

- Note that before the Lord is said to have opened her heart, Luke records that Lydia was **spoken to**.
- Lydia **heard** Paul's words.
- The Lord opened her heart by bringing her the Gospel (Romans 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:12).

Lydia would not have been converted without her **DESIRE** to do so.

*Ephesians 2:1-9.* From this passage, Calvinists will teach that since men are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) they cannot come to God on their own. Because they cannot choose God, God's grace and mercy saves them apart from their own will. However,

- When were the Ephesians sealed with the Holy Spirit? After they heard the word (Ephesians 1:12-13).[6]
- They were saved by grace through **THE** faith (verse 8). The Greek has the definite article. **THE FAITH** is a synonym for the Gospel system of faith.
- Grace is freely given, but it is never forced upon the heart of a person. A person who gives a gift never forces it.

The attempted proofs for this teaching do not hold one ounce of water!

### The Doctrine Defeated

Like any other false teaching, when placed beside the light, its errors are exposed. What specific points help us see the errors in Irresistible Grace?

*Answer 1:* The Bible teaches that the Word of God is the power unto salvation (John 15:3; Romans 1:16; 10:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; James 1:18, 21; 2 Peter 1:3). If Irresistible Grace were true, God failed, Jesus lied, and the Holy Spirit's work was worthless.

*Answer 2:* There is **NOT ONE** example of Calvinistic Holy Spirit regeneration in the Scriptures. No person ever received the Holy Spirit before obedience. Every conversion in Acts was preceded by faith (Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18).

*Answer 3:* The Bible teaches that God's will never supersedes man's will in their personal salvation (Matthew 22:3; 23:37). God wants all saved (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), but it does not mean all will be saved.

He gave all a choice (Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15). Salvation comes through heart obedience (Romans 6:17-18).

*Answer 4:* The Bible teaches that God's grace extends to all, not just the elect (Titus 2:11). While no man is saved unless he accepts that grace, God's grace is available to all men who obey.

Irresistible Grace is just another petal on Satan's flower called TULIP. While it may look appealing, smell wonderful, and attract many, those who know the truth stay away from it as far as they can.

### Endnotes

1R.C. Sproul: <https://youtu.be/loXh8PqrR3Y>

2Duane Edward Spencer TULIP, p. 60.

3Ibid, 58.

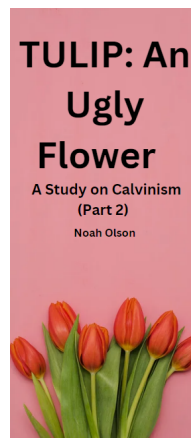
4<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/what-is-irresistible-grace>

5Bob Winton: <https://gbntv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Textual/14-Winton-Ezekiel.pdf>

6C.A. Feenstra, Calvinism in the Light of God's Word, p. 46.

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# TULIP: An Ugly Flower

## A Study on Calvinism (Part 4)



**Noah Olson**

# Irresistible Grace

Noah Olson

“Amazing Grace how sweet the sound.” “His grace reaches me.” “Where sin has gone must go his grace.” Grace, grace, grace. The Old Testament is filled with it, while the New Testament is the best definer of it. Grace is the foundation for everything. Without it, men are lost. With it, man can be saved. The Greek word for grace is *charis*. It means unmerited favor and it is found 170 times in the KJV. Paul used it the most and expressed the importance of this essential element in regards to salvation (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 2:11). Man never deserved heaven, but God’s grace allows them to go there.

Dangerously, religion though has taken the grace of God and turned it into a false teaching. The fourth tenant of TULIP is Irresistible Grace. Like the previous tenants, each builds upon another. If man is incapable of saving himself (Total Depravity), God must choose him to be saved (Unconditional Election). Since God chose specific individuals to be saved, then Christ could only have died for the elect (Limited Atonement). Because Christ’s atonement saved man at the cross, God sovereignly chooses individuals to be saved apart from man’s choosing to do so through Holy Spirit regeneration (Irresistible Grace).

This doctrine is false at its core like every other petal on Satan’s flower.

## The Doctrine Defined

Some Reformed advocates do not like the term Irresistible Grace for it brings confusion. Instead, “Effectual Grace” is used. One noted that, “Invincible Grace” could be used too. Simply, the terms “Irresistible” and “Grace” mean that God’s favor “is so powerful that it has the capacity to overcome our natural resistance to us.”[1] The Canons of Dort concluded that the Holy Spirit must directly operate on an individual so that they can choose to believe. Note what the Westminster Confession of Faith said: “This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is

altogether passive therein, until, being made alive and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.” The main idea imbedded into this devilish and deathly doctrine is the Holy Spirit’s work on the individual. Man is dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1). In fact, this doctrine teaches that, “Man cannot come to Christ because man is bound by Satan. Man will not come because he finds Satan irresistible and Jehovah despicable. Man does not have a ‘free will,’ he has a devil-bound will.”[2] Spencer would say a few pages earlier that, “Man is a third-rate power. He is not able to resist Satan because his will is inferior to the will of the devil. Paul says that the unregenerate, who ‘oppose’ God’s servants who teach the Word ‘are taken captive by [the devil] at his will’” (2 Tim. 2:26).[3] Because of man’s inability, they teach that choosing to respond is not possible (Romans 3:11; John 6:65). God then must draw Him from His own sovereign, omnipotent power (John 6:44; Romans 9:15-16). Reformed respecters take God to save man by grace alone and not by man’s works of obedience (2 Timothy 1:9). It is the person whom GOD wills (John 5:21) not the person who wills. We are then again left with the phrase: He wills my will to will. Note the following division:

- He wills. Gods’ sovereign will, choice, and decision.
- My will. My will, choice, and decision.
- To will. My will changes to God’s will.

In short, God’s ultimate desire is for man’s will to conform to His. So, He performs such an act so that the elected men and women will do...just... that. The responsibility relies not upon man they say, but upon the Holy Spirit to change the heart of the elected sinner, changing his heart of stone to become a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 37:26-27). Before a person can believe himself, he must be born again of the Spirit (John 3:3, 5). Calvinists also call this the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). In short, to them, regeneration must precede faith. One said the irresistible grace of God is “monergistic, or one-sided. It is no synergistic, or two-sided, involving God and us (Gal. 1:15).”[4] While God is omnipotent (Revelation 19:6), we must

recognize that man must come to Him in full obedience to be saved.

## The Doctrine “Defended”

Let us notice five passages of interest that are used to “support” this false teaching.

*2 Timothy 2:25-26.* Some say that mankind is enslaved to Satan and cannot resist UNLESS God performs a work on the heart of the sinner. Did Paul have this teaching in mind when he wrote to Timothy? First, note that God gives them repentance. He allows them to repent, He does not make them. Second, the phrase “recover themselves” shows that man must take it upon himself to recover.

*Romans 8:7-8.* This verse cannot prove Irresistible Grace because

- The context is about those who make the CHOICE to walk in the Spirit or flesh (Romans 8:1).
- The passage does not mean that one can NEVER please God. It is while one is currently, constantly, and consistently **choosing** to sin, that he cannot please God.

*John 3:3-8.* Calvinists see a direct operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of sinner in this passage. Was Jesus referring to such in His discourse with Nicodemus? According to Guy N. Woods, this verse has brought much misunderstanding to many. Calvinistic theology has concluded that the Spirit’s work on an individual is unknown and cannot be seen like the wind. This view; however, is not correct. Woods notes that either the word “wind” is mistranslated and should be rendered “Spirit,” or the wind is used as an illustration to show the conversion of the sinner. Once the person responds to the Gospel through obedient faith, his heart is changed and like the wind, no person can see this because it is spiritual in nature. This has no reference to Irresistible Grace. Too

- In John 3:5, “water” is a reference to baptism and “Spirit” is a reference to His teaching.
- God gives us a new heart when we obey His commands.[5]

*Acts 16:14.* It is argued that a direct operation of the Holy Spirit was poured upon the heart of Lydia. It is stated that no person can obey without God first opening his or her heart. But,