

# OpenTheo

## Challenges to Irresistible Grace



### **God's Sovereignty and Man's Salvation** - Steve Gregg

In this lecture, Steve Gregg questions the Calvinist belief in Irresistible Grace and presents various challenges related to the doctrine. He criticizes the idea that God predestines only a select few to be saved and argues that the Bible does not support the notion of an effectual and sovereign call that cannot be resisted. Gregg also emphasizes the importance of preaching and offering everyone the opportunity to repent and choose to follow God. He concludes by stating that salvation is a gift from God and not something that can be earned through works.

### **Transcript**

We're now looking at Lecture 7, Challenges to the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace. Irresistible Grace, remember, means that if you're one of the elect, you will be saved inevitably. Because God, His sovereign power cannot be resisted by man.

It seems like God's sovereign power is resisted by many men. Because when the gospel is preached, many people clearly resist it. Some successfully resist it to the end of their life.

Which makes it seem like God's grace can be resisted. But the Calvinist says, no, you've got to understand what's really going on. What God really wants to happen, really will happen.

And if it seems that He wants all men to repent because He commands them to, and they don't, then we can't go by what seems to be true. We have to assume that what really happens is what God really wanted to happen. Because He's sovereign.

And if all men are not saved, it's only because God didn't want all men to be saved. And if God really wants people to be saved, they will be saved. Because nothing can resist God.

Despite appearances to the contrary, no one really successfully resists the purposes of God. Now, they will say that men can resist the outward call and do on a regular basis. If God commands all men to repent, some will not.

They can resist that. But the fact that they resist it means that it was only an outward call to them. If the effectual inward call is made to them, they will inevitably come.

And so, there are several different aspects of this. We're going to be reexamining the positive case that Calvinists present for Irresistible Grace. But there's three subheadings.

One is the inevitability scriptures. The scriptures that make it sound like it's inevitable that the elect will come to Christ. Then there's a statement about people being dragged to Christ, which would be seemingly irresistible.

And then there's, of course, the effectual call issue here. And we're going to look at these. As far as the inevitability of the elect being saved, we mainly have John 6.37. By the way, we also are going to have to consider the issue of whether repentance and faith are gifts from God.

Because obviously if they are, and God gives somebody faith and gives them repentance, what can they do but be saved? He gave it to them. So, we're going to talk about that too. That's part of this category too.

Is faith a gift from God? Is repentance a gift from God? And if so, doesn't that mean that God gives these gifts to the ones he wishes to give them to, and they'll inevitably believe? All right. John 6.37 says, All that the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will by no means cast out. Now, the last line of this could be used possibly for the perseverance doctrine, which we'll cover in our next subject.

But the main thing here is that all that the Father gives me will come to me. It's a prediction, not a command. It is something said with assurance, seemingly with certainty.

There are some people who will certainly come to Christ. And they are a known category, those whom the Father has given to me. Now, to the Calvinist, that category, those whom the Father gives to Jesus, is simply another way of saying all the elect of all time.

Not only in his day, but in all days. There's an elect number, both in Old Testament times and to the end of the world. Through the whole history of mankind, there's some that God elected for salvation and some he didn't.

And those that he elected of any time are part of that number that God gave to Jesus. Now, that seems reasonable enough if we don't pay much attention to the way these terms are used elsewhere in the Gospel of John by Jesus himself. I showed you this before in John 17, 6. John 17, 6, Jesus is praying and he talks about those that the Father has given him.

And he says to the Father, they were yours and you gave them to me. Now, this means, of course, that when Jesus says the ones that the Father has given me, he's referring to

people that were already God's people. As I said, when Jesus came, there were many who, prior to his coming, were already faithful Jews.

They were already faithful to the old covenant, faithful to the old revelation, faithful to what God had said through Moses and the prophets. And there were Jews who were not. There were Jews that were apostates.

This comes out in Jesus' teaching in many ways, especially in the Gospel of John. When John says to some of the Jews, if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me because he spoke of me. But if you reject his words, how can you believe mine? What he's saying is, you're not going to receive me because you already are rejecting Moses.

You're already categorized as not faithful under the old revelation that God gave through Moses. You're not a faithful remnant Jew. You're an apostate Jew.

If you had, he said, believed Moses, you would also believe me. That is, if you were faithful under the old covenant, you would also come to me. Because people who are faithful to God and who meet Jesus say, oh, I want to be faithful to God in that way too, following the Messiah that he sent.

It's predictable. Anyone who loves God and wants to follow God, and God opens their eyes to see Jesus is the Messiah, what are they going to do but come to him? If they don't, they show that they aren't faithful. What Jesus is saying is there's a group of people in his generation who have already been faithful to God before he arrived.

They are God's people. But they were God's people and now God gave them to him. He transferred the leadership of those that were already his people, God transferred the leadership from Moses to Jesus.

They were God's people following Moses, now they're going to be God's people following Jesus. And no doubt, just like Lydia, who was a Jewish worshiper of God before she knew about Christ, God opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul said. Because she was already obedient to God in all she knew to be.

It's just the next step of coming to know that God has done something you didn't hear about. He sent the Messiah. She said, oh, okay, I'll go there too.

God, of course, has the right to work in you, you who are his people. Paul's talking to Christians, it is God who works in you to will and to do, it is a good pleasure. One of God's people, by definition, wants God's will.

Therefore, if God opens your eyes and says, Jesus is the Messiah, you're already wanting his will. Say, okay, obviously, this is the next step of obedience to God, I'll follow the Messiah. For Jesus to say that all that the Father has given me will come to me, is not to make a statement about unconditional election or irresistible grace.

He's simply saying, they're already moving that direction. It's like they're on the train that's following God and he throws the switch that goes on the track to Jesus. It's not a change of course for them.

It's just the next step in their development of following God. They're already on that track. So, this is not referring to God taking some of the devil's people and giving them to Christ as Christians, as irresistible grace would suggest.

Because irresistible grace suggests that these people might otherwise resist if they could, but they can't. But these are people that aren't interested in resisting. These are people who are already submitting to God.

So, this statement, though it is one of the strongest statements for irresistible grace and the inevitability of the conversion of certain lost people, it isn't that. It doesn't talk about lost people at all. It talks about saved people, saved Jews who now become Christian Jews.

Because they were saved by their faithfulness to God under the old covenant. Now, they continue to be saved by making the next step that God reveals to them. So, this verse doesn't really say anything about irresistible grace.

We've seen it a number of times, Acts 13, 48. 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. The suggestion here is that if appointed means predestined, that means they were the elect.

And as many as were elect believed. In other words, by being elect, it was predicted that they would believe. Now, we already talked about some alternative ways of looking at this verse, including as many as were disposed to eternal life, which is an equally legitimate translation of the word *taso*.

As many as were disposed to eternal life believed, in contrast to those two verses earlier, who judged themselves unworthy of eternal life and didn't believe. There's two kinds of people. Some were disposed one way, some another way.

And the ones who were disposed to eternal life believed. That's a very reasonable way to understand it. It's not the only way.

There's several other possibilities that don't include any reference to predestination. And we talked about some of them. But what's more important, let's assume that Calvinist view is correct about this.

That it is saying that everyone in that town who was predestined from eternity past to be saved, believed that day. That would mean that never again was anyone in that town ever saved. Because everyone who was predestined from the foundational world to get

saved, got saved.

They believed. That left none, because there aren't going to be any more predestined from the foundational world than those. That town got all the converts it's going to get that day.

And you'll never see anyone else convert because everyone who was predestined to eternal life, if that's how it's understood, believed that day. That leaves no one in that town who was predestined for eternal life and no one who would ever believe again. That is, first of all, not a very likely meaning, though it seems to me the only possible meaning if the Calvinist is understanding this to be about predestination and inevitability of conversion of all that are elect from eternity past.

But even if it was a possible meaning or a reasonable meaning, how would Luke, who's writing it, know this to be true? How would Luke know that everyone who is predestined to salvation ultimately believed on that occasion? How would Luke know who's elect and who's not? He's writing the history. How could he even profess to know that? Anyway, suffice it to say that there's numerous ways to understand that verse that do not affirm the Calvinist notion. The Calvinist just assumed that the word *tasso* means predestined.

Even if, by the way, the word *tasso* very often in scripture means appointed, as it is translated here. It can also mean disposed or devoted, but it can mean appointed. So that's not necessarily a bad translation.

It's just a question of whether it's the right translation in this context. If it is, it doesn't necessarily mean pre-appointed. I can make an appointment right now.

I can say, okay, you're going to wash the dishes after lunch. I don't have the authority to do it, so I won't. But the point is, somebody in authority to do that could appoint you to do something.

That doesn't mean they pre-appointed you before the foundation of the world. It just means you're doing it now because you were appointed to do it. Maybe just now you were appointed to do it.

There's nothing here that in any sense requires an assumption about predestination from any time eternity passed. It may be that there are some good folks, good-hearted folks, like the Bereans who are noble-minded, the Bible says, who heard. And God says, I like that about you.

I'm appointing you to be a believer now. I'm going to open your heart to believe because you've got it in you. You see, what the Calvinist wants to insist upon is that the ones who believed had nothing in them that God took into account.

God unconditionally chose them. There's not a word in this passage that hints at such a

concept. It can be imported if one wishes to, but I don't like importing things in an unjustified manner into a passage just to prove a point that's controversial.

There's also John 6, 44 and 45, same chapter as one of the verses we looked at earlier. In John 6, 44 and 45, Jesus said, No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God.

Therefore, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Now, the main point here is the word draw. We saw this verse when we were talking about total depravity and the total inability of anyone to come to Christ unless they're elect.

He says, no one can come to me unless the Father draws him. This suggests that the state of man before his conversion is unable to come to Christ. That's what Calvinists say.

But there's another point, this point of irresistible grace. Because they say the word draw, the Greek word draw, which is *helkou* over here, it means to drag. It doesn't just mean to invite.

It means to drag. No one can come to me unless the Father drags him to me. Now, this image of dragging certainly would sound irresistible.

If God's dragging you, who can overpower God? The same word *helkou* is used a number of times in the New Testament to mean things like drawing a sword. The word draw is used to draw a sword. The soldier drags the sword out of his sheath.

Or in a few cases of dragging fish in a net because they couldn't get them into the boat. Dragging a net full of fish. Obviously, these are dragging instances.

And that's the same word used here. And so it is argued by the Calvinists, Jesus said no one can come unless God drags him. And certainly we must assume that if God drags you, you're coming.

How could you resist God's dragging? Now, it's important to note that although the word does mean drag in some passages, it doesn't always. The question is does it here? Does the Calvinists really believe that God drags people to God? No. They really believe he changes their hearts so they come willingly.

Isn't that what they say? Isn't that what God does? He puts faith. He puts repentance in the heart. This is not a dragging.

This is a benevolent gift. They're not being dragged against their will according to Calvinism. He makes them willing.

By his grace, by his irresistible grace, he makes them willing. So dragging would be

entirely a wrong image if we're talking about this Calvinistic idea. He doesn't drag anybody.

In fact, they consider it to be a parody of their view when an Arminian says, what? Does God drag these people kicking and screaming against their will to him? They say, no, he doesn't do that. He makes them willing so they come happily. Well, then why would they insist on this meaning drag? God drags people to God? That seems to be what they're denying to be the case.

They like to say this means drag when drag can mean something is irresistibly happening to a person. But it's the wrong image if we're trying to convey what Calvinists really believe happens. Because they don't believe that anyone is dragged.

They believe people come willingly because God changes their hearts unilaterally. So, again, this verse to insist that it's drag is problematic for the Calvinists, although they're the only ones who really want to insist upon that. And why do they? Because there's not really much in the Bible to help them with this irresistible grace doctrine.

There's too much record of people resisting God successfully. You're not going to find a lot of verses to help you out if you want to prove irresistible grace. And so, you've got to take what you can get.

And if we can say God drags people, well, I guess that sounds irresistible. We'll take it. We'll use that.

We'll put that in our argument, even though it really doesn't work. Now, what I'd like to point out to you is that this same word, *helkuo*, is used in Hosea chapter 11. In Hosea chapter 11, it's right after the book of Daniel, of course.

In this chapter, it begins really with God recollecting his history with Israel from the Exodus on. The first verse is quoted in the book of Matthew. When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

As I called them, so they went from them. Then, of course, they rebelled. They sacrificed to the Baals and burned incense to carved images.

I taught Ephraim, meaning Israel, to walk, taking them by the arms. Now, see, the imagery is Israel was his little child. When Israel was young, I brought him out of Egypt in the Exodus.

I taught him how to walk, no doubt referencing giving them the law, teaching them how to live. But they worshiped Baal instead. They worshipped a golden calf.

He's recounting Israel's rebellion, although he had treated them in a fatherly way and sought to help them. They had gone the wrong way, nonetheless. It says in the second

part of verse 3, they did not know that I healed them.

I drew them with gentle cords, with bands of love. And I was to them as those who take the yoke from their neck, and I stooped down and fed them. Now, there's a word in verse 4 that we're going to be finding relevant to this present talk.

Can you see what that word might be? How about the verb drew? In the Greek Old Testament, which is a Septuagint, which the New Testament writers read and quoted from, the Greek Old Testament has the word *helkouo* here. The same word Jesus said, no one can come to me unless the Father draws him. This is the same word.

God says, I drew them with loving cords and compassion. However, they didn't really follow very well. He obviously didn't draw them irresistibly because they remained obstinate for the most part.

He had to tell them they're all going to die in the wilderness because of their obstinacy. They provoked him and he cursed them. Now, these are the ones that he drew.

How did he draw them? With love. It's the goodness of God that is to lead you to repentance. God seeks to draw, seeks to woo like a bridegroom, a man courting a woman seeks to woo her.

That's how God draws. But that's not irresistible. In fact, the same word is used in John 12, 32 where Jesus said, I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to myself.

If Jesus is lifted up, he means on the cross, he says, I will draw all men to myself. The same word. So, did Jesus draw all people irresistibly to himself? Apparently not because some have not come to him and do not in their lifetime.

Now, again, the Calvinists say that all men here means Jews and Gentiles. This is their predictable explanation of all men, wherever that term seems to go against Calvinist doctrine. But the point here is to say no man can come to me unless the Father draw him doesn't mean that they are drawn irresistibly.

They are drawn. I certainly would argue that everyone has to be drawn by God. God draws by the show of his grace and his mercy.

God seeks to win our hearts by being good. It's the goodness of God that leads you to repentance. He lets you know his goodness through the preaching of the gospel.

He convicts your heart of your sin by the Holy Spirit. All these things happen before you are saved, but none of them irresistibly guarantee that you are going to respond well. God draws, but is it so that everybody that he draws comes? That's really the question.

We will see in some scriptures that many people that he's seeking to draw don't come. So, we who are not Calvinists have no problem with the fact that no one can come to



God unless God draws him. Draw does not mean to irresistibly draw.

It doesn't necessarily. In some context, the word can mean that, but there's no reason to import that meaning here. God drew Israel with loving cords.

It's the same word, but a lot of them just went the wrong way instead of following him. Now, let's talk about the effectual call. By the way, I mentioned in your notes, Philippians 2.13. Sometimes they use this, for it is God who works in you both to will and do of his good pleasure.

They say, see, that's God's working in the will to obey. True, but it's talking to Christians. For God who works in you, the church.

God is in us, and he works in us. He's not in the unbelievers, working in them, not in the same way. We have already surrendered him, so it's no violation of our will for him to work his will in us.

We want his will. So, he works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. This is quite consistent for him to do with Christians who've already decided they want to follow the will of God.

That's what Christians want. Unbelievers, if he was to do this, he'd be doing it against their will. And again, I mentioned earlier that the Calvinist says, no, he doesn't do it against their will.

No, he makes them willing. But that is against their will, is it not? If they were unwilling until he made them willing. I mentioned, I'm not sure how that is different than a man slipping a date drug into the cup of the girlfriend who's not willing to go to bed with him.

But now she is. He changed her will. Against her will, he did.

And although that's a crude comparison, and Calvinists that I've said that to, obviously are offended by that. Because they think it's almost blasphemy. It's only a blasphemy if that's what God is doing.

They think it's a blasphemy because they beg the question. God does do that, and it's shame on you for calling that like date rape. But if God doesn't do that, and he doesn't do it because it is in fact like date rape, then it's not a blasphemy.

I'm saying that's not what God does. That's what sinners do. God's not a sinner.

God doesn't force people against their will. Even if doing so means you change their will by slipping them a drug. God, if he finds people who are haters of him, and by definition every unregenerate person, by Calvinism's view, every unregenerate person hates God.

They'd rather go to hell than be with God. James White says if everyone in hell was given

the choice to go back to God, they'd prefer to stay in hell because they hate God so much. I don't know how he knows these things.

I don't know very many people who I would describe as haters of God in that degree. Even unbelievers. I don't know how James White knows this about people.

The Bible doesn't say that, but it's a Calvinist doctrine. So if it's true that everyone who's not regenerate, right up to the moment that they're regenerated, hates God to this degree and is saying no, no, no, no, no to God, but at some point God regenerates them and says, no, I'm going to put a yes in you. I'm going to put faith and repentance in you.

Isn't he doing that without their permission? Isn't he doing that against their will up to that point? Isn't that, how is that different than a man giving an unwilling girl a drug? So he says, okay, yes. You know, I mean, thankfully the Bible does not say that God does that. And indeed it would be blasphemous to make that comparison if God in fact does those things.

But thankfully the Bible doesn't give us any reason to believe that that's what God does. It gives us every reason to believe that God wants everyone to come, and many resist very successfully, and he doesn't change their mind. He doesn't unilaterally make them love him when they don't want to.

But the Calvinists think he does. And he does that with an effectual call. Romans 8 30 says, moreover whom he predestined, these he also called.

And whom he called, these he justified. And whom he justified, these he also glorified. Now this verse has come up under several points previously, and it will come up again in Perseverance at the end.

This verse is used for many of the points of Calvinism. In this case, what it's suggesting is he called these people, and the ones he called he justified. That would mean that the ones he called are the Christians, because only the Christians are really justified.

That means that he's saying everybody who's called also ends up justified. And since some calls are resisted, this must be a different call. This must be the irresistible call.

This must be the effectual call, the inward call. They assume this on the basis that everyone he called is said to be justified, and since not everybody he calls outwardly ends up justified, this must refer to that other kind of call that they've invented, called the effectual call, which is irresistible. Now, we've read Calvin on this already.

He said there's a universal call by which God, through the external preaching of the word, invites all men alike, even those whom he designs to call to be a savor of death and the ground of a severe condemnation. There is the general call by which God invites all equally to himself through the outward preaching of the word. And it says the other

kind of call is special, which he deigns for the most part to give to the believer alone, which is the inward illumination of his spirit.

He causes then the preaching of the word to dwell in their hearts. Anyway, he goes on to talk about the temporariness of some of that, which is the weird thing that most Calvinists don't even believe. We won't talk about that again.

But the point, he's making a distinction. There's an outward call that doesn't necessarily save people, and then there's an inward call that necessarily does. Jerry Walls, the non-Calvinist, says this is a remarkable passage.

He's talking about this Calvinist, the statement of Calvin. This is a remarkable passage, but it's difficult to make sense of it on Calvinistic premises. Notice Calvin says that God causes some of the non-elect to partake of the inner illumination of the spirit, but only for a time because of their ungratefulness.

Surely it is natural to infer that these persons could actually respond favorably to the inner illumination they receive. Otherwise, it is hard to make sense of how their ingratitude can be the just cause of even more severe condemnation. In other words, Calvin appears to imply that these persons have been enabled to believe and pursue the good, but have perversely refused to do so.

They could have, but they freely chose otherwise. However, this reading does not square with Calvin's doctrine of election. For if these persons are not among the elect, they simply cannot respond with this sort of gratitude.

But if they were among the elect, they would surely do so. And this is the issue here. Why do we have to persuade people to come to Christ? Why did Paul debate with the philosophers? Why try to persuade them? God's going to draw them irresistibly.

If God's going to do all the drawing, why do we have to labor so hard to try to get them to make a decision, in some cases? If they are predestined, they will, according to Calvinism. If they're not predestined, they won't. And our efforts seem to be superfluous.

And again, the Calvinist says, no, we preach because we're told to. It may not make sense to the overall paradigm of theology, but we just obey and don't ask questions. Well, frankly, we should sometimes obey and not ask questions.

But sometimes we can obey and ask the questions. Okay, I'm going to do what you said, but is there a reason for this? Just wondering. No? Okay, I'll just obey.

But often there is a reason, and we're assuming there's not. And the reason we're assuming there's not is because our presuppositions wouldn't fit the true reason. The true reason we're supposed to preach is because people actually need to have the opportunity to repent and can do so, if they're preached to.

Not that God just wants to increase the condemnation of the ones that he won't let repent. Now, they're already condemned. Let's increase the heat in hell for them, because we're not satisfied with the low heat.

We want the high heat. So we'll increase their condemnation by preaching to them, knowing that this will make them more guilty than they already were. And that accomplishes exactly what in God's plans? To make people more guilty than they already were? Is that helpful? What is it about God's plan that that fits into? What is there about God's character that that agrees with? That's a mystery.

Now, the contrary scriptural witness. The Bible teaches that the call of the sovereign can be rejected. You see, what the Calvinist says is God is sovereign, and that's why his inward call cannot be resisted.

But the Bible does not anywhere suggest that because someone is sovereign, no one can resist his call. Mark 10, 21 and 22 says, Then Jesus, looking at him, that is, the rich young ruler, loved him and said to him, One thing you lack, go your way and sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. That sounds like a call.

And come and take up the cross and follow me. Is Jesus a sovereign? Absolutely. Did he call this man? Clearly.

But the man was sad at this word and went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. He did not accept the call, not because he wasn't elect, not because of the divine decree that he was simply not going to do that, but he had great possessions he wasn't eager to part with, so he didn't accept the call. Something mattered more to him than Jesus.

Now, this man did not fail to receive a call from a sovereign. This was sovereign Jesus calling this man, and he was resisted. Therefore, we cannot assume that sovereign call is irresistible.

Remember, the Calvinist thinks that sovereign means meticulous providence. Sovereign means that if someone is sovereign, he controls everything and always gets what he wants. That's not the definition of sovereign in any dictionary, nor is it the definition of sovereign in any common usage in the English language.

Sovereign means the person who has the authority to make the rules and to be obeyed. Now, the fact that someone has the authority to make the rules doesn't guarantee that people will keep the rules. The parents have the right to make the rules of the house.

That's their sovereign rule of their household. They have the authority to that. They have the right to that.

Will their children always obey? Maybe, maybe not. To say the parents are sovereign

doesn't tell you whether their sovereignty will be honored or rejected. Sovereignty is not always obeyed.

But the fact that someone is sovereign just means that they should be obeyed. Someone who rejects the call of the sovereign is doing a wrong thing because the sovereign has the right to be obeyed and to disobey is to violate the rights of the sovereign. God is sovereign and therefore he has the right to be obeyed.

Does it mean he always will be? No. Sovereignty doesn't mean that. Jesus was sovereign.

He was disobeyed by the rich young ruler. Matthew 22, 2-7 Now this is a king. That makes him a sovereign, doesn't it? He's the sovereign over his nation.

He's a king. He makes a marriage for his son and he sent out his servants to call. This is a sovereign call.

Those who were invited to the wedding and they were not willing to come. Oh. So there's something else besides the sovereign call.

It's the willing or not willing on the part of the people called. Again, he sent out other servants saying, Tell those who are invited, see I have prepared my dinner, my oxen, my fatted cattle are killed and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.

But they made light of it and they went their ways. One to his farm, another to his business and the rest seized his servants and treated them spitefully and killed them. That sounds like they're resisting a sovereign call in a serious way.

When the king heard about it, he was furious and he sent out his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. Now, he sent out the call. It was rejected.

Does that mean he wasn't sovereign? No, he was sovereign. That means he got to punish the people who disobeyed him. He punished those wicked men.

They were wicked because they rejected his call. But they did. You see, sovereign doesn't mean you will always be obeyed.

But it does mean you have the right to enforce your will if it is disobeyed. You have the right to punish those who disobey because they're doing an unlawful thing. The violation of a sovereign command is a crime.

Punishable. And the sovereign has every right to punish those who disobey him. But being sovereign doesn't mean they will obey him.

It just means in the end, they either will obey him or they'll suffer the consequences because that's his right. Isaiah 5, 3 through 4, this is where God is comparing Israel with a vineyard and he's looking for fruit. Now, in that chapter, Isaiah 5 and verse 7, he says

the fruit he was looking for from Israel is justice and righteousness.

He wanted these people to be good. He wanted these people to produce righteousness and justice in their society and in their behavior. Now, presumably, if he had irresistible grace, he could just work that out.

Just fix the tractor beam on them and draw them in. But it says they didn't. He did everything he could and they didn't come.

They didn't produce the fruit. He says, Now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Why, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? In other words, I did everything known to me to get the results I wanted in your lives.

I didn't get them. I can't figure it out. Explain that to me.

What more could I have done that I haven't done? Why didn't I get what I wanted? Now, this sounds like frustration. On God's part. Now, if he had in his arsenal a tractor beam and whenever he elected to do so, he could fix that tractor beam on him and they would come and do exactly what he wanted.

They'd be drawn to obedience, drawn to loyalty to him. Why would he not use it? Why would he only complain that he didn't get the results he wants? This is how God speaks frequently in the Old Testament and the New. But the important thing here is he actually asked rhetorically, what more could I have done? As if to say, I think I've done everything I know to do.

I don't think I have additional tools to bring about different results than the tools I have used. I think I've exhausted my options here and I still have not gotten what I want. Certainly, this communicates that God's will is resisted.

Now again, the Calvinist says, well, that's just the outward call. But remember, they are inventing the effectual call. The Bible does not mention the effectual call in any clear way.

There are some references to Christians being the ones who are called and one could conclude, well, maybe that means that we've been called in a different sense than others are. And we can look at that thought. But even that does not in itself clearly speak of any irresistible, irresistible call that God can give to man.

And yet again and again and again we read of God calling people and them not coming. Isaiah 65, 12, which is repeated in 66, 3 and 4. Isaiah says this twice. God says this twice in Isaiah 65, 12 and 66, 3 through 4. It says, therefore I will number you for the sword and you shall all bow down to the slaughter because when I called you did not answer.

When I spoke you did not hear. But did evil before my eyes and chose that which I don't delight in. Now your problem is not my election or lack thereof.

Your problem is what you chose, not me. I called you and you didn't hear. I summoned you, you didn't come.

Now, of course, if we are to presuppose a Calvinist worldview, then God did all this without activating his effectual call. Because he called, but they didn't come. If there is such a thing as an effectual irresistible call, he chose not to use it in this case.

Which means he didn't very much want them to come. He could have made them. But it wasn't really what he wanted that much.

So why is he going to number them to the sword and slaughter them? It sounds like they and they alone are responsible for not having come. For not obeying his call. But to the Calvinists, if they're not elect, they can't obey his call.

And if they are elect, they will. Why does God talk so much like that isn't the case in everything he says about this subject? In Jeremiah 7, 13, God said, I spoke to you rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear. And I called you, but you did not answer.

That's because my effectual call machine was on the charger. It wasn't fully charged, so I couldn't use it. So I had to just use my outward call, and that didn't work so well.

Matthew 20, verse 16, and Matthew 22, 14, both say, many are called, but few are chosen. Now the context here, especially the second case, is that wedding feast. People were invited to the wedding feast.

And some came, and they didn't even come on God's terms. They didn't wear a wedding garment, and so they were kicked out. Because many are called, and few are chosen.

Called means invited. Chosen apparently means permitted to stay, chosen to be among those that are not kicked out. God calls lots of people who don't stay.

There's many he calls, but few chosen by comparison. So the called and the chosen are not necessarily the same group. Of course, the Calvinists say that's the outward call only.

The Bible doesn't distinguish between outward and inward call in any passage in the Scripture. Matthew 23, 37. Jesus said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to you, or 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. Well, what should that matter? If he wants to gather them, what should it matter they're not willing? God can change that. Can't he? Jesus acted like he couldn't.

How many times I wanted to gather you, but you were not willing. Now, I'll tell you what James White says about this because this is a very non-Calvinistic sounding verse. And he's a strong Calvinist.

He says, wait, look what it says. How many times I wanted to gather your children. He speaks to Jerusalem.

He doesn't say I wanted to gather you. He says I wanted to gather your children. What's that mean? He says in the context, Jesus is addressing the leaders of Jerusalem.

And he's saying I wanted to gather your children, but you, the leaders, were not willing. So that solves it. The leaders were not elect, so they're not willing.

And they even tried to stop their children from coming. Well, this is not a very good argument for a couple reasons. One is it misses the way that Jerusalem and Zion are addressed in Scripture in general.

I've given you some notes there. We won't look these up. But throughout the Scripture, Old and New Testament, statements addressed to Zion or Jerusalem, the same thing.

O Jerusalem, O Zion, or O daughter of Zion, O children of Jerusalem. These are all synonymous terms. It's just a way of personifying the population of Jerusalem.

It is not a specific reference in any case to just the leaders of Jerusalem. It is to Jerusalem, the city, and its population personified. Now it's true.

But sometimes people are called children of Jerusalem. It just means citizens of Jerusalem. So when Jesus says, O Jerusalem, how often I wanted to gather your children, this is not saying something different than saying, I wanted to gather the population of Jerusalem to myself.

And you, Jerusalem, the population, were not willing. To miss this is to pay too little attention to the way O Jerusalem or O Zion are used frequently in Scripture. I've given you some things in my notes, examples, so you can see this for yourself.

We won't look at them now. But there's another reason this is weak. If what James White is saying is Jesus wanted the people of Jerusalem to come, but they didn't because the leaders were unwilling, how does this help the doctrine of irresistible grace? If he wanted the children to come and they didn't, what does it matter? Whether it was the leaders that prevented them, or their own stubbornness, or they loved their riches, or whatever reason.

The point is, he wanted them to come and they didn't. Now, I think probably James White would answer this. Well, no, the children they wanted to come of Jerusalem are the elect.

And they did come, although they were resisted by the leadership. Certainly there were



people of Jerusalem who did come to him. They're the ones he wanted to gather, the children of God in Jerusalem.

And the leaders are rebuked because they weren't willing to let that happen. Well, you can keep going one step after another to try to save the Calvinist ideas here, but you keep having to insert things that aren't in the text. Your children are now the elect.

In all references to Jerusalem and her children in the past, the children of Jerusalem are not a reference to the elect. In fact, there's a very important passage in Jesus that makes this very clear. Jerusalem's children are not necessarily the elect.

In fact, they are not the elect. Because in Luke chapter 19, when Jesus weeps over Jerusalem, Luke 19 beginning at verse 41 says, Now as he drew near, he saw the city and wept over it. This is Jerusalem he wept over.

And he said to them, If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you when your enemies, this is the Romans, will build an embankment around you. This happened in AD 70, 70 AD, and surround you and close you in on every side and will level you and your children within you to the ground.

And they will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not know the time of your visitation. Now notice what, those who are destroyed by the Romans in this siege and overthrow of Jerusalem are who? Jerusalem and its children. Are these the same children that Jesus said, How many times, Jerusalem, I wanted to gather your children? If there's a distinction, it certainly is obscure.

Those who perished in the fall of Jerusalem were Jerusalem and its children. And yet they weren't the Christians because the Christians in Jerusalem escaped. History tells us.

The Christians in Jerusalem were warned and fled the city and were not there when it fell. Those children of Jerusalem that perished in the city were not the elect. So why would they be the elect when Jesus said, How many times I wanted to gather your children? And you would not.

Clearly, you cannot validly say, Jerusalem's children refers to the elect and they're the ones that Jesus wanted to call. He didn't want to call the others. There's no way around it.

There's a lot of fancy footwork, but all of it includes eisegesis, insertion points of things that aren't there, things that contradict other passages. You can't get around it. Jesus said, I wanted to call you, but you didn't come because you didn't want to come.

That's the basic, unmistakable meaning of that statement. Acts 7, 51, Stephen said to the Jews, the Sanhedrin, you stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you

always resist the Holy Spirit. I thought that couldn't be done.

No, you always do it. It must be possible. Now, the Calvinist says, well, this is just saying that he's referring to the prophets who've come before, that they have always resisted the prophets who spoke through the Spirit.

Well, that they did. But he didn't say that. He said they resisted the Holy Spirit.

Yes, he did mention they had resisted the Spirit speaking through the prophets. They also resisted the Spirit speaking through Jesus. And they consistently resist the Holy Spirit, no matter how he speaks to them.

But resisting the Holy Spirit is resisting a sovereign, isn't it? So sovereignty does not mean a person who cannot be resisted. Now, let's look quickly at the question of whether repentance and faith are gifts from God. This is part of the doctrine of irresistible grace.

The reason it's irresistible is because men who are unconverted, unregenerated, cannot believe or repent. They're totally depraved. This is not an option for them.

But obviously, to be saved, people must believe and repent. And since people can't do that, faith and repentance must necessarily be a gift that God gives to the elect. And if it's a gift, then it must be inevitable that people will have it.

If he gives you faith, does that not mean that you'll believe? If he gives you repentance, doesn't that mean you will repent? How could it be otherwise? Therefore, salvation is irresistible and inevitable for those that God has elected, because he will give them the repentance and faith that's necessary to be saved. And we saw already in Acts 5.31 that Peter said that God has exalted Christ to give repentance to Israel. To give repentance.

Acts 11.18. The apostles in Jerusalem, when they heard about Cornelius, Peter told them and they said, they rejoiced and said, then God has granted the Gentiles repentance. God granted repentance to the Gentiles. 2 Timothy 2.25. Paul said, the servant of the Lord must not strive, but in meekness, he needs to deal with those who resist.

And in humility, he must try to correct those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, that they may know the truth. Now, these three verses in the scripture say that God grants repentance or gives repentance. It is a gift, in a way.

Does that mean he unilaterally imposes an attitude of repentance on those who don't want it? Which is what irresistible grace would suggest. Because before they are granted repentance, they are unregenerate and hate God. They don't want to repent.

If God does this, he takes people who are unwilling and makes them willing against their will. He changes their will forcibly. And is that what you call a gift? If someone says, listen Steve, I want to give you this wonderful house.

And I say, oh, well, thank you very much. I already have a house. I don't want to move here.

So, thank you, but give it to somebody else, not me. And they say, no, you have to have this house. Well, no, I don't really need it.

I already have a house, you see. I'm not needing this house. Thank you for the offer, but no thanks.

No, I'm going to take your hand and force you to sign the transfer because this is my gift to you. Well, it doesn't sound like a gift. It sounds like it's an imposition on me.

If I don't want it, how is that called a gift? You might say, but it's good for you to have a house, whether you know it or not. Maybe so, but you're still imposing it on me, not giving it to me. A gift usually is something graciously offered that is, of course, to be appreciated.

But if it's something you don't want and don't appreciate, you don't call that a gift. If God finds people who are saying, no, no, no, no, no, I'm going to give you a gift. I'm going to make you say yes.

That's not a gift. That's an imposition. That's tyranny.

Now, frankly, God's entitled to practice tyranny if he wants to. He's sovereign. A sovereign can be a tyrant or he can be a nice guy.

His sovereignty means he can be whatever he wants to be. The question is, is God a tyrant or is God a nice guy? Does God force people to repent who are determined not to? Or does he lead people to repentance? Does the goodness of God lead you to repentance, as Paul said in Romans 2? Now, by the way, I could say that God has granted me repentance because I repent as a result of his conviction. The Holy Spirit convicts people.

And when they're convicted, they have the opportunity to repent, which they would not have any notions of doing if they weren't convicted. It is God's gracious kindness that he allows the gospel to be preached and the Holy Spirit to convict. And that allows me to repent.

In a sense, the word grant isn't the same thing as referring to a gift as we think of it unilaterally. A grant is to extend a privilege. I'm granting you this privilege.

And that's the word that's used in most of these passages. God has granted them the privilege of repentance. How? By allowing them to know that they should.

By allowing them to hear the gospel. By convicting them of their sins. This has given them the opportunity to repent that they didn't have before.

That is kind of him. He doesn't make them repent, but he grants them the privilege if they will take it. And we see that such privileges granted are not always seized upon.

Acts 17.30 Paul told the Athenians that God had granted many kindnesses to them. And he says, truly these times of ignorance God overlooked. But now he commands all men everywhere to repent.

Does God make them repent or does he command them to repent? Or both? Well, we know this. All men everywhere don't repent. God, when he commands all men everywhere to repent is certainly extending to them the privilege of salvation.

The privilege of repentance. He's granting them that opportunity. He commands them to seize upon it.

But they don't always. A privilege like that can be rejected. Apparently.

Because it is. 2 Peter 3.9 says, The Lord is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Once again, God wants everybody to have this privilege of repentance.

Unfortunately, not all do. Ezekiel 33.11 Say to them, As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn, that is, repent from his way and live. Turn, turn, repent, repent from your evil ways.

For why should you die, O house of Israel? Now, here's God extending the privilege of living and not dying. That's certainly a privilege. You have to repent for that.

I'm calling you to repent. This is a gracious offer I'm making you. If you repent, you won't die.

Please take my offer. I don't want you to reject this offer. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

I want everyone to repent. But everyone doesn't. You see, even if someone takes 2 Peter, say God's not willing that any should perish, but all should come to repentance.

And they say, oh, that's just the elect. That's what the Calvinists say about that verse. He wants all the elect to repent.

You can't make that out of Ezekiel 33, 11. He's addressing the whole sinful nation of Israel. And they're not all elect.

Most of them did not repent. Most of them perished. Yet God said, I don't want you to perish.

I want you to repent. Not just the elect, but all the wicked. And God did not get what he

wished.

Apparently, his extension of repentance opportunity was rejected. Jeremiah 13, 17. But if you will not hear it, my soul will weep in secret for your pride.

My eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears. If you do not hear what? In the context, Jeremiah's call for them to repent. You may be called to repent, extended that offer.

If you don't take it, I'll weep for you because it's going to go badly for you. But as we know, for the most part, they did reject it. So God may grant repentance, and yet it may be not offered.

You know, my grandmother, when I graduated from high school, my grandmother says, you know what? If you go to Biola College, I'll pay your whole, I'll give you a full-ride scholarship. I'll pay your whole tuition. She was offering me a grant.

She was granting me free tuition. I didn't take her up on it. I didn't want to go to that school.

I didn't want to go to college at all. And so I didn't receive it. It was a gracious grant.

She granted me a full-ride scholarship. I just didn't take her up on it because I had other plans. And so God grants sinners the opportunity to repent.

He grants them repentance. It's their option. It's their privilege to seize upon if they will.

But He also doesn't force it on them, and they often resist it. Likewise, what about faith? Is faith a gift from God? Usually people quote Ephesians 2, 8, and 9 for this point. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Now what is argued, of course, and you probably have heard it, is that Paul says it's through faith, and that faith is not of yourselves. Faith is a gift of God.

Why would they say that? Well, because faith is the nearest noun, really, to the next phrase. So when he says, it is not of yourselves, they think it refers to faith. It is the gift of God refers to faith.

Is faith a gift of God, then? Well, let's put it this way. Even if it is, a gift is sometimes rejected. But that's not what Paul is saying in this particular place because the word faith in Greek is a feminine noun.

Now in Greek grammar, nouns and pronouns are to agree with each other in gender. We don't have a separate gender for every noun in English. We have masculine nouns like man and boy, and we have feminine nouns like woman and girl.

We have a lot of nouns that are not masculine or feminine. Table, that's not masculine or feminine. But in Greek and in many European languages, a lot of these things like table would have either a masculine or a feminine gender too.

Now there are pronoun forms that are masculine, feminine, and gender. It would be very strange if I said, my wife is a great woman. He cooks breakfast for me every day.

Wait a minute, he? That's a feminine. You don't use a masculine pronoun to refer to a feminine noun. That's true in English.

That's true in Greek. The noun and the pronoun should agree in gender. Faith is a feminine word.

So is grace. Grace and faith are both feminine words in Greek. That and it are neuter words in the Greek.

And therefore it would be unnatural and in most cases impossible for it and that to refer to faith. To say faith, feminine, is the gift of God. It is a gift of God.

It's not of yourself. But the problem here is that it and that are neuter pronouns, but there are no neuter nouns prior to it. And therefore, James White and I agree about this.

It's nice to find something. We both agree to what I think is normal that it's salvation itself is the gift of God. The word salvation is not in the passage, but it doesn't have to be.

He's talking about salvation. By grace you have been saved. That's talking about salvation.

It, what, you being saved, salvation, is the gift of God. It is not of works. It would be interesting if he was trying to say that faith is the gift of God.

It is not of works. Whoever suggested that faith is of works? I've never heard of a heresy that said you get faith through works. Of course, I've heard Calvinists say faith is of works, slightly different.

But to obtain faith through works has never been suggested by anyone I know of. But to obtain salvation through works is a very common heresy, and the Bible often speaks against it. To say it is the gift of God, it is not of works, is almost certainly a reference to salvation itself is the gift of God.

Salvation is not of works. He's not saying faith is the gift of God. Faith is the part that we bring.

Grace is the part that God does, which really takes us there, to salvation. We receive that grace through faith. That whole transaction is a salvation that is not of works, but

the gift of God.

It's not affirming that faith is the gift of God. The neuter and the feminine disagreement there would not encourage that at all. In fact, Calvin himself said so.

Calvin said Paul does not mean that faith is the gift, but that salvation is given to us from God. So not only James White, but Calvin agree. But many Calvinists disagree.

Many Calvinists say, no, Paul is saying faith is a gift from God. Well, neither Calvin nor some Calvinists would necessarily assert that. Philippians 1.29 says, To you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, what? Not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.

So two things have been granted. One is that you believe. Again, it's like God grants repentance.

God has granted to you to believe. Sounds like faith is a gift. Hebrews 12.2, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Doesn't that mean that Jesus started it? 2 Peter 1.1, To those who have obtained like precious faith. Like it's something we've attained to or obtained from some source. Acts 18.27, it refers in the end of that verse to Apollos greatly helped those who had believed through grace.

They believed through grace. So God's grace led them to believe. That's a gift from God.

1 John 5.1, we talk about whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. The suggestion here is that because you're born of God, you believe. It's a gift that God gave you by regenerating you.

Now the problem here is the same as calling repentance a gift or a grant. The word gift, the word grant are used here It is a privilege to repent and it's a privilege to believe. However, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.

And if people don't hear the word of God, they can't have this privilege. You have. These are references to people who have heard and responded to the gospel.

It has been granted to them to become believers because God happened to send someone with the gospel to their town so they could hear and believe. And same thing as repent. You cannot believe or repent unless God does something first.

Namely, He's got to do something for you to believe. He's got to say something for you to believe. He's got to see to it that you hear the thing He said so you can believe.

Not everyone has these privileges. There are people who don't know about God, have never heard the word of God. They have not been granted the privilege of believing or of

repenting.

They have not experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit. We have. And what the Bible keeps saying is that we should praise God that we have this privilege been granted to us to believe and to repent.

It doesn't mean He made us do it. It means He allowed us to do it. He extended this privilege.

He didn't force it on us as an unwanted imposition. A true gift is not imposed upon unwilling recipients. Romans 5.18 says, Therefore, as through one man's offense, judgment came on all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one man's righteous act, the free gift came upon all men, resulting in justification of life.

The free gift came on all men. Remember, this is the same all men that were affected by Adam in the earlier part of the verse. The verse talks about what Adam did to all men and what Christ did to all men.

God gave the free gift to all men. Have all received it? Apparently not. A free gift apparently can be given to everyone but not received by everyone.

Luke 9.53 says of a certain town when Jesus came, they did not receive Him. This is the Samaritans. They did not receive Him because His face was set to journey to Jerusalem.

Jesus is the gift of God and they didn't receive Him. He offered Himself. He was the gift that God had sent them and they didn't receive Him.

John 1.11, He came to His own. His own did not receive Him. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son as a gift.

Jesus said to the woman at the well, If you had known the gift of God and who it was that offers you living water, who asks for water, you would ask Him for living water. If you had known the gift of God and known who He was. Jesus is the gift of God but many times people didn't receive that gift.

God sent Him. God gave Him. Unto us a child is born.

Unto us a Son is given. God gave Him. That's a gift.

But many didn't receive the gift. It's possible to reject a gift. John 5.43, I have come in my Father's name and you do not receive me.

John 12.48, He who rejects me. Jesus said. Obviously rejecting, not receiving, this is one possible response when a gift is given.

Frankly, recently someone gave me a gift for Christmas that was something I really



didn't want. Although I didn't let them know, I was more polite than that. They lived far away and they're not going to know what I did with it, I hope.

But I took it back. Got something I did want. It was a gift but I didn't receive it.

It didn't suit my needs and so forth and my tastes. So it was not, I received a gift but I don't have it now. Because when you receive a gift or reject it outright, there's no guarantee you're going to have it because a gift is something that you have an opportunity to receive but not the inability to reject.

Notice this. Jesus marveled at the faith of some and the lack of faith of others. If God is the one who gives faith to who he wants to, then why is it that we read when Jesus heard it, that is what the centurion expressed his faith in Matthew 8-10, when Jesus heard it, he marveled and said to those who followed, surely I say to you, I've never found such great faith, not even in Israel.

Well, what's so surprising, Jesus? Don't you know God does that for some people? You shouldn't be surprised to find someone who he did it for. He thought it was surprising. Matthew 15-28, then Jesus answered and said to her, Oh woman, great is your faith.

Again, expressing some, he's impressed. Likewise, when he came to Nazareth, they rejected him and it says in Mark 6-6, he marveled because of their unbelief. Now, if Jesus understood that God, that some people simply can't believe because it's against human nature to do so and God gives faith to some people, why should he be so amazed to find it in some people and so amazed to not find it in others? Why should he marvel at their unbelief? Why shouldn't he just conclude, Oh, I guess these are some of the ones who aren't elect.

And when he finds great faith, Oh, he must be one of the elect ones because God gives faith like that to them. No, he's astonished. There should be nothing astonishing about faith or unbelief if the Calvinist system is true.

It's really God does what he wants to do and it's not surprising that he does it. Now, why are people then held responsible for their lack of faith? And this is really our last point on this and so we quit after this. Why are people held responsible for their lack of faith if God's the one who decides whether they're going to have it or not? They can't have it if they're not elect and they can't not have it if they are elect.

Psalms 78 verses 21 and 22 says, Therefore the Lord heard this and was furious. So a fire was kindled against Jacob and anger also came up against Israel because they did not believe in God and did not trust in his salvation. So they had a deficiency in their faith here and this made God furious.

Well, how can you get furious at someone because they don't do something that you know they can't do? You tell your little kid, here, there's a boulder over there. I want that

to be over there. Go move that boulder for me.

It only weighs about 800 pounds but you tell your four-year-old to go move it. He doesn't do it. Do you get furious? I told you to do this.

How dare you not do what I said? Well, did you ever take into account that it's kind of impossible for him to do it? Why are you so weird as to get furious at someone who doesn't do what you know they can't do? God gets furious because he knows that they could have believed but they didn't. There's no other reason for him to get mad. Why hold someone responsible for not having faith if you know they can't and you could give it to them but you don't? Mark 16, 14, later he appeared to the 11 after his resurrection as they sat at the table and he rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he'd risen.

But the Calvinist says that God is one who hardens hearts and they say he's the one who determines whether someone will have belief or unbelief. But Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief and their hardness of heart like it wasn't God who did it. If Jesus was unhappy, why doesn't he rebuke God? If Jesus doesn't like them not believing and doesn't like them being hardened, why doesn't he blame the person who hardened them and who deprived them of the ability to believe when he could have given it to them? This kind of behavior doesn't make sense if Calvinism is true and it isn't.

These things do make sense. They just don't make sense when compared with Calvinist thought. John 3, 36.

Jesus said in Young's literal translation, He who is believing in the Son has life age enduring. And he who is not believing the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God doth remain upon him. The person who is not believing Jesus, because of that, the wrath of God abides on him.

Well, I can understand that if they have the ability to believe and they reject belief. If they have every opportunity, but they insult God by disbelieving him. But why is God's wrath abiding on people who are simply not doing what he knows they cannot do? And which he could make them do if he wants to, but he doesn't want to enough to do it in their case.

Why doesn't he get mad at himself? If it's so offensive to him that people don't believe in him and he can put faith in him, why doesn't he just do it? Why not blame himself since they can't do anything about it and he could? I'm not trying to be irreverent. I'm simply saying that if Calvinism is true, these irreverent suggestions would seem called for. Irreverence is not called for because God doesn't do that.

You see, I've often in the past made these kinds of statements to Calvinists. They say, oh, you're so blasphemous because you say that God should blame himself. No, I'm not

saying God should blame himself.

I'm saying God should blame himself if you're right, but you're not right. You're assuming you're right and the implications I'm finding in your point, you're finding blasphemous. Let that tell you something about your beliefs.

It's your beliefs that incur blasphemy, not mine. And it's hard to avoid that blasphemy. Why doesn't God blame himself instead of sinners if Calvinism is true? Now, if Calvinism isn't true, that question never arises.

So this is the issue here. Calvinism, first of all, is not taught positively in Scripture and it is denied in many places of Scripture, although they can take those places where it's denied and try to shoehorn it into their paradigm somehow by inserting words, elect, whether it's not, and other things, you know, effectual when it's not there. They can insert their own words to make the verses that don't fit seem to fit.

But even when they do that, it involves certain conclusions that in themselves seem blasphemous if you state them plainly. This is what they don't do. They don't state plainly what the logical outcome of their theology is.

And they don't think they need to because it doesn't have to be logical. It's a mystery. How can God blame people for not believing when God alone could make them believe? It's a mystery.

I'm not being joking here. This is the answer they get. Calvin gives this answer to that question.

Why does God hold them accountable when only God can make it happen? Calvin, in his instance, says it's a mystery. You don't try to pry into those mysteries. And I agree.

If there are mysteries that God presents for us to have to do, then we do well to just live with the mystery. But what if the mystery is created by our false theology? What if there is really no mystery presented in the Bible? Then making it a mystery is simply a way of dodging the true logical implications of what you're suggesting. In my opinion, frankly, that's what Calvinists do.

They often don't recognize they're doing it. But then, obviously, if someone's wrong about something, there's a lot of things they're not recognizing. And that's one of the things I think they're not recognizing, that their theology involves them, not in mysteries, but in contradictions.

There's a difference. All right, well, we're done with this lecture, so let's take a break.