



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace

Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"

By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

John 6:37, 44-45 - ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.

INTRODUCTION –

We continue now in our TULIP series on reformed theology and the doctrines of grace.

For the past few weeks, we have gone over some of these great truths of the reformation, and we started by looking at how man in his natural condition is totally depraved.

Now that doesn't mean that everybody is as evil as they can be, but it means that sin has so corrupted every part of our soul and body, that apart from God's grace, we can do no good and only do evil.

Then we saw how unconditional election is the work of God the Father, and limited atonement is the work of God the Son, and now we come to the work of the Holy Spirit in irresistible grace.

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith in chapter 10 paragraph 1 says this on effectual calling which is another word for irresistible grace –

"In God's appointed and acceptable time, he is pleased to call effectually, by his Word and Spirit, those he has predestined to life. He calls them out of their natural state of sin and death to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. He enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God. He takes away their heart of stone and gives them a heart of flesh. He renews their wills and by his almighty power turns them to good and effectually draws them to Jesus Christ. Yet he does all this in such a way that they come completely freely, since they are made willing by his grace."

So irresistible grace refers to the way God calls sinners to Jesus Christ. It does not mean that God drags people kicking and screaming into his kingdom.

And it also doesn't mean that grace is never resisted by us. It means that we don't resist effectively.

In other words, when God calls us to faith in Jesus Christ he calls effectively and succeeds in his purpose to save us.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

In contrast, the Arminian believes in resistible grace. God does all that he can to bring every sinner to salvation. But in as much as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call.

And so, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work.

The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow him to have His way with them.

Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not irresistible, it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.

In summary the Arminian believes that God knocks on the door to man's heart and man decides to answer or not to answer.

The Calvinist, however, believes that anyone whom the Holy Spirit regenerates is saved. This is because God's grace works effectually only on the elect.

He never wastes His effort or is frustrated in His design. If you are one of God's elect, He will bring you to Himself sometime in your life.

His desire for you will never be quenched until you are one of His.

Consider some of these passages of Scripture –

Acts 16:14 - One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

Galatians 1:15-16 - ¹⁵ But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, ¹⁶ was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles.

Now I want to show you from church history that the doctrines of grace are not the invention of the sixteenth, seventeenth, or nineteenth century, or the product of one narrow branch of the Christian tradition.

Rather, they are part of a common theological legacy. Yes, they were not always fully understood and yes, they sometimes were obscured or ignored, but the cumulative testimony of history is a powerful witness to their universality.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Studying historical theology allows us to learn what other Christians in other times thought the Bible taught. This in turn can serve to confirm and test our own understanding of Scripture.

So, I want to take a few minutes and survey church history and see what some of the great theologians for the past 2,000 years thought about the doctrines of grace.

Clement of Rome (35 to 99 AD) – *“By His majestic word He established the universe, and by His word he can bring it to an end. Who shall say to Him, What have You done? Or who shall resist His mighty strength? He will do everything when He wants to and as he wants to. And not one of the things He has decreed will fail.”* – Clement of Rome

Irenaeus (130 – 202) – *“God knows hidden things, knows all things before they can come to pass, and for this reason has He said, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”* - Irenaeus

Tertullian (155 – 220) – *“For who can know truth without the help of God? Who can know God without Christ? Who has ever discovered Christ without the Holy Spirit? And who has ever received the Holy Spirit without the gift of faith?”* - Tertullian

Gregory of Nazianzus (329 – 390) – *“The Spirit of God is the author of spiritual regeneration. Here is your proof – None can see or enter into the kingdom of God, except he be born again of the Spirit, and be cleansed from the first birth.”* – Gregory of Nazianzus

Augustine (354 – 430) – *“God chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, predestinating us unto the adoption of children, not because we were going to be holy and spotless through ourselves, but he chose and predestinated us that we might become so.”* - Augustine

John Wycliffe (1328 – 1384) – *“We are predestined, that we may obtain divine acceptance, and become holy, having received that grace through Christ’s taking human nature, whereby we are rendered finally pleasing to God. And it appears that this grace, which is called the grace of predestination, with the charity of final perseverance, cannot by any means fail.”* – John Wycliffe

Ulrich Zwingli (1484 – 1531) – *“We agree with Paul that predestination is the free disposition of God concerning us, independent of any consideration of our works, good or bad. I would that the word freewill had never been invented, for neither is it in the Scripture and might better be called self-will, which is of no use.”* – Ulrich Zwingli

William Tyndale (1494 – 1536) – *“When Christ is preached, the hearts of them which are elect and chosen, begin to wax soft and melt at the bounteous mercy of God.”* – William Tyndale



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) – *“I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith.”* –

He also said - *“When God works in us, the will is changed under the sweet influence of the Spirit of God. Once more it desires and acts not of compulsion, but of its own desire and spontaneous inclination.”* – Martin Luther

John Calvin (1509 – 1564) – *“When God elects one and rejects another, it is owing not to any respect to the individual, but entirely to His own mercy which is free to display and exert itself when and where He pleases in order to humble the pride of the flesh.”* – John Calvin

John Owen (1616 – 1683) – *“When the Holy Spirit intends to regenerate a person, he removes all obstacles, overcomes all resistance and opposition, and infallibly produces the result He intended.”* – John Owen

Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758) – *“Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. God’s sovereignty has ever appeared to me a great part of His glory.”* – Jonathan Edwards

George Whitefield (1740 – 1770) – *“I embrace the Calvinistic scheme, not because of Calvin, but Jesus Christ has taught it to me. I am more and more convinced that the doctrines of grace are the truths of God and that they agree with the written Word and with the experiences of all the saints in all ages.”* – George Whitefield

Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892) – *“It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching, no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, that are called by the nickname Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me.”* – Charles Spurgeon

Benjamin B. Warfield (1851 – 1921) – *“The Calvinist is the man who has seen God, and who, having seen God in His glory, is filled on the one hand with a sense of his own unworthiness to stand in God’s sight as a creature, and much more as a sinner, and on the other hand, with adoring wonder that nevertheless this God is a God who receives sinners.”* – Benjamin Warfield

John Murray (1898 – 1975) - *“God’s call, since it is effectual, carries without the operative grace whereby the person called is enabled to answer the call and to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel.”* – John Murray



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace

Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"

By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

John MacArthur – *“God is the decider and the determiner of every man’s destiny, the controller of every detail in every individual’s life, which is another way of saying He is God.” – John MacArthur*

That is just a sampling of what many believed for the past 2,00 years throughout church history.

The grace of God’s calling is overwhelmingly efficacious or effective or successful.

The Holy Spirit regenerates us, giving us a new nature, and as a result we believe the gospel, repent of our sin, and trust in Christ for salvation.

This puts the determining factor in a person’s salvation in God’s hands where it clearly belongs.

For example, when the Jewish authorities opposed Christ, they were allowed to do so to the very last.

Acts 7:51 - ⁵¹ *“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you.*

And although the apostle Paul also resisted, he was allowed to do so only to a point after which God brought his resistance to an end in Acts chapter 9.

Those whom God calls effectively not only hear his call but actually respond to it by turning around and by believing on or committing their lives to Jesus Christ.

Point 1 – Irresistible grace begins with the General Call to Salvation

Now there are two types of calls in the Bible. The first is a general call. It’s external, it’s universal. It’s an invitation to all people to repent of sin, turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved.

Acts 17:30 - *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.*

Matthew 11:28 - *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

John 7:37 - *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.*



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Today that same call flows from every true Christian pulpit and from all who bear witness to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in every land.

The difficulty with this external, universal, and ineffectual call is that if people are left to themselves, no one ever actually responds to it.

People hear the gospel and may even understand it up to a point, but the God who issues the call is undesirable to them, and so they turn away.

Luke 14:15-24 - ¹⁵ When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" ¹⁶ But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' ¹⁹ And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' ²⁰ And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' ²² And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' ²³ And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"

Jesus wasn't making the story up out of thin air. That was the way the people of his day actually responded to his call. They would not receive the invitation. They rejected it, preferring to go their own way.

When Jesus was in the world, he was the world's light. The light was shining. But the people of his day did not respond to Jesus by walking in the right path.

Instead, they hated the light and tried to put it out. They crucified the lighthouse.

John 3:19 - And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

Then there is a second kind of call, a specific call.

Point 2 – Irresistible grace leads to the Effectual Call of Salvation



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

This second kind of call is internal and effectual. It not only issues the invitation but also provides the willingness or ability to respond.

It's a case of God bringing to spiritual life those who without the call would remain spiritually dead forever.

The greatest illustration of God's grace and calling a dead sinner to life is the raising of Lazarus in John 11.

What a graphic description of the state of our moral and spiritual decay because of sin. There is no hope that anything will be done for Lazarus and his helpless condition.

His case was not serious or grim but altogether hopeless. George Whitfield used to say that the sinner's condition is worse than hopeless.

Jesus called Lazarus to come out and the call of God brought the dead man to life. That is what the Holy Spirit does spiritually.

The Holy Spirit operates through the preaching and teaching of the word to call to faith those whom God previously has elected to salvation and for whom Jesus specifically died.

Apart from those three actions - the act of God in electing, the work of Christ in atoning, and the power of the Holy Spirit in calling, there would be no hope for anyone. No one could be saved.

But because of those actions, because of God's sovereign grace, even the worst of blaspheming rebels may be turned from their folly to the Savior.

One of the best discussions on the effectual call is in John Murray's book *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*.

Murray begins by making the distinction just made, showing that there is such a thing as a general or universal call and that there are examples of it in the Bible.

But then he points out that in the New Testament the terms for calling, when used with reference to salvation, are almost uniformly applied not to the universal call of the gospel, but to the call that ushers men into a state of salvation and is therefore effectual.

Consider some of these biblical examples –



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Romans 1:6-7 - ⁶ Including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.

So, God irresistibly calls His elect out of all the nations to the obedience of faith in Christ. This effectual call inevitably leads to the salvation of God's chosen ones.

The believers in Rome had heard the gospel preached and had been invited to receive Christ.

But they had also been called by the power of the Holy Spirit to believe the message they had heard, and for that reason they had responded positively to the invitation.

When Christ calls a sinner, he enlightens that person's mind, renews the heart, and activates the will so that the elect one can believe upon Him.

Romans 11:29 - ⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

1 Corinthians 1:9 - ⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 4:1 - I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

It's by the faithfulness of God, fulfilling His eternal purpose and plan, that the elect are called and converted.

God is absolutely faithful to call to Himself all whom he chose before time began.

2 Timothy 1:8-9 - ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

Paul explained that God powerfully calls His elect to Himself with a holy calling. This divine summons arrests all who are chosen and separates them to a life of holiness, service, and suffering.

2 Peter 1:10 - Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Peter insisted that all whom the Father has chosen will be called by the Spirit to salvation. Divine election and irresistible calling are inseparably bound together.

In each of these texts and many others the call of God effectually saves those to whom it's addressed.

It's a call that unites us to Jesus Christ, bringing us into fellowship with him and setting before us a holy life in which we will be sure to walk if we truly have been called.

Effectual calling is the point at which the eternal foreknowledge and predestination of God pass over into time.....

..... and start the process by which the individual is drawn from sin to faith in Jesus Christ, is justified through that faith, and is then kept in Christ until their final glorification.

Why is this internal or specific call so effective? The reason the call is so effective is that it's God's call.

It issues from his mouth, and everything that issues from the mouth of God accomplishes that for which it is sent.

Isaiah 55:10-11 - For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

As God's Word is proclaimed, the Lord carries out His predetermined purposes in salvation. He causes His truth to triumph in the hearts of his chosen ones.

Isaiah here describes the certain triumph of God's Word in the hearts of God's elect.

Like the rain and snow that come down to water the earth and give it abundant growth, God's Word brings forth spiritual life within the dead souls of the elect.

Now there are a number of misunderstandings of what "calling" means and I want to provide some clarification about the two calls.

Firstly, as I've mentioned, the trouble with the general call is that people don't naturally respond to it.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Although they don't respond to the general call to salvation, they can respond by such outward actions such as coming forward at a religious meeting, or making a profession of faith, or even joining a church.

Not only can they respond in these ways, but many do. That's why Peter told people to make their calling and election sure.

He meant that we must be sure that we really have been called by God and are truly born again, and that we have not merely been called by the preacher.

Donald Grey Barnhouse said this *"If men heed no more than the outward call, they become members of the visible church. If the inward call is heard in our hearts, we become members of the invisible church. The first call unites us merely to a group of professing members; but the inward call unites us to Christ himself, and to all that have been born again. The outward call may bring with it a certain intellectual knowledge of the truth; the inward call brings us the faith of the heart, the hope which anchors us forever to Christ and the love which must ever draw us back to him who first loved us. The one can end in formalism, the other in true life. The outward call may curb the tendencies of the old nature and keep a soul in outward morality; the inward call will cure the plague that is in us and bring us on to triumph in Christ."* – Donald Grey Barnhouse.

Secondly, the general call has a purpose and importance. The general call is necessary, since it is through the general or universal call that God calls specifically.

The effectual or specific call comes through the general call. In other words, it's through the preaching of God's Word by evangelists and preachers and through the sharing of the gospel by Christians everywhere, that God calls sinners.

He doesn't call everyone we call. We sow the seed broadly; some of it falls on stony or shallow soil, just as some of it also falls on good soil.

But when the seed falls on the soil God preciously has prepared and when God, the giver of life, blesses the work of sowing so that the seed takes root in the good soil and grows, the result is a spiritual harvest.

To put it another way, if God calls effectively through the general call, then if some are to be saved, the general call is as necessary as the specific and effectual call.

The call we give doesn't regenerate. God alone is the author of the new birth. Even so, the way God does that is through the sowing of the seed of his Word, which is entrusted to us.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Thirdly, sometimes people get bogged down by the mistaken thought "If God is going to elect me to salvation, he will just have to do it. There is nothing I can do."

Or they get hung up on knowing whether or not they are among the elect. They might say, "How can I know if I'm elect? If I'm not, there's no hope for me."

There's no reason for such passivity or despair.

How do you know whether or not you are elect? Well, have you responded to the gospel? Have you answered God's call?

Do you see fruit in your life? Do others see fruit in your life? Are you continuing to believe and have faith? Then you are elect.

Consider some biblical examples from the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 11:7 - *By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.*

Hebrews 11:8 - *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.*

Hebrews 11:24-25 - *²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.*

Again, how do you know you're elect? It's not by trying to peer into the eternal counsels of God. You can know you're elect if you respond to the gospel.

Romans 10:11-13 - *¹¹ For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. ¹³ For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

When you believe in Christ, you can know that God has set his electing love upon you and that, having loved you, he will continue to love you to the end.

Point 3 – Irresistible grace is part of the Order of Salvation



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

The effectual call is only one point in a long chain of actions by which God saves an individual sinner.

In theology this chain is called the *ordo salutis* or the order of salvation. It's a long chain beginning with God's eternal purpose to save and ending with the glorification of the justified sinner.

Jody has talked about this before, but I just want to review it again because it's good to talk about this and make sure we understand it.

The first part of the chain is foreknowledge. Fore means beforehand.

The common view of this is that since God knows all things, God knows beforehand who will believe in him and who won't, and as a result he has predestined those whom he foresees will believe in him for salvation.

What he foreknows or foresees is their faith.

However, there's a problem with that view. If we look at Romans 8:29, it doesn't say that God foreknew what some of his creatures would do.

It's not talking about human actions at all. Rather it's speaking entirely of what God does.

Each of the terms in Romans 8:29-30 is like that – God foreknew, God predestined, God called, God justified, and God glorified.

The object of divine foreknowledge is not the actions of certain people but the people themselves.

In this sense foreknowledge can only mean that God has fixed a special attention on certain people or has loved them in a saving way.

But there's another problem as well.

If all the word foreknowledge means is that God knows beforehand what people will do in response to him or to the preaching of the gospel.....

.....and then determines their destiny on that basis, what could God possibly foresee or foreknow except opposition to him?



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Romans 3:10-12 - *As it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."*

What could God possibly foresee in any human heart but unbelief?

So biblically speaking, foreknowledge means that salvation has its origin in the mind of God, not man.

Foreknowledge focuses our attention on the everlasting love of God, according to which some persons are graciously chosen to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

Next is predestination which is different from foreknowledge. Predestination means to determine a person's destiny beforehand, while foreknowledge means to fix one's love upon or to elect.

But this doesn't inform us of the destination to which those who have been chosen are appointed.

Predestination supplies this for us. It tells us that, having fixed his distinguishing love upon us, God next appointed us to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.

Effectual calling is next which is what we've been discussing. The effectual call not only issues the invitation but also provides the ability or willingness to respond.

It's God's drawing to himself or bringing to spiritual life the one who without that call would remain spiritually dead and far from him.

Effectual calling is then followed by regeneration. When we say that God's call brings forth life in the one who is called, what we mean is that the call of God regenerates or brings about the new birth.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 - *²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

Regeneration is a work of God by which a spiritually dead man or woman is brought to life in Christ, having been given a new nature in which what was once a heart of stone now becomes a heart of flesh.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

The person who has been regenerated is brought out of darkness into God's wonderful light.

It involves a change in one's character so that they become a new creation in Christ.

John 1:12-13 - *But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

John tells us that regeneration is not by physical birth or merit nor a person trying to will themselves into being born again nor does it happen through another person's desires for someone to be saved.

John 3:3-5 - *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*

Jesus taught that the new birth is a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit performed powerfully within God's elect. The Spirit causes the elect to be born again, allowing them to spiritually see, understand, and enter God's kingdom.

1 Peter 1:3 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

Peter tells us that all who are chosen and foreknown by the Father are regenerated by the Spirit. The truth of the sinner being "caused" to be born again is reason for great praise in the heart of every believer.

1 Peter 1:22-23 - *Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.*

The new birth is a work of sovereign grace within the human soul. No one can cause himself to be born physically.

No one is responsible for their physical birth. The process is initiated and nurtured by the parents.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Neither can anyone cause himself to be born again spiritually. And spiritual birth is initiated and nurtured by our heavenly Father and is not our own doing.

God, who alone is active in regeneration, must cause the unbelieving sinner to be born again.

The immediate effect of the divine regeneration of the soul is that the sinner now abhors the sin that he once cherished, and trusts in Christ for his salvation.

This involves two actions, turning from sin, which is repentance, and turning to God, which is faith.

These are both things that we do. That is, God does not repent for us, nor does he believe for us. We must repent. We must believe.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Nevertheless, both repentance and faith occur in us because of God's prior work of regeneration. They are granted to us and given to us by God's grace.

Repentance and faith are two parts of the single experience that we call conversion.

Conversion means to turn around. Before God's regenerating work in our hearts, we were going in a wrong direction.

But when God have us a new nature to desire him and what he desires for us, we turned a full 180 degrees to go in the opposite direction.

The next step in the chain is justification. Justification is God's act, not ours.

It's the judicial function by which God declares a person to be in a right standing before him, not on the basis of their own works, but on the basis of what Jesus Christ has done by dying in their place on the cross.

God now imputes the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus to their account.

Then there is Adoption, and like justification, is a judicial act.

However, it differs from justification in that justification concerns our standing before the bar of God's justice, while adoption has to do with our being brought into God's spiritual family, with all the blessings that entails.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
Wk. 4 "Irresistible Grace"
By Mike Clark 11/20/2022

Adoption brings us all the benefits of sonship, including the right to approach God in prayer.

It assures us of God's love and protection. It contributes to our assurance that we have been saved.

Next comes sanctification and like repentance and faith it involves our cooperation with God.

Sanctification is a process in which, having been given a new nature by God, the redeemed sinner now can and must cooperate.

Justification is monergistic, that is the work of God alone. In contrast, sanctification is synergistic, that is it is a joint work of both God and man.

Philippians 2:12-13 - ¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

The last chain in the order of salvation is glorification and it's our ultimate spiritual destiny. We will one day become like Jesus Christ as fully and gloriously as possible.

Romans 8:30 - And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Notice that Paul uses the past tense when he speaks of glorification.

He is thinking of this final step in our salvation as being so certain that it is possible to refer to it as already having happened.

Philippians 1:6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

The bottom line of the order of salvation is that the decisive acts in this sequence are God's.

And even the matters for which we are responsible such as repentance and faith and sanctification, are only possible because of God's prior working.



TULIP - The Doctrines of Grace
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It's the acts of God that matter. Without them, not one of us would be saved.

CONCLUSION –

So, I ask why, if the gospel is freely offered to all people, do some respond to it and are saved but others reject it and are lost?

The Arminian says this is because of something in an individual, so that the individual ultimately is responsible for his own destiny.

The Calvinist says that it's God who makes the difference, and that this is due entirely to his grace.

And so maybe you're hearing all this today and you feel the weight of sin and God's judgment hanging over you.

If that's you, cry out to God and humbly plead with Him to remove his wrath from you.

If you will humble yourself and cry out for mercy, you can be declared righteous before the tribunal of God despite your sin.

And you can rest assured that the death of Jesus has removed the wrath of God from you once and for all.

And if you are already trusting in Christ, you can know that you personally were a part of the eternal plan of God for the salvation of sinners, and that Jesus Christ had you in mind when he suffered the punishment due to sin.

Prayer -