

## TULIP – IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

... others who are called by the gospel obey the call and are converted is ... wholly ascribed to God, who as He has chosen His own from eternity in Christ, so He confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of His own Son, that they may show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light; and may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord according to the testimony of the apostles in various places.

But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect or works in them true conversion, He not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them and powerfully illuminates their mind by His Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the efficacy of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man; He opens the closed, and softens the hardened heart, and circumcises that which was uncircumcised, infuses new qualities into the will, which though heretofore dead, He quickens; from being evil, disobedient, and refractory, He renders it good, obedient, and pliable; actuates and strengthens it, that like a good tree, it may bring forth the fruits of good actions. – THE CANONS OF DORT, “Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine of the Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God, and the Manner Thereof,” Articles 10, 11.<sup>1</sup>

So far we have considered the *total depravity* or, more appropriately, the *total inability* of man, God’s *unconditional election* of some individuals to glory and others to damnation, and the *limited atonement* of Christ that views His death as being only for those who are elected to glory. Now we come to *irresistible grace* – in essence, what we are seeing unfold is, first of all, the absolute *total inability* of man to even desire to be saved (“T”), and then everything that God must do in order to save those whom He has chosen (“ULIP”).

“By irresistible grace we mean that God’s grace and salvation cannot be effectively resisted. **When God determines to save a man, that man is saved.** Neither he himself, nor the devil, nor the wicked world are able to prevent his salvation. Nothing can stand in the way of God’s purpose.”<sup>2</sup> In essence, they say that God is absolutely sovereign over everything, He has predetermined who will be saved, and there is absolutely nothing that can stand in His way – even if the person whom He has determined to save wants no part of it. The Calvinists’ position is that this could not happen, for God, in His sovereignty, will **make** the individual **willing**, yet “the **liberty of the will is not invaded**, for that would destroy its very nature; but **its obstinacy is overcome**, its perverseness taken away, and the whole soul powerfully, yet sweetly, attracted to the Saviour” (emphasis added).<sup>3</sup>

The Westminster Confession states: “All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, **effectually** to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus

<sup>1</sup> <https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Canons-of-Dort-with-Intro.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace5.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace5.html).

<sup>3</sup> <https://reformed.org/documents/shaw/>.

Christ” (emphasis added).<sup>4</sup> Consider an explanation of this matter: “There is *an eternal* call of the gospel, whereby **all who hear it are called** to the fellowship of Christ, and **to receive a full salvation in him** ... That the call of the gospel is indefinite and universal, that God is sincere in addressing this call to all to whom the gospel comes, and that none who comply with the call shall be disappointed; these are unquestionable truths. But the **outward call** by the Word is of itself *ineffectual* ... But there is also **an internal call**, in which the Holy Spirit accompanies the external call with power and efficacy upon the soul; and this call is always *effectual*” (bold emphasis added).<sup>5</sup> They openly admit that “to reconcile the unlimited call of the gospel with the doctrines of particular election and a definite atonement, seems to exceed the efforts of the human mind.”<sup>6</sup> In effect they are admitting that the doctrines of Calvinism must be **accepted by faith** – faith in the ponderings of men; although they purportedly find all of their doctrines within the pages of Scripture, when they are finished, they admit that it is virtually impossible to reconcile their teachings with the Scriptural call of the Gospel to everyone, therefore: accept their theology by faith! Yet Jehovah openly declared to a sinful Judah: “Come now, and let us **reason** together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18). Why do the Calvinists insist that God has predetermined who will be saved and that God alone will save them, when the Lord Himself calls upon Judah to present their case to Him so that they (Judah and Jehovah) might consider their situation together? The Calvinists insist that man “is altogether passive” in the matter of salvation, yet Jehovah calls upon Judah to *reason* with Him – that is **not** a passive role in salvation (which is precisely what the Lord wants to discuss with Judah). Jesus explained that *everyone who is knowing the Son and is believing in Him is having life everlasting* (John 6:40, literal);<sup>7</sup> the *knowing* and *believing* are both participles in the present tense that are used to describe *everyone*; these are continually present attributes of *everyone* who is holding *life everlasting*!<sup>8</sup> The Calvinist says: man is passive in his salvation; Jesus says that perceiving Who the Son of God is and being persuaded that He is Truth is something that *man* must do! Even though man can be persuaded to believe, that does not make him the author of salvation: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6); “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth [*is believing*: a present reality – an attribute of *whosoever*] in him should not [*will not*] perish, but have [*is having*] everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved [*passive voice*: God does the saving]” (John 3:17).<sup>9</sup>

They go on to explain: “The god of resistible grace is not the God of the Scriptures. He is a weak god, an ineffective god, a powerless god. In reality, he is no god at all, but an idol god. So serious is the denial of irresistible grace!”<sup>10</sup> Clearly, we are not on the same page, but it is equally

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://thewestminsterstandard.org/the-westminster-confession/#Chapter%20X>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://reformed.org/documents/shaw/>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks 8*; [https://www.ntgreek.org/learn\\_nt\\_greek/subj-purpose.htm](https://www.ntgreek.org/learn_nt_greek/subj-purpose.htm).

<sup>8</sup> [https://koine-greek.fandom.com/wiki/Participles#Present\\_Active\\_Participles](https://koine-greek.fandom.com/wiki/Participles#Present_Active_Participles).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*; Strong’s Online, <https://onlinebible.net/>.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace5.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace5.html).

evident that the Calvinist feels very strongly about this teaching – going so far as to identify anyone who denies their teaching of *irresistible grace* as an idolater (those are strong words that require strong evidence). Since they are so very confident of their position, their proof should then be readily evident; let's continue to evaluate this teaching.

**Deuteronomy 30:6** – *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. “God does not try to save sinners ... God saves sinners, sovereignly, efficaciously, irresistibly.”*<sup>11</sup> That is their assessment of the matter, and this is one of the texts that they use to try to support this statement. However, once again, they have failed to look beyond the words of the text that they have selected. If we consider the context, we find this: “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee [in detail in Deuteronomy 28], and thou shalt **call them to mind** among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee, And shalt **return unto the LORD** thy God, and shalt **obey his voice** ... That **then** the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and ... *circumcise thine heart ... to love the Lord thy God*” (Deuteronomy 30:1-3, 6). In Deuteronomy 28, Moses gave the children of Israel a detailed pronouncement of the blessings that awaited them for obedience to the Lord (1-14) and of the curses that would abide with them if they did not observe the Lord's commands (15-68); chapter 29 has a reminder of what the Lord had done for them, and a summation of the curse that will be theirs for not living in obedience to the Lord. The Calvinists would have us believe that the quoted text (Deuteronomy 30:6) comes out of the blue – but it doesn't; the text is built upon the Israelites understanding what the Lord required of them, and the consequences for not being obedient. At some time when the children of Israel find themselves under the promised curses and recall the Lord's promised blessings for obedience, on the premise that they will *return* to the Lord and *obey* Him, **then** the Lord will *circumcise* [their] *heart to love the Lord thy God*. Very clearly, the Lord is looking for someone who willing turns and obeys before He will *circumcise* their heart. Under the New Covenant, Paul explained it this way: “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28-29). The *circumcision of the heart* is a spiritual covenant with the Lord; the persuasion of the Lord as Truth is already in place, which leads to our faith reaching out to embrace the Lord's provision, and the Lord sealing that with His Spirit: “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). For Israel, this required faith in the promises of God; for us, it is faith in the accomplished sacrifice of the Lord Jesus.

**John 6:44-45** – *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* At first glance this might appear to limit those who can come to the Lord Jesus to those whom the Father has drawn. Remember, this is being used to affirm that God will make those who receive His *irresistible grace* willing recipients of His salvation; this same text (v. 44) was used in support

---

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace5.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace5.html).

of *total depravity*. The condition is this: if the Father Who sent the Lord Jesus should not have drawn a person, **then** he cannot come to Jesus; but **if** the Father has drawn someone, then that one can *come unto me*. What did Jesus teach about His relationship with the Father? “I and *my* Father are one” (John 10:30). Jesus also stated: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me” (John 12:32). In this case, the condition is: **if** Jesus is lifted up from the earth, **then** *all* (*pantas* – masculine, plural: it means **all of humanity**) will be *drawn to Him*.<sup>12</sup> Since the Lord was *lifted up from the earth* in crucifixion (a fulfillment of the condition that He stated), then it follows that *all men* are being drawn to Him. Therefore, we must understand John 6:44 to read: everyone is able to come unto the Lord Jesus because all are being drawn to Him. The question remains: is the *coming* a product of God’s *irresistible grace*? The following verse explains who is coming; all are being drawn, but not all are coming. Consider the last portion of John 6:45 – *so everyone who has learned from the Father and has understood, he is coming to Me* (literal).<sup>13</sup> The Gospel invitation is open to *whosoever will*, and those who have *learned* and *understood* are coming to the Lord Jesus – that sounds a lot like *believing*! Because we are created in the image of God (something that is still present, even within the sinner – Genesis 9:6), we have the ability to ponder what we hear, and either accept or reject it; it is this ability to reason that makes the *whosoever-will* of the Gospel a reality. For the one who ponders the Gospel and is persuaded of its veracity (he has *learned* and *understood*), he is coming to Jesus: he is believing on Him, and that opens access through the Narrow Gate to the way of life (Matthew 7:13-14, John 10:9). The *coming* that is explained here is not by God’s *irresistible grace* but by His grace at work within a heart that has heard, learned and understood what the Lord has done for him. It is by God’s exceeding grace that He expresses in kindness to us through Christ Jesus that we are among those who have been saved *through the faith* (Ephesians 2:7-8) – it is expressed *faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ (persuaded and believing) that opens God’s rich storehouse of grace and brings us His salvation.

They make this interesting observation: “That salvation is a rebirth **implies** that the grace of salvation is irresistible. As far as physical birth is concerned, the child who is born has no say in the matter of whether or not he will be born. He does not cooperate in being born, not even will to be conceived [sic] and brought forth. Neither is he able effectively to resist conception and birth. **What is true of physical birth is also true of spiritual rebirth.** It is not due to us; **we do not cooperate in it; nor are we able effectively to resist it**” (emphasis added).<sup>14</sup> This is a very interesting analogy, but I wonder if they really thought it through carefully. As a non-Calvinist, I have no problems with the term *rebirth*, but for a Calvinist to use this term to describe salvation *implies* (to use their term) that they believe that man is born with a *spiritual life*, but one that isn’t of God. As we examined the Calvinists’ understanding of *total depravity*, they took great care to emphasize man’s inability to “to desire, understand, believe, or apply spiritual truth.”<sup>15</sup> Within their theology, wouldn’t it be more appropriate to speak of salvation as being *spiritual birth*, rather

---

<sup>12</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>13</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT.

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine\\_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books\\_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved\\_By\\_Grace5.html](http://www.reformedspokane.org/Doctrine_pages/Calvinism%20%26%20Sovereign%20Grace/books_folder/Saved%20By%20Grace/Saved_By_Grace5.html).

<sup>15</sup> John MacArthur, *The Vanishing Conscience*, p. 88.

than *rebirth*? However, if we consider what took place when Adam sinned, perhaps we can bring some clarity to this matter.

Before Adam disobeyed the commandment of the Lord, he and Eve enjoyed spiritual vitality as they fellowshiped with the Lord, their Creator – the Lord came to the Garden to commune with them (Genesis 3:8). Satan came to the Garden in the serpent with the intent to deceive and gain control over what God had created; Satan is a created **spirit-being** who is alive and yet in direct opposition to God (from God’s perspective, you could say that he is *spiritually dead*) – it was his intent at the time of his rebellion, to become *like the most High* (Isaiah 14:14). Satan was *perfect* and the most highly acclaimed of God’s created angelic beings until unrighteousness was found in him (Ezekiel 28:15): he aspired to be as exalted as his Creator. Adam and Eve were also perfect until Satan came tempting them with an opportunity to be *as gods, knowing good and evil* (Genesis 3:5): he used his own point of failure (pride) as his means of deception (Ezekiel 28:17). When God created man, He breathed into him both his breath and his *eternal* soul (Genesis 2:7, *breath of lives* [plural]<sup>16</sup>) – He made him in His own image: man could perceive, think, reason and choose (Genesis 2:19-20). Satan, a spirit-being who is the antithesis of the Lord God, came into the Garden with the intent to gain control over all of God’s creation. The sin of Adam was disobedience to the Lord and obedience to the lure of Satan: his allegiance (by his choice) changed from Jehovah to Satan. The Lord’s warning was that when Adam would eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, on that day *dying you will die* (Genesis 2:17).<sup>17</sup> *Dying* is an infinitive absolute verb, which means that it serves to emphasize the verb that follows it; in this case, *dying* could also be shown as *surely* or *utterly*.<sup>18</sup> *Die*, on the other hand, is a second person masculine singular verb (*thou wilt die*) in the imperfect tense, which means that it is an incomplete action; from this we can deduce that there will be several facets to the death that is promised.<sup>19</sup> If we ponder this in the light of Adam’s sin, we can recognize three aspects to this promised death: 1) there was an immediate spiritual death – the fellowship with God was gone, 2) perhaps less noticeable but also immediate, is that physical death was everywhere, and for humanity it could end either “naturally” or unnaturally (as with Abel), and 3) more significantly, there is a future death coming when man’s eternal soul (the image of God now marred by sin) would experience eternal separation from God. When God breathed life into Adam, He gave him his physical breath **and** his eternal soul; sin did **not** abolish this eternal aspect of man, it merely set it on a course that was away from God (Genesis 9:6), and physical death serves to make the soul’s destination irreversible. At the end of time we are told that “... death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them<sup>20</sup> ... And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:13-15); consider a literal translation of the latter portion: *this, the second death being: if anyone*

---

<sup>16</sup> Leningrad Hebrew Old Testament, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.ancient-hebrew.org/learn/learn-biblical-hebrew-16.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, Strong’s Online.

<sup>19</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>20</sup> *Death*: with the vanishing of the old heaven and earth, any who are alive on the earth at the time are caught in *death*; *hell* (*Hades*) is where the unrighteous dead from all ages are being held pending the Great White Throne judgment.

was not found having been written in the Book of Life, then he was thrown into the Lake of Fire.<sup>21</sup> The souls that are aligned against God (they are not found in the Book of Life: i.e., they have either not been made alive in Christ or have failed to remain faithful to Him) will be separated from Him for eternity in the Lake of Fire – **this** is the *second death*; **this** is that final stage in Adam’s *you will die!* As we noted in our study of *total depravity*, the Lord had a means of redemption in place even before Adam was created – this was God’s gracious gift to humanity that would permit everyone to avoid the *second death*. His gift centered on the need for a blood sacrifice to atone for sin (Hebrews 9:22) – it began in the Garden of Eden with the coats of skins that Jehovah made for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). Until Jesus died upon the cross, shedding the blood of an innocent, clean animal (as prescribed by God) combined with faith in the Lord’s promise of deliverance (Genesis 3:15) brought temporary cleansing from sin; since the cross, Jesus’ shed blood has replaced the animal sacrifices with a one-time cleansing from sin (Hebrews 9:12) yet it, too, must be combined with faith in the Lord in order to be personally effective. Jesus said that it is the one who will remain faithful to Him through the trials of life unto the very end who will be saved (Matthew 24:13) – it is a life of obedience to the Lord that will bring His welcome. This is not *irresistible grace*, but *abundant grace* that is administered by the abiding Spirit of God that will enable us to live in faithfulness to Him despite the trials of life (Romans 8:10; 2 Corinthians 4:13-15).

After the sin of Adam, the Lord pronounced a curse upon the serpent, the woman and the man – things on earth would never be the same again. However, more significantly, the Lord set His pre-creation plan for redemption into motion: as already noted, He shed the blood of animals in order to provide Adam and Eve with coverings (Genesis 3:21) – the shedding of blood, mixed with faith in the Lord, brought a temporary restoration of fellowship between the Creator and His fallen creatures. The promise was made to Satan: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [*He*; this is a masculine pronoun in Hebrew] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).<sup>22</sup> The temporary cleansing from sin accomplished by Jehovah for Adam and Eve foreshadowed the time when the *Word* would take on a body of flesh (John 1:14) and Jehovah would record a final, one-time sacrifice for the sins of humanity (Hebrews 10:12); God’s first sacrifice in the Garden was a pattern for everyone to follow (we see that exemplified in the choices that Cain and Abel made – Genesis 4:3-5), the last Sacrifice fulfilled the Lord’s promise in Genesis 3:15 and broke the power of the devil (Hebrews 2:14). The efficacy of the sacrifices that were made for sin was always dependent upon the choice of the one for whom the sacrifice was made: Abel exercised faith in the Lord’s promise and drew His grace (*respect*; righteous in the eyes of God), whereas Cain trusted in his own abilities and found no grace (Hebrews 11:4). “For unto us was the gospel [the Good News of God’s redemptive work] preached, as well as unto them [referring to the children of Israel]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*” (Hebrews 4:2). Moses rehearsed before the children of Israel the work that Jehovah had done and their required obedience to His commands (Deuteronomy 28-30), and his summation was this: “I call heaven and earth to record [*bear witness*] this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:

---

<sup>21</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

<sup>22</sup> Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*.

therefore **choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live**: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).<sup>23</sup> The majority of the children of Israel did not live in obedience to the Lord, yet Moses called upon them to *choose life* – choose obedience to Jehovah! What did Jesus say? “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15) – if we are loving Him, then He requires that we attend carefully to His commands (*keep* is in the imperative mood).<sup>24</sup>

In the Calvinist’s words, *salvation is a rebirth* – that is true to a greater degree than even they believe! Within their theology, the sin of Adam rendered all of his posterity unable “to desire, understand, believe, or apply spiritual truth.”<sup>25</sup> They hold that man is spiritually incapable of anything; within this vein, some Calvinists believe that the *image of God* (Genesis 1:26) is no longer present in man, citing that Seth was born in Adam’s image and not God’s (Genesis 5:3). Yet MacArthur, who believes in the total inability of man to even *desire* or *believe* any *spiritual truth*, also believes that sinful humanity still bears the *image of God* – despite being marred by sin, it is “not utterly obliterated” and is “essential to the very definition of humanity.”<sup>26</sup> Within the *image*, he includes man’s rational abilities: his ability to understand morality, to feel emotions, to think, to “reason and solve problems” (i.e., make choices) – these are all a part of being made in the likeness of God.<sup>27</sup> Clearly, he is not above contradicting himself, or accepting two opposing truths at the same time; or, perhaps, he has limited the *total depravity* of man to spiritual matters, and his somewhat marred image of God only applies to the rest of life. Yet if the image of God remains even somewhat intact within sinful man, then it is entirely possible that he can hear, ponder and choose to believe the truth about the Lord Jesus (just like Moses’ expectation of Israel) – which makes *total depravity*, *unconditional election* and *irresistible grace* all an unnecessary contrivance of sinful man.

They like to point to Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus in support of their position: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3); literally: *unless someone has been born from above, he is not able to see the kingdom of God*.<sup>28</sup> *Born*, as it is used here, is in the passive voice, which identifies God as the One Who performs this action – clearly, they would have no problem with that. Therefore, the question is: how is one born from above? Interestingly, the Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas that very question: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30); their response to this question will provide us with the answer to ours, and from the Apostle Paul himself! The jailor was told: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:31). Within this concise response, *believe* is the one word that we must be very sure that we fully understand. *Pisteuson* (the Greek word so translated) means to think to be true, to be persuaded of, or to evaluate and become convinced of

---

<sup>23</sup> Strong’s Online.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> MacArthur, *Vanishing*, p. 88.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A200/loving-gods-image-in-our-neighbors>.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B200710>.

<sup>28</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon.

the truth of a matter; moreover, the word is also in the imperative mood (Paul issued this as a command to the jailor) and active voice, which means that it was the jailor who was required to be persuaded of the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ (*believe*).<sup>29</sup> Paul and Silas did not leave the jailor with that command, but “they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house” (Acts 16:32) – instruction was given so that the jailor and his household would **understand** what was required, could **evaluate** what they heard, and then be **persuaded** (believe). How are we saved? First of all, by being persuaded of the truth of the Lord Jesus through learning about Him (as the eternal *Word* made flesh, His sinless life, His death for our sin, His shed blood for our cleansing, and His resurrection as our High Priest and Master); Jesus said that everyone who is believing in Him will not be ruined but is holding everlasting life (John 3:16).<sup>30</sup> Part of *believing* in Him and learning about Him is counting the cost of being His follower (Luke 14:26-33) and, if I am willing to pay the price of discipleship and have been persuaded, then it is understood that all things are made new (for I am now cleansed); through the enablement of the Spirit of God, Who now abides within, I embark on a *new* life designed by God to show forth His righteousness and holiness (Romans 8:1-4; Ephesians 2:10; 4:24).

As we learned in our study of *limited atonement*, everyone is *called* to the Lord, but few will find the Door to the narrow pathway to life (Matthew 7:14; John 10:9). Although the wealth of God’s grace has been expressed to us through Christ (Ephesians 2:7) and our salvation comes only through that abundant grace, it is a *gift of God* to be received, it is **not** an *irresistible* force that requires our compliance, or one that will change our mind in order to bring compliance. The *image of God* is very much a part of all of humanity and an *irresistible grace* would contravene what God has placed within each one of us: the ability to understand, reason and choose; truly, our eternal souls have been tainted by sin so that our evaluations are not without a sinful bias, but since Jesus commanded the multitudes to make every effort to *enter* onto the pathway of life through the Narrow Gate, then it would be foolish of us to say that no one can obey Him (Matthew 7:13; Luke 13:24). Concerning those who will be deceived by the Antichrist, Paul said that the Antichrist will come “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness [Satan’s *power, signs* and deceitful *wonders* (v. 9)] in them that perish [*those who are perishing*]; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might [*in order to*] be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10).<sup>31</sup> Those who will be perishing under the Antichrist’s lies will be those who **refuse** to accept (*received not*) a love for the truth in order to be saved – in other words, they will evaluate the lies of the Antichrist along with the truth of God, and they will choose the lies because they come with convincing *signs* and *wonders*. They will be permitted to exercise their ability to think, reason and choose; *irresistible grace* does not fit into this scenario because **then** there would be **no choice** – they would not be able to reject the truth because either 1) they are the object of this *irresistible grace* and cannot resist (no choice), or 2) they are not the object of this *irresistible grace* and will have no choice.

---

<sup>29</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Strong’s Online; Friberg Lexicon.

<sup>30</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Friberg Lexicon; [https://koine-greek.fandom.com/wiki/Participles#Present\\_Active\\_Participles](https://koine-greek.fandom.com/wiki/Participles#Present_Active_Participles).

<sup>31</sup> Stephanus 1550 NT; Gingrich Lexicon, *Bibleworks 8*; <https://www.morechristlike.com/koine-greek-present-tense-present-participle/>.