

JOHN 3:16 CONFERENCE  
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DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED RELATED TO LIMITED ATONEMENT  
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**A. TERMS RELATED TO THE GROUPS OR POSITIONS**

**1) Non-Calvinism**

ARMINIANISM –named for James Arminius (1560-1609), the Dutch-reformed theologian who modified reformed theology by teaching that election is based on God’s foreknowledge of foreseen faith, Christ died for all humanity, and grace is resistible. Arminius himself did not teach one could lose salvation, but modern day Arminianism rejects the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

**2) Classic and Moderate Calvinism**

CLASSICAL CALVINISM –the variety of Calvinism held by the early Reformers, including John Calvin himself, which did not espouse a *strictly* limited atonement, such as was later taught by John Owen.

MODERATE CALVINISM –sometimes referred to as “four-point Calvinism”; rejects *or* does not espouse Limited Atonement in the Owenic sense (strict particularism). They believe that Christ suffered sufficiently for all (unlimited imputation/ordained sufficiency), but *especially* for the elect (limited special intent and special application).

AMYRALDIANISM –named for the French theologian Moïse Amyraut (1596-1664). It is sometimes described as a form of hypothetical universalism. According to John Quick’s *Synodicon*, they taught that Christ intended to suffer or *satisfy for all men sufficiently* (so that it is of infinite value to expiate the sins of the whole world), but *for the elect only effectually* in respect of it’s saving virtue.<sup>1</sup> Amyraldianism is thus a kind of double aspect theory with respect to the extent of the atonement, and is often improperly referred to as “four-point Calvinism.” Richard Muller has affirmed that Amyraldianism is a legitimate variation of Reformed theology that is within the boundaries of orthodoxy,<sup>2</sup> and describes Amyraldism as a “speculative” form of “hypothetical universalism.”<sup>3</sup>

HYPOTHETICAL UNIVERSALISM –According to Richard Muller, hypothetical universalism is “the teaching, based on the doctrine of the all-sufficient merit of Christ’s obedience, that Christ’s death is hypothetically universal in its extent, the extent being limited only by the failure of some to believe. *Ex hypothesi*, hypothetically, all might choose to believe and all might be

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<sup>1</sup> John Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata* (London: Printed for T. Parkhurst and J. Robinson, 1692), 2:354.

<sup>2</sup> See Richard Muller’s *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker, 2003), 1:76-80; also, see *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 15-16.

<sup>3</sup> “English Hypothetical Universalism: John Preston and the Softening of Reformed Theology,” by Jonathan D. Moore. Reviewed by Richard A Muller, *Calvin Theological Journal*, 43 (2008), 149-150. In this review, Muller describes the positions of Musculus, Zanchi, Ursinus, Davenant and Preston as “nonspeculative hypothetical universalism.”

saved. Thus, Christ is said to have died for all. In actuality, however, man cannot come to faith apart from grace, and the application of Christ's merit is limited to the elect."<sup>4</sup> Erickson says it is "The idea that Jesus died for the sins of all persons and that all are capable of believing. Theoretically, then, all persons might be saved, though in practice that may not be the case."<sup>5</sup> Given the confusing and inaccurate nature of this label as it pertains to Amyraldism proper, it should probably be dropped.<sup>6</sup>

FOUR-POINT CALVINISM –used often as a pejorative, this label refers to the Calvinistic position that affirms only four of the five points of the TULIP, but rejects Limited Atonement *in the Owenic sense*. The dualists in this group make qualifications, while others simply say that Christ died equally for all.

### 3) High Calvinism

HIGH CALVINISM –synonym for five-point Calvinism; affirms Limited Atonement *in the Owenic sense* (strict particularism). They maintain that Christ's death has infinite intrinsic value, such that it could save all men *had God so intended* (a bare or hypothetical sufficiency), but since God did not so intend, they deny that Christ actually bore the punishment due for the sins of all humanity (an ordained sufficiency). This label should not be used as a synonym for hyper-Calvinism as it engenders confusion.

FIVE-POINT (or FIVE POINTS of) CALVINISM –the position that affirms all the so called "five points" of Calvinism or the TULIP (T = Total Depravity, U = Unconditional Election, L = Limited Atonement, I = Irresistible Grace, P = Perseverance of the Saints), including Limited Atonement *in the Owenic sense*.

OWENIC CALVINISM –the brand of strict five-point Calvinism associated with John Owen, that teaches a strict particularist position on Limited Atonement, *i.è.* Christ died for the sins of the elect *alone*.

### 4) Hyper-Calvinism

HYPERCALVINISM –an aberrant form of historic Calvinism emphasizing divine sovereignty over human responsibility. A hyper-Calvinist is anyone who ascribes to *any one or more* of the following positions: 1) denies that the gospel call applies to all who hear, 2) denies that faith is the duty of every sinner, 3) denies that the gospel makes any "offer" of Christ, salvation, or mercy to the non-elect (or denies that the offer of divine mercy is free and universal), 4) denies that there is such a thing as "common grace," 5) denies that God has any sort of love for the non-elect. All five varieties of hyper-Calvinism either twist the gospel message or undermine evangelism. (These five statements are taken verbatim from Calvinist Phil Johnson's website under the heading "A Primer on Hyper-Calvinism."<sup>7</sup>)

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1985), 319-320.

<sup>5</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House, 1986), 78.

<sup>6</sup> E. F. Karl Müller said, "Amyraut's doctrine has been called 'hypothetical universalism'; but the term is misleading, since it might be applied also to the Arminianism which he steadfastly opposed." See "Amyraut, Moïse," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 13 vols. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1908-14), 1:161. Lindsay also says the label is "not quite appropriate." See Thomas M. Lindsay on "Amyraut," in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, 7 vols. (Edinburgh, 1908-24), 1:404.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/articles/hypercal.htm>; accessed 4 November 2008.

## **B. TERMS RELATED TO THE VIEWS OF THE CROSS**

### **1) The Design of Christ's Death, or the Extent of Expiation and Redemption**

DUALISM –the view that Christ bore the punishment due for the sins of all humanity, but not for all *equally*; that is, He did not do so with the same *intent, design or purpose*. Most Calvinists who reject (or do not espouse) Limited Atonement in the Owenic sense are dualists.

ATONEMENT –in modern usage, this term refers to the expiatory act of Christ on the cross whereby satisfaction for sin was accomplished. One must be careful to distinguish between the *intent, extent, and application* of the atonement. In classical usage, this term referred to the at-one-ment that the reconciled believer experiences with God through Christ.

LIMITED ATONEMENT –For the purposes of this lecture, this term refers to the view that Christ *only* bore the punishment due for the sins of the elect *alone*. Consequently, no one else can or will receive the saving benefits of his death. This term will be used as a synonym for DEFINITE ATONEMENT and PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT –answers the question “For whom did Christ die?” There are only two options: 1) for the elect *alone* (“Limited Atonement”), 2) for all of humanity. The second option may be further divided into 2a) Dualists (Christ has an *unequal* will to save all through that accomplishment) and 2b) Arminians (Christ has an *equal* will to save all through that accomplishment).

PARTICULARISM –when used in a strict sense (which is the sense I will use it in this presentation), it is a synonym for Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption. A PARTICULARIST is someone who holds to particularism, *i.e.*, the position of Limited Atonement.

UNIVERSAL ATONEMENT –Christ bore the punishment due for the sins of *all* humanity.

LIMITED IMPUTATION –the sins of the elect *only* were substituted for, atoned for or imputed to Christ on the cross.

UNLIMITED IMPUTATION –the sins of *all* of humanity were substituted for, atoned for or imputed to Christ on the cross.

### **2) The Sufficiency of Christ's Death**

SUFFICIENT FOR ALL; EFFICIENT FOR THE ELECT –the formula first *explicitly* used by Peter Lombard in his *Sentences*.<sup>8</sup> The terminology is used by both “five-point” and “four-point” Calvinists (as well as by Arminians) in relation to the nature and extent of the atonement. When used by Owenic “five-point” Calvinists, the term “sufficient” means that Christ's death is of infinite intrinsic value, and therefore *could have been* capable of saving all humanity *had God so intended*. But, since he did *not* suffer for all, in their view, it is only *hypothetically* (not actually) sufficient respecting the non-elect. While this sense of sufficiency is not limited in value, it is limited in extension, since it only has the ability or capacity to save the elect for whom atonement

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<sup>8</sup> *Sentences* (Book III, Section 20, Paragraph E). The *concept*, however, is *at least* as old as Ambrose (338-397 A.D.). See his *Exposition of the Holy Gospel According to Saint Luke*, trans. Theodosia Tomkinson (Etna: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998), 201-202. He wrote, “Although Christ suffered for all, yet He suffered for us particularly, because He suffered for the Church.”

was made. However, as used by “four-point” Calvinists (and others), the term “sufficient” means that Christ actually made satisfaction for the sins of all humanity. Thus, it is “extrinsically” or “universally” sufficient in capacity to save all men. Sometimes an author or speaker does not specify in what sense he’s using the term, so it is difficult to tell which meaning is intended.

**INFINITE OR UNIVERSAL SUFFICIENCY** –1) When used by strict particularists, this terminology means that the death of Christ *could have been* sufficient or able to atone for all the sins of the world *if God had intended for it to do so*. However, since they think God did not intend for the death of Christ to satisfy for all, but only for the elect, it is not *actually* sufficient or able to save any others.<sup>9</sup> 2) When used by Dualists and non-Calvinists, the terminology means that the death of Christ is actually able, or of such a nature that it can save all men. It is, *in fact*, a satisfaction for the sins of all humanity. Therefore, if any man perishes, it is not for lack of an atonement for their sins.<sup>10</sup> The fault lies *totally* within themselves.

**LIMITED SUFFICIENCY** –the death of Christ only satisfied for the sins of the elect *alone*, thus it is *limited in its capacity to save* only those for whom he suffered.

**INTRINSIC SUFFICIENCY** – this speaks to the atonement's internal or infinite abstract ability to save all men (if God so intended), in such a way that it has no reference to the actual extent of the atonement.

**EXTRINSIC SUFFICIENCY** –this speaks to the atonement's actual infinite ability to be able to save all and every man, and this because God indeed will it to be so, because Christ *in fact* made a satisfaction for all men. In other words, the unlimited satisfaction enables the sufficiency to truly be adaptable to all men. Every living man is in a savable state because there is blood sufficiently shed for them (Heb. 9:22). If this were not so *for some*, then *they* would be no more salvable than the fallen angels.

### **C. TERMS RELATED TO THE GOSPEL**

**DUTY-FAITH** –the doctrine that all men are *evangelically* responsible or duty-bound to believe in Christ savingly.<sup>11</sup>

**FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL** –the free and well-meant proposal of mercy given *by God* through the preacher to their hearers indiscriminately. Through this offer, God is serious or sincerely willing for all men to be saved on condition of faith in the all-sufficient death of Christ.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The following Calvinists cogently argue *against* this novel perspective: Edward Polhill, "The Divine Will Considered in its Eternal Decrees," in *The Works of Edward Polhill* (Morgan, PA.: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1998), 164; John Davenant, *A Dissertation on the Death of Christ* (London, 1832), 401-404; Norman F. Douty, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* (Wipf and Stock, 1998), 40-41.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Hodge (concurring with Synod of Dort) makes this very point in his *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 1993), 2:557. The Puritan Stephen Charnock also powerfully argues the point in "The Acceptableness of Christ's Death," in *The Works of Stephen Charnock* (Banner of Truth, 1985), 4:563-564.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Pink addressed this topic in *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 15, no. 5 (May 1936).  
<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/articles/dutyfth.htm>; accessed 4 November 2008.

<sup>12</sup> These components of the free offer can be found in John Murray's treatment of the topic in *The Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vol. ed. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976-82), 4:113-132.  
<http://www.wscal.edu/clark/freeoffer.php>; accessed 4 November 2008.

**FOUR VIEWS OF THE WILL OF GOD AND THE CROSS**

<i>*Shading and Bold shows agreement</i>	<b>Arminianism</b>	<b>Classic/Moderate Calvinism</b>	<b>High Calvinism</b>	<b>Hyper-Calvinism</b>
<b>1. God's Love</b>	God <i>equally</i> loves all men.	God loves all men, but <i>especially</i> the elect.	God loves all men, but <i>especially</i> the elect.	Classic hyper-Calvinists say that God <i>only</i> loves the non-elect <i>merely</i> to physically preserve them. ----- Some modern hyper-Calvinists deny that God loves the non-elect in <i>any sense</i> .
<b>2. God's Will</b>	God <i>equally</i> wills all men to be saved.	God wills all men to be saved, but <i>especially</i> the elect.	God wills all men to be saved, but <i>especially</i> the elect.	God <i>only</i> wills the elect to be saved.
<b>3. God's Grace</b>	God gives all men prevenient grace.	God gives <i>common</i> grace to all, but only <i>effectual</i> grace to the elect.	God gives <i>common</i> grace to all, but only <i>effectual</i> grace to the elect.	Classic hyper-Calvinists say that God is gracious to the non-elect <i>merely</i> to physically preserve them. ----- Some Modern hyper-Calvinists say that God is <i>only</i> gracious to the elect.
<b>4. Gospel Offers</b>	The Gospel should be indiscriminately <i>offered</i> to all.	The Gospel should be indiscriminately <i>offered</i> to all.	The Gospel should be indiscriminately <i>offered</i> to all.	All say the gospel is not <i>offered</i> ( <i>i.e.</i> a tender or overture), however some ( <i>e.g.</i> PRC) redefine the word "offer" to mean a bare presentation.
<b>5. Christ's Death, or the Extent of Expiation and Redemption</b>	<b>Christ suffers for the sins of all mankind</b> with an <i>equal</i> intent to save all men (see #2).  <b>Unlimited Expiation and Redemption, and a Limited Application.</b>	<b>Christ suffers for sins of all mankind</b> , but with an <i>unequal</i> intent/will to save all men (see #2).  <b>Some say Unlimited Expiation and Redemption, and a Designed Limitation in the Effectual Application.</b> ----- <b>*Others believe in an Unlimited Expiation with Limited Redemption (<i>i.e.</i> a Designed Limitation in the Effectual Application).</b>	Christ <i>only</i> suffers for the sins of the elect because of his singular intent.  Expiation <i>and</i> Redemption Limited by Design, <i>and</i> a Designed Limitation in the Effectual Application.	Christ <i>only</i> suffers for the sins of the elect because of his singular intent.  Expiation <i>and</i> Redemption Limited by Design, <i>and</i> a Designed Limitation in the Effectual Application.

<b>6. Sufficiency</b>	<b>Christ's death is <i>extrinsically</i> and <i>intrinsically</i> sufficient for all.</b>	<b>Christ's death is <i>extrinsically</i> and <i>intrinsically</i> sufficient for all.</b>	Christ's death is <i>extrinsically</i> sufficient for the elect, but only <i>intrinsically</i> sufficient ( <i>i.e.</i> of infinite value) for the rest.	Christ's death is <i>extrinsically</i> sufficient for the elect, but only <i>intrinsically</i> sufficient ( <i>i.e.</i> of infinite value) for the rest.
<b>7. Human Ability</b>	All men have the <i>moral</i> ability to believe (see #3).	All men have the <i>natural</i> ability to believe, but only the elect are given the <i>moral</i> ability to believe. Some reject this distinction.	All men have the <i>natural</i> ability to believe, but only the elect are given the <i>moral</i> ability to believe. Some reject this distinction.	Only the elect have any ability to believe.
<b>8. Responsibility</b>	All men are responsible to <i>evangelically</i> believe ( <i>i.e.</i> "duty-faith").	All men are responsible to <i>evangelically</i> believe ( <i>i.e.</i> "duty-faith").	All men are responsible to <i>evangelically</i> believe ( <i>i.e.</i> "duty-faith").	Classic hyper-Calvinists deny that all are responsible to <i>evangelically</i> believe ( <i>i.e.</i> "duty-faith" is denied). ----- Modern hyper-Calvinists affirm "duty-faith."

### NOTABLE REPRESENTATIVES

<b>Arminianism</b>	<b>Classic/Moderate Calvinism</b>	<b>High Calvinism</b>	<b>Hyper-Calvinism</b>
Arminius, Episcopius, J. Goodwin, H. Grotius, J. Horn, Whitby, J. Wesley, R. Watson, T. Grantham, A. Clarke, J. Taylor, T. Summers, W. B. Pope, J. Miley, H. O. Wiley, Dale Moody, I. H. Marshall, H. Hammond, J. Griffith, S. Loveday, G. Cockerill, S. Ashby, M. Pinson, J. M. Hicks, P. Marston, R. Forster, J. Dongell, S. Harper, S. Hauerwas, W. Willimon, J. Walls, S. Grenz, J. Cottrell, L. F. Forlines, Robert Picirilli, J. Walls, R. Shank, R. Dunning, S. Witski, J. Kenneth Grider, R. Olson, G. Osborne	Calvin, Vermigli, Musculus, Oecolampadius, Zanchi, A. Marlorate, Bullinger, Zwingli, Ursinus, Kimedoncius, Paraeus, Rollock, Cranmer, Latimer, Coverdale, Ussher, Davenant, Culverwell, Ward, Hall, Crocius, Alsted, Martinius, Cameron, Amyraut, Daille, Preston, Bucanus, Baxter, Polhill, Harris, Saurin, Calamy, Marshall, Vines, Seaman, Scudder, Arrowsmith, T. Adams, Bunyan, Charnock, Howe, Bates, Swinnock, Edwards, Brainard, Ryle, Chalmers, Wardlaw, A. Strong, Douty, Clifford, Erickson, Demarest, Curt Daniel ----- *C. Hodge, *Dabney, *Shedd (see #5 above)	Beza, Perkins, Ames, Twisse, Rutherford, Owen, Turretin, Witsius, T. Goodwin, Sedgwick, Manton, Watson, Dickson, Durham, Ridgley, Coles, Boston, A. Booth, Andrew Fuller, Carey, Spurgeon, Dagg, Kuyper, Warfield, Cunningham, Girardeau, Bavink, A. A. Hodge, Berkhof, Boettner, John Murray, Stebbins, Bahnsen, Iain Murray, Hulse, J. I. Packer, Roger Nicole, Helm, R. C. Sproul, Doug Wilson, Horton, David Steele, Curtis Thomas, R. K. M. Wright, Grudem, S. Johnson, Storms, G. Long, MacArthur, P. Johnson, John Piper, Mark Dever, Tom Ascol	R. Davis, Hussey, Skepp, Gill, Brine, Gadsby, Huntington, J. C. Philpot, W. J. Styles, William Rushton, Pink (early writings), Herman Hoeksema, Herman Hanko, Gordon Clark, John Gerstner (later writings), David Engelsma, John Robbins, Vincent Cheung, George Ella, Robert Reymond

This chart was created by Tony Byrne.

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