

**6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.**

**6:38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.**

**6:39 "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.**

**6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."**

The thought of Christ coming down from heaven is repeated seven times in chapter 6 (vs. 33, 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58). Verses 38-40 give the reason for His descent; He came to do the will of the Father.

In 6:39 the Father's will is expressed in two desires: it is the Father's will that (1) none whom He gives to Christ will be lost, and that (2) those who are given to Christ will be raised. In other words, God's desire is to give people to Christ, and that all whom He gives reach the destination of their salvation. If eternal life is permanent, the necessity of the resurrection becomes obvious. Since Christ perfectly accomplishes the Father's will, not a single person given to Him will be lost. Salvation is not based on the strength of man to hold on to it, but the power and character of Christ to fulfill God's will (see also 1 Pet. 1:3-5).

In verse 40, to "behold" means to see and grasp the significance of what is seen; it is a synonym of "believe."

**6:41 Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven."**

**6:42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"**

"The Jews" in the Book of John normally refer to the leaders who oppose Jesus. They couldn't conceive of how Jesus could claim to have come down from heaven when they knew who His parents were. Had they really known the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth, Christ's comments would have seemed tenable.

"Murmuring" describes their anger and the discontentment that spread through the crowd. It was the characteristic of the people in Moses' day as well.

**6:43 Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves.**

**6:44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."**

Grumbling about what Jesus had said was not only an expression of unbelief, but their discussion suggested that through their logic they could know if Jesus had come from heaven or not. Nothing could be further from the truth. No one can come to Christ apart from God's grace. In verse 39 Jesus had said

all that the Father gives to Him will come; now in even stronger language He says, "*No one can come unless the Father draws Him.*"

The doctrine of God drawing men to salvation is a major theme in the Gospel of John. "Men like to feel independent. They think that they come or *can* come to Jesus entirely of their own volition. Jesus assures us that this is an utter impossibility. No man, no man at all, can come unless the Father draws him" (Morris, 372).

***6:45 "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.***

***6:46 Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father."***

Jesus now states how the Father draws people, but in OT terminology (Isa. 54:13 or Jer. 31:34). The prophets had predicted that a day would come when God Himself would teach His people, giving them insight and illuminating their hearts. Jesus now flips the meaning to make the opposite point; the reason for their inability to come to Him is due to their inability to hear the Father's voice (Kostenberger, 214).

Lest there be confusion in this, Jesus clarifies that being taught by God does not mean that they have seen God. No one has seen God (Jn. 1:18) except One – the One who is from God, the One who has come down from heaven. Knowledge of God is impossible apart from the revelation of Himself in Christ.

***6:47 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.***

***6:48 I am the bread of life.***

***6:49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.***

***6:50 This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die."***

In verse 31 the Jews had spoken of the manna that their fathers had eaten in the days of Moses. Verses 48-51 return to this theme.

The manna which was eaten in the wilderness could only sustain physical life for a time. Jesus offers something far superior; the bread He gives eliminates death altogether. This bread is not earthly, but comes down from heaven. All who eat of it (aorist tense indicating a one-time action) will not die.

***6:51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."***

***6:52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"***

Those who heard Jesus knew that He was speaking figuratively (no one would think that Jesus was advocating cannibalism and offering Himself as the first meal; Carson, 295), but His words were offensive and they had no idea what it was that they were trying to convey (Bruce, 159).

Their question in verse 52 shows their confusion. "How can this man give us His flesh to eat? What's He talking about?" Even in a spiritual sense, the impartation of His nature to another is hard to grasp (Bernard I, 209).

The combination of words "give," "flesh," and "for (on behalf of) the world" strongly suggests Jesus' sacrificial death for others. The emphasis is not that Christ dies for sin, but that He dies to give life, which is an emphasis that is characteristic of this Gospel (Jn. Jn. 3:14-16; 5:40; 6:40; 10:10; 11:25, etc.).

Simply put, these verses are saying something like this: God gave His people bread in the wilderness and all who ate it lived. In a similar way, God gives bread to the world, and all who eat it will live. The bread He gives is Jesus. The way that Jesus gives life is by giving His body (flesh) for the world. The way that people receive life is by appropriating Him; in the analogy of bread, they eat.

**6:53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.**

**6:54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."**

Before Jesus answers their question in verse 52, He amplifies what He had said in verse 51 making it even more offensive than the original. The Law of Moses imposed a ban on the drinking of any blood whatsoever (including the eating of flesh with the blood in it; Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10-16). Christ's words were intolerably abhorrent to Jewish ears (Bruce, 159; Carson, 269; & most others).

The primary idea of eating and drinking Christ is that of appropriating (receiving, believing upon, abiding in) Christ in totality (6:35, 40, 47, 50, 51, 57, 58). However, it is also clear that these verses are predictive of Jesus' death; Jesus said, "the bread also which I will give for the life of the world *is My flesh*" (v. 51). Men do not possess eternal life naturally (6:53); it is through the intake of Christ's life that life is received.

Some modern commentators understand Jesus to be speaking of the bread and the cup of communion by prophetic forecast, but that is a violent misinterpretation of the Gospel and an utter misrepresentation of Christ. It would have been hopeless confusion for these Jews if Jesus had used the symbolism of communion. Furthermore, if sacramentalism is what Jesus is teaching, one must conclude that one must partake of the Eucharist to receive eternal life, which would contradict the earlier part of the discourse (esp. v 40) (Carson, 297).

Verse 40 and 54 are closely parallel.

V. 40	everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him	will have eternal life,	and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.
V. 54	He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood	has eternal life,	and I will raise him up on the last day.

The only real difference between the two verses is that in verse 40 it speaks of looking at the Son and believing, while verse 54 speaks of eating His flesh and blood. The conclusion is obvious: the latter is a metaphorical way of referring to the former (Carson, 297). Thus, we understand the meaning of Christ's words; they refer to coming to Him, believing in Him and appropriating Him by faith (Bruce, 159).

If there is, however, a connection with Jesus' words and the bread and the cup it is that the bread and the cup illustrate the unchanging truth so fully set forth in this discourse. Eating and drinking Christ is the best way to signify the assimilation of one thing into another, the method whereby life is transmitted from the eaten to the eater (Tenny, 122). He who feeds on Christ appropriates His life, which is the life of God (Bernard I, 210). This is what communion symbolizes.

***6:55 "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.***

***6:56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."***

Other foods are not food in the true sense. They are but imperfect types of the only real source of nourishment and refreshment (Alford, 768). Jesus is the real food.

Jesus here defines what it means to eat His flesh and drink His blood - it is to abide in Him (another expression synonymous to belief). The same idea is expressed by Paul in the expression "in Christ" (Bruce, 160).

To abide in Christ means that the person continues to be identified with Jesus and continues in saving faith and subsequent transformation of life (Carson, 298). As food is assimilated into the body, Christ becomes fully absorbed into the life of the individual (Dods, 758). Abiding is ultimate fellowship and union (Plummer, 162) and reminds us that the believer doesn't enter in to a temporary state with Jesus, but a permanent one (Morris, 380).

***6:57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me."***

The analogy of verse 57 makes it clearer than ever what it means to eat and drink Christ; it's having Christ and His life within oneself, just as the Son has the life of the Father in Him. It is the communion with Christ's person that transmits the life of the Father to the believer.

This verse also defines the Father and Son's relationship to each other; the Father is the source of all life; the Son is the bearer of that life to the world (Dods, 758; Bernard I, 213).

***6:58 "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."***

This is the summary of verses 32-57 and final explanation of the true manna as being Jesus Christ Himself (RWP; Plummer, 162; Alford, 768; Bernard I, 214). The manna in Moses' day fed the bodies of men and women for a time; the true bread feeds God's people for eternity.

***6:59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.***

***6:60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"***

***6:61 But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?"***

***6:62 What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?"***

The “disciples” in verses 60 and 61 is a reference to the crowd that had been following Jesus (Jn. 6:2), not the twelve. These are the same as the disciples in verse 66 who stopped following Him and distinct from the twelve whom Jesus addresses in verses 64 and 67. It isn’t unusual for unbelievers to be called disciples, since the term simply means to be a follower or a learner and could be applied to any who followed a particular teacher.

The ascension is the counterpart of Christ’s heavenly descent to which the Jews had objected (Jn. 6:41-42). Elsewhere, the idea of going to the Father implies the whole drama of Christ’s passion (see Jn. 7:33; 13:3; 14:12, 28; 16:5, 28; 17:11, 13). The additional meaning of the suffering would be implied and supplied by the reader (Plummer, 164). In other words, Jesus implies that the means of ascending was through the cross. If they were offended by what He said about coming from heaven, they will be all the more offended by the death of Messiah on the cross. The very idea was outrageous (I Cor. 1:23). But this is at the very heart of His disclosure. At the time of His greatest shame is the moment of His glorification, the path of His return to glory. The fact that He will be crushed for our iniquities is the portal to the time He will be raised up (Isa. 53:3-5; 52:13). How men and women look at the supreme scandal determine their eternal destiny (Carson, 301; Bruce, 163).

***6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."***

The Spirit is the One who gives life (see notes on Jn. 4:13-14; 7:38-39; Gen 1:2; Psa. 104:30).

When rightly understood, the words Jesus speaks are spirit and life. They are spirit because they are a product of the Spirit (Carson, 302; Kent, 110); they are life because the Spirit gives life through the words of God. “Man does not live by bread alone, but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD” (Deut. 8:3; cf. Isa. 55:11; Jer. 23:29; Heb. 4:12).

***6:64 "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 it was that would betray Him.***

***6:65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."***

Jesus is probably now addressing the twelve disciples. He is not speaking from the perspective of observation, but His comment is based on foreknowledge. Jesus knew from the beginning that many in the crowd who had professed discipleship would not last. He even knew that some among His closest disciples could not accept what He had said. But the twelve should not be surprised that many would not believe Christ, for apart from the Divine initiative belief was impossible (v. 65; Morris, 387).

John 6:65 says that no one can come to Christ UNLESS God grants it. This can only mean that no one can believe in Him unless God grants it. Only the Spirit gives life (6:63). In John 6:37 Jesus said, “All that the Father gives to me WILL COME TO ME.” So if we were to put these verses together we can see what Jesus explicitly teaches concerning who will believe: no one will believe in Me unless God grants it, and ALL to whom God grants it will believe. Jesus is making sure that no one thinks that anything apart from grace is what saves them; the very desire to believe is a gift of God. This is extremely important because it leads to the inescapable conclusion that the grace of God cannot be resisted.

“The grace of the Holy Spirit in regeneration is not only sufficient but efficient, unfailingly bringing about God’s desired result. We may resist the gospel when hearing the outward call and even resist stirrings of the Holy Spirit, but no one resists the inward quickening and call of God (Rom 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:22-24)” (John Hendryx).

***6:66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.***

***6:67 So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"***

As it has been mentioned, a disciple was someone who literally followed His master around. “Not walking with Him anymore” means that they had renounced their discipleship; they went back to their former manner of living.

This verse marks the watershed in the Gospel of John, for it is a major rejection of Christ and raises the question if the twelve will also leave.

***6:68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.***

***6:69 We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."***

Though this is a different occasion than Peter’s confession in Matthew 16:16, the content is essentially the same.

Peter addresses Jesus as “lord” or “master” in acknowledgment of his relationship to Him. He confesses that there is no other one to whom he could go to find the words of life. He has believed in Christ and states that He is the Holy One of Israel, a title clearly used by Peter with messianic implications.

***6:70 Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"***

***6:71 Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.***

Since Peter is speaking for the twelve, Jesus addresses them as a group. Though Christ had chosen the twelve to be His disciples, it is clear that he knew that not all “were given” to Him by the Father.

### ***Summary of John, Chapter 6:***

The feeding of the 5,000 is a sign that points to Jesus as the Bread of Life. The historical context gives depth to this. It is the Passover season which is associated with sacrifice, redemption, a meal, and future deliverance. The Jews are looking for a prophet like Moses, and expected signs similar to those that attended Moses, specifically bread from heaven. Jesus, thus introduces Himself as the true bread that comes down from heaven, who gives life, even raising the dead.

The section climaxes with the separation of men; many leave, the twelve grow in their faith and remain. Neutrality is not a position that is made available.

**END NOTES ON IRRESISTIBLE GRACE****by John Piper**

The doctrine of irresistible grace does not mean that every influence of the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted. It means that the Holy Spirit can overcome all resistance and make his influence irresistible.

In Acts 7:51 Stephen says to the Jewish leaders, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit as your fathers did." And Paul speaks of grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). God gives many entreaties and promptings which are resisted. In fact the whole history of Israel in the Old Testament is one protracted story of resistance, as the parable of the wicked tenants shows (Matthew 21:33-43; cf. Romans 10:21).

The doctrine of irresistible grace means that God is sovereign and can overcome all resistance when he wills. "He does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand!" (Daniel 4:35). "Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases" (Psalm 115:3). When God undertakes to fulfill his sovereign purpose, no one can successfully resist him.

This is what Paul taught in Romans 9:14-18, which caused his opponent to say, "Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" To which Paul answers: "Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me thus?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?" (Romans 9:20f).

More specifically irresistible grace refers to the sovereign work of God to overcome the rebellion of our heart and bring us to faith in Christ so that we can be saved. If our doctrine of total depravity is true, there can be no salvation without the reality of irresistible grace. If we are dead in our sins, totally unable to submit to God, then we will never believe in Christ unless God overcomes our rebellion.

Someone may say, "Yes, the Holy Spirit must draw us to God, but we can use our freedom to resist or accept that drawing." Our answer is: except for the continual exertion of saving grace, we will always use our freedom to resist God. That is what it means to be "unable to submit to God." If a person becomes humble enough to submit to God it is because God has given that person a new, humble nature. If a person remains too hard hearted and proud to submit to God, it is because that person has not been given such a willing spirit. But to see this most persuasively we should look at the Scriptures.

In John 6:44 Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." This drawing is the sovereign work of grace without which no one can be saved from their rebellion against God. Again some say, "He draws all men, not just some." But this simply evades the clear implication of the context that the Father's "drawing" is why some believe and not others.

Specifically, John 6:64-65 says, "'But there are some of you that do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that should betray him. And he said, 'This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.'"

Notice two things.

First, notice that coming to Jesus is called a gift. It is not just an opportunity. Coming to Jesus is "given" to some and not to others.

Second, notice that the reason Jesus says this, is to explain why "there are some who do not believe." We could paraphrase it like this: Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas would not believe on him in spite of all the teaching and invitations he received. And because he knew this, he explains it with the words, No one comes to me unless it is given to him by my Father. Judas was not given to Jesus. There were many influences on his life for good. But the decisive, irresistible gift of grace was not given.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth."

Here, as in John 6:65 repentance is called a gift of God. Notice, he is not saying merely that salvation is a gift of God. He is saying that the prerequisites of salvation are also a gift. When a person hears a preacher call for repentance he can resist that call. But if God gives him repentance he cannot resist because the gift is the removal of resistance. Not being willing to repent is the same as resisting the Holy Spirit. So if God gives repentance it is the same as taking away the resistance. This is why we call this work of God "irresistible grace".

NOTE: It should be obvious from this that irresistible grace never implies that God forces us to believe against our will. That would even be a contradiction in terms. On the contrary, irresistible grace is compatible with preaching and witnessing that tries to persuade people to do what is reasonable and what will accord with their best interests.

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 says, "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jew and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Notice the two kinds of "calls" implied in this text.

First, the preaching of Paul goes out to all, both Jews and Greeks. This is the general call of the gospel. It offers salvation to all who will believe on the crucified Christ. But by and large it falls on unreceptive ears and is called foolishness.

But then, secondly, Paul refers to another kind of call. He says that among those who hear there are some who are "called" in such a way that they no longer regard the cross as foolishness but as the wisdom and power of God. What else can this call be but the irresistible call of God out of darkness into the light of God? If ALL who are called in this sense regard the cross as the power of God, then something in the call must effect the faith. This is irresistible grace.

It is further explained in 2 Corinthians 4:4-6, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God...It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Since men are blinded to the worth of Christ, a miracle is needed in order for them to come to see and believe. Paul compares this miracle with the first day of creation when God said, "Let there be light." It is in fact a new creation, or a new birth. This is what is meant by the effectual call in 1 Corinthians 1:24.

Those who are called have their eyes opened by the sovereign creative power of God so that they no longer see the cross as foolishness but as the power and the wisdom of God. The effectual call is the miracle of having our blindness removed. This is irresistible grace.

Another example of it is in Acts 16:14, where Lydia is listening to the preaching of Paul. Luke says, "The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul." Unless God opens our hearts, we will not heed the message of the gospel. This heart-opening is what we mean by irresistible grace.

Another way to describe it is "new birth" or being born again. We believe that new birth is a miraculous creation of God that enables a formerly "dead" person to receive Christ and so be saved. We do not think that faith precedes and causes new birth. Faith is the evidence that God has begotten us anew. "Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God" (1 John 5:1).

When John says that God gives the right to become the children of God to all who receive Christ (John 1:12), he goes on to say that those who do receive Christ "were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." In other words, it is necessary to receive Christ in order to become a child of God, but the birth that brings one into the family of God is not possible by the will of man.

Man is dead in trespasses and sins. He cannot make himself new, or create new life in himself. He must be born of God. Then, with the new nature of God, he immediately receives Christ. The two acts (regeneration and faith) are so closely connected that in experience we cannot distinguish them. God begets us anew and the first glimmer of life in the new-born child is faith. Thus new birth is the effect of irresistible grace, because it is an act of sovereign creation -- "not of the will of man but of God."

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