

Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible 035

John 12:37

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Well, let's take our Bibles and open them to John 10:25. We are continuing to move, believe it or not, through our study, "Neo-Calvinism vs. the Bible." And we are kind of at that part of the study where we are dealing with TULIP, the Calvinistic acronym, and comparing it to Scripture.

Neo-Calvinism vs. The Bible

- I. Calvinism's Mixed Blessing
- II. Why Critique Calvinism?
- III. The Source of Calvin's Theology
- IV. Calvin's Manner of Life
- V. TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture**
- VI. Conclusion

So we are at that section where we are dealing with the "I" in the Calvinistic mnemonic TULIP, called Irresistible Grace.

V. Running TULIP Through the Grid of Scripture

- A. Total Depravity
- B. Unconditional Election
- C. Limited Atonement
- D. **Irrresistible Grace**
- E. Perseverance of the Saints



You can see on the slide right there what they mean by that: resistance is futile. We are almost finished with Irresistible Grace, which means we only have the "P" left before the series concludes. But as we deal with Irresistible Grace, what Calvinists mean by Irresistible Grace is—

"'I' in Calvinism stands for 'Irresistible Grace.' Faith is something 'God irresistibly bestowed upon the elect without their having believed anything...By such reasoning, man...can't even hear the gospel—much less respond to the pleadings of Christ.'"¹

And that is an outworking to the Calvinists' "T": Total Depravity. In Total Depravity they basically teach that man is a cadaver, a corpse, lifeless in the spiritual sense, a rock. So he has no ability to believe on his own. Even when he is convicted by God, he has no ability to believe.

So why does anybody believe? Well, God grants to them the gift of faith. So that is why, when you get into Calvinism, they are so big on, "Do you have the right kind of faith?" There is the faith that saves and the faith that does not save. And if you believe that, you are going to spend your whole life wondering, "Do I have the right kind of faith?"

So you cannot just trust in Christ as Messiah. I mean, we need to see repentance, contrition, perseverance, service, works, commitment, which are all very subjective categories. How do you know whether you are doing enough to demonstrate you have the right kind of faith?

Well, there is the faith that saves and the faith that does not save. They have two kinds of faith. Faith that just mere people have, and then the faith that God gives. So if you have the latter kind of faith you are sitting pretty because you are one of the elect. Everyone else is kind of iffy.

So God grants faith to some. It is not your faith. It is God's faith. So when we get into this whole subject of Irresistible Grace, as we looked at the Calvinistic definition, it is faith that God irresistibly bestowed on the elect.

So if you are one of the elect, you are coming to Christ whether you want to or not. You are coming kicking and screaming because you were chosen. You were given the gift of faith. And now there is this irresistible draw to God.

¹ Bob Kirkland, *Calvinism: None Dare Call It Heresy; Spotlight on the Life and Teachings of John Calvin* (Eureka, MT: Lighthouse Trails, 2018), 34.

D. Irresistible Grace

1. Calvinistic definition
2. **Calvinistic arguments**
3. Man can resist God's grace
4. Man can resist God by disbelieving
5. John 6:44?

We have gone through the Calvinistic arguments that are used to support this. There are basically three of them.

2. Calvinistic Arguments

- a) Faith is a gift
- b) Regeneration precedes faith
- c) Lost man cannot seek God (Rom. 3:11)

(1) Faith is a gift. We have explained why that is not adequate. (2) Regeneration precedes faith. We have explained why that is inadequate. And (3) the lost man cannot seek God. We have explained why that is inadequate. So if you have question marks on those, you could go back into the prior lessons and learn about that.

D. Irresistible Grace

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3. **Man can resist God's grace**
4. Man can resist God by disbelieving
5. John 6:44?

Last week we saw that man can resist God's grace. I mean, there are just a ton of examples of that happening in the Bible, not the least of which sub letter (a) there: the likely seven billion people on planet Earth, pre-flood (a figure that comes from Henry Morris, the creation scientist), resisting God's grace.

The Spirit was striving with man for 120 years. I mean, the only people in the boat were Noah and Mrs. Noah and Noah's three sons and their respective wives. So clearly the grace of God was going out during that time period. And yet it was being resisted, just just like today. The same thing is happening today.

3. Man Can Resist God's Grace

- a) Gen. 6:3 (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5)
- b) Prov. 1:24-25; 29:1
- c) Matt. 23:37
- d) John 12:32 (Rev. 20:11-15)
- e) Acts 7:51
- f) Heb. 12:25

So when Calvinism talks about Irresistible Grace, I am sorry. I have a lot of examples in Scripture where God's grace can be resisted. And let me give you this one real quickly, number four. We left off here last time. Man indeed can resist by disbelieving.

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The Bible is very clear about that. I will give you these verses fairly quickly.

4. Man Can Resist God By Disbelieving

- a) John 10:25
- b) John 12:37
- c) Acts 9:26; 19:9; 28:24
- d) 2 Thess. 2:12

John 10:25.

"Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me'" (John 10:25).

Jesus does not say, "You cannot believe." He says, "...you do not believe" (John 10:25), meaning that if you are an unbeliever after seeing these signs, then it is your own fault.

One of the classics is John 12:37, which is really the turning point in John's Gospel. This is what moves us out of the book of signs, the miracles that Christ did, into the Passion narratives dealing with the death, burial, resurrection of Jesus.

OUTLINE OF JOHN	
1:1-18	HEAVENLY GENEALOGY (Explains who Jesus is)
1:19-11:57	PUBLIC MINISTRY (7 signs & discourses)
12:1-50	TRIUMPHAL ENTRY (public national rejection of Christ-12:37)
13-17	UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE (new dispensation)
18-21	PASSION NARRATIVES (crucifixion to resurrection)

And this is the point where Jesus had had enough. And John says that this switched Christ's ministry. What happened right here as Jesus was doing countless signs (John features seven) in first-century Israel, John 12:37 says,

"But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" (John 12:37).

So therein lies the big shift. John 12:37 happens during the Triumphal Entry, which transitions us into the Upper Room, where Christ's whole ministry changes. He starts now for the first time to lay down Church Age truth in seed form.

He never did that before. After John 12 Jesus began hinting at the coming Church Age, which would begin on the Day of Pentecost. So that took Him out of public ministry into private ministry. And what follows after the Upper Room discourse? John 13-17 are the Passion narratives.

So what is the big switch? The big switch is in John 12:37.

"...many signs...yet they were not believing in Him" (John 12:37).

Israel had the opportunity as a nation to embrace him, and they did not. They made a choice. The choice was theirs. They made the wrong choice.

This idea that man can resist by disbelieving is pretty prominent in the Book of Acts. Notice Acts 9:26, dealing with the conversion of Saul, whom we now know as Paul. It says,

"When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26).

So this is the reaction of the early church against Saul. They did not want to believe him at first. If you go over to Acts 19:9, you will see another example of this. It says,

"But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way"—that would be the message of the early church—"before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9).

What forced Paul into the school of Tyrannus, away from a ministry to the Jews in the synagogue was that they were disobedient. So they were making an active decision. And this is kind of how Paul's ministry ends.

If you go to Acts 28:24, Paul is under house arrest for two years at the end of the Book of Acts, about A.D. 60-62. This is where Paul writes four letters that we call the Prison Letters. Why do we call them the Prison Letters? Because when Paul wrote them, he was in prison.

And those letters are Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians. And we put them in that order because it looks like as you go through those letters, he starts with no hope of getting out of prison. And that hope starts to accelerate and it really reaches an apex, or a zenith, in Philippians.

So Ephesians deals with the body of Christ. Colossians deals with the head of the body. Philemon talks about how Christianity works out in daily relationships. And then the Book of Joy, Philippians, is where Paul is really confident that his trial before Caesar is going to go his way.

So that whole era of Paul's life is sort of initiated with Acts 28:24. It says,

"Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe." (Acts 28:24).

So house arrest was very different from Paul's final arrest where he wrote 2 Timothy. He was in prison in Rome twice, and the first time around it was like, he could receive guests. He was not alone. He thought he was going to get out of jail, which he did.

And so people would come and visit him, and Hebrews would come and visit him, and leaders of Israel would come and visit him, and they just would not believe.

So that is why Paul in the subsequent verses, Acts 28:25-27, quotes Isaiah 6, where God told Isaiah 700 years earlier that the same thing that Paul would experience, Isaiah would experience in his ministry. People would just not believe.

So, you know, as you read these, it does not say that they cannot believe. It says that they will not believe. And because they will not believe, there are consequences for that.

And then one more on this, 2 Thessalonians 2:12. Just remember, the "T's" are after the Prison Letters. So after you hit Colossians, you will run into some "T's," like the Thessalonian letters and the letters to Timothy.

And just remember that the second letter in "Thessalonians" is an "h," and the second letter in Timothy is an "i," and "h" comes before "i." Go to the right, "t." I mean, you can learn all these little tricks and people will just think, "Wow, you really know the word, man, you know, to turn to the right thing," when you just put a little simple memory thing into existence.

Second Thessalonians 2:12 says,

"in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12).

So that is why when you go through the Book of Revelation, it keeps saying that people hid themselves in the rocks and they would not repent. And it is not some kind of thing where they cannot repent. It is just that they are making an active decision not to do it. They just will not respond to the light that God has given.

So when you talk to me about Irresistible Grace, I am sorry. Man can resist God's grace. He does it frequently, very, very sadly. And we do not want to be people like that, amen?

So we are going to wrap up this section on Irresistible Grace by going to where I wanted to spend the majority of our time this morning, John 6:44. This verse is such a big deal in Calvinism that we have to give it its separate treatment here.

Almost every Calvinist you deal with will quote this verse at some point when they are trying to defend Irresistible Grace. It says,

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws..." (John 6:44).

"Draws" is a translation of the Greek verb "helkyo" [ἐλκυω].

"No one comes to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws ["helkyo" (ἐλκυω)] him; and I will raise him up on the last day" (John 6:44).

So what Calvinism uses John 6:44 to teach is that *"No one can come to Me unless the Father...draws him;..." (John 6:44)* means that you have to be dragged to Jesus. I mean, no one comes on their own. There has to be almost like, what the Book of Ezekiel talks about in the end times, that famous invasion from Russia, Iran, Turkey. It is like hooks in the jaw.

That is the Calvinistic interpretation of salvation. You are being dragged to Christ, and it does not matter what you want. It does not matter what you think. You are being irresistibly drawn. And after all, Jesus talked about it, right?

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] him;..." (John 6:44).

And Calvinists basically translate "helkyo" [ἔλκω] to mean "drag him." You are dragged. You are pulled. And you almost have no choice in the matter. So Calvinists will say, "If you are one of the elect, we are going to get you on our side. Whether you like it or not, because of Irresistible Grace, God is going to yank you. He is going to pull you to Himself."

And I am saying that God's grace is resistible. So how would we answer John 6:44? Here is a little outline that we can follow.

5. John 6:44?

- a) Verb *helkyō* can mean "drag" (Acts 21:30; Jas. 2:6)
- b) What does it mean in John's Gospel?
 - 1. John 12:32, 37-40
 - 2. John 18:10; 21:6, 11 (inanimate objects)
- c) Verb *helkyō* can mean "attract" or "draw" rather than coerce

Now it is true that "helkyo" [ἔλκω] can mean "drag." It is used that way at least twice, once in Acts 21:30, and a second time in James 2:6. Let's look at those real quick. So you will notice we are leaving John to try to get "helkyo" [ἔλκω] to have this meaning of "drag." You go all the way over to Acts 21:30. It says,

"Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut" (Acts 21:30).

So Paul was dragged out of that temple against his own will, really. He had no choice in the matter. So the Calvinist says, "Well, if that is what "helkyo" [ἔλκω] means there, that is obviously what it means in John 6."

Go over to the Book of James for a minute, by the Lord's half-brother, James 2:6. Just go to that big book called Hebrews and take a right. You will see James.

James 2:6 is talking about how the church, meeting in a synagogue, a very early form of Christianity, was giving preference to the wealthy. I am glad that never happens today. I am glad churches never give preference to the wealthy. "I will give this money, but I want a building named after me." "Okay, well, we can do that."

But you have your reward in full. Do you want to be rewarded in heaven or now on the earth (Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21)? That is another sermon, by the way. We will not get into that. James 2:6 says,

"But you..." (James 2:6).

James 2:6 is dealing with the rich. James is saying, "Why are you favoring the rich in the assembly when it is the rich that are dragging you before the courts? They are mistreating you. So in the process, he says in James 2:6,

"But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you..." (James 2:6).

Now oppression is something that happens against your will.

"...and personally drag you into court?" (James 2:6).

The word translated "drag" there is "helkyo" [ἔλκω], which means to coerce. So the way this works with Calvinism is that they find all of these examples where "drag" ("helkyo" [ἔλκω]) is dealing with something against your will. And they read that into John 6:44.

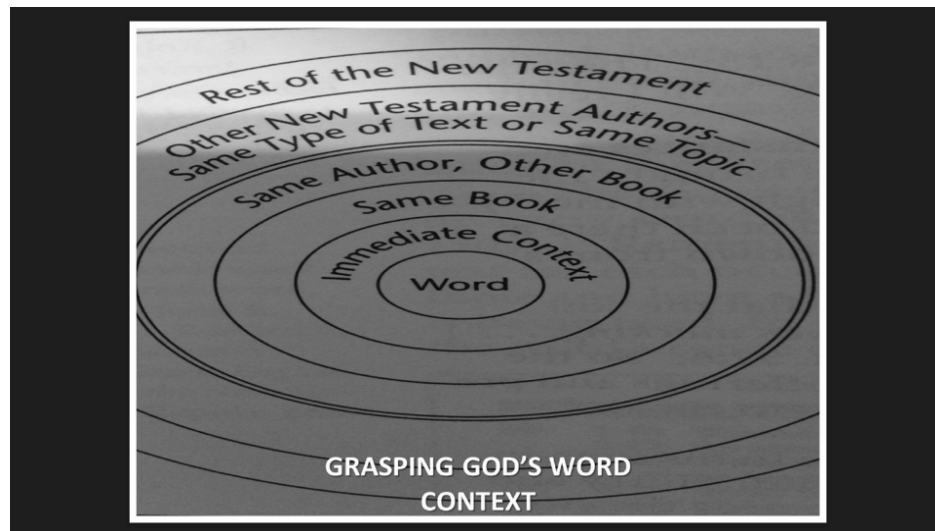
So Calvinists interpret John 6:44 through the lens of Acts 21:30 and James 2:6. So is that a valid interpretation? I do not think that is a valid interpretation, because that is not how you do a word study.

You do not figure out what a word means by how it is used by some remote author somewhere else in the Bible. There is a method that you use to do a word study. You can look at it as concentric circles working its way outward, just kind of like throwing a rock into a placid pond, and it creates this circular way going out in all directions.

So when you do a word study, you study, first of all, the word itself. What are the different meanings of the word? Because, frequently, words have many different meanings. Did you know that? Take the word "apple," for example. I mean, that could be a piece of fruit. That could be a computer. That could be New York City, the Big Apple.

So you could be talking about New York. You could be talking about the pupil of one's eye. So how in the world would you handle the word "apple" when it has so many different meanings?

It is the same with the word "helkyo" [ἔλκω]. So you generate the meanings and then you say, "Okay, well, what does the word mean here, since it can mean multiple things?" Well, you start with the first circle inside, the immediate context.



Which definition works the best with this context? So if I am writing you an email about a computer and I use the word "apple," you are not going to just throw into it "New York City" or "fruit," because you have a context there that tells you what the word means.

Words mean things based on the context in which they are used. This is just basic language, right? So you figure out what meaning best works in the immediate context. And then if that does not yield enough fruit, then you move outward further and you look at, well, what does the word mean in this book?

How is "helkyo" [ἔλκω] used in John's Gospel? And then if you want more understanding of it, then you move out to the next layer. How does John use this word in his other writings? Because John wrote five books, right? He wrote the Gospel of John. He wrote 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and he wrote the Book of Revelation.

Okay, well, let's move outwards. How does John use the word in those other books? And then you can keep studying it. You go out to the second to last layer there, and it says, "Other New Testament Authors—Same Type of Text or Same Topic."

So in basically the same context, how do other biblical writers use the word? And then finally then your last layer is the outer edges, and you are researching the entire New Testament. So do you notice what the Calvinists do? They start with the outer layer first.

Did you see that? I mean, they run off to Acts, they run off to James, and then they develop the meaning of a word, and they read that into John 16. And so when somebody does that, you say to yourself, "Well, they are not really going through the proper steps of a word study."

There is a methodology that you use when you study a word in the Bible or any word for that matter. And your average person does not pick up on this, because these kinds of things, sadly, are not taught in local churches. And so they are reading their favorite theologian and their favorite theologian makes this point, and he puts in brackets some verses, and people are so impressed by that.

"Wow, look at that. He is using the Bible." But your response to that should be, "So what? I mean, anybody uses the Bible, right? The devil uses the Bible. The devil quoted the Bible to Jesus there with the three temptations."

So using the Bible is not impressive. You should say to yourself, "It does not matter how many verses they have in their parenthesis after they make a point. The issue is, are they using the verses correctly?" And if you do not understand this, you are just going to be deceived by a lot of confused theologians, because they sound really erudite in how they are presenting their material.

As an example, "Irresistible Grace (Acts 21:30; James 2:6)." I mean, who could argue with that? Until you start understanding that "helkyo" [ἔλκω] has a lot of different meanings and the Calvinists have picked the most remote meaning and read it into the present context.

So when people do this, it is a hermeneutical error. You know what hermeneutics is, right? It is called interpretation. It comes from the name of the god (little "g") Hermes, that we are going to run into—his name, anyway—in Acts 14, when we reconvene on Wednesday nights.

The apostles are going to be called Zeus and Hermes, and they call Paul Hermes, because Paul was the speaker. He was speaking. So Hermes is the guy in Greek mythology that spoke for Zeus, and as he spoke for his father, Zeus, he was bringing a message from Zeus to man.

That is where the name "Hermes" and the word "hermeneutics" come from. Because when you are dealing with hermeneutics, you are interpreting the Bible correctly, Lord willing, following basic Bible study methodology. And you are bringing a message from God to man, which is one of the greatest privileges you could have. Just make sure you handle the Bible correctly.

So, a hermeneutical error is called illegitimate totality transfer. This happens all the time. You can just call it ITT for short. D.A. Carson defines it in his book "Exegetical Fallacies," which is a great book to have on your shelf at home, because it just shows you, definition-wise, all of the basic errors that people make when interpreting God's Word, not following hermeneutical principles.

So one of the errors that occurs is what D.A. Carson defines as the "Unwarranted adoption of an expanded semantic field,"² meaning that you take the broadest meaning of the word and you read that into your context, whether your context supports it or not. Carson says,

"The fallacy in this instance lies in the supposition that the meaning of a word in a specific context is much broader than the context itself allows and may bring with it the word's entire semantic range...."³

So for example, you are in an email and someone's talking about a computer, and they put the word "apple" in, and you look at the word "apple," and you read into the word "apple" "New York City," or "the pupil of one's eye," when the context does not allow it—although those are legitimate uses of the word "apple" elsewhere.

Carson says,

"This step is sometimes called illegitimate totality transfer."⁴

So that is really what is going on with the Calvinists' use of "helkyo" [ἑλκω]. They are going way outside the context. They are not following the rules of proper biblical interpretation, and they are not following our concentric circles.

So the issue is not what does "helkyo" [ἑλκω] mean somewhere else by a different writer. That is not the issue. The issue is what does it mean here? And you will run into this kind of thing. When you debate people about the word "day" ("yom" [יֹמ]) in Genesis, they will say, "Well, the word day doesn't mean one day."

People are always attacking Genesis because they are more impressed with Carl Sagan than with God. And after all, Carl Sagan, on his videos that we all grew up with, at least I did, in the public school system, saying "Billions and billions."

And he kept saying it over and over again, as if the more you say it, the more it is true. "Billions and billions and billions of years ago." And you are just a little kid in grade school kindergarten watching this. And this scientist is saying this, and he sounds so authoritative and he has got the lab coat on, so he must be true.

Even though Carl Sagan was not there in the beginning, was he? He is pretty confident about something that he was not there to see. And so people are really impressed by that. Then they get saved. I did this for years. I just took the word "day" ("yom" [יֹמ]) in Genesis 1, and said, "Well, each of the creation days is an age," so I can love Jesus and love Carl Sagan simultaneously, isn't that cool?

² D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 60-61.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

When the reality is that God says, "You cannot serve two masters" (paraphrase, Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13), right? The thing about Jesus is that if you walk out discipleship, He is like a wrecking ball to your whole world system. He will ruin the whole thing. That is His goal. He will replace it with something better. But you cannot fill a cup that is completely full. So what people do is they take the word "day" ("yom" [יוֹם]) and they make it into an age, because they are trying to cram evolution into Genesis 1. And they will tell you, "Look, 'yom' [יוֹם], which is the Hebrew word for 'day,' can mean an age."

And that is absolutely true. "Yom" [יוֹם] can mean an age, and not necessarily a twenty-four-hour day. But the question is, "Is that what it means in Genesis 1?" not what it means somewhere else. What does it mean in Genesis 1?

And I am sorry, in Genesis 1 we have a context that says, "Evening and morning" (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) and then it says "first day" (Genesis 1:5), "second day" (Genesis 1:8), "third day" (Genesis 1:13). So every time you see "yom" [יוֹם] with "evening and morning," it always means a twenty-four-hour day.

And "yom" [יוֹם] plus a number, an ordinal numerical modifier, I think, always means a twenty-four-hour day. And by the way, Moses said twice in the Book of Exodus (we may get there before the Rapture) in Exodus 20 and Exodus 31, God says to Moses, "I worked six days and rested on the seventh."

So do you get a million years off after you work six days? So I guess my point is, yeah, "yom" [יוֹם] can mean an age somewhere else. But what does it mean here in Genesis 1? And if you are going to define the meaning of a word by how it is used in some remote context and read it into the present context, then that is illegitimate totality transfer.

That is not how you do a word study. So with all that being said, what does "helkyo" [ἔλκω] mean in John's Gospel? Not, what does it mean somewhere else? What does it mean in John's Gospel? We can look at what it means somewhere else. But let's not start there.

Let's not start at the ultimate layer outward. Let's start where we are supposed to start. And when you study the word elsewhere in John's Gospel, "helkyo" [ἔλκω] does not mean "drag." It does not mean "yank to oneself," where the person being yanked has no choice in the matter.

What the word means is "to attract." That is what "helkyo" [ἔλκω] means. It has a very different meaning than what Calvinism says, "irresistibly draw." That is not what the word means in John's Gospel. It means that somewhere else, but not John's Gospel.

So notice, if you will, John 12:32. See, if the present context does not yield the meaning of a word, I am trying to figure out, how does the same writer in the same book use the

same word? That is a much more accurate way to do a word study than to start somewhere else in the Bible with the remote author first.

So when you interpret John 6:44, backing up a little bit, which says—

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] him;..." (John 6:44).

—you have to understand that "helkyo" [ἔλκω] is also used a few chapters later in John 12 by Jesus, referring to His death on the cross. And in so doing, it is going to attract the world, not yank them to Him against their will. It will attract them.

So Jesus says in John 12:32, speaking of His imminent death,

"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] all men to Myself" (John 12:32).

Do you see "all men" (John 12:32) there in the Bible? "I am going to draw all men to Myself" (paraphrase, John 12:32). Now that is real different from how the Calvinist is handling John 6:44. They are talking about dragging a small group to oneself—Irresistible Grace,—and that small group is the elect.

But that is not the way the word "helkyo" [ἔλκω] is used elsewhere in John's Gospel, one of the early layers in our concentric circles. When Jesus is lifted up, He *"will draw ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] all men to Myself" (John 12:32).*

And the truth of the matter is that as Jesus is drawing all men to Himself, some are going to resist that. How do we know that? Because John 12:32 comes before John 12:37, which we have already read. John 12:37 says,

"But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" (John 12:37).

So this drawing, this attraction (John 12:32), is going out into the world. And yet, as Jesus is even teaching that truth, there were people there making a decision not to believe in Him, which shows you that there is an attraction—we would call that God's grace—but it can be resisted.

So that is a real different definition of "helkyo" [ἔλκω] than what you are getting from Neo-Calvinism. As you go down to John 12:37-40, there is our verse,

"But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" (John 12:37).

That is in spite of the drawing of John 12:32. Now Jesus quotes Isaiah 6. It is the same verse that Paul quoted in Acts 28, you remember, about how the same kind of thing happened in Isaiah's ministry.

God was involved in Isaiah's ministry. God was using Isaiah's ministry to give to the nation of Israel, in the seventh century, prior to the scattering of the North, pre-exilic ministry, an opportunity to repent before the consequences came. That drawing was going out.

That is why God, through the prophet Isaiah, says things to the nation of Israel like, "Come, let's reason together" (paraphrase, Isaiah 1:18). And in spite of that drawing, in spite of that attracting that God was trying to do, they were resisting.

Jesus is saying in John 12 that the same thing is happening right now to first-century Israel. Paul, using Isaiah 6 in Acts 28, says that the same thing was happening right now in his ministry. So that is a very different definition of "helkyo" [ἔλκω], isn't it?

So you notice what I am doing. I am not running to Acts 21:30 first. I am not running to James 2:6 first. I am working my way out through concentric circles. And then as you keep studying the use of the word "helkyo" [ἔλκω] in John's Gospel, what you discover is that it does not even refer to dragging. It refers to pulling something that is an inanimate object.

If it is an inanimate object, it has no power to resist. So you cannot take "helkyo" [ἔλκω], attracting someone with a free will, to the use of "helkyo" [ἔλκω] in John's Gospel, where you are pulling something that is an inanimate object and does not have any power to resist.

That is an invalid comparison. But notice John 18. We are still in John's Gospel. John 18:10. Here is another use of the word "helkyo" [ἔλκω]. It says,

"Simon Peter, then, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus" (John 18:10).

So Peter was not happy about the arrest of Christ. And he kind of like Moses, you know, that we are studying in the main hour, sermon hour.

John 18:10, about Peter, who did not like the arrest of Jesus, says,

"Simon Peter then, having a sword, drew it..." (John 18:10).

Now, when you see that word, "drew" it, that is an English translation of this word "helkyo" [ἔλκω].

"...and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus" (John 18:10).

So when John's Gospel uses "helkyo" [ἔλκω], it is sometimes referring to pulling out an inanimate object, like a sword out of a sheath. Now, did the sword have any choice in the matter? Was the sword fighting and resisting? No. And so it was just a drawing.

So you cannot take that and transfer it over to John 6, because John 6 is a totally different context where God is attracting image bearers that have the power of volition.

You see "helkyo" [ἔλκω] used two other times, in John 21:6 and 21:11, referring to dragging a net of fish. It says,

"And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.' So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish" (John 21:6).

If you go down to John 21:11, it says,

"Simon Peter went up and drew ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three;..." (John 21:11).

And boy, you would not believe the ink that spilled on that one: What is the meaning of 153 fish?" I mean, the commentaries just go on and on, trying to give you the secret meaning.

I think I know the secret meaning. You guys ready for this? It means 153 fish. That is what it means. It is not a secret code or something. It is just showing that John was an eyewitness to all this stuff, and he knew the number of the fish that were brought in.

John 21:11 says,

"Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn" (John 21:11).

So there is the actual drawing. But it is really not the same as our context, because the fish, you know, really did not have much of a choice in the matter, any more than a sword does (John 18:10).

So with all of that being said, what I would say is that "helkyo" [ἔλκω] does not mean to "yank" in our context (John 6:44). It can mean it somewhere else. But it really does not mean "to yank to oneself," where the person being yanked has no choice in the matter.

I think it probably means "to attract." But as the attraction is going out, people have an opportunity. Are they going to respond to the grace that God has given or not? So this is a very different meaning of "helkyo" [ἔλκω] than what you are getting from five-point Calvinism.

The verb "helkyo" [ἔλκω] can mean "attract" or "draw" rather than "coerce." This is not just my opinion. Notice the words of Frederick Godet, a first-rate Bible scholar, in his "Commentary on the Gospel of John." Godet says,

"'helkyo,' to draw, does not necessarily denote an effectual drawing. This word may refer only to the preaching of the cross throughout the whole world and the action of the Holy Spirit which accompanies it. This heavenly drawing is not irresistible."⁵

So I think Godet has got it right. Calvinism wants you to interpret John 6:44 as meaning that the drawing is irresistible—Irrresistible Grace. Godet is saying, "That is not what the word means in our context, as determined from a word study in the same book." That is kind of the point of the whole thing.

So how does God draw the unsaved? I mean, we have seen examples of it a few lessons back.

God's Grace to the Unsaved

- Holy Spirit's conviction (John 16:7-11)
- God's Word (Isa. 55:10-11)
- Gospel (Rom. 1:16)
- Creation (Ps. 19:1-4)
- Conscience (Rom. 2:14-15)

He does it through the Holy Spirit's conviction, which goes out into the whole world, John 16:7-11. He does it through the proclamation of His Word, which does not return void. It accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent.

He does it through the gospel, which is the "dynamis" [δύναμις], where we get the word "dynamite." The word "power" in Romans 1:16 is a translation of the word "dynamis" [δύναμις], the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

These are all drawing things that God does with lost people constantly. He does it through creation, because the heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1). So it is

⁵ Frederick L. Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. Timothy Dwight [n.p.: Funk & Wagnalls, 1893; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.], 228.

kind of obvious, as you look around, that this whole thing did not just materialize on its own.

It did not materialize on its own any more than I could sit here with a deck of cards and put them in a bag and number them 1-52, and shake up the bag, and throw the bag out, and the cards would line up in a straight line in the right number.

I mean, what if I did that? Put 52 cards in a bag, numbered 1-52—on one side, by the way—and I just tossed it out there and they lined up in a straight line in the right order. I mean, what are the chances of that happening? Slim and none, and slim just left town, right?

And so you look at that and you say, "Well, if that if that cannot happen with a deck of cards, how in the world do these things like the DNA molecule, and the fact that no two of our fingerprints are exactly alike, and no two snowflakes that have fallen in human history are exactly alike, how does the world—how can something like that happen by chance?

You would have to almost commit intellectual suicide to believe this all happened by chance. That is why the Bible says, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (paraphrase, Psalm 14:1; 53:1). I know atheists, and you do too. I have never really been impressed with them, because they are believing in something that is irrational. I mean, it is just illogical to believe that.

And the fact that we are rotating in our heliocentric system at exactly the right distance from the sun, and I do not know how fast we are moving. Does anybody know we are moving quick? It does not feel like it. And we are rotating around the sun at just the right orbit to sustain life. Not too close that we burn to death. Not too far away that we freeze to death.

So you want to tell me that the whole thing happened by chance? Come on. So the heavens declare the glory of God in and of themselves (Psalm 19:1). And that is an attraction that has gone out into the world. And then another attraction that has gone out into the world is conscience.

You know, we have talked about consciences. We talked about it last week in our Fourth of July message. Conscience is that invisible barometer within us that knows right from wrong. Saved and unsaved people have that conscience. That is why God in Genesis 3:22 said to Adam and Eve after they had sinned, "'Now the man has become like one of us,'" a Trinitarian statement, "Us," "'knowing good and evil'" (paraphrase, Genesis 3:22).

So these are all the things that God is doing right now to attract unsaved people. Is He coercing them? Is He forcing them? Calvinism says that He is, but that is not what "helkyo" [ἔλκυω] means in John 6:44. It is an attraction that has gone out.

John starts his Gospel this way. He says,

"There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man" (John 1:9).

"Every man" is enlightened by Jesus Christ. When the Son of Man is lifted up, He will draw all men to Himself (John 12:32). Some respond to the light; some do not. Some respond to the conviction; some do not. Although sufficient light has gone out, some choose, tragically, not to respond to it.

So that is how I would, you know, handle "helkyo" [ἔλκω] there in John 6:44. It is an attraction. And by the way, here is what the verses look like when you throw in John 6:40, which comes before John 6:44.

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day... No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws ["helkyo" (ἔλκω)] him;..." (John 6:40, 44).

You have to understand "draw" ("helkyo" [ἔλκω]) in light of what comes before it. John 6:40 shows that "draw" ("helkyo" [ἔλκω]) is something that happens to everyone. And you do not find that in the Calvinistic writings. They just quote John 6:44, and they do not connect it with John 6:40.

So if you just learn the basic principle of Bible study: context, context, context; you can see through any deception. I am just using the principles here to sort of dispel Neo-Calvinism, which means we are finished with Irresistible Grace. And the only thing left to study in this study is the Perseverance of the Saints.

Can you guys persevere with me for a few more weeks? Look at Perseverance of the Saints.

V. Running **TULIP** Through the Grid of Scripture

- A. **T**otal Depravity
- B. **U**nconditional Election
- C. **L**imited Atonement
- D. **I**rresistible Grace
- E. **P**erseverance of the Saints

And this one here, as we start to embark on it, is the big one, because this is the one that is being used today, I believe, by Satan in the lives of countless people. They have trusted Christ, but they do not really know if they are Christians or not.

So we have this endemic of people that might believe in eternal security, but they do not believe they possess it, or they do not know for sure. So they are doing all these sorts of good works to prove they have it. I am not the biggest fan of so-called Christian psychology, but there was a study done by Minirth and Meier, who were at that time faculty at Dallas Seminary.

You can find this online. I think it is called, "The Psychological Effects of Lordship Salvation." You can Google it and find it. And they talk about the emotional toll that exists in the lives of Christians because of this doctrine right here: the Perseverance of the Saints.

What the Perseverance of the Saints teaches is that if you are one of the elect, then it must be shown in proper doctrine and proper behavior throughout the course of one's life.

So if you have a bad thought or a bad day, or a bad month, or a bad year, like David, for example, to give you the most extreme example, you have all of these people now within Christianity—because they are under this doctrine constantly, I mean, this is this is the majority opinion out there in the pulpits, in media, in Christian writing—you have all of these people out there that really do not know if they are Christians, when the truth of the matter is it is your birthright.

It is your birthright to know that you are saved. God wants you to believe, not just in eternal security. He wants you to understand that you have it. And that is called the doctrine of the assurance of salvation. And I will be showing you writings from Puritans, when we study the Perseverance of the Saints, that were steeped in Calvinism.

And almost to a person—people that have looked into this—the Puritans went to their graves scared out of their minds, because they did not know if they had persevered enough to know if they were going to go into heaven. And on your deathbed, that is not a time to be struggling with that.

You have enough struggles on your deathbed. You do not need all these question marks in your mind that "Maybe I am going to hell, because I did not do enough good works to demonstrate I am one of the elect." You realize that the Puritans founded America. You know, God used these people amazingly.

Harvard, Princeton, Yale, all of our major schools came to us through the Puritans in New England. They were great people. But they got caught up in this Perseverance of the Saints stuff, and it robbed them of the joy of their birthright, which is not just that you are secure, but you know that you are secure.

Because your salvation never depended on you to begin with. Right? I mean, if it never depended on me to begin with, why in the world would I think that I have to work to maintain it? I cannot maintain something that was given to me.

So from a counseling standpoint, a lot of counseling that you run into in ministry, can be resolved over the pulpit just by putting people under proper doctrine. So that is the direction we are going in at the conclusion of our study here, as we take on beginning, next week, the Perseverance of the Saints.