

John 6:65

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Analysis

And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. Jesus grounds the apostasy in divine sovereignty and human inability. 'No man can' (*oudeis dunatai*) indicates absolute inability, not mere difficulty. 'Come unto me' (*elthein pros me*) is John's language for saving faith. The condition 'except it were given' (*ean mē ē dedomenon*) makes divine gift the sole basis for coming to Christ. The perfect tense 'dedomenon' (has been given) indicates a completed divine action. This echoes verse 44: 'No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' Reformed soteriology sees here definitive proof of sovereign grace—salvation is entirely God's work from start to finish. The Father must draw, the Father must give, or no one comes. This doesn't excuse unbelief (responsibility remains) but explains it—without divine intervention, all humanity remains in willing rebellion. Election is thus the only explanation for why some believe while others don't.

Historical Context

This reiterates Jesus's earlier teaching (verse 37, 44) about divine sovereignty in salvation. The Jewish audience would find this troubling—didn't Israel's covenant, Torah obedience, and Abrahamic descent ensure God's favor? Jesus says no: only those given by the Father come to the Son. This demolishes all human contribution to salvation. Early church debates over grace and free will (Pelagius vs. Augustine) centered on verses like this. Augustine argued from Scripture that grace is efficacious and irresistible, not merely offered. The Reformation recovered this

emphasis: Luther's 'Bondage of the Will' and Calvin's 'Institutes' taught that fallen humanity cannot choose God without God first choosing and regenerating them. Modern Arminianism and synergism struggle with passages like this that make salvation entirely God's work.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does the doctrine of sovereign grace affect evangelism—if God must draw, why preach?
2. What is the relationship between divine sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility to believe?
3. How does understanding salvation as God's gift from start to finish affect assurance and humility?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἔλεγεν	Διὰ	τοῦτο	εἶρηκα	ὑμῖν	ὅτι	οὐδεὶς
And	he said	Therefore	G5124	said I	unto you	that	no man
G2532	G3004	G1223		G2046	G5213	G3754	G3762

δύναται	έλθεῖν	πρός	με	έὰν	μὴ	ἢ	δεδομένον
can	come	unto	me	G1437	G3361	it were	given
G1410	G2064	G4314	G3165			G5600	G1325

αὐτῷ	ἐκ	τοῦ	πατρός	μου
unto him	of	G3588	Father	my
G846	G1537		G3962	G3450

Additional Cross-References

John 6:37 (Parallel theme): All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

John 3:27 (Parallel theme): John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

2 Timothy 2:25 (Parallel theme): In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

1 Timothy 1:14 (Parallel theme): And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:29 (Parallel theme): For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Hebrews 12:2 (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

John 10:16 (Parallel theme): And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.
