

Irresistible Grace vs. Irresistible Gospel

- I. One of the Calvinistic "doctrines of grace" and petals of the TULIP is *Irresistible Grace*.
 1. It is true that God's grace is irresistible, but what Calvinists mean when they say *irresistible grace* is actually *irresistible gospel*.
 2. "Irresistible grace (or efficacious grace) is a doctrine in Christian theology particularly associated with Calvinism, which teaches that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (the elect) and, in God's timing, overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to faith in Christ." (*Irresistible Grace*, [Wikipedia](#), 3-5-2018)
 3. Many Calvinists confuse regeneration and conversion, and conflate (fuse together) belief and the new birth.
 4. The doctrine of *irresistible grace* is true, but what many Calvinists mean by the term is not.
 5. It can therefore be a misleading term and one that needs to be defined when using it to explain our faith.

- II. God's grace, whereby He gives a sinner eternal life through the act of regeneration, is indeed *irresistible*.
 1. Not only *is* eternal life irresistible, but it *must be* so because man by nature is spiritually *dead* (**Eph 2:1**).
 - A. A corpse has no ability to resist anything.
 - B. Lazarus had no ability to resist the effectual voice of Jesus Christ when He commanded him to come forth from the grave (**Joh 11:43-44**).
 - C. A dead man who is resuscitated by CPR or a defibrillator cannot resist being brought back to life.
 2. So it is spiritually: those who are spiritually dead have no spiritual ability to resist being given spiritual life.
 - A. Just as Jesus caused Lazarus to come to life physically by the power of His voice, in like manner He causes His elect to come to life spiritually by the power of His voice (**Joh 5:25**).
 - B. Joh 5:25 refers to the regeneration of the soul and spirit, not the resurrection of the body for the following reasons.
 - i. Firstly, it was a present reality at the time Christ said it, which is apparent from the words "and now is" (**Joh 5:25**).
 - ii. Secondly, the resurrection of the body was spoken of separately a few verses later (**Joh 5:28-29**).
 - C. This act of regeneration by the voice of Jesus Christ is not the preaching of the gospel.
 - i. Firstly, the call of regeneration is by the *voice* of Jesus Christ (**Joh 5:25**), whereas the call of the gospel is by the *word* of Jesus Christ, which is the word of God (the gospel) (**Joh 5:24**).
 - ii. Secondly, hearing and believing the call of the gospel comes after regeneration, not before it or simultaneously with it (**Joh 5:24; 1Jo 5:1**).
 - a. He that *hears* the gospel and *believes* on God the Father who sent Christ *hath* (not gets) eternal life (**Joh 5:24**).

- b. The man that *believes* (present tense) the gospel *is passed* (present perfect tense) from death unto life (**Joh 5:24**).
 - c. Therefore, belief of the gospel doesn't *cause* eternal life, but is rather the *evidence* of it.
 - iii. Therefore, the voice of Jesus Christ calling a sinner from spiritual death to spiritual life is not the call of the gospel, but is the effectual call of regeneration.
- 3. Those that *believe* (present tense) *were born* (past tense) *of God* (**Joh 1:12-13**).
 - A. They were not born again *of the will of the flesh* (**Joh 1:13**).
 - B. If they were born again of their own will, then they could have of their own will resisted being regenerated.
 - C. Since eternal salvation is *not of him that willeth* (**Rom 9:16**), it is therefore not resistible by a sinner's will.
- 4. God is the potter and the elect are the clay.
 - A. It is God the potter who makes the elect into vessels of mercy (**Rom 9:21-23**).
 - B. Clay doesn't decide what type of vessel it will be made into, nor can it resist the potter's will.
- 5. The Arminian doctrines of conditional eternal life and decisional regeneration are therefore false.

III. Regeneration makes belief possible, but does not cause it to be exercised like heat causes water to boil.

- 1. If regeneration *effectually caused* a man to believe, there would be no reason for God to *tell him* to believe.
 - A. God does indeed tell His elect to believe the gospel (**Mar 1:14-15; 1Jo 3:23**).
 - B. The simple fact that the elect are told by God to believe demands that He doesn't irresistibly make them do it.
 - C. People or things that are effectually caused to do something are not afterwards commanded to do it.
 - i. If a parent takes a child to a barber and causes him to get a haircut, he would not then instruct the child to get his hair cut.
 - ii. Regeneration is effectually caused by God (**Joh 5:25**).
 - iii. Bodily resurrection is effectually caused by God (**Joh 5:28-29**).
 - iv. Thus the reason that sinners are neither commanded by the gospel to acquire eternal life, nor to rise from the dead.
- 2. God gives His elect the gift of faith and the ability to exercise it.
 - A. God's elect believe *through grace*, which means that grace makes faith possible (**Act 18:27**).
 - B. God gives each of His children a measure of faith; some more, some less (**Rom 12:3 c/w Mat 25:15**).
 - C. Their faith is born of God, and therefore its source is God (**1Jo 5:4**).
 - D. It is given to God's children to believe on Him (**Php 1:29**).
 - E. They obtain their faith through God's righteousness (**2Pe 1:1**).
 - F. They believe in God *by Jesus Christ* (**1Pe 1:21**).
- 3. Only those whom God has ordained to eternal life can believe the gospel when they hear it (**Act 13:48**).

IV. Belief and obedience of the gospel *are resistible*.

1. The elect Israelites who came out of Egypt resisted believing the gospel (**1Co 10:1-4 c/w Heb 3:17-19 c/w Heb 4:1-2 c/w Act 7:51**).
 - A. They *rebelled* (resisted) against God and believed Him not (**Deu 9:23-24**).
 - B. Rebel v. - 1. a. *intr.* To rise in opposition or armed resistance against the rightful or established ruler or government of one's country. b. To resist, oppose, or be disobedient to, some one having authority or rule. c. *transf.* or *fig.* in various contexts: To offer resistance, exhibit opposition, to feel or manifest repugnance, etc.
2. Some of the elect Israelites are enemies of the gospel, yet beloved according to election (**Rom 11:28-29**).
 - A. If a man is an enemy of the gospel, he is clearly resisting believing the gospel.
 - B. This is one of many examples of God's elect who refuse to believe and obey the gospel.
3. Paul warned Christians to not grieve the Holy Spirit (**Eph 4:30**).
 - A. The Holy Spirit is grieved by unbelief (**Heb 3:17-19**).
 - B. Paul would not warn God's children to grieve not the Holy Spirit if it were not possible for them to do so.
 - C. Paul warned them against grieving the Holy Spirit because it was possible for them to resist believing and obeying Him.
4. Paul warned believers to not *refuse* God's word (**Heb 12:25**).
 - A. Paul would not warn God's children to not refuse God's word if it were not possible for them to do so.
 - B. Paul warned them against refusing God's word because it was possible for them to resist it.
5. God's children can *deny* Him and not believe (**Mat 26:34 c/w Mat 26:69-75; 2Ti 2:12-13**).
 - A. Deny v. - I. To say 'no' to a statement, assertion, doctrine. 1. To contradict or gainsay (anything stated or alleged); to declare to be untrue or untenable, or not what it is stated to be. II. To say 'no' to the claims of. 4. To refuse to recognize or acknowledge (a person or thing) as having a certain character or certain claims; to disown, disavow, repudiate, renounce.
 - B. Denying God is resisting Him, His word, and His gospel.
6. Many of God's children resist believing and obeying things in the word of God that offend them -- each of us are living proof of this.

V. What about verses which seem to say that all of the elect will believe the gospel?

1. Verses such as **Joh 6:37** and **Joh 10:27** are used by Calvinists to prove that all of the elect will believe the gospel.
 - A. **Joh 6:37** - "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me..."
 - B. **Joh 10:27** - "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."
2. Coming to Christ and following Him in these verses refers to regeneration in which the elect are *drawn* unto Christ by the Father (**Joh 6:44**).
 - A. Draw v. - 1. a. *trans.* To cause (anything) to move toward oneself by the application of force; to pull.
 - B. All of the elect come unto Christ in this sense, and all of them will be resurrected by Him on the last day.

- C. But not all of the elect will come to Christ in faith though.
 - i. Elect babies that die infancy will not come to Christ in faith, but they will in regeneration.
 - ii. There were countless elect Gentiles out of every nation who were bought by the blood of Christ (**Rev 5:9**) who were dying as Christ spoke those words in John 6 and 10, who would die before the gospel ever got to them, who came to Christ in regeneration, but not in faith.
 - iii. There are enemies of the gospel who came to Christ in regeneration, but not in faith (**Rom 11:28-29**).
- D. Jesus gave His elect eternal life that they might know God (**Joh 17:2-3**).
- E. Different children of God will come to various levels of understanding of the truth in their lives, but not all will come to a full and complete knowledge of the truth.
- F. Though not all of the elect will come to a complete knowledge of the truth in this life, they all will come to the knowledge of the truth that God imparts to each of the elect in regeneration when the law is written in their hearts (**Heb 8:10-12**).
 - i. This is the unction and anointing which God gives His elect when He gives them His Spirit (**1Jo 2:20 c/w 1Jo 2:27 c/w 1Co 2:12 c/w Act 10:38**).
 - ii. This is the understanding that Jesus Christ gives His children that we may know Him (**1Jo 5:20**).
 - iii. This is why the elect can do by nature the things contained in the law even when they haven't heard it (**Rom 2:14-15**).
 - iv. The elect are taught of God directly in this way (**Eph 4:21; 1Th 4:9**).
 - v. This being "taught of God" happens when God draws His elect to Christ (**Joh 6:44-45**).
 - vi. It is in this way that all of the elect come to Christ, know Him, and follow Him (**Joh 6:37 c/w Joh 10:14, 27**).
- G. All of the elect will personally and fully come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ who is the truth at the Second Coming.
 - i. At that time we shall see Him as He is (**1Jo 3:2**).
 - ii. We shall know Him as we are known (**1Co 13:12**).
 - iii. We shall see His face on that day (**Rev 22:4**). 53