

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

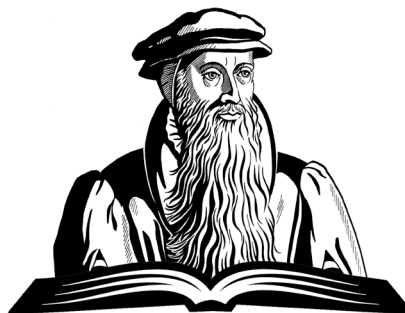
## Video Lecture Series

by Dr. Stephen Myers and Robert D. McCurley, ThM

# STUDY GUIDE

*Module 4:*  
**CHRISTOLOGY**

*Lecture 9:*  
**THE EXTENT OF  
THE ATONEMENT**



**The John Knox Institute**  
of Higher Education

## **John Knox Institute of Higher Education**

*Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide*

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Rev. Robert D. McCurley is minister of the Gospel at Greenville Presbyterian Church, in Taylors, South Carolina, a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), Presbytery of the United States of America.

[greenvillepresbyterian.com](http://greenvillepresbyterian.com)

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

by Dr. Stephen Myers and Robert D. McCurley, ThM

## STUDY GUIDE

### Module 4

## *Christology*

#### *Lectures by Dr. Stephen Myers:*

1. Introduction to Christology
2. The Divinity of Christ
3. The Humanity of Christ

#### *Lectures by Robert D. McCurley, ThM:*

4. The Hypostatic Union
5. The States of Christ
6. The Offices of Christ
7. The Necessity of the Atonement
8. The Nature of the Atonement
- 9. The Extent of the Atonement**
10. The Preeminence of Christ

# SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

by Robert D. McCurley, ThM

## STUDY GUIDE

### Module 4: CHRISTOLOGY

#### Lecture 9:

# The Extent of the Atonement

### ***Introduction***

God created the institution of marriage at the beginning of time, in the garden of Eden. But it was designed to point to something higher and greater, namely, the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church. This becomes clear throughout the Bible, in the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, the prophets, the Gospels, the epistles, and note, especially in Ephesians 5; and all the way to the end, in Revelation chapter 21. Christ seeks and secures a bride through his atoning sacrifice in the proclamation of that gospel. He weds himself to her in the covenant of grace. He chiefly has eyes for one only, a saving and eternal love for his redeemed people.

**Theme:** *The Extent of the Atonement—for whom did Christ die?*

### **I. Scriptural Basis**

*“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” (John 17:9)*

1. Christ’s High Priestly Prayer, in John 17.
  - a. He states clearly that he is not praying for the world.
  - b. He prays specifically for the chosen, redeemed people.
  - c. This builds on what Jesus taught in John chapter 6.
  - d. This reflects the design of Christ’s atonement.
2. Old Testament priests only prayed for God’s people.
3. Christ had a change in his location—from earth to heaven—but he still prays for his people.

***Questions:***

1. In the Old Testament, how do we see that the high priests only prayed for a certain group of people rather than for the whole world?

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2. How does the whole 17th chapter of John show us that there is a certain group of people for whom Christ prayed? Did he pray for other people groups?

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3. What about Christ's intercessory prayers in heaven? Does he pray for the same ones as he prayed for in John 17? How do we know this?

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**II. Doctrinal Overview**

As summarized in *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 8, paragraph 5:

*"The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him."*

1. Defining the terms:

a. Limited Atonement—unlimited in power, but limited in scope.

1) Also called Definite Atonement, or Particular Redemption.

a. We need to distinguish what is being asserted in Limited Atonement.

b. The gospel is to be proclaimed to every last person in the world.

c. Salvation is offered indiscriminately to all who hear the gospel.

- d. Christ's work of atonement is of infinite sufficiency.
- 2. The Extent of the Atonement is rooted in the Nature of the Atonement.
  - a. Christ must die for the sin of unbelief.
  - b. The gift of faith must be purchased and secured.
  - c. Christ's love for his bride is different than how he thinks of the rest of the world.
  - d. There cannot be a double payment in atoning for sin.
    - 1) Christ does not pay for the sins of all men, and then some sinners, unbelievers, pay for that same sin again in hell.
  - e. Christ was a real substitute for a real people, not a hypothetical possibility of salvation.
- 3. Particularism—atonement for a particular people.
  - a. Old and New Testaments are consistent about a particular people.
  - b. Deuteronomy 7:6–8, “Thou art an holy people unto the LORD.”
  - c. Matthew 1:21, “He shall save his people from their sins.”
- 4. This doctrine fits in the broader context of man's total depravity, spiritual inability, and God's election.
- 5. The argument of John Owen.
  - a. The Father imposed his wrath, and the Son underwent punishment for either:
    - 1) all the sins of all men;
    - 2) all the sins of some men;
    - 3) some of the sins of all men.
  - b. Summary: Christ died for all the sins of some men—all the sins of God's elect people, including their sins of unbelief. He thereby secured a complete and comprehensive salvation for his own people.

### ***Questions***

1. What is the definition of the term, “Limited Atonement”? Is it limited in power? What other two terms are used to express this doctrine?

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2. In discussing the Extent of the Atonement, how is it limited, and how is it unlimited? Is the sufficiency of Christ's work in question?

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3. What is stated in this doctrine? Who limits the atonement of Christ? What does it mean when we say that there cannot be a double payment?

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4. How is the Necessity of the Atonement related to the Extent of the Atonement? How is the Extent of the Atonement related to the Nature of the Atonement? Why is this important?

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5. What is meant by the term, "particularism" and how do we see it played out throughout the Old and New Testaments?

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6. The Extent of the Atonement fits, in the broader sense, with what three other doctrines? How do you know that?

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7. Please explain John Owen's argument about the Extent of Atonement. What do you learn from this?

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**III. Polemical Exposition**

1. Arminianism teaches that Christ died for the sins of all men.
2. It also asserts that Christ died for the potential possibility of salvation of all men, if sinners respond with faith, and believe the gospel.
  - c. The implications of this error—no one would be saved.

**Questions:**

1. What is the error of Arminianism in regard to the Extent of the Atonement?

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2. Can Christ's atoning sacrifice really be only a possibility of salvation for all men? Why?

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3. What are the implications of this error of only a possibility of salvation? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How would you answer these Arminian errors according to biblical truth?

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#### **IV. Practical Exposition**

1. These doctrines about the Extent of the Atonement are a great aid to the assurance of God's love for the believer.
2. The good news of salvation is all of grace.
3. We are led to magnify and bless his glorious name for the abundant riches of grace found in the gospel.

#### **Questions:**

1. Why do we say that this doctrine about the Extent of the Atonement is a great aid to the assurance of God's love?

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2. How does this doctrine lead us to praise God for who he is and what he does?

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#### **V. Self-Reflection**

Read all of John chapter 17, and meditate on the verses. Do you realize that all the things the Lord Jesus Christ prays for in his High Priestly Prayer will certainly be granted by our heavenly Father? What an encouragement for believers! Make an itemized list of all the things the Lord Jesus prays for in John 17. Notice how the truth of the gospel serves to bring people into

fellowship with God, and then they experience the love shared in the Trinity. Try to pray through the things in this prayer during your devotion.

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