

Irresistible Grace

One of the most marvelous truths of the scripture is that God has extended His grace to fallen man. The Bible teaches that God saves us by grace (Eph. 2:8-9).

Some teach that God's grace is irresistible. This idea alleges that an inward supernatural call draws spiritually dead sinners to God. The Holy Spirit through regeneration makes the dead sinner alive and creates within him faith and repentance. According to this teaching, the supernatural working of the Spirit is necessary because otherwise the sinner would have no desire to turn from sin. The teaching speaks of *irresistible grace* because, to its proponents, the Spirit never fails to convert those to whom He is sent. God extends His grace, the proponents claim, to only the elect, and those so elected cannot thwart or refuse this grace. This teaching is false for a number of reasons.

First, this teaching upholds a false view of man's nature. Human beings are not sinners because they have inherited the sin of Adam but because of their own sins: "Each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad (2 Cor 5:10)." The phrase *each one*, which shows who is responsible, is repeated in Rom 14:12, "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God." Jesus laid the blame of sin on those who do not obey the Father and based every one's judgment on the same standard: "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven. . . . And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt 7:21-23)."

Second, this teaching upholds a false view of the way God extends His grace. According to Titus 2:11-12, God's grace has appeared to all men, and God's grace instructs all men on what they must do to be saved. Jesus declared that God draws men through teaching (John 6:44-45). Everyone can participate in the grace of God by obeying his gospel (2 Peter 3:9; Rom. 6:16-18; 6:1-4).

Third, this teaching upholds a false view of the way God calls. God does not call sinners by a direct and supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit. God calls sinners by the gospel: "He called you through our gospel (2 Thess 2:14)." Paul calls the gospel the "power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16)."

God's grace is available to you through obedience of His word. Do not reject His word and thwart God and His Grace.