

understanding the
doctrines of grace



May 21, 2025



- T total depravity
- U unconditional election
- L limited atonement
- I irresistible grace
- P perseverance of the saved

For whom did Jesus die?

Did Jesus sacrifice Himself...

- to secure our salvation, or
- to make our salvation possible?

Did Jesus' death guarantee and accomplish anything definite for sinners?

Limited Atonement

Particular Redemption; Definite Atonement

A biblical definition:

“Finally, perhaps the most significant aspect of the eternal plan of salvation is that the Father gives specific individuals to the Son on whose behalf He is to accomplish redemption [freedom from sin]. That is to say, the Father commissions the Son to be the representative and substitutionary sacrifice for a particular people—namely all and only those whom the Father has chosen [elected] for salvation.” *(John MacArthur)*

Limited Atonement

Particular Redemption; Definite Atonement

Scriptural teaching:

- John 6:37-40
- John 10:14-15, 29
- John 17:1-3, 6, 9, 24
- ...and many more

Jesus is acting faithfully on the will of the Father in His eternal purpose decreed before the foundation of the world. God the Father has given to the Son a particular, definite, limited, and specific group of people who belong to the Father. Jesus calls them His own, His sheep.

Limited Atonement

Particular Redemption; Definite Atonement

Scriptural teaching:

- John 6:44-45

It is these people, claimed by God, who are drawn to Jesus by the Father, and they know the voice of their Shepherd as He calls them to Himself—to follow Him in faith.

The critical truth at the heart of this atoning act is that God did this out of love for His chosen ones even though they were steeped in their pride, rebellion, hatred of God, calloused hearts, and spiritual death, making them enemies of God in their unbelief.

Limited Atonement

Particular Redemption; Definite Atonement

Scriptural teaching:

- Romans 5:6-10

God didn't start loving His elect when Jesus died for them. Jesus died for us because God loved us from the beginning.

This limited, definite, atoning sacrifice of Jesus for His people guaranteed and secured a definite salvation by the same power and love of God which predestined us, elected us, drew us out of sin to Himself, and which constitutes us in the perfect, sinless life of His Son credited to us by God's gift of saving faith.

Limited Atonement

Did Jesus die for “all” and “everyone”?

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures....” (I Corinthians 15:1-4)

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

“Our Lord’s atoning death and triumphant resurrection are the foundation of the Christian faith and message.... Since God’s gracious provision of salvation rests upon these truths, it is imperative that we thoroughly understand their meaning, not only for our own edification and that of others but also for the clear presentation of the gospel to the lost.” *(Floyd Barackman)*

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

Each point of Calvinism (the doctrines of grace) is extensive in its meaning and application to life with God—particularly concerning our salvation from sins.

- John Calvin did not “invent” these points, nor did he, during his lifetime, sit down and codify/systematize them in the form that we have them today.
- The synod of Dort systematized the five points in response to the remonstrants demands for changes in the Belgic and Heidelberg confessions.
- John Calvin’s teaching was upheld because it was determined to be the plain teaching of the Scriptures.
- As we look into the Bible for *our* answers, keep in mind that the doctrines of grace were a carefully thought out and articulated Biblical response to false teaching.

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

One helpful approach to keeping limited atonement in a proper biblical perspective is to work backwards from the specific doctrine of grace you are studying.

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

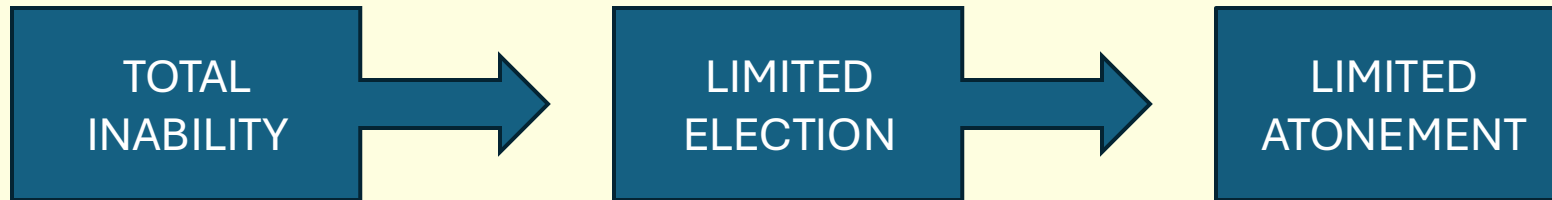
Limited atonement means that Jesus' sacrificial, substitutionary death accomplished its purposes for salvational blessings only for the elect. Why is this true?

- The elect alone are those whom God singled out for salvation before the beginning of the world. Why did God need to act to single out anyone at all?
- All people deserve God's punishment for their sins, live under God's wrath, and are spiritually dead to God. That death renders them unable to respond to God on their own.
- The elect are sinners; they need God to choose them in this way because man's will has been corrupted by the fall. Thus, each individual sinner is unable to choose for himself/herself the spiritual good of a relationship with God.

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

A limited atonement follows from a limited election which follows from the total inability on the part of man.



If God did not choose, initiate, and act on our behalf to save us, we would remain slaves to sin and suffer eternal damnation.

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

The issue is once again affirming the sovereignty of God and not the sovereignty of man or the false concept of man's "free will."

We are seeking to establish and uphold the plain teaching of God's Word that God took the initiative in saving mankind. Salvation is completely the work of God, so that no person may boast in himself for his/her salvation.

Limited Atonement

Keeping the big picture in mind

God maintains His sovereign right to both save and condemn.

- Romans 9:21
- 2 Corinthians 4:7

These doctrines are not true and trustworthy because we believe them to be logical and because they follow naturally upon one another.

They are true because they are plainly taught in the Bible, which makes them reasonable to any mind/heart that has been redeemed and spiritually renewed by the transforming grace of God in Christ.



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