

This question is germane to both Arminians and Calvinists, since both believe in the election of individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world. Arminians believe that election is conditioned on foreseen repentance and faith: those who are foreknown to meet this condition are elect; those who are foreknown not to meet it are non-elect. Thus there are only two classes of human beings; and, since God is omniscient, the number of individual human beings in each class, being precisely foreknown, is fixed from the foundation of the world. Calvinists believe that election is unconditioned by anything in man or done by man, and grounded wholly in God's sovereign love and grace: those who are chosen are elect; those who are passed by are non-elect. Again, the number in both classes is fixed and certain.

In addition, both orthodox Arminians and orthodox Calvinists believe that Christ was both God and man in His incarnate state of humiliation; and that in respect of His divine nature He knew all things, including the precise identity and number of the elect and the non-elect.

This being the case, it must be asked whether the Lord Jesus, when He hung on Calvary's cross, intended by His atonement to save all human beings, or to save the elect whom He had chosen before the foundation of the world.

From the Arminian standpoint on election, did our Lord intend His blood to save those whom He foreknew would never repent and believe (this would be either an exercise in futility or a contradiction, since their salvation is conditioned upon repentance and faith). Or did He intend His death to potentially save those whom He foreknew would repent and believe (thus making their action part of the work of salvation). Or did He intend His crowning act of atonement to actually save those whom He foreknew would repent and believe, and not to save those whom He foreknew would never repent and believe (in which case the Arminian would espouse a particular design of the atonement, and step over on Calvinistic ground, at least on this point!).

- (b) Another important question is whether the atonement actually accomplished salvation for the elect (while being sufficient for all), or made salvation possible for all but contingent (In its effect) upon a favorable response to the gospel.

On the one hand, if Christ lived a perfect life and expiated the guilt and penalty of the transgressed law on behalf of the elect, than those who by the exercise of saving faith have shown themselves to be among the elect are no longer liable to the requirements of the law, and can no longer be condemned by it. Correspondingly, if Christ did not fulfill the law and expiate the guilt and penalty of the transgressed law on behalf of the non-elect, then those who by unbelief have shown themselves to be among the non-elect continue to be liable to the requirements of the law and continue to be condemned by it.