

Laying the Foundation

Each book of the Bible contributes poignantly and uniquely to the message of redemption revealed in God's Word. John's gospel offers much to the picture of redemption, but it provides special insight into the deity and supremacy of Jesus Christ. For this reason, it naturally follows that John would present the sovereignty of God in a profound, thorough manner. Therefore, this lesson will use the Beloved's record of the life and ministry of Jesus, the all-mighty Son of God, to explain and analyze the doctrines of grace, and he begins his lecture series with an introduction to John's gospel and its insight into these doctrines.

I. Introduction

a. The gospel of John has an enormous amount to say on the subject of biblical Calvinism and the doctrines of grace. Its lofty perspective on salvation makes it a perfect place from which to trace the five main headings of the doctrines of grace.

b. Three questions need addressing in this first lesson.

i. What is the unique focus of John's gospel?

ii. What two issues does the book primarily address?

iii. What are the doctrines of grace?

II. The Unique Focus of John's Gospel

a. Every book of the Bible contributes uniquely to the biblical corpus.

i. John, in marked contrast to the other Gospels, presents the deity and supremacy of Christ in a breathtaking manner.

ii. All of the Gospels address and elucidate both natures of the person of Christ (human and divine), but whereas the Synoptic Gospels emphasize Jesus' humanity, John focuses on his divinity.

b. The content of the book of John demonstrates a special attention to God's sovereignty as befits His deity.

i. The prologue of John presents His eternality and the fullness of His deity.

ii. The seven "I Am" statements reinforce His transcendence as God.

III. The Dual Focuses of John's Gospel

a. The book portrays the offer of the gospel as free and unbiased.

i. Numerous passages attest to this unequivocal call (e.g. John 4:14, 42, etc.).

ii. The invitation to repent and believe addresses all people,

wherever they might reside (John 3:16; 6:51, etc.).

iii. Jesus will not reject anyone who responds to the call, but He who came to seek and to save welcomes faith (John 6:37; 7:37)

b. The book presents salvation as under the sovereignty of God.

i. These two focuses do not contradict each other.

1. The Bible depicts these truths as compatible, and we must accept them as such, despite our inability to fully grasp their relation.

2. This occurs in Scripture often, and you don't just throw out one because of the other. You accept them as truth, recognizing the finitude of the human mind.

ii. John offers ample evidence for God's sovereignty in salvation.

1. God must instigate and create a new, spiritual birth, similar to His role in physical birth (John 3).

2. God controls the hearts of men and chooses whom to give to Christ. (John 6:37, etc.).

3. No man can institute this change in his heart, but God must quicken life in the heart before one may accept the call, join the flock of Christ, and follow His voice for all eternity (John 10; 11:26).

IV. The Doctrines of Grace

a. The doctrines of grace (the focus of this lecture series) set forth the glory of God's saving grace. They are titled as follows: 1. Radical Depravity 2. Sovereign Election 3. Definite Atonement 4. Irresistible Call 5. Persevering Grace.

b. The gospel of John teaches these doctrines clearly and irrefutably.

c. The doctrines stand and fall together, and their interwoven nature necessitates their complete acceptance or rejection.

d. The doctrines elevate God while humbling man.

i. Man remains dead in His trespasses until God pulls him from this state.

ii. This emphasis demonstrates the amazing grace demonstrated by our high, lofty God, a God who would reach across the chasm of sin to reconcile us to Himself. John's gospel, maybe more than any other, demonstrates for us God's mind-boggling, jaw-dropping grace

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Exodus 3:13–15; John 1:1–18; 3:1–21; 4:14, 42; 5:24; 6; 28–59; 7:37; 10; 11:26; 15:16; 20:30–31