

CALVINISM: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE, Part 2 (Conc.)

Irresistible grace is the fourth of the five foundational pillars of Calvinism. (The first three, previously discussed, are *inherited total depravity*, *unconditional election*, *limited atonement*—the latter the idea that Jesus died only for those God has elected to salvation.)

Calvinism begins with the contention that man is so corrupt by virtue of his inheriting Adam's sin that he cannot seek God so that God must therefore, by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, call those he has elected to be saved by a power beyond man's ability to resist. Since this calling is, allegedly, *irresistible*, it is therefore said to be *effectual*.

We have already shown, not only that the doctrine of inherited sin is false, but that the work of the Holy Spirit in calling man to salvation from his own sin (his OWN sin, not Adam's) is accomplished through the gospel of Christ. Notice again that The Holy Spirit revealed the gospel to the apostles of Christ (John 14:26). Thus, when one is taught and converted by the gospel the apostles preached and recorded he is, in effect, taught and converted by the Holy Spirit (I Peter 1:22, 23).

Now let us notice that the idea of the Holy Spirit's calling being irresistible is also false.

It is not that the Holy Spirit is weak. To the contrary, his power is that of deity as seen in all the works ascribed to him in the Bible: for instance, his part in the creation of the universe (Genesis 1:2; Psalms 104:30). Rather, it has to do with the fact that God created man with a free will and holds him responsible for exercising it. From the day of man's creation man has always been able to choose between good and evil and has been held accountable for the choice he makes. Adam and Eve did not have to sin, but chose to do so (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:6). Israelites were admonished to choose to serve God but chose instead to serve idols (Joshua 24:15; Judges 2:7-13). Indeed, man is a free will being and is responsible to God for the choices he makes.

So, when Israelites rejected the words of the prophets, they resisted the Holy Spirit who inspired them to declare God's will. So said Stephen, according to the record at Acts 7:51. But this passage indicates that Stephen's hearers were doing the same thing in refusing what he said concerning God's plan of salvation in Christ. As Stephen expressed it, "You always resist the Holy Spirit."
—Jerry F. Bassett