There can be faith without assurance, but that degree of faith is to be sought that is accompanied by assurance. Since not all men are elected, what are the signs of election? Our election is not to be known by some direct revelation to our souls that we are chosen, but by the nature of our response to the preaching of the Christian gospel. Christ is the mirror of election. How, then, does someone know that he is not a reprobate, that is to say, merely a temporary believer? So it would appear that a person may be a true believer and yet not be assured that he is one, because he has misunderstood the signs. Similarly, a person may not be a true believer, but may think that he is, because he has misread the signs. To give an illustration: Whether or not a person is forty years old at a stated time depends upon the year of his birth. If he was born in a certain year then he is forty years old. If not, then he is not forty years old. But the evidence of his being born in a certain year cannot be had directly, but only indirectly, through what his parents tell him, the evidence of a birth certificate, and so on. Similarly, Calvin says, there are indirect signs of true faith, signs upon which assurance is based. Misunderstanding is sometimes caused by statements made about the ground of assurance. It is said, for instance, that according to Calvin, Christ alone is the ground of assurance, and that to think of the ground of assurance as within oneself is a form of salvation by merit or works. While the believer has not to trust in himself for salvation “this would be salvation by human merit” nevertheless he may find in himself evidence that he has trusted in

Christ for salvation.

Chapter 9 : Calvinism | Limited Atonement | John Calvin

In Christian theology, atonement describes how human beings can be reconciled to God through Christ's sacrificial suffering and death. Atonement refers to the forgiving or pardoning of sin in general and original sin in particular through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, enabling the reconciliation between God and his creation.

Limited Atonement by Gene Taylor The third basic tenet of Calvinism is that Christ died only for the ones God had unconditionally chosen to save. The doctrine of Limited Atonement is a natural outgrowth of the doctrine of Unconditional Election coupled with the idea that everything God does has purpose. They believe that since God chose only some to be saved, it would be foolish to think that He sent His Son to shed His atoning blood for the sins of all people. Christ only died for the elect. In this article we will look at this doctrine by seeing how its proponents express it, examining the proof texts used to support it, and citing Scriptural objections to it. Limited Atonement Expressed David N. Steele and Curtis C. His death was a substitutionary sacrifice of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind? The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery. Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell? All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery? God, having out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer. The Protestant Faith, p. The argument made on this passage is that Jesus died only for His sheep which Calvinists take to mean the elect. The answer to that argument is that in verse 16 Jesus taught that there are "other sheep I have which are not of this fold" who would come into the fold. Calvinists deny that one can change from "sheep not of this fold" into "sheep" of the fold or from "goats" to "sheep. The argument based on these texts is that Christ died only for those who are saved, the elect. The answer here is that there is no doubt that the church is composed of the saved and that Jesus died to purchase the church. The Scriptural truth that Calvinists overlook, though, is that any person can become a part of that church. All who obey Jesus Heb. It is not limited to just those who Calvinists say are elected to salvation. Those who do the will of the Father. Though not all will be saved, those who "gladly receive" the word are added by the Lord to His church. The argument Calvinists use in relation to this passage is that the love of God in giving Jesus as a sacrifice was not a general kindness to all creation. John Gill in Five Points of Calvinism, says, "But it is a special and discriminating love, the favor which he bears to His own people, as distinct from others. Admittedly, this passage shows that God preferred Jacob over Esau even before their birth -- not in reference to their salvation but in regards to the election of the descendants of Jacob as the people through whom the physical Messiah would come. In commenting on this passage, Robertson L. God was selecting his own instruments to work out his own plans. But the selection of Jacob and the rejection of Esau had nothing to do with their salvation. If it had pertained to their salvation, there would have been no point in mentioning the fact that the younger was selected instead of the older; for even the most dogmatic predestinarian would not say that the oldest son is the natural heir of salvation and all the other sons reprobates. The fact is that the selection of Jacob was the selection of a people rather than an individual. Consider also the waste of preaching the gospel to those God will save whether they hear it or not. Jesus died for all people. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Conclusion It would be extremely difficult for us to devise a doctrine which would be more out of harmony with plain Biblical teaching than the doctrine of Limited Atonement. The doctrine of Limited Atonement stands in direct opposition to the death of Jesus for all John