



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Suffering Savior, John 6:37-40

"The Design of the Atonement: For Whom Did Christ Die? - II"      [TRANSCRIPT](#)

[Prayer] Father, we commit the hour to Thee with thanksgiving and praise for Jesus Christ who has loved us and has given himself for us. And we thank Thee for the privilege of the study of the Bible. We rejoice in the assurance that we have that it is a revelation from Thee and that it contains within its pages the truth that Thou would have us to know and to believe.

And we pray, again, as we study in this hour that we may be helped by the Holy Spirit to come to a deeper understanding of the topic that is before us. Guide and direct us and help us learn from the lessons of the past in order that we may be better prepared for the future. We commit each one present to Thee and we commit this ministry of Thy word to Thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight as a passage of Scripture to be read for our Scripture reading, I want to turn to John chapter sic, verse 37 through verse 40. And I want to freely confess right from the beginning that I'm not going to try to expound this passage tonight, for tonight is a lesson in history, which is very important for our topic and the understanding of the question of the design of the atonement. I would like to read this passage, because

it does bear directly upon our topic, and I would like you to be thinking about it through the weeks that are ahead. The Lord Jesus is speaking and he says, "Everything," I'm reading from the Greek text, by the way, and so if there are a few little changes here or there, it is for that reason.

"Everything which the Father gives me shall come to me; and the one who comes to me I will in no wise (or by no means) cast out. Because I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of the one that sent me. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that of everything which he hath given me I should not lose any of it, but raise it up at the last day. For this is the will my Father that every one who beholds the Son, and believes in him, has everlasting life (or should have everlasting life): and I will raise him up at the last day."

The thing I want you to notice particularly is, "everything which the Father gives me shall come to me." "Everything that the Father gives me shall come to me. This is the will of the one who sent that of everything which he hath given me, I should not lose any of it, but should raise it up at the last day." This is the second in our series of studies on "The Design of the Atonement." We are considering the question, Did Christ die for the purpose of saving all men indiscriminately or for the purpose of saving his elect seed personally and definitely. I would like for you to think about that, and if you have not written that down, I think it would be a good thing to write it down and ponder it. Did Christ die for the purpose of saving all men indiscriminately or for the purpose of saving his elect seed personally and definitely?

This question raises the question of the conflict between the Calvinists and the Arminians. Calvinists have taught a definite atonement that Christ died for the purpose of saving his elect seed personally and definitely. Arminians have taught a universal atonement. They have taught that Jesus Christ died for the purpose of saving all men indiscriminately. The question, we said last time, is a Soteriological question. That is, it has to do with the sphere of the doctrine of salvation. One must not assume that if we

should prove the Calvinists to have more truth on their side as a result of this series, that they are right in all things.

Now, I am not engaging in this series to prove the Arminians right. I am convinced that they are not right in almost all of their positions, but I'm not sure that I can prove, to the satisfaction of everyone, nor would I want to. I want to, and I am sure you do, too, we want to be able to say exactly what Scripture says on the question. But I do think this is important for us, that we should remember that even if I do, and you do as a result of this series, think that a proof has been offered for a definite atonement, that does not mean that other things that Calvinists teach are necessarily right. I do not think that almost all Calvinists are right in the areas of Ecclesiology. Many areas, of course, they are right in, but other areas they are not. I do not think they are all together right in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, in Pneumatology. And I do not think the great majority of them are right in the doctrine of Eschatology. We are not seeking, in the series, to demonstrate that the Calvinists are right in everything that they have taught. We're trying to look at this one question. Did Christ die for the purpose of saving all men indiscriminately or did he die for the purpose of saving his elect seed personally and definitely. That's the question.

In our last study, if I may review for just a moment, we stressed the importance of understanding the true issue between the parties to the dispute. And if we understand the true issue, then we won't be making wild charges about the opposite position. But we'll hue to the real issue at stake. I said the real issue does not relate to the sufficiency of the satisfaction the Jesus Christ has rendered for all men. By that I mean simply this, both Calvinists and Arminians acknowledge that Jesus Christ rendered in his death a satisfaction to the justice and holiness of God that is sufficient in merit for the salvation of all men. In fact, we could add a few more that will never come into existence. It would take care of them as well. For the atonement of our Lord Jesus has infinite merit. So, we're not

saying, if we are Calvinists, we are not saying that Jesus Christ's death is only sufficient for the elect. A Calvinist would say it is designed to save the elect. It is sufficient for all men.

Second, the issue does not relate to the applicability of the satisfaction to each man's need. Both sides to the dispute, the Arminians as well as the Calvinists, agree that the atonement is exactly adapted to the needs of men, whether they be elect or non-elect the atonement is adapted to their needs.

Third, it does not relate to the actual application of the satisfaction. That is, both of these groups agree that the true issue does not pertain to the application of redemption. The Arminians acknowledge that a certain number of people will be saved. The Calvinists acknowledge that a certain number of people will be saved. And both acknowledge that at the end of the period of salvation, these certain numbers of people, in the Arminians mind and in the Calvinists mind, are the identical people. The Calvinist says Christ died to save a certain number of people, certain people, they should be saved. The Arminians claim that he died for all men, but only certain ones will be saved. They are the same ones that the Calvinists said that Christ died for. In other words, universal redemption, after all its parade of its superior liberality, Christ died for all men instead of just some, fails to extend the benefits of redemption to one single soul beyond those embraced by a definite atonement. This, by the way, lets us know that this issue is not the greatest issue in Christian theology, although, it may be one of the most emotional issues. That's why I'm trying to keep from being emotional. The atonement conveys no advantage to the perishing, according to Arminian teaching.

Fourth, the true issue does not relate to the universal offer, in good faith, of salvation to all men. The Arminians insist since Christ died for all, salvation should be offered to all. The Calvinists say, Christ died for the elect, but salvation should be offered to all. There is no dispute over the universal offer of salvation. So, if you hear someone say he believes in a definite atonement and thus, he does not believe the gospel should be preached to everybody, you will know that that's a straw man that he has erected.

And five, it does not relate to the provision in Christ's death of benefits for all men. The Arminians say that Christ died for all men. The Calvinists say that there are benefits from the death of Christ that do go out to all men. So, it is true to say in one sense, Christ died for all men, but not in the sense that the atonement was designed to deliver them from their sins. So, the true issue does not relate to these things. The true issue does relate to the intention, the design of the Godhead in the saving work. Did he die to make the salvation of all men possible and nothing more? Or did he die to actually and certainly save his elect people, that is to save those he does save? Did he die to save those he does save? Or did he die to save those that he does not save? Do you get the point?

Now, it will help us to set the issue in proper perspective, if we look at the history of the dispute, and that is what we want to do tonight. Now, I have, last time remember, we began with the state of the question. We took up the various positions. I hope you have those in your notes if you are taking notes. We looked at the Wesleyan position. We looked at the Lutheran position. We looked at the Reformed position. Now, we did not consider the specifically Arminian position, although the Wesleyan position is Arminian. We are going to look at that tonight. We stated the real issue exactly, just as I have been talking about; what it does not relate to and what it does relate to. So, tonight we want to take a look at Roman II in our outline, the History of the Question, and capital A, the Arminian challenge.

Philip Schaff is one of the great church historians. He has written an eight volume history of the Christian church. It is not complete, because the modern is not really covered by Professor Sharp's work. But in the course of his discussion of the Reform church, and particularly the Reformers as they pertain to the Presbyterian side of the Reformation, wrote, "The Arminian controversy is the most important which took place within the Reform Church." So, we are not talking about something that has not been important in the history of the Christian church. And I hope, even if we do not learn a

whole lot about the Bible tonight, we'll learn some things about the history of the Christian church that will help us as we study this issue in the Bible in the weeks that follow.

The Arminian challenge, the roots of Arminianism go back almost three hundred and seventy-five years to the Reform Church in Holland. It was there that the controversy began. And it may surprise you to realize that the controversy began in the Calvinistic churches of Holland. We have to go back there to understand the issue that faces us today, and so we are going back there and take a look at it. Historically it appeared as a reaction to Calvinism, and the Arminians affirmed conditional predestination. They affirmed general redemption. They had been teaching, in the Calvinist church in Holland, absolute predestination, or unconditional predestination, unconditional election I would call it. The Arminians taught conditional election.

The Calvinists had taught that election was based upon the divine purpose, the divine foreordination. The Arminians began to teach, or that which became Arminianism as we shall see, they began to teach that the decree of God was conditional. That is, it was based upon what God saw that men would do, conditional predestination. The Arminians taught general redemption instead of particular redemption. Now, we've been talking about that, we don't have to speak any more about it. Conditionality is excluded in Calvinistic doctrine. Arminianism, on the other hand, rests upon conditionality. Arminianism has taught that predestination is based upon God's foresight of events and persons, and that these events and persons in their faith are not foreordained. Particularity is essential to Calvinism. Conditionality is essential to Arminianism.

Now, these two terms, I think are very important, particularity for Calvinists, conditionality for Arminians. Well, let's take a look now at what happened in Holland for this is where it all began, and it did not begin out on one of the dikes, it began in one of the churches. And the controversy relates to a man whose name was James Arminius. Now his real name was Jacob [Hermanson](#), H-E-R-M-A-N-S-O-N, Jacob Hermanson. He

was born in 1560. He was born before Calvin died, but he was a next generation Christian. Jacob Hermanson was born at [Oudewater](#) in South Holland. He was the twelfth student at the newly established University of Leiden in 1576, and institution with a great deal of tradition, a great deal of recognition in the scholarly world today. But he was the twelfth student of those who registered in that first year at the University of Leiden.

After he finished the University of Leiden he went to Geneva, and there he studied in the very place that Calvin had taught. He had been Calvinistic theology, and he went and studied under Calvin's successor who was a man by the name of Beza. Now, most of us have heard the name Beza. Beza was Calvin's successor at Geneva, an extremely important theologian, a man who has left his mark upon theology even to this present day. James Arminius studied under Beza, then he went on to Basle and did a little study there. And in 1588, when he was twenty-eight years of age, he came back to Amsterdam, and there he became one of the ministers in the churches in Amsterdam. Now, the ministers of the churches in Amsterdam formed kind of a presbytery of ministers. They did not have one minister for one church. In this respect, they were more biblical Calvinists than some of their followers.

He was one of the preachers of the city of Amsterdam, and generally speaking he preached in the most significant church in that city, as a rule. He was an outstanding preacher, a man also known for a grave, sober kind of Christianity. I don't know that anyone ever questioned James Arminius' Christianity. He was a very fine Christian man personally, so far as his personal conduct was concerned. And he was an effective preacher. He was also a very scholarly and intelligent man. However, it wasn't long before Arminius, or Hermanson became involved in controversies in the city of Amsterdam. This did not come do much from his writings, for he did not express himself very often in print. It arose out of his preaching, and as those who were in his congregation listened to him preach, it became very evident that there were certain ways

in which Arminius was not following the doctrinal standards of the church of which he was a member. In other words, he had doctrines that did not agree with the things that they were supposed to be teaching.

There is a story about Arminius, there is some question about the truthfulness of it, that there were movements within the church. There were this, there were some men in the Reform Church in Holland who were a little disturbed over the strict Calvinism of the Reform Church in Holland and had questions about the doctrine of predestination. It was the opinion of some of these men that the Bible did not teach a Supralapsarianism. We don't have time to discuss these terms in this class right now. Now, did the Bible teach a double predestination? And so, some of the men, a man by the name of Coornhert was one who was especially involved, some of them began to privately and somewhat publicly dispute some of the Calvinistic doctrines.

There is a story that someone came to Arminius, because he has studied under Beza who was a very strong Calvinist, and asked him if he would refute those who were attacking the doctrines of the church. According to this story, Arminius studied this particular issue, and finally decided that the truth lay with those who were attacking the doctrine of the church. And that's how he came to his views concerning predestination. That particular story is probably not true. Most of our scholars today, who have written on Arminius, believe that he had these doctrines before he ever came back to Amsterdam, but you will often see that story about him printed.

At any rate, he began to preach in the city of Amsterdam and he began to differ from the opinions of the other ministers. For example, when he came to Romans chapter 7, in verse 14, he began to teach something differently from that which the others had taught. Romans 7:14 is an interesting text, and I know you are familiar with it. I will read it for you. "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal (I am flesh), sold under sin." Arminius taught that that text did not refer to a Christian, but it referred to a non-Christian man who was under the law. And the text represented the enlightened man,

who was unsaved, who understood his position, who understood the condition in which he was in, and who struggled with his inability to keep the law.

Now, this was contrary to the Calvinistic teaching on this verse, which had been that when Paul had said that he was carnal, sold unto sin, that he was referring to himself as a Christian man. Now, you can see this issue becomes very important when you realize what lies back of this. On the surface, it doesn't seem to make a great deal of difference, but it does in this respect, because if this text refers to a man who is not a Christian, then it suggests that the non-Christian man can have a great deal of enlightenment about his own spiritual condition. Now, "We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." And it presupposes that the man who has not yet believed in Jesus Christ has a great deal of enlightenment. In other words, that he is not blinded after all.

Now, as you can see also, this effects the doctrine of Human Depravity, and consequently, ultimately it effects the doctrine of the atonement as well, because if man is not completely dead in sin. If the depravity of man is not total, then of course, the atonement is not as great an atonement as it is otherwise. And furthermore, it does not, in order for a man to come to Christ there is not demanded the degree of grace that total depravity would demand. In fact, if we posit that man has some ability in himself to analyze his own condition, and to see what it is, that's a short step from saying that he can, out of himself, respond in faith to the gospel message. So, this was a very shattering thing for those who held strong doctrines concerning the depravity of man. That was one of the things that he taught.

So, in this is implicit, something that led to Pelagianism or a salvation by works as well as Socinianism. Well, you know in Arminius' day people were not so affected by the kind of teaching that we are in the 20th century. That is, if you hear a man say anything about heresy, well don't say anything about it. Be nice, be sweet, and if you be sweet it will all pass by and nothing will really happen. But in those days, they were more

apostolic. They were like the church in Jerusalem, and when a question of doctrine came up; they didn't mind having a big dispute. Now, of course, you can carry that too far. It has been said that all you need, to have a Synod in Holland is two men who agree, because they are noted for their theological controversies. The Scots are also.

But Arminius had a man in his congregation who heard him preach, by the name of Plancius. As a matter of fact, he was the senior colleague, and when he heard Arminius preach, he detected some heresy. And so he began to let it be known that Arminius was preaching false doctrine. Well, that stirred up such a controversy that finally a number of meetings were held in the church in Holland, and finally Arminius agreed that he would adhere to the confessions of faith in his preaching. A victory was thought to have been won, but it wasn't. Arminius, I am afraid, was a kind of sneaky individual. Now, my Arminian friends dispute this, of course, very strongly, but I think the facts indicate otherwise. He was a man who never let you know publicly what he really believed privately. Have you ever known anybody like that? Have you ever known anybody that has some secret views that he does not like to tell others about? Well, Arminius was that kind, and furthermore his followers, later on manifested this kind of attitude as well.

He evidently did not believe the sixteenth article of the Belgic Confession, which was part of their confession, and he revealed that in his preaching. Well, the controversy simmered. He had agreed to adhere to the confessions of faith. In 1603, he was appointed Professor of Theology at the University of Leiden. Immediately, conflict broke out at the University of Leiden, because they had a man on the faculty, another colleague by the name of Franciscus Gomarus. Gomarus was one of the great staunch Calvinists of the 17th century. When you are picking our strict Calvinists you always go first to Gomarus. He was a strict Calvinist, and he happened to be on that same faculty with Arminius. Again, controversy broke out. Arminius didn't say anything in his lectures that really committed himself to any controversial position. He skirted all of the issues in his

lectures, but he invited some selected students to his home for private instruction, and in the private instruction he taught them the doubts that he had about the standard church confessions. And he was a persuasive man, and a capable man, and we must admit that almost all of the doctrines of the Bible are capable, we are able to debate them, we can draw cases against most of the doctrines of the word of God. And so, the controversy became more and more lively on the campus of the University of Leiden until finally it came to a head, and again Arminius agreed that he would adhere to the confessions in his public lectures.

Now, this was the condition that prevailed until Arminius died. He died in 1609, but in the mean time he had spawned a school of followers. Now, I would like to say just a word about this. I think that the principle here is a very important principle. We all have known individuals who don't really preach what they believe. Most of us have had experience of that. We also know politicians who do the same thing. They don't tell us what they really believe, when they campaign. They tell us what they think that we want to hear. Sometimes that's what they try to do all of their lives, but at other times they tell us what they think we want to hear, so that we will vote them in office, and then they can do what they please or enjoy the emoluments of the office. There are preachers just like this, as you know.

Now, I'm going to take up for preachers. There are preachers like this, but there are also church members like that, too. There are members of the congregation like that. They don't tell you what they really believe either. And, as a matter of fact, we have a pretty good crowd here tonight; I have a hunch there may be one of you like that in this congregation. I don't know who you are. If you want to let us know, you can raise your hand. [Laughter] You don't have to get too many people together to find someone like this, or someone who at the moment is like that. We have certain doctrines, perhaps, that we secretly believe, but we don't want to say anything about because we may be criticized for them. We might be unpopular for them, and so on.

Now, I'm not talking about the man who has honest doubts about certain scriptural doctrines. I think it is perfectly all right for a person to have some honest doubts. I honestly have some honest doubts about certain scriptural teaching. I think they're honest. I may have some dishonest doubts, too, but I do have some honest doubts. And so, I don't like to go around preaching my doubts. I have discovered in the past that a lot of my doubts leave me as soon as I have a chance to more completely study the word of God. My doubts that I have today, or my difficulties that I have today are not the same difficulties that I had ten years ago; that's all right, I think.

Most of us that are studying the Scriptures have questions, and I'm not speaking about that. I'm speaking about the man who's convinced of a certain thing, but unwilling to say anything about it. I think that's really dishonest. I think it's fair to say that a great number of the Arminians were oath breakers. I don't think they really held to those confessions that they said they held to. On the other hand, I also think, from the study of the Synod of Dordrecht, which we'll say a word about in a moment, there's no question that many of the Calvinists were mean men. There's no question that some of them acted in an unchristian way in this controversy. They had the upper hand, and some of them took advantage of it. So, I'm not suggesting that all the right was on the side of the Calvinists and all the wrong was on the side of the Arminians, not at all. And for Arminius himself, he was so far as I can tell, a sober, fine, Christian man outwardly.

Now, let's think about the Arminians, his followers. For you see, James Arminius died before the controversy reached its critical point. He died in 1609, amidst the controversy. There was a man by the name of Simon Episcopius. Episcopius became his successor at the University of Leiden, and he also became the leader of the Arminians. He was a very able man. He was a man who went into Arminianism deeper than James Arminius ever did. Remember, James Arminius died a member of the Calvinistic church as Professor of Theology at one of their institutions. So, he did not die as a Methodist. He did not die as an Arminian, Wesleyan. He died as a Calvinist by profession and by

position. But after his death, the Arminians gathered together, those followers of Arminius, and began to push even stronger their opinions in the Dutch Reform Church. In 1610, they met at Gouda, famous for its cheese. They met at Gouda, and they prepared what they called a Remonstrance, a public objection to Calvinistic doctrines. They rejected certain positions of the Calvinists, and they expressed their objection to them, and went on to state five propositions which were their views.

Now, these five views of the Remonstrants are the counterpart of the five points of Calvinism. The five points of the Arminians were, first, election and condemnation are conditioned by divine foreknowledge, and dependent upon the foreseen faith or unbelief in man. In other words, they did not believe in unconditional election. They believed that election and condemnation are conditioned by divine foreknowledge. They believed that God looked down through the years, seeing who would believe and who would not believe, determined on the basis of what he saw who should be saved, and who should be lost. So, that salvation is dependent upon the foreseen faith of individuals. Now, if you will think a moment about that, you will see immediately that salvation depends upon human response rather than divine foreordination. What really determines a person's election is not what God does, but what man does. God ratifies man's decision. It is not election by God, it is election by man. God sees what man will do, and chooses those who respond. Those who do not, he does not choose, but consigns to everlasting perdition.

All kinds of questions arise by this, of course. One question that arises immediately is, if it is true that God looked down through the years and saw who would believe, did he gain in knowledge by so-doing. Well, if he gained in knowledge by so-doing, if he learned by foreseeing, then he did not know that before he foresaw. And thus, he was not omniscient. So, God is changeable and not omniscient. Lots of questions arise out of that particular doctrine. But as you can see, it locates salvation in man, election particularly.

Now, the second thing the Arminians proclaimed was that Christ died for all men, and for every man. Now, that's the issue that we're talking about.

Third, they taught that man, fallen, fallen man was unable to think, will, or do anything really good unless regenerated by the Spirit. Now, stated as it is stated there, that's sound doctrine, which proves that Arminians can have some sound doctrine. Later on the later followers of Arminius abandoned this, but at this time in the five points of the Remonstrance, the statement is sound doctrine. And Arminius himself held essentially to this position.

Fourth, they said that God's grace is the beginning, the continuance, and the accomplishment of all good, but notice that they say that God's grace is the beginning, the continuance, the accomplishment of all good, but it is not irresistible. In other words, it is possible for man so to resist God that he does not accomplish his purposes. God's grace is the beginning, the continuance, and the accomplishment, but it's not irresistible. Now, I think if you will think about that for a moment, you will see that inherent in it is a contradiction. But we will pass it by, since that's not the topic we're talking about.

And fifth, the Remonstrants claimed it was not proven. They didn't really pass judgment on this question, but they said that it was not proven from the word that grace, once given, may not be lost through negligence on the part of the regenerated. What they were saying then is that it is not proven that a man is secure in his faith once he believes. They didn't say that it is unscriptural. They didn't say it was scriptural to believe in eternal security, they just said it's not proven that the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is a biblical doctrine.

Now, you know of course, in popular language among evangelicals, who very frequently have never done and never studied even as much as I am giving you tonight in this on lecture. You know that fifth point has become a kind of touch-stone for the term Calvinism. If a person believes in the eternal security of the believer, he's called a Calvinist. If he does not believe in eternal security, he is not a Calvinist, but as you can

see, the Arminians, their doctrine is much more than the denial of eternal security. As a matter of fact, they don't really deny that. They just say, "That's not proven." The question of what is Calvinism and what is Arminianism is based on other issues than that. As a matter of fact, we usually say people are Calvinists or mild Calvinists. But as you can see, the mild Calvinists were the Arminians. They're the mild Calvinists, the Arminians.

Well, let's talk about the Synod of Dordrecht now. This controversy so raged in Holland from the years of 1610 to 1618 that finally something had to be done. And in 1618, on November the 13th at Dordrecht a Synod was convened in which the issues that the Remonstrants had brought up were dealt with. Fifty-six ministers and ruling elders from the Dutch churches, five professors of theology, and twenty-six foreign theologians also attended. King James, the King James Bible had a special message for the Synod of Dordrecht. It was a very important Synod. In addition, there were eighteen political commissioners who were not members of the Synod, but nevertheless were invited and were there. The Remonstrants were answered. I wish we had time to talk about that Synod. It was a most interesting Synod, and also about the way they gathered themselves together, and how they sat through the cold, and what they did to keep warm, and the kinds of paper and ink that they used, and various other things, most interesting. It was an extremely important conference. It lasted from November on into the next year. I've forgotten the exact date, but two or three months later in the next year. So, it was a conference that lasted, a Synod that lasted six or seven months.

Well, the Remonstrants were called there, too. And there were debates and finally, they were much outnumbered, the Remonstrants, the Calvinists had the upper hand. That's probably why they were a little mean here and there. But finally, the Remonstrants were answered in the Canons of Dordrecht. These were the pronouncements of the Synod of Dordrecht, and they are stated positively to answer the Arminians five points. Now, other things were put forth in the canons, but the five points of the Remonstrants were answered in the five points of Calvinism. This is where the five

points of Calvinism originated historically. And so, the Calvinists, or the Synod of [Dordrecht](#) said the Bible taught unconditional election. Election dependant upon the sovereign will of God, not dependent upon the foreseen faith in men. "All that the Father giveth to me shall come to me. And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. This is the will of the Father, that of everything which he gives me, I should lose nothing of it, but shall raise it up at the last day."

Second, they taught definite atonement. Jesus Christ died for the elect; the same ones who were elected, so that there is a harmony between election and atonement. Third, they taught total depravity. That is, there is nothing in man by which he may respond to God. His will is affected by sin, and there must be a work of grace in order that men may respond to God, and that grace is infallible graced exercised toward the elect, which is certain to bring them to the knowledge of the Savior. They taught then, irresistible grace.

And then finally, they taught the perseverance of the saints. This is the order in which they are presented. Some enterprising theological student, a long time ago, rearranged them in order that they might be memorized, total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance of the saints. And taking the first letters of each of these statements, they spelled out TULIP, and anybody could remember one word, TULIP, and therefore the five points of Calvinism.

The aftermath of the Synod of [Dordrecht](#) that the Arminians had more on their mind than they had expressed, later, humanistic and practical, mystical, and Pelagian were more fully developed, and what became evident later was that the Arminians all along has certain secret beliefs that they did not express publicly, and as a result it became evident that Arminianism meant synergism in salvation. Synergism is a word that you ought to know about. That comes from a word that means "to work," and syn means "with" in Greek, so that synergism is a working together, a working with. Synergism in salvation is, God does his work, you do your work. And in the case of Arminianism, it came to be,

God does his work in saving us, our work is faith and our work is really our work. It is not the gift of God. Faith is not the gift of God, it is what we do. And thus, of course, salvation becomes the work of Christ, plus my work, a synergistic kind of salvation, a works salvation. They taught a synergism. They also had a different concept of man and God, because they felt that man did have the power within him to believe, of himself. And of course, they also felt that the God who was the God of the Bible was not a sovereign God who determined who would be saved, who would be lost, but a God who was dependent upon the decision of men. So that ultimately the kind of God is at stake in the distinctions between Arminianism and Calvinism.

Now, I am going to read a section, I've got just a minute or two, I'm going to read a section which comes from a Lutheran history of Christian thought. I don't think this man is really too biased. Lutherans don't like Arminianism too well, don't misunderstand me. But this section is very good on Jacob Arminius. I didn't mean to let you know that I wore glasses. [Laughter] I have been keeping that secret from you. [Laughter] I can read that if it's far enough away from me. [Laughter]

"In Jacob Arminius, the traits of the movement can be seen as a whole. In his first pastorate he won distinction as a preacher and pastor of an irenic spirit. The change of conviction regarding predestination, which drove him to a study of the Scriptures, developed into difference with the official church on other matters as well. More than once he was accused of defection from Reformed Orthodoxy.

"For instance, he had critically rejected the statement that the righteousness of Christ is imputed as righteousness. For, as he said, strictly speaking, righteousness which is imputed is not righteousness. Arminius admitted that the saying, 'The righteousness of Christ is imputed,' is found in Scripture, Romans 4:3, but it is unscriptural, he pointed out, to teach that it is imputed as righteousness. To illustrate by way of example, if someone owes a person one hundred dollars, and then repays the whole amount, the creditor may not truthfully say, I reckon this payment to you as righteousness. Yet, if the debtor pays

him only ten dollars, while the creditor remits the debtor the rest of his debts, then the creditor may rightfully say, 'I reckon these ten dollars as a full payment!' This would be an act of grace which the debtor had to acknowledge. Arminius then considered faith, not primarily as the instrument by which man accepts the grace of God, as the Reformers did, but rather as the first cause of justification."

Now, there's all the difference in the world between saying faith is the cause of our salvation and saying faith is the instrument by which we receive salvation. If it's a cause, it's meritorious. The faith which resides in man as a potential quality is what is imputed to the sinner as righteousness. It is the ten percent of the debt which man has to render to God, his faith. Thus, man is justified on account of faith. By the way, that expression is never found in the Bible, but as soon as the writers of the Bible finished writing the Bible, the church fathers began to speak about being justified on account of faith. It's amazing. This principle of grace is lost almost the moment the New Testament is finished. Justification in the eyes of Arminius is an analytic judgment. This view flatly contradicts what Melanchthon taught and said in the apology to the Augsburg Confession, for faith does not justify or save because it is a good work in itself, but only because it accepts the promised mercy.

Otto Ritschl's verdict that the apostate of Supralapsarianism, that's Arminius, was totally out of touch with the religious concern of the Reformation, his judgment, that he was, will stand. The Reformers teaching of justification by an alien righteousness had no place in his system. So, you can see that the issues at stake were very grave issues in this controversy. Well, we've studied a little church history tonight. I hope you have not been too bored, but it's important that we understand the background of this controversy. Next time, I want to trace what happened in England with John Wesley and his approach to the question of Arminianism, and then I hope we'll begin, also, our study of the scriptural evidence for and against these divergent view points. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of our study together tonight, and we do ask that Thou wilt enable us to read the Scriptures with more understanding as a result of an acquaintance with some of the issues that lie back of the statements of the word of God. We commit each one present to Thee. We pray that we may remain...

**[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]**