

UNDERSTANDING THE “L” IN TULIP

Selected passages

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. **Total depravity:** Man is helpless to accomplish his own salvation. Man is dead within his trespasses and sin.
- B. **Unconditional election:** God does not choose you based on any conditions. God would elect some for eternal life and condemn others to eternal death.
- C. **Limited Atonement:** Jesus only died for those whom He knew were chosen by God the Father.
- D. **Irresistible grace:** If God wants to save someone, that person will not be able to “resist” or “reject” the grace of God. They will be saved no matter what.
- E. **Perseverance of the saints:** If you’re truly born again, you will persevere and not permanently turn away from the faith. You cannot lose your salvation.

II. THE UNDERSTANDING OF “LIMITED ATONEMENT” WITHIN A BIBLICAL RESPONSE:

- A. Their definition of “Limited Atonement”: The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) defines Limited Atonement (or Particular Redemption) as the doctrine that Christ’s death was intended to effectively save only the “elect”- those chosen by God from eternity-rather than every individual person.

Key aspects of their definition:

Purpose: The goal of Christ’s death was to surely and effectively redeem, not just make salvation possible.

Scope: It is “limited” in that it was designed specifically for the elect, not all of humanity.

Sufficiency: The sacrifice is of infinite worth and sufficient for the whole world, but efficient only for the chosen.

Basis: The limitation is rooted in God’s eternal decree of election, not on human choice.

III. BIBLICAL PROBLEMS CONCERNING THIS DOCTRINAL POINT OF CALVINISM:

- 1. Argument 1: Limited Atonement is Hermeneutically Insupportable:
 - A. Universal or unlimited atonement is supported throughout the New Testament (*John 3:16-17; John 1:29; Romans 11:32; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2:6; 4:10*)
 - B. Universal atonement is not the same as “universalism” which says that everyone will be saved and go to Heaven but claims that the atonement has universal or unlimited power to all people. Those that jump to the other side of