

Biblical Reasons to Dismiss the Irresistible Grace Doctrine

(I) - Irresistible Grace

1. Calvinism holds that God determines who will be saved or not, and if you aren't on the 'elect' list, you can't be saved.
2. Non-Calvinists have no problem with saying that the people who believed are the same people that God appointed to eternal life.
God has appointed that there will be many who have eternal life, who have saving belief.
3. God does know the future, but that does not mean we have no choice in the matter.
4. Also, the people were 'disposed' or 'appointed', but it does not say who did the disposing or appointing. Did they appoint/dispose themselves to belief?

Only God makes the choices?

Acts 13:48 (as many as had been appointed)

48. Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

1. as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed
 - i. It does not therefore follow that the people had no choice, or that God was proactively making belief for anyone else impossible.
 - ii. Of course God knows who will be saved.
That doesn't mean He forces them to.
 - iii. "as many as were ordained to believe" is how some Calvinists read this passage.
Instead it says "as many were ordained to eternal life believed".
 - iv. Most translations use "appointed".

1 Timothy 2:4

4. who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- a) But God desires all men to be saved.
 - b) So the reason all men aren't saved is because not all want to be saved.
The Calvinist would affirm that God does not want them all to be saved.
But Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 2:4 that He does.
- v. The Greek word "tassō", which is "appointed" in many English translations
 - vi. The same Greek word "tassō" is used in

1 Cor 16:15

15. I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints—

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- a) Would we say they "appointed" themselves to the ministry of the saints?
The word is being used to speak of a disposition of the household of Stephanas.
- b) This demonstrates that "tassō" is not only used one way in the Greek.
- c) Therefore "devoted" or "disposed" to eternal life could be a possible usage of "tassō" in the Acts 13:48 passage.
- d)

Romans 9:13-20 (Esau I have loved, Jacob I have hated)

Romans 9:13-20

- 13. As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."^[fn]
- 14. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!
- 15. For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."^[fn]
- 16. So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
- 17. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."^[fn]
- 18. Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.
- 19. You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"
- 20. But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"
- 22. What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,
- 23. and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,
- 24. even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

- 1. Romans 9 is following Paul's defense of why all ethnic Israelites were not saved.
- 2. Paul cites how Esau was ethnically from Abraham though Isaac, yet was not the one to whom the birthright was given.
- 3. Likewise, Paul is saying that the Israelites who wanted to reject Jesus their Messiah would also be like Esau in being rejected by God for partaking in the blessing that God has for all those who are in Christ.
- 4. Non-Calvinists do not deny that God can harden or soften the hearts of people, but deny that God does or desires to do that all the time.
- 5. Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will
 - 1. Paul has said nothing about anyone resisting God's will.
People do resist God's will in many cases.

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Luke 7:30

30. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

2. The objector is not making a flaw in logic by saying God would be unjust for condemning people for resisting God's will if God caused them to resist, giving the person no free will to choose otherwise.

That is the objector's suggestion that Paul is stating.

It is the premise of the objector is wrong.

The objector is saying that no one rejects God's will, which we clearly know is not the case.

3. The Calvinist holds that the objector's comment that Paul cites is what Paul believes.

Paul said "**You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault".**

So that is what the objector believes, not Paul.

4. People *do* resist God's will.

That is why God *does* find fault.

6. who are you to reply against God

1. The objector who is resisting against God by questioning(**replying against God**) why not all the ethnic Jews/Israel are saved (whereas Paul says all of true Israel is saved).

Paul in verse 24 says God called not only the Jews only but also the Gentiles.

The objector has no right in resisting God's will to not only not save all ethnic Jews (who God does not see as part of Israel) and to save Gentiles.

1. The objection is not about individual salvation, but of corporate salvation of entire groups of people.

The objector is upset that not all of the fake/apostate Israel were saved in following Jesus as the true, faithful remnant of Israel did.

2. Calvinists take Romans 9 to be talking about individual salvation in that God is micro managing whether each individual person through all time and history will be hardened or softened toward the gospel call.

2. Stephen the martyr told the Sanhedrin they always resist the Holy Spirit.

Man does resist God.

7. Romans 9 is not necessarily saying that God micro manages every human to determine who will or won't believe.

1. Paul is answering at a higher-level.

The objection he is responding to is why not all ethnic Israel were saved.

He says they were saved because those not in Christ are not part of Israel in any way God reckons.

In addition to that, Gentiles can now be saved at a much more massive scale than was

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happening in the Old Testament.

The Jewish objector that Paul is refuting seems to think that God should save all ethnic Israelites before He reaches out to any Gentiles.

Can God harden and soften hearts? Sure.

But does He do it to everyone and all the time? We aren't told He wants to or that He does.

Here we see hardening and softening of folks at a national level, not an individual level.

Is God's salvation call able to be rejected?

John 1:11-13 (not of the will of man)

John 1:11-13

11. He came to what was His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

12. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, [even] to those who believe in His name,

13. who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

1. The Calvinist doctrine of Irresistible Grace in the passage would say that the Jews did not accept Jesus in a major way because it was not God's will.

But those did accept Jesus was because it was the will of God, not man.

It does not say in these verses that man is unable to refuse God's will.

2 Peter 3:9

2 Peter 3:9

9. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us,[fn] not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

- i. Jesus is not slacking concerning His promise to return and get rid of all the evil.
- ii. But He still has more souls to save before that time. That is why He is holding off from returning right away. He has more work to do.
There are still some who have not repented who He is waiting on.
- iii. Many bible translations say toward "us", but the Alexandrian manuscripts say toward "you".
The 'you' would be the Church – Christians.
- iv. Is God being patient toward Christians, not willing that any Christians should perish or cease to be elect?
That would mean that God does not want any of the elect to perish, but that the elect would come to repentance.
The Calvinist view holds that only the elect will come to repentance.

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- i. Whether elect refers to the Church corporately or on an individual level does make a difference in how this verse is understood.
- ii. Do we say that God is not willing that any Christians perish, being willing that unbelievers perish, but not you (Christians)?
Also, we don't see Peter identifying an 'elect' group here, though he did in 1 Peter.
- iii. Let's put it another way:
If God is being patient toward you (the elect), then God is waiting for more of the elect to repent.
The 'you' would not refer to current Christians, but future ones, with the idea of 'elect' being a corporate term and not an individual one, at least in this passage.
- iv. Nothing here nails down the Calvinist idea that humans truly have no ability to choose or that humans are unable to refuse God's drawing.

Ezekiel 33:11

1. Ezekiel 33:11

11. "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

- i. God certainly takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.
He does want all to repent.
- ii. God wanted people who would not repent, to repent.
That means God wanted people who were not elect, to repent.
Did God want people to do something they were incapable of doing?
That wouldn't be too just, would it?
If I told a chair to move, then bludgeoned it with a sledge hammer because it didn't, you would rightfully call me a fool.
You would retort - chairs don't move on their own; what did you expect?

Matthew 23:37

1. Matthew 23:37

37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

- i. Jesus wanted the Israelites to be saved.
- ii. But they were not willing.
- iii. Were they not willing because they were not 'elect'?

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- iv. But why then would Jesus complain about something that was His fault, if He indeed, being God, had every part in making them unable to be willing, or not allowing them to be willing to be saved?
 - i. This goes against the Calvinistic doctrine of Irresistible Grace.

John 6:44,64-65 (No one can come to Me)

John 6:44,64-65

44. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

64. "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

65. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

1. These verses are cited by Calvinists to say that the Bible teaches that no one can resist God's call to salvation.
 - i. The call to salvation is divided into God's general evangelistic call and the calls which result in salvation.
 - ii. A non-Calvinist can agree with that, but while God did do make the first step toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, it does not then follow that God does not allow humans to reject His will.
 - iii. There are many examples of people disobeying God.
 - iv. Of course He knows the future – but it does not follow that man therefore is just a robot, acting out what he has no will to determine in the matter.
 - v. For God so loved the world, so that whosoever believes shall not perish (John 3:16). Whosoever was not limited to just the elect. If all humans wanted to be regenerated, the blood of Jesus would cover all of them. But we all too well know that not all humans historically thus far have desired to do that. John 3:16 is a verse that militates against the Limited Atonement Calvinistic doctrine.

John 3:5 (unless one is born of water and Spirit)

John 3:5

5. Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

1. unless one is born of water and the Spirit
 - i. The Calvinist view holds that God irresistibly draws an unbeliever and make him born again before he can have saving faith in God.

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This passage says one must be born again, but that does not mean faith is not needed first.

Romans 10:17

17. So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1. But Calvinism holds that one can be born again even without hearing the word of God. To put it in Calvinistic terms, "regeneration preceeds faith", in their view. In other terms, Calvinism holds you are saved before you believe.

John 6:37,39

John 6:37,39

37. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

39. "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

1. all He has given Me I should lose nothing

1. Who did the Father give Jesus?

The followers of God were the believing Jews, for the most part.

The faithful remnant.

Those are those who Jesus said the Father gives Me And who comes to Me.

John 17:6 uses the same language, saying they were the Father's but was given to Him(Jesus).

2. Jesus never loses anyone, but people can walk away if they so desire, as Judas did.
3. People don't get distant from God because of something God does/did, but rather by something people do.

John 15:16 (I chose you. You didn't choose me)

John 15:16

16. "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

John 17:6 (the men whom You have given Me)

John 17:6

6. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

1. they have kept Your word

- i. Men were given over to Jesus, but one of the qualities of ones who remained in Christ are that they have kept Your word.

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2. People who are given to Christ can fall away.
3. None are lost because of Jesus, but because they want to leave Jesus.
4. No power on earth can separate us from the love of God, but we can choose to leave if we wish, as Judas did.
5. Jesus said I've lost none except one, the son of perdition, Judas. Judas was one that God gave to Jesus who fell away.
6. God's predestination did not determine Judas' choices. Instead, God determines the consequence of man's choices.
7. Nowhere does the bible say anyone is predestined to become a Christian. What is predestined in that Christians will have a certain destiny. God determines the consequences of our choices, not our choices.

1 Corinthians 1:29 (don't boast before God)

1 Corinthians 1:29

29. *that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

1. The Calvinist interpretation of this verse is that if you claim that God not only chose you, but you chose God, you are boasting of a work that you did.