

AMAZING GRACE:

The Doctrines of Grace | Pt. 2

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us...Worship is pure or base as the worshiper entertains high or low thoughts of God."¹

- A.W. Tozer

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE

1. God's grace in election (Unconditional election)
2. Radical corruption (Total depravity)
3. Accomplishing grace (Irresistible grace)
4. Complete atonement (Limited atonement)
5. Enduring Preservation (Perseverance of the saints)

GOD'S GRACE IN ELECTION (THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION)

Arminian: God elects individuals based on His foreknowledge of their future faith.

Calvinist: God elects individuals according to His sovereign will, not based on foreseen faith.

- **Eph. 1:3-6** - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
- **Rom. 8:29-30** - For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

¹ A.W. Tozer, "The Knowledge of The Holy."

RADICAL CORRUPTION (TOTAL DEPRAVITY)

Arminian: Humans are fallen but enabled by prevenient grace to respond to God.

Calvinist: Humans are spiritually dead and unable to come to God apart from regenerating grace.

What is sin?

- *“Sin is rebellion against the God who created us, failing to conform to his righteous standards in who we are and what we do.”² - Sovereign Grace Catechism*
- *“Evil is the very heart and root of man. It is at the very foundation, at the deepest level of human life. This evil does not corrupt merely one or two or certain particular avenues of the life of man but is pervasive in that it spreads into all aspects of the life of man. It darkens his mind, corrupts his feelings, warps his will, moves his affections in wrong directions, blinds his conscience, burdens his subconscious, afflicts his body.”³ - Roger Nicole*
- **Rom. 14:23** - ...For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.
- *“Outward conformity to the revealed will of God is not righteousness in relation to God. It is not done out of reliance on him or for his glory...If all men are in total rebellion, everything they do is the product of rebellion and cannot be an honor to God, but only part of their sinful rebellion.”⁴ - John Piper*
- **Rom. 3:10-12** - as it is written: None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one...
- **Eph. 2:1-3** - And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience-- 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the flesh and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

How does sin affect our relationship to God?

- 1) We are condemned before the Judge both for Adam’s sin imputed to us and also for our own personal sin. (Rom. 1, 2, 5)
- 2) We are defiled by the sin at the core of our nature. (Mark 7:21).
- 3) We are unable to obey God.

² Sovereign Grace Catechism, “Man’s Sins and Its Effects.”

³ Roger Nicole, “Our Sovereign Saviour.”

⁴ John Piper, “Five Points.”

- a) **Rom. 8:7-8** - For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.
- b) **1 Cor. 2:14** - The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

“Dead, not sick, not limping, not partially able to choose righteousness. Dead. Not in need of a hospital, in need of a resurrection. Salvation begins where self-help ends.”⁵ - **Scott Keith**

ACCOMPLISHING GRACE (IRRESISTIBLE GRACE)

Arminian: God's grace can be resisted by human free will.

Calvinist: God's saving grace effectively brings the elect to faith.

5th Century - Augustine vs. Pelagius.

- Pelagius denied inherited sin, viewing Adam's fall as a bad example but not an inherited corruption. Augustine taught that humanity inherited a corrupted nature from Adam.
- **Rom 5:19** - For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
- Pelagius believed humans possess the inherent ability to choose good and avoid sin entirely. Augustine argued that while the will exists, it is crippled by sin and cannot choose God without grace.
- *“The state of original sin leaves us in the wretched condition of being unable to refrain from sinning. We still are able to choose what we desire, but our desires remain chained by our evil impulses. He argued that the freedom that remains in the will always leads to sin. Thus in the flesh we are free only to sin, a hollow freedom indeed. It is freedom without liberty, a real moral bondage. True liberty can only come from without, from the work of God on the soul. Therefore we are not only partly dependent upon grace for our conversion but totally dependent upon grace.”*⁶ - **R.C. Sproul**

16th Century - Luther vs. Erasmus

- Erasmus wrote “On the Freedom of the Will” - there must be some good left in man, some potential for righteousness.

⁵ Scott Keith, “An Introduction to the Bondage of the Will.”

⁶ R.C. Sproul, “Augustine and Pelagius.”

- Martin Luther wrote “On the Bondage of The Will” - the will is not neutral, it is as a beast of burden riding between two masters: *God or Satan*.⁷ The will freely walks toward the desires within the domain of the power which possesses it.
 - **Rom 6:22** - But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God...

External, General Call vs. Internal, Effective Call

- The gospel is preached (general call) and then some believe (effective call). The ones who respond are the ones God chose in eternity past.
- “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” - **John 6:37**
- External call can be rejected.
 - **Acts 7:51** - "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you."
- Internal call effectively brings people to salvation.
 - **John 6:65** - And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father:"
- *“When Calvinists refer to irresistible grace, they mean to say that the Holy Spirit is able, when he so chooses, to overcome all human resistance and so cause his gracious work to be utterly effective and ultimately irresistible. In soteriology, the doctrine of irresistible grace refers to the Spirit’s work to overcome all sin-induced resistance and rebellion, opening blind eyes and enlivening hardened hearts so that sinners understand and embrace the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ”⁸ - **Bruce Ware***

COMPLETE ATONEMENT (LIMITED/DEFINITE ATONEMENT)

Arminian: Christ died for all people, making salvation possible for everyone.

Calvinist: Christ died specifically to secure the salvation of the elect.

How should we understand seemingly universal words?

- **World**
 - **John 1:29** - The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

⁷ Martin Luther, “On The Bondage of The Will.”

⁸ Bruce Ware, “The Place of Effectual Calling and Grace in a Calvinist Soteriology.”

- World can refer to Christ's work as encompassing all people without distinction (John 4:42).
- **1 John 2:2** - He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
 - Who is the "whole world"?
 - **John 11:51-52** ...Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. - this parallel passage gives insight into the meaning of "whole world."
- **All**
 - Can refer to "everyone without exception." But it can also mean "all sorts of"
 - **2 Cor. 5:14-15** - For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; 15 and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.
 - "All" is not all persons without exception. This is a description of Christians.
 - Atonement for many ("all the elect")
 - **Mark 10:45** - For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Redemption points to mission accomplished

- *"Because we as sinners are in bondage to sin and to Satan, we need someone to provide redemption and thereby 'redeem' us out of that bondage...a price was paid (the death of Christ) and the result was that we were 'redeemed' from bondage."*⁹ - **Wayne Grudem**
- **Col. 1:13-14** - He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 - He is the one who would pay the price to redeem his people out of bondage. What type of redemption is it when some of those who are redeemed by Jesus are still in bondage to sin and Satan and are far away from Christ?
 - "What does redemption mean? It does not mean redeemability, that we are placed in a redeemable position. It means that Christ purchased and procured redemption."¹⁰ - **John Murray**

⁹ Wayne Grudem, "Bible Doctrine."

¹⁰ John Murray, "Redemption Accomplished and Applied."

The NT, however, knows nothing of possible salvation flowing from Christ's death. Jesus did not make salvation possible for everyone; he actually saves.

The extent of the atonement

- *"God imposed his wrath due unto, and Christ underwent the pains of hell, either all the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men, or some sins of all men...If the first [the Arminian position], why, then, are not all freed from the punishment of all their sins? You will say, 'Because of their unbelief; they will not believe.' But this unbelief, is it a sin, or not? If not, why should they be punished for it? If it be, then Christ underwent the punishment due to it, or not. If so, then why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which he died from partaking of the fruit of his death? If he did not, then he did not die for all their sins."*¹¹ - **John Owen**
- *"If Jesus died for the sins of everyone, then everyone must go to heaven. Yet, this is unbiblical universalism. If they maintain that he died for all sins but unbelief, then he did not atone for that sin and the sinner must do something to merit his/her salvation. This seems to be both works righteousness and a slighting of the fulness of Christ's atonement."*¹² - **Shawn Wright**
- The atonement is sufficient for all but effective for the elect.

ENDURING PRESERVATION (PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS)

Arminian: True believers may fall away and lose their salvation.

Calvinist: True believers will persevere because God preserves them to the end.

- *"The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have truly been born again."*¹³ - **Wayne Grudem**
 - **John 10:27-29** - My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.
- One way in which we know that we have come to genuine faith in Christ is if we continue in faith until the end of our lives. Those who do not continue in the faith show that there was no genuine faith in their hearts in the first place (1 John 2:19).
- *"The word perseverance might be somewhat confusing because it could seem to communicate that God has started something, and now it is your turn: you must persevere. The biblical teaching, however, is that God*

¹¹ John Owen, "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ."

¹² Shawn Wright, "40 Questions on Calvinism."

¹³ Wayne Grudem, "Bible Doctrine."

*has done something; God is doing something; and God will do something. The God who starts is the God who finishes.*¹⁴ - **Danny Myers**

- **Phil. 1:6** - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
- *“Persevering in faith does not mean that the saints do not go through seasons of doubt and spiritual darkness and measures of unbelief in the promises and the goodness of God. ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’ (Mark 9:24) is not a contradictory prayer.”*¹⁵ - **John Piper**
- *“It is not our love that causes God to be 100% for us. It is God being 100% for us through faith in Christ that enables us to love. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. And we have received the Spirit by our first act of faith (Gal. 3:2).”*¹⁶ - **John Piper**

CONCLUSION

*“If I am ignorant of what, how far, and how much I can, and may do in relation to God, it will be equally uncertain and unknown to me, what, how far, and how much God can and may do in me, although it is God who works everything in everyone. But when the works and power of God are unknown, I do not know God, himself, and when God is unknown, I cannot worship, praise, thank, and serve God, since I do not know how much I ought to attribute to myself and how much to God. That therefore behooves us to be very certain about the distinction between God’s power and our own, God’s work and our own, if we want to live a godly life.”*¹⁷ - **Martin Luther**

¹⁴ Danny Myers, “What is the Perseverance of the Saints?”

¹⁵ John Piper, “Five Points.”

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Martin Luther, “On The Bondage of The Will.”