

## **“Whosoever Will ...”**

John, in Revelation 22:17, wrote, “*And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*” During the presidency of Andrew Jackson, George Wilson robbed a federal payroll from a train and in the process killed a guard. The court convicted him and sentenced him to hang. Because of public sentiment against capital punishment, however, a movement began to secure a presidential pardon for Wilson, and eventually Jackson intervened with a pardon. Amazingly, Wilson refused it.

Since this had never happened before, the Supreme Court was asked to rule on whether someone could refuse a presidential pardon. Chief Justice John Marshall handed down the court's decision: “A pardon is a parchment whose only value must be determined by the receiver of the pardon. It has no value apart from that which the receiver gives to it. George Wilson has refused to accept the pardon. We cannot conceive why he would do so, but he has. Therefore, George Wilson must die.” “Pardon,” declared the Supreme Court, “must not only be granted, it must be accepted.” George Wilson, as punishment for his crime, was hanged.

Likewise, God, through His mercy, has provided every human being pardon from their sins. However, that pardon must be accepted in the way God has ordained. There is no such teaching as an “irresistible grace” which comes upon a person in the Bible. When God provided His grace through Jesus, we all must obey Him in order to be saved from our sins (or pardoned). Jesus is the “*author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*” (Hebrews 5:9). Those who do not accept His pardon will perish.

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