

“I” – Irresistible Grace

True or False?

Bible Answers About Denominations

This doctrine of “Irresistible Grace,” in conjunction with the Calvinistic view of “Unconditional Election,” basically holds that the elect cannot effectively or finally resist the decree of salvation and the subsequent “call” of God for their salvation. Because as alien sinners, they are “totally depraved,” (see the tract “Total Hereditary Depravity”) and thus morally incapacitated, they are therefore “passive” throughout the process. They are devoid of “free will,” or the ability to choose the good or the evil. Thus, they will receive a direct and immediate infusion of saving grace into their souls by the operation of the Holy Spirit before and without the agency of the Word of God.

According to its own proponents, the doctrines of Calvinism stand or fall together. If man is born in a state of total hereditary depravity, then he must experience the working of irresistible grace in order to be saved. According to the doctrine of “Irresistible grace” “the once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the Spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates within him faith and repentance.” (David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented*. P. 49). This supernatural work of the Holy Spirit is alleged because, “left to himself, the sinner would not desire to make even the motion of turning from sin nor would he be able.” (J.A. Millikin, *Christian Doctrine for Everyman An Introduction to Basic Christian Doctrine from a Baptist Perspective* (Greensboro, N.C. p. 46). This “grace” is termed “irresistible” because “the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only! The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or cooperation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit’s call and of God’s grace in saving sinners as being “efficacious,” “invincible,” or irresistible.” 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 Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 49).

This dogma of Calvinism is also false along with the doctrines of “Total Hereditary Depravity,” “Unconditional Election,” and “Limited Atonement.” The doctrine of “Irresistible Grace” invariably contradicts and repudiates the biblical doctrine of the all sufficiency of the Scriptures in the salvation and sanctification of the soul of man. The Bible affirms, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that it is all sufficient to convict and convert the sinner, to sanctify and equip the righteous. Paul wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it {the} righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous {man} shall live by faith” (Rom 1:16-17 NAS; Cf. Psa. 19:7-9; Acts 20:32; I Cor. 1:21; I Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Jam. 1:18, 21; 2 Pet. 1:3).

The Holy Spirit accomplishes His work through the Word and not separate from it in salvation and sanctification. Notice what the inspired apostle Peter wrote, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, {that is,} through the living and abiding word of God. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you" (1 Pet 1:22-25 NAS). The apostle Paul wrote, "For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet {you would} not {have} many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15 NAS). Other passages stress the power of the Word of God to cleanse and draw men to Christ (John 6:44-45; John 15:3; 2 Thess. 2:14; Rom. 8:2; John 8:31-32). The call of God is by the means of the glorious call of the gospel, and not by some better-felt-than-told emotion or feeling!

The fact is the grace of God can be resisted and rejected. Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life" (John 5:39-40 NAS; Cf. Matt. 23:37; Acts 7:51; 13:46; Eph. 5:30; Heb. 10:29).

If the doctrine of "Irresistible Grace" is true, then it makes the preaching of the gospel unnecessary, and in reality, useless. Why preach the gospel at all? The elect are going to be saved without it, according to Calvinism. The non-elect never could even understand it, much less believe it! So, why bother preaching to them? The Calvinist logically rejects his own doctrinal system every time he makes any effort to preach the gospel or to defend it. The elect, given Calvinism, cannot help but be ultimately miraculously or supernaturally saved by a direct infusion of saving grace. Prior to such activity on God's part he cannot understand one iota of God's Word toward the saving of his soul. The non-elect, on the other hand, never can be persuaded of God's truth, but is doomed for all eternity because of his state of inability. Why then do Calvinists even try to convince men of the truth of Calvinism before and without such supernatural infusion of God's grace as is involved in this doctrine of "Irresistible Grace?"

Calvinism is a false doctrine, and should be rejected by all people who hold God in awe, the Bible in respect, and the salvation of men as dear. This total doctrine is repulsive and repugnant to reflecting minds. It ultimately dishonors God and mocks His Word. "Irresistible Grace" is clearly a false doctrine and must be opposed by all who are faithful to Christ.

Visit us online at: montevista.church
or
Stop by and worship with us!

Monte Vista
church of Christ