

## “The Doctrines of Grace: Part III of V”

There are five distinct biblical teachings recovered by Reformers in the seventeenth century that have become known by the acrostic TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. Now, TULIP does not summarize Reformed theology, but it does capture important biblical teachings in a simple way. My intent is to explain each of the five teachings for you to gain familiarity with these doctrines of grace.

While Limited Atonement is the popular name of this teaching, it is better known as “Particular Redemption.” Limited atonement suggests that the death of Christ is limited in its value. But the death of Christ is of infinite value. Instead, the question is what Jesus accomplished by his death. Particular redemption means Jesus accomplished salvation for His people.

Scripture does not teach that Jesus’s death resulted in the salvation of all people. Scripture gives us the examples of Pharaoh, Judas, and the rich man in Jesus’s parable to teach that not all persons will be saved. So, then, was his death something that only made redemption possible, or did his death atone for the sins of His people?

To “redeem” means “to buy back”. It is used many times to describe Jesus’s death for his people (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Gal. 3:13; Rev. 5:9b). His death didn’t just make redemption possible. It is the redemption that Jesus bought back His people by his death on the cross. To “atone” means “to make at one”. Hebrews 2:17 tells us that the death of Jesus accomplished atonement, with the result that it is never repeated. Together, these verses teach that Jesus did not make atonement possible, but accomplished redemption for his people. “For the transgression of my people he was stricken” (Is. 53:8). “You are the give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68). Jesus reconciled His people to God, making them at one.

Then, how are we to understand a text that teaches the salvation of all men and women, such as 2 Peter 3:9? There, the issue of the verse is the delay of Christ’s return. Peter explains that God delays Christ’s return to bring to repentance all His people.

The statement “Christ died for you” is not in the Bible. It is more accurate to call sinners to put faith in Christ because they need Him. What is universal is the invitation to faith and the promise of salvation to all who believe. The message of the gospel is “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for sins, and offer you Himself as your Savior.” Will you believe?

Judson Marvel

Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Sierra Vista, AZ