

## The Doctrines of Grace

### Ephesians 1:3-10

#### Ephesians 1:3-10 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,  
<sup>4</sup> just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love  
<sup>5</sup> He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,  
<sup>6</sup> to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.  
<sup>7</sup> In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace  
<sup>8</sup> which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight  
<sup>9</sup> He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him  
<sup>10</sup> with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him”

These are the so-called Five Points of Calvinism.

These are sometimes set forth in the form of an acrostic on the word “TULIP”, as follows:

**T** Total Depravity (i.e. Total Inability)

**U** Unconditional Election

**L** Limited Atonement (i.e. Particular Redemption)

**I** Irresistible Calling

**P** Perseverance of the Saints

#### 4. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

This fourth point of the Calvinistic system of belief is, once again, the logical outcome of all that has gone before it.

If men are unable to save themselves on account of their fallen nature, and if God has purposed to save them, and Christ has accomplished their salvation, *then* it logically follows that God must also provide the means for calling them into the benefits of that salvation which He has procured for them.

The Calvinistic system of theology, however, although soundly logical, is more than a system of mere logic. It is a system of pure Biblical belief which stands firmly on the **Word of God**. Its doctrine of irresistible grace, then, is not devised by the men who drew

up the Five Points of Calvinism at the Synod of Dort, **but is the revelation unfolded in God's Holy Word.**

For example, **Romans 8:30 (NASB)** “And these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

God not only elected men and women to salvation; He also *called* those whom it pleased Him to elect.

### **What is meant by irresistible grace?**

We know that when the gospel call goes out in a church, or in the open air, or through reading God's Word, not everyone heeds that call.

Not everyone becomes convinced of sin and his need of Christ.

This explains the fact that there are *two* calls.

There is not only an *outward* call; there is also an *inward* call.

The outward call may be described as “**words of the preacher**”, and this call, when it goes forth, may work a score of different ways in a score of different hearts producing a score of different results.

One thing it will not do, however; it will not work a work of salvation in a sinner's soul.

For a work of salvation to be wrought the **outward call** must be accompanied by the **inward call** of God's Holy Spirit, for He it is who “**convinces of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.**”

And when the Holy Spirit calls a man, or a woman, or a young person by His grace, that call is *irresistible*: it cannot be frustrated; it is the manifestation of God's irresistible grace.

This is substantiated again and again in God's Word of Life, as for example in the following verses and portions.

1. **John 6:37 (NASB)**

<sup>37</sup> “All that the Father **gives Me will come** to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not **cast out.**”

Note that it is those whom the Father has “**given to Christ**” — the elect — that “*will come*” to Him; and when they come to Him they will not be “**cast out**”.

2. **John 6:44 (NASB)**

<sup>44</sup> “No one can come to Me **unless the Father who sent Me draws him**; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

Here our Lord is simply saying that it is impossible for men to come to Him of themselves; the Father must “*draw*” them.

3. **John 6:45 (NASB)**

<sup>45</sup> “It is written in the prophets, 'AND THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT OF GOD.' Everyone who has heard and ***learned from the Father***, comes to Me.”

Men may hear the outward call; but it is those who have “*learned of the Father*” who will respond and come to Christ. So, with Simon Peter:

**Matthew 16:17 (NASB)**

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, ***but My Father*** who is in heaven.

4. **Romans 8:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> For all who are being ***led*** by ***the Spirit of God***, these are sons of God.

5. **Galatians 1:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> But when God, who had set me apart *even* from my mother's womb ***and called me*** through ***His grace***, was pleased

6. **1 Peter 2:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has ***called you out of darkness*** into His marvelous light;

7. **1 Peter 5:10 (NASB)**

<sup>10</sup> After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, ***who called you to His eternal glory*** in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you.

One outstanding illustration of this teaching of irresistible grace, or *effectual* calling, is certainly the incident that we read in [Acts 16:14](#).

The apostle Paul preaches the gospel to a group of women by the riverside at Philippi; and as he does so:

**Acts 16:14 (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the ***Lord opened her heart*** to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Paul, the preacher, spoke to Lydia's ear — the outward call; but the Lord spoke to Lydia's heart — the inward call of irresistible grace.

**Arminians** believe that men and women **can** and **do** resist the call of God's gospel, and, therefore, they contend, there can be no such doctrine as that of irresistible grace. We believe that not only **can** men and women resist God's gospel, but that they do, and **must** by their very natures, resist it. Therefore there must be such a doctrine as the doctrine of irresistible grace.

In other words, some influence greater than our natures — greater than our resistance — must be brought to bear upon our souls, or else we are forever doomed, for **“a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God.”**

**1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB)**

**<sup>14</sup> But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.**

There are three great forces at work in the matter of a man's salvation:

- 1. Man's will.**
- 2. The Devil's will.**
- 3. God's will.**

Which will be the victor?

If **God's will** is not victorious in the matter of our salvation, then, the **Devil's will** must be, for the devil is stronger than we are.

**Thomas Watson, an old Puritan of the 17th century, puts the matter vividly in these words:**

**“God rides forth conquering in the chariot of His Gospel. . . He conquers the pride of the heart, and makes *the will* which stood out as a Fort Royal against Him, to yield and stoop to His grace; He makes the stony heart bleed. Oh! it is a mighty call! Why then do some men seem to speak of a moral persuasion? That God in the conversion of a sinner only morally persuades and no more? If God in conversion should only morally persuade and no more, then He does not put forth so much power in saving men as the Devil does in destroying them.” Whose will shall be the victor? Our will? But does it not stand out, indeed, as “a fort royal” against the Lord; “Ye *will not* come unto me that ye might have life.”**

**The Devil's will?**

Then who will ever be saved, for his will must always be stronger than ours.

But surely this is the gospel, that **“a stronger than the strong”** appears, conquering and to conquer in the chariot of His gospel; and He does conquer! He conquers Satan, and He conquers puny man as well, to the praise of His irresistible grace.”