

# Saved By Grace VI – The Wages of Sin; The Gift of Grace

**Introduction** – Just when you think you have your theology down, reality hits. And on the face of it, reality often hits pretty hard. It is for just this reason that we must make sure that we have our theology down. Otherwise, when trials come we will be doubters and, as James says, *“like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.”*

The doctrine of election is like that. It’s one thing to wrestle with the doctrine in the abstract. It is quite another to deal with the loss of a loved one whom you have no hope with regard to their salvation. How can election be glorious if I know and love someone who is not in the elect, or if I knew someone who died unrepentant?

**The Doctrine of the Reprobate** (John 12:37-40) – God decreed that these men would not believe in His Son. It was decreed during the glorious vision of God’s glory in Isaiah 6 and so it is a part of His glory. There are many scripture passages that clearly teach the doctrine of reprobation (Prov 16:4, Jude 4, Acts 13:41).

**“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem”** (Matt 23:27) – Jesus did weep over the unbelief of the Jews. At the same time, we must remember that God knew this would happen (Deut 31:29). Not only did God know – He decreed it to happen (1 Pet 2:8).

**The Chilling Truth** (Rom 9:22) – A man, of his own free will, chooses autonomy from God, and God gives it to him. But we find out that God had already given it to him from before the foundation of the world. Why does He not drag these ones to His throne? Because He doesn’t want to. In the end, these men get just what they want – justice. And God gets just what He wants – glory.

**Gifts and Wages** (Rom 6:23) – The Bible teaches that eternal life is a gift, and that eternal condemnation is a wage earned. They are not both gifts. Neither are they both wages. When we understand this (as Isaiah in the throne-room of God), we no longer ask why God left some in their sins. We ask instead why God saved anyone. We are left thoroughly humbled and amazed at the grace of God.

**What About God’s ‘Will’ toward ‘All’** – Many passages seem to contradict the idea that God predestined the condemnation of certain men, or that He desires it to happen.

**1 Tim 2:3-4** – *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

Must this mean that God desired each and every man to be saved? Not any more than that Paul was told that he would be ‘a witness to all men...’ (Acts 22:15), that is, to all kinds (Jew and Gentile) of men. Paul exhorts Timothy to pray for all men, and then describes all in verse 2 – *“for kings and all who are in authority...”* In these situations, ‘all’ either means ‘a great number’ or ‘all kinds of’.

**2 Pet 3:9** – *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some would count slackness, but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* – Peter had also said that those who were disobedient to the Word stumbled, *“...to which they also were appointed”* (1 Pet 2:8). How can it be both ways? Consider the words ‘any’ and ‘all’ again in light of their antecedent – *“...but is longsuffering towards us...”*, that is, the recipients of this letter (2 Pet 1:1), who along with Paul, have received the gift of faith.

**Ezek 33:11** – *“As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways!”* – God’s decreed will for an individual to be left remaining in his sins in no way charges God with some sort of morbid pleasure. A righteous judge, administering justice (paying wages), does not desire to see men hanged, and yet will sentence a murderer to death. In addition, we see an inspired version of a true gospel call for repentance.

**Election Does Not Mean a Small Minority** (Psalm 86:15) – God was never obligated to give the gift of salvation to anyone. But the God of Scripture is not stingy with His mercy. He delights in mercy. He sings over the work of His salvation. *“Isaiah declared that the pleasure of Jehovah should prosper in the hands of the Messiah, that He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And in view of what He suffered on Calvary we know that He will not be easily satisfied”* - Boettner

**Grace Abounding** (Rom 5:15) – Through Adam, the number of those who will be condemned on the last day is set. But the number of those who will be received into heaven cannot be counted (Rev 7:9-10). Judgment has come upon all men, because in Adam all have sinned. But grace has judged this race in Christ to such an extent that we preach a ministry of reconciliation – of the world (2 Cor 5:19). The contrast seems to point to a world that in the end is redeemed and not condemned (Zech 9:10, Isaiah 40:5, 1 John 2:2, Matt 13:33).

**Conclusion** – Let’s now return to the concern we have for our lost loved one. What have we learned from our study on election to apply to our lives?

**Rebellion to God is Grievous** – Our loyalty to our God and King must come first. Obstinate rejection of the Messiah is a grievous sin, even if it is committed by one we love. It is no little thing to mock God. We must not forget our ‘first love’.

**The History and Promise of God’s Mercy Motivates** – For those who have loved ones still living, there are countless examples of God’s mercy to those who have been stiff-necked for years. The doctrine of election is a great hope in those cases. And it is no accident that you are in their lives today, to pray for, to proclaim Christ crucified, and to be used by God in your living testimony.