

"...that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ" 1 Peter 4:11

“THOSE DOCTRINES EXTINGUISH EVANGELISM!”

This is a common charge hurled at **the Doctrines of Grace** from those who disagree with them and have formed their own opinion about them. People who make this allegation, though, have no real grasp of these truths; they haven't diligently sought to know them from the Scriptures, nor do they have any experiential knowledge of them. So, what they say concerning **the Doctrines of Grace** is like listening to someone talk about *coming back from a place they've never been!*—it amounts to nothing. In these deeper waters of God's Word, they prove themselves to be but *shallow-minded* thinkers.

The apostles were taught first-hand about the **Sovereign Grace** of God from the Master himself. If evangelistic zeal would truly suffer due to these teachings, we should see it in the lives of those twelve men—but *quite the opposite is true!* Their passion for a lost and dying world is recorded for all to see throughout the New Testament and history. They laid down their lives as a true and living sacrifice of suffering and joy in the service of making their Redeemer known!

(1) On the **Sovereignty of God in Salvation**, Jesus pulled no punches:

And he said unto them, *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.* —Mark 4:11,12

Jesus said, Blessed art thou, Simon...for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. —Matthew 16:17

Jesus said, I thank thee, O Father...because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight....no man knoweth the Son, and the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. —Matthew 11:25-27

...the Son quickeneth whom he will. —John 5:21

(2) On **Total Depravity**, Jesus equally sounded a clear note:

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light...I am the light of the world...No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. —John 3:19,20; 6:44; 9:5

(3) On **Unconditional Election**, Jesus confirmed it emphatically:

*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you...*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, *that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him...I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me...*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me...And this is the Father's will which the Father sent me, *that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.* —John 6:37,39; 15:16; 17:2,9

(4) On **Particular Redemption**, again Jesus was crystal clear:

This is my blood...which is shed for many....The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep...I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep...I lay down my life for the sheep. —Mark 14:24; John 10:11,14,15

(5) On **Effectual Calling**, Jesus couldn't have taught it any stronger:

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, *except it were given unto him* of my Father...The hour is coming, and now is, *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live...*And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: *them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.* —John 5:25; 6:44,65; 10:16

(6) On **Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints**, Jesus declared:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them...I give unto them eternal life; and *they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and *no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand....*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me *I will in no wise cast out....*And this is the Father's will...*that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day...*every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: *and I will raise him up at the last day.* —John 6:37-40; 10:27-29

This is conclusive evidence that the disciples were schooled well in what has come to be known as **the Doctrines of Grace!** The Lord did not feel that they were *too immature spiritually* to have strong meat; he strengthened and built them up in the faith by it! And take note: this same teaching *offended* “many of his disciples”—they *went back, and walked no more with him!* (see John 6:65, 66). These doctrines are highly offensive to the carnal mind! They've separated superficial followers from true disciples of Christ for centuries! But the question before us is: Do they stunt evangelism? *not in the original twelve!* And that's our case in point; this is a fact beyond dispute! If **your zeal** has fallen off, **don't blame the doctrines!** Confess your sin unto God and he will forgive you! He's able to renew your love for souls through a fresh view of his glory! See the apostle Paul! He was established in these doctrines deeper than all the other apostles. Look what it did to him! **“I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory!”** (2 Tim 2:10).□

“BUT GOD OWES EVERY MAN A CHANCE!”

God is unspeakably great; we cannot plumb the depths of his ways and wisdom. We should humbly recognize this. God doesn't have to explain everything to us; he doesn't have to explain *anything* to us. And man is *out-of-place* when he begins demanding answers of God, or gives advice and directions to God. This is the problem with this statement: **“But God owes every man a chance!”** These are not the words of a humble person with a sanctified mind and a submissive heart: one who has taken sides with God. No, this statement springs from the carnal reasonings of one who is still on the side of man: a spokesman for “man's rights.”

Those who would make this statement are the defenders of man, not the defenders of God. Yet it is not man who has been ill-treated, it is God. Man has been showered with blessings beyond measure; but God has endured man's insolence, insults, defiance, and unthankfulness from the beginning of time. God has been good to man; yet he has received evil. Thus, if there is a liability, it is *man's*: the perfect allegiance, devotion, and love for God that should have been given; this is *owed* to God. But instead, the natural mind speaks of some *supposed debt* that God has to man. God in debt! This is not only ludicrous; it's blasphemous! If God owed man a chance, then *he owed us the death of Christ!* In other words, God messed up so bad that he got himself in debt “head-over-heels” to the human race! That's a filthy slander upon the majesty of God and his infinite wisdom!

This statement springs from a deep hostility toward the doctrine of God's **sovereign election**: that he “will have mercy on whom he will” (Rom 9:15). Those who refuse to bow to this truth will side with man every time, charging God with an injustice: “That's not fair! God owes every man a chance!” They believe that God cannot be *sovereign* if man is *responsible*; they think it an impossibility for both of these things to be true. When Paul preached the **sovereign grace** of God, he met this same objection, and answered it! “Nay but, O man, who art thou that *repliest against God?*” (Rom 9:20; see vv10-24). To speak out against a truth so clearly voiced in the Word of God is to *repl against God himself!* When truth is too high for us to grasp, and out of our reach to reconcile, there is but one thing for us to do: humbly bow to God in reverent worship, and believe what he says.

We should rejoice in both of these truths: **the sovereignty of God** and **the responsibility of man**, and teach them earnestly. Both of them come from a glorious God who is immensely **greater** than we are; and he has set them forth on purpose to display his glory! Hear me now: We are *not* supposed to be able to reconcile these two doctrines! They have been given to us as **the dividing line** in God's marvellous plan of salvation, separating *the mind of man* from *the mind of God!* “that high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity” (Isaiah 57:15). God's purpose in giving us these two truths is that we might know that we are but men, creatures of the dust, and that he is infinitely glorious, transcendent in the heavens!—“as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). When Paul set these truths forth (see Rom 8-11), all he could do is exclaim in wonder!—“*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*” (11:33). The pinnacle where these truths meet in glory is simply *inaccessible* to man!

To deny that both of these doctrines are true is to deny the Word of God. Sovereignty and responsibility stand in the Scriptures as a testimony to the **inscrutability of God!** And when mortal men meet something like this that *cannot* be reconciled in their finite brains—they *dare not* throw it out! How can God be a **righteous judge** and yet punish men for not obeying the command to “*come*” to Jesus, when he himself declared that “*no man can come unto me*” except sovereign grace draw him? (Mat 11:28; John 6:44). That's an **unfathomable** paradox! “*Unsearchable!*” It's beyond man; but it's *not* beyond God! How can he justly punish “unbelievers” when *only those* whom he *has chosen* will believe?—“*As many* as were ordained to eternal life *believed*” (Acts 13:48). That's a mystery! a puzzle! but it's *God's puzzle*, and he's smart enough to put it together! “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”—Who is it that shall be saved?—“even *as many* as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:21,39). No more and no less!

Myriads throw out “sovereign grace” simply because they cannot see how it is *consistent* with man's accountability. They refuse to accept the “**mysteriousness**” of the gospel. They simply will not allow God to be **greater** than themselves! The “*deep things of God*” *cannot* be deeper than their reasoning powers! Thus they rationalize these truths away in their feeble attempts to *squeeze God* into a box *no bigger than a man!* This is a **dangerous presumption**, though, for men to make this mistake, and take upon themselves to **unriddle the deep mysteries of God** with their carnal reason; where the great apostle stands at the gaze, crying, “*O the depth, how unsearchable! Who knoweth the mind of the Lord!*”□

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