

S T U D Y G U I D E



The
DOCTRINES
of **GRACE**
IN JOHN

BY STEVEN J. LAWSON

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Laying the Foundation

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

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, Dr. Lawson 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.

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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the unique contribution of John's gospel to the biblical corpus and Christian thought
2. To recognize the dual focus of his gospel: the free offer of the gospel and the sovereignty of God in salvation
3. To get acquainted with the doctrines of grace

QUOTATION

And so that which is said 'God wills all men to be saved' though He is unwilling that so many be saved, is said for this reason: that all who are saved, are not saved except by His will.

—St. Augustine of Hippo

LECTURE OUTLINE

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, etc.).
- 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

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The gospel of John and the book of _____ feature the sovereignty of God in salvation more than any other.
 - a. Philippians
 - b. Psalms
 - c. Hebrews
 - d. Romans
2. Matthew, Mark, and Luke do not present on the deity of Christ at all, but they attend solely to His humanity.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The prologue of the gospel of John demonstrates the fullness of His deity, an important emphasis of the book.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. The message of the gospel goes out to _____.
 - a. everyone, everywhere
 - b. only a select few, everywhere
 - c. everyone, only in a few locations
 - d. no one

5. If we cannot reconcile certain doctrines clearly advocated in the Word of God, they must be mutually exclusive.
 - a. True
 - b. False

6. When Jesus describes the wind in John 3, he does so to demonstrate _____.
 - a. man's ability to accept the call of the gospel
 - b. God's sovereign role in regeneration
 - c. the importance of nature in creation
 - d. the unpredictability of God

7. The doctrines of grace elevate God and humble man, highlighting the amazing grace involved in salvation.
 - a. True
 - b. False

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Can you name the unique focuses of some of the other books of the Bible? Genesis? Proverbs? Colossians? Revelation? Choose a few books, provide the unique focuses, and explain your answers.

2. Explain the importance of a presentation both of Christ's humanity and His deity. What would we lose with out one or the other?

3. Explain, as best you can, the incarnation of the Son of God. How many natures does Jesus Christ possess? Use Scripture for support.

4. Does the doctrine of God's sovereign election exclude the free call of the gospel, or vice versa? Define the two doctrines and explain your answer. Provide biblical evidence for your position.

5. How does the imagery of birth contribute to understanding God's sovereignty in salvation?

6. Does the sovereignty of God in salvation make evangelism moot and unnecessary?

7. Why must the doctrines of grace be accepted as a whole and not piecemeal? Explain the role of grace in them.

SUGGESTED READING FOR FURTHER STUDY

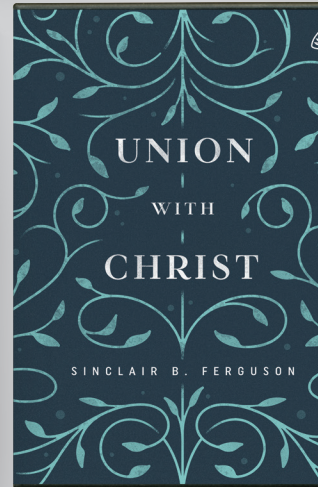
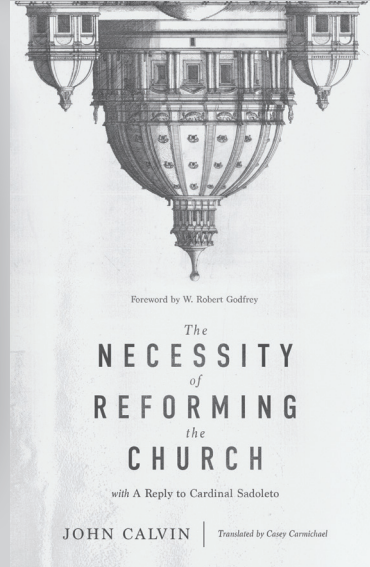
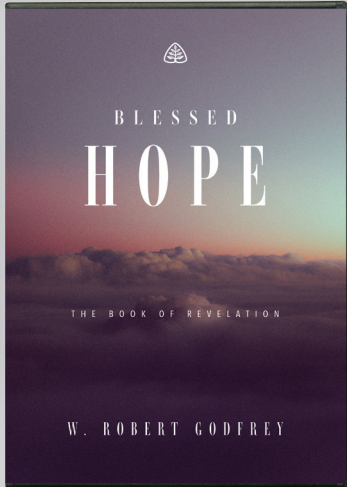
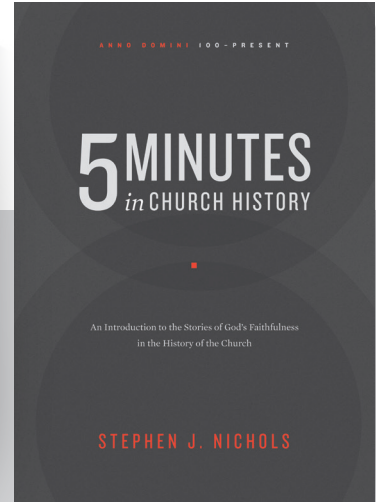
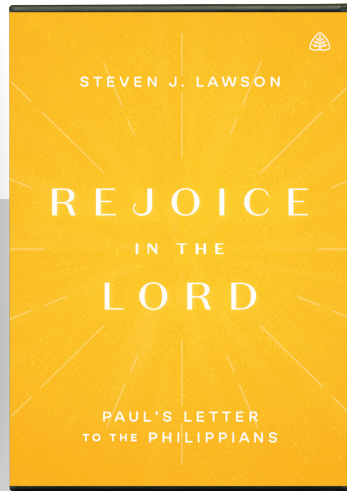
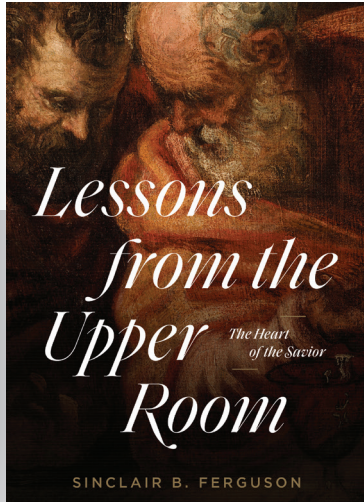
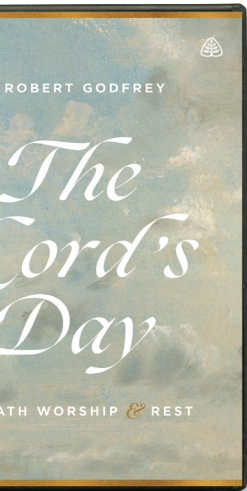
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