

# Arbor Foundations

## 12 – The Doctrines of Grace

### Key Ideas / Biblical Basis

#### What are the Doctrines of Grace?

- **Simple Definition:** An explanation of the doctrine of salvation as set forth in Scripture.

#### How did the Doctrines of Grace come to be articulated and set forth in Church History?

- Biblical doctrines declared by Paul and asserted in different ways in early church history to counter wrong views of salvation (Augustine & Pelagius)
  - (Augustine & Pelagius) Pelagius denied that human nature had been corrupted by sin – man can choose God; God sees good in man and shows favor to them. (Denial of doctrine of original sin)
- Jacobus (James) Arminius (Dutch Reformed Church)
  - In 1593 Arminius preached on Romans 9 – Sermon on predestination that didn't fall in line with the reformed view of predestination
    - Arminius insisted that he was only trying to protect the Church from the extremes of Calvinism, especially *supralapsarianism* (other view *infralapsarianism*)
    - Declaration of Sentiments 1608 (Arminius) Summary
    - Calvinists – Contra-Remonstrance in 1611 > Synod of Dort in 1618
- **Synod of Dort 1618**

Summary of Arminius' "Declaration of Sentiments" - 5 Articles	The Canons of Dort (Calvanists) Response to Arminius' 5 Articles	
Man is so depraved that divine grace is necessary unto faith or any good deed. <i>Man is spiritually sick.</i>	1 Man is so utterly lost in sin that without the regenerating grace of God, man cannot desire salvation, repent, believe or do anything truly pleasing to God. <i>Man is spiritually dead.</i>	T
God's divine grace may be resisted.	2 God's grace saves the sinner irresistibly since only irresistible grace can overcome man's rebellion.	I
God elects or reprobates on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief. <i>Conditional "election"</i>	3 God freely and sovereignly determined to save some lost sinners through the righteousness of Christ and to give to His elect the gift of faith. <i>Unconditional election.</i>	U
Christ died for all men and for every man, although only believers are saved.	4 God sent His Son to die as the substitute for His elect and Christ's death will certainly result in the salvation of His own.	L
Whether all who are truly regenerate will certainly persevere in the faith is a point which needs further investigation.	5 God in mercy preserves the gift of faith in His elect to ensure that the good work He began in them will certainly come to completion in their salvation.	P

### Biblical Support & Significance of the Doctrines of Grace

**T - Total (Radical) Depravity** – Because of the Fall, mankind is completely touched/affected by sin in all that he is (in nature he is completely fallen), but is not as bad as he could be.

- The unbeliever is deceitful and wicked ([Jer. 17:9](#)), full of evil ([Mark 7:21-23](#)), loves darkness rather than light and does evil ([John 3:19](#)), does not seek for God nor does any good ([Rom. 3:10-12](#)), is ungodly ([Rom. 5:6](#)), dead in his sins ([Eph. 2:1](#)), by nature a child of wrath ([Eph. 2:3](#)), cannot accept or understand spiritual things ([1 Cor. 2:14](#)), and a slave of sin ([Rom. 6:16-20](#)).  
✓ *Westminster Confession and Baptist London Confession of Faith (IX, 3)*
- Significance: Mankind is spiritually dead, blind and deaf to the things of God and is therefore unable of himself to choose spiritual good and determine his own destiny.

**U - Unconditional (Sovereign) Election** - God's choice of certain individuals for salvation was not based on any foreseen response of obedience on their part, but was based solely in His good and sovereign will.

- Election is the sovereign act of God where, from before the foundation of the world, he chose those whom he would save ([Eph. 1:4](#)). This election to salvation is not conditioned upon any foreseen faith ([Rom. 9:16](#)) or good works of any individual ([Rom. 9:11](#); [2 Tim. 1:9](#)). The election is based completely on God's sovereign choice according to the kind intention of His will ([Eph. 1:11](#)). God chose the elect

because He decided to bestow His love upon them ([John 3:16](#); [Eph. 2:4](#)) based solely on his sovereign grace ([Gal. 1:15](#)) and for His glory ([Isaiah 43:7](#)).

✓ *Westminster Confession and Baptist London Confession of Faith (III, 5)*

- Significance: God's election is based on what is in God. He chose us because He decided to bestow His love and grace upon us, not because we are worthy, in and of ourselves, of being saved – but because He wanted to.

**L - Limited (Definite) Atonement** - Christ bore the sin only of the elect, not everyone who ever lived.

- Christ's blood was sufficient for all, but not all sin was imputed to Christ. Christ's blood is sufficient to cover all people. The sufficiency relates to His divine value which is different than our legal debt. Sin is a debt ([Matt. 6:12](#) with [Luke 11:4](#)) since it is breaking the Law of God ([1 John 3:4](#)). *Limited atonement* means there was a *limit* to whose sins were imputed to Christ in a legal sense, which is not a denial of the sufficiency of Christ's blood to cover all people since the key focus is the legal aspect of the sin debt. Believers' sin debts were transferred to Jesus ([1 Pet. 2:24](#)) and were canceled on the cross ([Col. 2:14](#)). If the debt is canceled, it does not exist and cannot be held against the debtor/sinner. Therefore, Christ only legally bore the sins of the elect even though His blood was sufficient to cover all.

✓ *Westminster Confession and Baptist London Confession of Faith (III, 6; VIII, 5)*

- Significance: Christ's death secured and fully accomplished the salvation of all of God's chosen people. It is DEFINITE – fully accomplished. ([Matt 1:21](#)) ([John.10:11-29](#)) ([Hebrews 10:14](#))

**I - Irresistible Grace** - Everyone God the Father has chosen and everyone God the Son has died for will be effectually and savingly called by the Holy Spirit, resulting in regeneration and faith in Jesus Christ.

- God moves the heart of the person where He wishes it to go ([Proverbs 21:1](#)). The choice and mercy of God depend on God's desire, not man's ability ([Romans 9:18](#)). Everyone the Father has chosen will experience God's saving grace ([John.6:37; 44; Romans 8:28-30](#))

✓ *Westminster Confession and Baptist London Confession of Faith (X, 1-2)*

- Significance: The Holy Spirit graciously regenerates every one of God's chosen people, creating within them a new heart and enabling them to freely and willingly believe in Christ as Savior and Lord. *The New Birth precedes and makes possible Saving Faith. Life gives Faith.*

**P - Perseverance of the Saints** - True believers are so secure in Christ, that they cannot fall away.

- Jesus will not lose any who had been given to him by the Father ([John 6:38-39](#)); He gave eternal life to them so they will never perish ([John 3:16; 10:27-28](#)), and those who leave the faith were not true believers to begin with ([1 John 2:19](#)).

✓ *Westminster Confession and Baptist London Confession of Faith (XII)*

- Significance: Everyone that the Father has elected, the Son has died for, and the Spirit has regenerated *will* persevere in the faith to the end and will not and cannot fall away.

## Other Ways to Articulate & Present the Doctrines of Grace

**PROOF: Finding Freedom through the Intoxicating Joy of Irresistible Grace** (Montgomery & Jones)

1. **Planned Grace** (Limited Atonement): God's eternal plan to save His people through the substitutionary death of Christ.
2. **Resurrecting Grace** (Total Depravity): Although we are dead in our sins, God's resurrecting power enters our lives and enables us to believe the Gospel.
3. **Outrageous Grace** (Unconditional Election): God chooses to save his people without any consideration of their merit, works or future faith.
4. **Overcoming Grace** (Irresistible Grace): God overcomes sinners' resistance by making them willing to believe and repent.
5. **Forever Grace** (Perseverance of the Saints): God will preserve His elect enabling them to persevere in Christ to the end of their lives.

**The Joy Project: A True Story of Inescapable Happiness** (Tony Reinke)

1. **The world's joy tragedy** (Total depravity): Not just badness, but blindness to beauty & deadness to joy.
2. **The joy project designed** (Unconditional election): How God planned, before we existed, to complete our joy in Christ.
3. **The joy project purchased** (Limited atonement): The assurance that indestructible joy in God is infallibly secured for us by the blood of Jesus.
4. **The joy project breaks and enters** (Irresistible grace): The sovereign commitment of God to make sure we hold on to superior delights instead of the false pleasures that will ultimately destroy us.
5. **The joy project unwraps and unfolds** (Perseverance of the saints): The almighty work of God to keep us, through all affliction and suffering, for an inheritance of pleasures at God's right hand forever.

**SIGNIFICANCE: How Should the Doctrines of Grace Motivate Us unto Godliness?**

- God-centered perspective of God's purposes for His people and His creation. (Romans 11:33-36)
- Confidence that all things are created by, through and for Christ our Savior. (Colossians 1:15-20)
- We are saved according to God's plan for His glory – which we will share (Romans 8:17), and we to strive for the “prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14)
- Therefore, believing the doctrines of grace should humble us and spur us onto good works.
  - We should be wary of judging others who have theological differences that are in the boundaries of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. (Charles Simeon / John Wesley example)
  - Our union with Christ causes & enables us to know God's love, obey His commands & produce fruit. (John 15:1-17)

**Resources for Further Study**

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*

Daniel Montgomery & Timothy Paul Jones, *PROOF: Finding Freedom through the Intoxicating Joy of Irresistible Grace* (Zondervan, 2014)

James Montgomery Boice & Philip Ryken, *The Doctrines of Grace: Rediscovering the Evangelical Gospel* (Crossway, 2002)

James W. White, *The Sovereign Grace of God: A Biblical Study of the Doctrines of Calvinism* (Great Christian Books, 2016)

R. C. Sproul, *Grace Unknown: The Heart of Reformed Theology* (Baker Books, 1997)

Jerry Bridges, *Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love* (NavPress, 2008)

J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (IVP Books, 2012)

Michael Horton, *For Calvinism* (Zondervan, 2011)

Kenneth J. Stewart, *Ten Myths about Calvinism* (InterVarsity Press, 2011)

“The Sovereignty of God and the Doctrines of Grace” Bethlehem Institute Online,

<https://courses.biblemesh.com/bethlehem/sovereignty-god-doctrines-grace>

John Piper, *Five Points Towards a Deeper Experience of God's Grace* (Christian Focus, 2007)

<https://document.desiringgod.org/five-points-en.pdf?ts=1446647340>

Tony Reinke, *The Joy Project: A True Story of Inescapable Happiness* (Desiring God, 2015)

Doctrines of Grace Scripture List: <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/gracelist.html>

T.U.L.I.P. Synod of Dort, <https://www.fivesolas.com/tulipscriptures.htm#total>

David Murray, “Three Ways to Present the Doctrines of Grace”,

<http://headhearhand.org/blog/2015/10/14/three-ways-to-present-the-doctrines-of-grace/>

A Brief History of the Doctrine of Grace,

[http://www.onthewing.org/user/Arm Doctrines%20of%20Grace%20-%20History.pdf](http://www.onthewing.org/user/Arm%20Doctrines%20of%20Grace%20-%20History.pdf)