

Doctrine #4- Particular Redemption

Written by Calvin Fox

Monday, 29 September 2008 20:43 -

The theme of God's Sovereignty continues in the next topic- the Doctrine of Particular Election (traditionally called "Limited" Atonement). All Evangelicals affirm that the death of Jesus was a substitutionary atonement for sin. It is commonly believed that this atonement was for all people, inasmuch as all sin. It is assumed that the Atonement is unlimited. In fact, everyone believes that the Atonement definitely is limited.

Arminians (most Evangelicals these days) agree that the Atonement is limited in its results. Jesus died for all, they say, but only those who accept his sacrifice are saved. The results of Christ's death are thus greatly limited, as most people do not accept it. More than that, according to Arminians, the effectiveness of Christ's Sacrifice is actually determined by the (so-called) free will of sinners, most of whom "decide" to reject it. If no one accepted the Sacrifice, it not only would be limited, it would be reduced to nothing. Christ would have died in vain! Where is the sovereignty of God if unregenerate human beings have the final say, passing judgment on the work of God, deciding if the sacrifice of Christ will have results or not!

Reformed Christians (Calvinists) reject the view that the Atonement is limited by its effects. They believe the Atonement is limited in its design.

As Sovereign, God's purpose in the death of His Son will be achieved. His purpose is to redeem a People for himself. That was God's design for the death of Jesus.

It will be fulfilled.

God's design (purpose) for the Cross will not be thwarted. It was not a simple possibility that could be passed.

The Atonement would, in fact, redeem people, particular people. Christ died for those who would benefit by His death.

He died for those who would absolutely accept the Salvation He made possible.

Christ died for the Elect.

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Doesn't Scripture say that Christ died for the sins of the world? If Christ died for everyone and everyone for whom Christ died will accept that death as Atonement for their sins, than everyone will be saved (no one will perish) or the argument could be, since Christ's death atoned for everyone, every one would have to be saved, because, in a moral world, how could someone for whom Christ died, whose sins had been paid for by Him, be made to spend eternity in Hell for those sins?

Calvinists believe that while Christ's Death was sufficient to atone for the sins of everyone; it was efficient only for the Elect. The Atonement paid for all, but was applied only to the Few. The only alternative, of course, is Universalism, which we reject outright as unscriptural.

Scripture says Christ loves the Church and gave Himself for Her. He purchased Her with His blood. It is proper and right, for anyone who has been truly converted to Christ, to believe and say, with the Apostle Paul, "the Son of God loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal.2:20) This is the Doctrine of Particular Redemption or Limited Atonement. It is a source of great comfort and assurance, far better than the more popular idea that Jesus died for everyone and therefore, no one in particular.