

Canons of Dort: 2nd Head, Art 8-9–The Efficacy and Eternity of the Atonement

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: When penicillin was discovered as a cure for bacterial infections it saved lives – many lives. But as time went by, as it was over-prescribed and overused, it became less effective. Sometimes you need an extra-dose. Sometimes you need a stronger dose. Sometimes it doesn't work at all. Researchers have had to come up with other types of antibiotics.

Furthermore, taking penicillin does not kill bacteria forever. The infection can come against next year and you need penicillin again.

Not so with the atonement of Jesus. It does the job every single time – totally - and it continues to be effective for eternity. You will hear about this today.

Our headings are:

The Efficacy of the Atonement

The Eternity of the Atonement

Our goals are: **That seeing the effectiveness and the eternity of the atonement, you will not worry about your sins, but you will press on in your Christian duties of working for and worshipping the Lord.**

The Efficacy of the 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.

1. This plan of Christ's vicarious atonement fully succeeded in what it was intended to do: propitiating (satisfying) God's anger and expiating (covering) man's sins - period, full stop!

2. This plan for saving mankind was an entirely free plan, at least as far as man is concerned, for you have nothing to pay.

Jesus had to pay dearly for it...with his own life.

3. Christ's atonement was for a definite, certain number – the elect – with whom God worked from beginning to end.

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, from their sins.

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.**

His people were cleansed by his blood.

Notice how the doctrine of **election** is strictly **tied** to the doctrine of the **atonement**-that Golden Chain!

Ephesians 1: 4 just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love 5 **having predestined us to adoption** as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 7 In Him we have **redemption through His blood**, the **forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace

Jesus did not come to seek those who were looking for him, as none was looking for him. He came to seek the ones who were lost. And he would find every single one he came to seek.

John 6: 39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, **that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing**, but should raise it up at the last day.

4. God planned to atone for the sins of people from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and **make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Revelation 7:9 After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which **no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

5. God planned to give faith to this definite number so they would receive the work of Jesus as their own.

6. Arminians argue Christ's atonement simply removed the hurdle of man being able to believe; they don't believe Jesus died for a definite number that was given to him by his Father.

They treat salvation in 2 parts:

...the acquisition of salvation (what Christ purchased for all) and
...the application of salvation (what individuals choose to do).

So they emphasize a **dual labor in salvation, Christ and man**. **So they say salvation is possible for everyone, but it is certain for no one!** So Jesus could have died and not a single soul could be saved!

And they argue **man is totally free to make the choice of whether to accept salvation or not**. (Arminians are semi-Pelagians. Pelagius was a heretic of the 4-5th centuries and believed man was not born sinful and therefore could of himself choose to accept or reject the atonement.)

Arminians are wrong on both points.

a. First, Christ did not simply remove the hurdle to salvation and make salvation possible. Christ, your covenant keeper, **fully earning salvation by meeting God's full demands of law for his people**. He did what the 1st Adam did not do. (1Corinthians 15:22). **Jesus is the Mediator of redemption and the Mediator of application.**

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

Christ Jesus did not make salvation possible! He saved! 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. Jesus did not simply talk about love...and see if man would reciprocate. His love was not theoretical. **He actually loved in deed.**

You'd better be thankful that Jesus did both.

b. Second, while man can be said to have free will, man of himself would not choose to embrace 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 it is possible that Christ came to die and none could be saved. How abominable! Arminians **make Christ's work seem less needful**. This is a common way the Devil works.

But the biblical doctrine of atonement gives glory where it properly belongs – to your loving Savior.

7. What a comfort this doctrine is to those who know they are lost: Jesus came to die for him!

Give him the glory, honor, and praises!

The Eternity of the Atonement

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**. 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, faithfully worship, and praise him here and in all eternity.

1. None could stop God from fulfilling his plan to atone for the sins of his children; salvation is of the Lord!

God's plan to save man cannot be stopped in this world and it will continue until we gather in heaven.

2. Many have tried to stop God's plan; all who have tried to do so do have died.

a. During the time of Ahab the church became quite small, but God always preserved a remnant.

b. During the Dark Ages, the church was small, but God always kept a people for himself.

c. The communists wanted to remove religion and called it the "opiate" of the people, and tried to destroy it, but they could not. God's people's salvation was God's decree and none could stop it.

d. Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists continue to persecute the church of Jesus Christ in many parts of the world, intending to wipe it out, but God will destroy them, maybe in this world, or surely in hell.

One of the church's enemies, a Muslim leader, said that Jihad (holy war) will continue until every infidel (you) bows to Allah (their god). Look at God's language which shows his will can never be thwarted...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.

3. The Devil, who has and continues to try to destroy God's people, was chained, limited at the cross.

He cannot destroy a single Christian. His agents will surely will try, but they can't do it. They can't destroy the effectiveness and eternity of Christ's atonement for his people.

1Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the **devil walks about like a roaring lion,** seeking whom he may devour

God will continue to prevail.

He will preserve his children and his church.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God. (Romans 8)

His church can never be destroyed.

He who has begun a work in me will complete it.

The gates of hell can't stop him from fulfilling his plan.

John 10:28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;
neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

4. You might feel overwhelmed sometimes and even wonder if you are a believer, especially when you don't see many good works in your life; you may wonder if you have faith.

While you **might doubt, it is not because you have no faith, but because your faith is weak.** Ask God to strengthen your faith.

Remember, you don't obey God in order to be saved. You aren't contrite in spirit *for* God to save you. It is because you are saved you will want to obey God and to be contrite in spirit. If you feel ashamed for your sins, it is evidence of faith. If you feel weak, you know you need help!

5. What are some other implications then for you?

Definite atonement, properly taught, not only **motivates proper worship,** but is also removes fear!

Definite atonement, properly taught, **fills man with love in his heart** – love for his Savior.

Definite atonement, properly taught, **causes man to fall on his knees** in worship.

Definite atonement, properly taught, **causes man to stand up in praise** to the Savior.

Definite atonement, properly taught, **causes man to go out and tell the world** about it.

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 through the working of the Holy Spirit. This atonement, once received, can never be diminished or removed – and will remain valid for eternity.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Get a sense of the wondrous love God has shown to you in the bloody atonement of Jesus Christ!

2. Consider how you might respond? Get excited. Love him. How do you love him? You obey his laws with heart, mind, and strength! You worship 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. If you do this, you will have new life that will last beyond this world.