

BRIEFLY CORRECTING ERRANT VIEWS ON DIVINE ELECTION

IV. Biblically Explaining John 6:44

I. Introduction

- A. Many believers struggle to understand and/or to accept the teachings they hear or read about divine election.
- B. Actually, much error exists on the doctrine, so it needs to be explained in a brief but thorough, Biblical way.
- C. We thus offer a seven-lesson series on election, and in this fourth lesson, we Biblically explain John 6:44:

II. Biblically Explaining John 6:44.

- A. In John 6:44 KJV, Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," and Calvinists heed John Calvin who cited Augustine who taught that this verse teaches God gives those He chose to be justified an immediate gift of faith so only they can believe to be justified (as follows): "Augustine, their faithful expositor, exclaims (De Verbo Apost. Serm. ii) 'Our Savior, to teach that faith in Him is a gift, not a merit, says, 'No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him (John vi. 44).'" (John Calvin, Inst. of the Christ. Religion, Bk. III, Ch. II, Sec. 35, trans. by Henry Beveridge, 1970, v. I, p. 500-501)
- B. However, we before learned that this view leaves faith logically unneeded in God's plan of salvation, what in turn conflicts with the Bible's inerrancy, so we Biblically explain John 6:44, offering the correct interpretation:
 1. The verb translated "draw" in John 6:44 is *helko*, and it is used **metaphorically in Scripture only here and in John 12:32** where Jesus said that if He were lifted up on the cross, He would "draw" all men unto Himself. (G. Abbott-Smith, A Man. Grk. Lex. of the N. T., 1968, p. 146) Not all men have been justified by Christ's being lifted up on the cross, so "draw" in John 12:32 **must** refer to God's **general conviction** of the truth (John 16:7-11). That **also** means that "draw" in John 6:44 **must** refer to God's **general conviction!**
 2. In addition, Jesus explained His John 6:44 statement on the Father's drawing people to Himself by stating in John 6:45 that every man who **had heard** (*akousas*, aorist active participle; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 347; Wm. D. Mounce, The Analyt. Lex. to the Grk. N. T., 1993, p. 59) and who **had learned** (*mathon*, aorist active participle; Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Mounce, p. 306) of the **Father** was "coming [for his own benefit]" (*erchetai*, present **middle** indicative of *erchomai*; Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., Ibid., Mounce, p. 216) unto "me." (Jesus) The aorist participles "heard" and "learned" express actions that **precede** the action of the main verb "coming," and the **middle voice** for *erchetai* ("coming") means that the people were coming to Jesus for their own benefit. Accordingly, those coming to Jesus (a) **had already heard** and **had already learned from the FATHER**, (b) **and the middle voice of the Greek verb translated "coming" implies that these people were trusting in Jesus of their own will!**
 3. Furthermore, the Greek verb translated "learned" in John 6:45 is *manthano*, which in this verse means to "learn through instruction, be someone's disciple." (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 491) Such activity involves a **process over time**, **NOT** an **immediate gift of salvation faith!**
 4. Also, at John 17:6a in His High Priestly prayer, Jesus spoke about His disciples to His Father, saying, ". . . (T)hine they were, and thou gavest them me . . ." (John 17:6b KJV) The Greek verb translated "were" here is *esan* in the **imperfect** tense from the root form *eimi*, "to be, exist" (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 396; Ibid., Mounce, p. 239). The **imperfect** tense "denotes continued action in past time." (J. Gresham Machan, N. T. Grk. for Beginners, 1951, p. 65) Jesus' disciples **had been disciples of the Father for some time BEFORE the Father had then DRAWN** them to **believe in Jesus!**
 5. In conclusion, in John 6:44, Jesus did **NOT** claim that the Father gave people an immediate gift of faith to trust in Him to be justified, but that the Father caused those who had **before believed in Himself** and had **before been discipled OVER TIME by Him** to be **drawn by His general conviction of truth to trust in JESUS!** This was a unique situation that cannot be repeated today: Only in the days of the apostles did God the **Father draw** people who had **already believed in Himself** in the dispensation of the Law **before** Christ had been **publicly revealed to Israel THEN to come** to put their faith **also** in the **God the Son!**

Lesson: John 6:44 teaches that God the Father utilized a general conviction of the truth to draw believers who had already trusted in Him and had been discipled by Him prior to Christ's revealing to Israel to come to trust in Jesus.

Application: We must conclude that Calvinists, John Calvin, and Augustine have erred in claiming that John 6:44 teaches that God gives the lost an immediate gift of faith to trust in Jesus to be justified. (2) Instead, whether people lived in the days of the apostles or in the Church era since then, all people have been responsible to heed God's general conviction regarding the truth to come to trust in Christ of their own will to be justified!