



Reference: VARIOUS

Church: GRACE

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Can Anyone Resist God's Saving Work?

Purpose: To show from Scripture that God's call to salvation is and must be effectual - all His elect will be saved and none can resist His will.

1. Introduction

Continuing series on Reformed Theology

So far have seen:

1) Man is totally depraved

Spiritually dead

No desire for the truth

No understanding of the truth

No ability to respond to the truth

2) God has chosen to save some

Before the creation of the world

Unconditional – not because of anything in man

Originates totally with God for His own glory

3) Christ died on the cross only for God's chosen

Not to make salvation a possibility, depending on man

But to infallibly save those God had chosen

If Christ died for all:

- **Either** all are saved
- Then there is no Hell - Then Christ lied
- **Or** God punished Christ and sinner for same sin
- Then God is no longer just – no longer God

Tonight go one step further:

All we have seen would not be enough to save

We are dead. God's election and Christ's death do not change that

We have to have the salvation that Christ purchased applied

We have to be given new life through the working of the Spirit

And here is the Bible's teaching on the subject:

No one is able to resist **God's** call to salvation

He will save all His elect

No-one will thwart His plans.

Look at 1st the background of the doctrine

Then the Scriptures that teach it

2. Irresistible Grace

2.1. *Grace*

The word means unmerited favor

God's salvation is totally unmerited

In fact, totally contrary to merit

2.2. *Irresistible*

This means that the outcome is certain

God will save His elect

None can oppose Him in His saving purposes

3. Outward call and inner call

3.1. *Outward call*

The Gospel call is to go out to all creation

We are to offer salvation freely to all

This is the outward call

We appeal to men and women, boys and girls

We call on them to turn from sin and believe

Clearly not all do so – why not?

How can there be a Jacob and Esau – twins?

From what we have seen, all resist outward call by nature

And so it would continue if there was only an outward call

If men simply preached the Gospel and called sinners to Christ

No dead sinners would come to life

No hardened hearts would be softened

No blind eyes would see the truth

No-one would understand or desire the Gospel

Men can and do work on the emotions

Can produce a temporary effect

Can make people sign pledges, pray prayers

But if this is only man's work, not one will continue
There must be something else at work if true salvation is to occur

3.2. Inner, effectual call

The Holy Spirit calls us effectually
He applies the work of Christ to us
He regenerates those God has chosen
Makes them alive, softens their hearts
Opens eyes and ears
Breaks bondage to sin and Satan
Enables understanding of the truth
Engenders faith in the heart
He infallibly applies salvation Christ purchased on the cross
He never fails to save someone God has chosen
It is certain, invincible, irresistible

4. Does this mean we are puppets?

Does God drag people to Himself against their will?
Have seen that the will is tainted by sin
Man cannot choose to come to Christ
All resist Him by nature
Yet God does not make people Christians against their will
Rather, he operates on their will to make them willing
He first regenerates them
In doing so, He liberates their will
Causes them to love what they once hated
Righteousness, holiness, truth
Then, captivated by the beauty of Christ
They freely, willingly come to Him as Lord and Savior
They repent, believe and are saved
And man cannot and does not resist this operation
Does an unconscious man resist the surgeon?
Then what of a dead man?
Does an unborn child refuse to be born?
Does an uncreated thing refuse to be created?
Yet without Christ we are spiritually unborn and dead, uncreated
How could it be supposed we are able to resist God's inner call?

Look at Scriptures to demonstrate the truth of these things

5. The Scripture evidence

See What happens, examples and why it Happens

5.1. What Happens?

5.1.1. All the elect WILL come

John 6:37,44,45 All that the Father gives Me **will come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not 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 shall all be taught of God.' **Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.**

They **WILL** come – not **MIGHT**
ONLY if the Father draws them – not if they choose
Everyone who **really** hears (unstopped ears)
And **really** learns (mind)
COMES
This Scripture should be enough on its own!

5.1.2. All of Christ's sheep WILL hear

John 10:16 I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, **and they will hear My voice**; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

Christ must bring them.
Why? Because He must save all the Father has given Him
And they will hear
They will not refuse
Their resistance will end and they will become sheep

5.1.3. A certain process

Romans 8:29-30 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 **and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified**; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

Those He set His love on (foreknew)
He predestined (elected).
These He called (irresistibly)

And because they responded, he justified them and they were saved

Total and certain

5.2. Examples to Whom it did happen

5.2.1. Paul

Think of his conversion

Who resisted God more? Kicked against the goads

Did he resist on the road to Damascus?

How does he describe it? -

Galatians 1:15-16 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb **and called me through His grace**, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

Set apart from the womb – chosen

Called through grace – irresistible, effectual call

5.2.2. Lydia

Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; **and the Lord opened her heart to respond** to the things spoken by Paul.

Lydia listened to Paul

But she was unable to respond until the Lord worked

He opened her heart so that she could respond

There is the irresistible grace

She came willingly and freely to Christ

Because the Lord had opened her heart

5.2.3. Lazarus

Lazarus was dead in the tomb

Had been there 4 days

Jesus stepped forward and cried out

“Lazarus, Come forth!”

Did he say “I don’t want to – leave me alone!”?

Could he have refused Christ’s call?

What would that have said about Christ?

We are dead in sins

Ephesians 2:4-5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved),

And Christ comes to us and says, “Come forth!”

Can we refuse?

What would that say about Christ?

No – He made us alive **WHEN WE WERE DEAD**

Famous Preacher in UK when at Sunday School

Why did Jesus say, “Lazarus come forth!”?

“If He hadn’t said “Lazarus”, they would all have come!”

There it is – irresistible, invincible, certain grace!

It is more glorious but no different in salvation

Christ’ power is supreme and cannot be thwarted

5.3. Why Does it Happen this way?

Why was Paul saved?

Why was Lydia’s heart opened?

Why did Lazarus rise?

Why do dead sinners come to life?

Because of God’s Will, His Word and His Power

5.3.1. God’s will

John 1:12-13 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.**

James 1:18 **In the exercise of His will** He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Man’s natural will is not involved

It could only resist and perish

In the realm of salvation, it is God’s supreme will that works

John 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so **the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.**

He is the life-giver

The giving of life is at His pleasure

He comes to those who all resist Him and can only resist

And gives life to Whom He wishes

5.3.2. God's Word

Isaiah 55:11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; **It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire,** And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

What does this mean?

Can anyone oppose God's purposes?

No- His word will accomplish His desires

Including His word effectually calling the elect to Himself

5.3.3. God's Power

Ephesians 1:18-21 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 **and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,** 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

How much power did it take to raise Christ?

Could that power be resisted?

Could it have been thwarted by any power in Heaven or Hell?

But look – He uses power to raise dead sinners

And it accords to the power He used to raise Christ

Can it be resisted? Shall a creature thwart such power?

6. Conclusions

This should be so exciting to us

There is no uncertainty here

There is power, authority,

There is grace, mighty, sovereign Grace

We all resist the outward call

But God works in the elect with an inward call

He makes them willing

He opens their hearts

Breathes in life by the Spirit

Frees the will enlightens the mind

Opens the eyes, unstops the ears

And they come – Praise God!

Have you come?

Have you heard this powerful call of God

So that you could not resist

No – so that you no longer wanted to resist?

Come to Him now – He has not changed

He alone is the one with power to save

No man can do it

No man can contribute to it

No man can resist Him when He calls

If man can resist, there can be no salvation but:-

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short That it cannot save;
Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.