

## 4. Irresistible Grace

### T.U.L.I.P.; Calvin's doctrinal system as it relates to the spiritual condition of man.

- T  
Total Hereditary Depravity
- U  
Unconditional Election
- L  
Limited Atonement
- I  
Irresistible Grace
- P  
Perseverance of the Saints

### I. WHAT IS IRRESISTIBLE GRACE?

#### A. DEFINITION OF TERMS:

1. **Irresistible** – that which cannot be successfully resisted or opposed (**Webster**).
2. **Grace** - unmerited favor (Salvation by a supernatural working of the Holy Spirit).

#### B. WHAT CALVINISTS SAY:

1. "the Holy Spirit, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call...a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ."

"This is accomplished through regeneration or the new birth by which the sinner is made a child of God and is given spiritual life...the once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates in him faith and repentance."

"...the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made...For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ." (**The Heidelberg Catechism, Pg 48-49**)

2. "All those whom God has predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."

"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it." (**The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 10**)

3. **Irresistible Grace** – It is thru the operation of the Holy Spirit that we come to believe and desire salvation. He is mightier than us, therefore irresistible.

The saving grace of God is **not resistible**. Those who obtain salvation do so because of the relentlessness of God's mercy. Men yield to grace, not finally because God found their consciences more tender or their faith more tenacious than other men. Rather, willingness and ability to do God's will, are evidence of God's faithfulness to save men from the power and the penalty of sin.

**John 15:16** "You did not choose me, but I chose you."

**Eph. 1:11** "In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."

**1 Thes. 1:4-5** "For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit."

**Rom. 9:11** "though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call."

**Colossians 2:13** "When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him." – **Wikipedia**

4. The result of God's Irresistible Grace **is the certain response by the elect to the inward call of the Holy Spirit**, when the outward call is given by the evangelist or minister of the Word of God. Christ, himself, teaches that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of him (**John 6:37**). Men come to Christ in salvation when the Father calls them (**John 6:44**), and the very Spirit of God leads God's beloved to repentance (**Rom. 8:14**). What a comfort it is to know that the gospel of Christ will penetrate our hard, sinful hearts and wondrously save us through the gracious inward call of the Holy Spirit (**1 Pet. 5:10**)! - **CRTA**
6. Grace is said to be irresistible because it comes as a result of the Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit. He is mightier than we, so that we may not resist him. God's sovereignty is vindicated.

### II. THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF THE TENETS OF CALVINISM.

#### A. IF ANY OF THE TENETS OF CALVINISM ARE TRUE, ALL ARE TRUE

1. We have already seen that some are false.
2. total depravity, unconditional salvation and limited atonement are equally unsupported from the scriptures.
3. That brings us to the fourth point in "five-point" Calvinism: irresistible grace.

#### B. THE IDEA THAT SALVATION IS UNCONDITIONAL LEAVES 2 CHOICES.

1. Either all are going to heaven saved from their sins,
2. or God chooses who goes to heaven apart from their actions and beliefs.
3. A difference must be made between them. An agent must act upon them to work righteousness in their lives.
4. That agent is the Holy Spirit, **according to Calvin**.

### III. CALVINIST PROOF-TEXTS:

#### A. **John 6:44.**

1. The Calvinists say that God draws through the Holy Spirit.

2. But **verse 45** tells us better how we are drawn by God.
  3. God draws us as we hear and learn about Jesus.
  4. It is what we hear and learn that motivates us to make a choice.
- B. **Romans 8:9.**
1. This verse does not explain how it is the Spirit dwells in us.
  2. But verses 4 and 5 do.
  3. The point is that a conscious choice is made to follow the Spirit.
  4. The result is our hearts dwell on spiritual things, which the Holy Spirit reveals to us.
- C. **Acts 10:44-45.**
1. While the Spirit overcame Cornelius, this passage does not prove the point.
  2. Cornelius was not yet saved. In **verse 48**, he is commanded by Peter to be baptized.
  3. When Peter explains to the Jews in Jerusalem what happened, he says that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a special event to show that "to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (**Acts 11:11-18**).
  4. He says that it was through his words, that he spoke in **Acts 10**, that God saved Cornelius (**vs. 14**).
- D. **John 15:16** "You did not choose me, but I chose you."
1. Talking to the 11 apostles about their special job (**Acts 1:8**).
  2. Their following in the first place was their choice.
  3. He chose them out of the other disciples (**Mark 3:13-14**).
- E. **Eph. 1:11.** WHO IS PREDESTINED? INDIVIDUALS OR A CLASS?
- F. **1 Thes. 1:4-5.**
1. Where is the emphasis? On **how** they were elected, through the word (**Acts 11:14**).
  2. What was the role of Power and the Holy Spirit?
    - a. The word was confirmed when the apostles did miracles (**Heb. 2:3-4**).
    - b. Many heard and saw miracles, but still resisted.
- G. **Rom 9:11.** CONCERNS SELECTION OF JACOB (Israel) TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S PURPOSE, NOT OUR SALVATION.
- H. **Col. 2:13.**
1. The notion is that the dead cannot respond because they are dead.
  2. Refers to their standing before God, not an inability to do anything.
    - a. **Col. 2:13-14.** Death the result of sin and being Gentiles.
    - b. The solution is forgiveness and removal of the OT Law (**vs. 14-15**).
    - c. **Eph. 2:1-3.** Dead through your trespasses and sins. Past condition. **Col. 3:7** – Walked or lived in the sin described. **Isa. 59:1-2.** Separated from God. **Eph. 2:12.** Without hope and cut off. **Col. 1:21.** Alienated and enemies in their deeds.
    - d. How do the spiritually dead come back to life? (**John 5:21-25; 6:63, 68**).
  3. How do those who stay dead stay dead? (**Acts. 7:57; 13:46-48**).
- I. **John 6:37; John 6:44.** THESE VERSES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED TOGETHER.
1. God draws those who are given.
  2. How does he draw (**vs. 45**).
- J. **Rom 8:14.** HOW DOES THE SPIRIT LEAD? (**Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:26-27**).
- K. **1 Pet. 5:10.** HOW ARE WE CALLED? (**2 Thess. 2:14**).

#### IV. HOW ARE WE SANCTIFIED, AND CAN WE RESIST?

- A. **Acts 7:51.**
1. The Calvinist says we can't resist.
  2. Was Stephen wrong?
  3. They resisted the Holy Spirit by rejecting the teachings of inspired men and denying the righteous words of Jesus, the son of God.
- B. **Titus 2:11-12.** GRACE IS THE GIFT OF GOD TO ALL MEN.
1. It is by God's grace that we are saved (**Eph. 2:8**).
  2. God has made provision for the salvation of all men.
  3. But some are not saved, in spite of God's desire for them.
  4. That is because they can resist, they can ignore, they can put off what God wants for them. They can receive that grace in vain (**2 Cor. 6:1**).
- C. **2 Thess. 2:14.** WE ARE CALLED TO SALVATION THROUGH THE GOSPEL.
1. The gospel must be believed in order to be saved (**Mark 16:15-16**).
  2. Some will not hearken (**Rom. 10:15**).
- D. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE
1. Calvinism holds that man is so inherently depraved that the gospel alone cannot change his mind; a miracle is required to compel the elect to divorce the devil and join God

2. It is taught that God can only overcome the devil by miraculously forcing people to believe the gospel through a direct operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart (**Steele and Thomas, The Five Points of Calvinism**, 49)
  - a. In reality, God is no respecter of persons and the Holy Spirit works by influencing hearts through the gospel message (**Rom. 1:16-17**).
  - b. The sword of the Spirit is not the ability to compel compliance, but is the very word of God itself that is preached to all men (**Eph. 6:17**)
    - i. some are cut to the heart and obey the word by repenting (**Acts 2:38-41**).
    - ii. others are wounded and resist the Holy Spirit (**Acts 7:51-54**).
    - iii. God sets people apart by using his word (**John 17:17**) and he calls them, not by **possession** but through the gospel (**2 Thess. 2:13-14**).