

Augustine and predestination of the saints: Application for the South African Church

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ABSTRACT

Predestination is misunderstood by many believers. It is a theological issue defined by complexity and difference of opinion among theologians. However, it cannot be ignored because of implications that arise depending on the view one adapts. Predestination is discussed extensively by the African theologian St. Augustine (354-430 CE) in terms of his specific historical situation. The questions that Augustine faced were not unique to his day and it will be argued that these questions are posed to the modern church even though the context of the contemporary church differs from Augustine's day. The attention will focus on Augustine's exposition of the doctrine and the historical arguments of theologians opposed to Augustine's view, while the biblical teaching on predestination in both Old and New Testaments will be utilised to evaluate the arguments on both sides, before the conclusions will be applied in the exposition of the basis, purpose and result of predestination as an important part of the biblical plan of salvation presented in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The study will focus on the situation in the black Reformed churches in South Africa and the doctrine will be applied in this specific context.

Key terms

Predestination, Augustinianism, salvation, free will, Black Reformed Church, Arminianism

OPSOMMING

Uitverkiesing word deur talle gelowiges verkeerd verstaan. Dit is 'n teologiese kwessie wat deur kompleksiteit en 'n verskeidenheid opinies onder teoloë gedefinieer word. Die gevolge wat uit die verskeie opinies voortspruit, bevestig dat dit nie geïgnoreer mag word nie. Uitverkiesing word breedvoerig bespreek deur die teoloog uit Afrika, Augustinus (354-430 n.C.), na aanleiding van sy spesifieke historiese konteks. Die vrae waarmee Augustine gekonfronteer is, was nie uniek tot sy tyd nie, en in hierdie studie word daar geargumenteer dat hierdie vrae ook aan die moderne kerk gestel word, ten spyte daarvan dat die konteks van die moderne kerk van Augustinus se tyd verskil. Die klem val op Augustinus se uiteensetting van die leerstelling en die historiese argumente van teoloë wat van Augustinus verskil het. Die Bybelse standpunt aangaande die uitverkiesing in beide die Ou- en Nuwe Testamente word gebruik om argumente aan beide kante te evalueer, alvorens gevolgtrekkings toegepas word op die basis, doel en resultate van uitverkiesing as 'n belangrike deel van die Bybelse reddingsplan soos in die evangelie van Jesus Christus voorgestel. Die studie fokus op die omstandighede in die swart Gereformeerde kerk in Suid-Afrika en die toepassing van die leerstelling binne daardie konteks.

Sleutelterme

Uitverkiesing; Augustinianisme; Heil; Vrye wil; Swart Gereformeerde Kerk; Arminianisme

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background and problem statement

3.1.1 Background

Predestination is misunderstood by many believers. It is a theological issue defined by complexity and difference of opinion among theologians. However, it cannot be ignored, because of implications that arise depending on the view one adopts. Predestination is discussed extensively by the African theologian St. Augustine (354-430 CE) in terms of his specific historical situation (Hyde, 2011:237). The questions that Augustine faced were not unique to his day and it will be argued that these questions are posed to the modern church even though the context of the contemporary church differs from Augustine's day. The attention will focus on Augustine's exposition of the doctrine, the historical arguments of theologians opposed to Augustine's view, while the biblical teaching on predestination in both Old and New Testaments will be utilised to evaluate the arguments on both sides, before the conclusions will be applied in the exposition of the basis, purpose and result of predestination as an important part of the biblical plan of salvation presented in the gospel. The study will focus on the situation in the Black Reformed Churches in South Africa.

The doctrine of the predestination of the saints as argued from a Christological point of view is concerned with the role played by human free will to make a decision on salvation and God's predetermined decision about the individual's eternal destiny. Some teach that works accomplished in a state of grace have a meritorious and redeeming power and that believers are obliged to accomplish good works to earn entrance into heaven because good works count as a way to receive eternal life (Vanhuysse, 1992:48). Augustine developed his doctrine of predestination against the background of and with an emphasis on the sovereignty of the almighty God (Berkhof, 1996:109). He unveiled the incompatibility existing between the Christian understanding of God and the Ciceronian philosophical argumentation that the datum of freedom rendered impossible any foreknowledge of the future in as much as things foreknown would necessarily occur (Muller, 2017:104).

1.1. Predestination vs free will

Free will does not admit absolute predestination but requires in every respect a conditional predestination (Berkhof, 1996:109-111). Hannah (2001:212) in his exposition of free will indicates that God's election of humankind to salvation depends upon his knowledge of the sinner's actions when seen from the view of God's grace and the ability of people to choose

between good and evil. People possess a will inhibited by the tendency to follow bad examples. Grace is an assisting gift from God if one chooses to avail oneself of it. This is called “illuminating grace” which influences humankind toward voluntary cooperation with God; it is resistible grace in a sense that each individual can choose whether to avail him- or herself of it. The doctrine of free will accentuate God’s will as a “waiting servant” to the will of man and the whole covenant of grace depends on human action. It affirms the universality of atonement which ascribes salvation to all humankind. Free will takes predestination out of God’s hand and places it into the hands of humankind. It makes the will of God to be conditioned by man’s response. It means further that he has created a set of sovereign beings upon whom, to a certain measure, his will and actions are propagated (McGoldrick, 1999:88).

Predestination traces back to Augustine’s teaching of original sin and the total depravity of humankind, that the will of humankind after the fall had no power to choose the good, except by the help of divine grace. All people, therefore, were not only under condemnation for their original sin in the fall, but added to this guilt by way of actual personal sin. Being corrupt and guilty to the most extreme degree, the whole race was justly condemned to the pains of eternal punishment. However, grace through Christ interferes on behalf of some, those chosen by God in his sovereign will. God by his own decree and from secret purpose of his own will from eternity chose certain definite persons out of the corrupt mass of mankind to whom he would grant grace, enabling them to repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. This explicitly exposes that salvation is not based on meritorious works done in or for the sake of earning righteousness. Salvation not from any merit on humankind’s side is the fruit of election. God foreknew the faith of some people because he foreordained it, and in view of this foreordained faith they are saved (Hannah, 2001:213).

1.2. Different ways of understanding predestination through the ages

One of the odd things about the ancient church is that the existential struggle that seems to lie at the heart of Paul’s understanding of grace, particularly as it is articulated in his letter to the Romans, is essentially absent from Christian writings prior to Augustine. Of course, there are some reasons that may account for this. First, we need to remember that we have only a small portion of the Christian literature that must have existed during this period. Many writings and works have been lost or destroyed over the centuries. Further, most Christians would have been illiterate or would not have written down their thoughts, so we do not know how ordinary believers thought about or experienced the Christian life (Trueman, 2017:53). According to Berkhof (1996:109), predestination as a doctrine was not discussed in the history of the church until the time of Augustine. Hiestand (2007:117) argues that Augustine’s teaching on the predestination of the saints is rooted in his doctrine of original sin; his doctrine of predestination

provides the solution to the problem that his doctrine of original sin creates. Augustine saw an absolute inability to do good on the sinner's part as a necessity for divine initiative and drawing grace. He understood that God's mercies must be unconditional; his grace alone, not anything the creature could be foreseen to do, is the basis of God's choice (Hannah, 2001:213). Augustine is seen as deterministic in his approach to the freedom of will and predestination, specifically as falling short of a compatibilist understanding, but as more successful in his argumentation on free choice in the discussion of human freedom and divine foreknowledge (Muller, 2017:67).

In the early fifth century CE the original shape of the doctrine was modified. A semi-Pelagian mediating view was proposed by John Cassian, which was an attempt to sail between the two opposite viewpoints of interpretations. Contrary to Augustine, he taught that humankind is partially disabled. Therefore, grace is needed to save the sinner, though not all sinners are included. Each person often, though not always, has a part to play in order to earn salvation. He rejected the concept of unconditional election and predestination on foresight rather than foreknowledge (Berkhof, 1996:110). The early Medieval Church (600-950 CE) agreed with Augustine on the effects of original sin and the necessity of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. The teaching of the enslavement of the will to evil and the need for the unmerited grace of God in salvation were affirmed. Pope Gregory 1 (540-604 CE) generally affirmed these views but rejected Augustine's view on predestination and irresistible grace, for what could be called "causative cooperation". He affirmed that the good we do is both of God and ourselves (Hannah, 2001:217). In the Medieval church and the Scholastic period (950- 1300 CE) a shift in the perception of grace in salvation occurred; it was understood that grace is given gradually, not instantaneously. Around 1215 CE the church shifted to what gave birth to infant baptism, accentuating that baptism could remove the guilt of Adam's sin and leave the child in a state of innocence with a free will that may or may not choose to sin. With this insight, redemption was perceived as a process that culminated in salvation at the time of death, or more likely, after the predetermined period spent in purgatory because most believers have to atone for sins committed after receiving forgiveness of sins through the sacraments. The acquisition of degrees of grace was thus through the sacramental system with the cooperation of the Catholic Church in the form of the priest as a prerequisite for earning forgiveness of sins (Hannah, 2001:216-217).

The church after Thomas Aquinas between 1300-1500 CE entered into a confusing period on the eve of the Reformation. During this time a shift from semi-Augustinianism to semi-Pelagianism occurred, and semi-Pelagianism gained the upper hand, at least among most prominent leaders of the Catholic Church. Toward the end of the Middle Ages it became

apparent that the Roman Catholic Church would permit a great deal of latitude in the doctrine of predestination. Some even advocated universalism, which alluded that God willed salvation for all humankind, not only for the elect. Thomas Aquinas held a compatibilist position, followed by an argument that this compatibilism is also the basic Augustinian view that extends into early modern Reformed thought as well (Muller, 2017:111). Even in the case of those like Thomas Aquinas, who believed in the absolute and double predestination, this doctrine could not be carried through consistently and could not be made determinative of the rest of their theology (Berkhof, 1996:110).

The Protestant Reformed tradition (1500-1750 CE) did not differ in their understanding of human inability. They all began their discussion of salvation with an acknowledgement of the utter helplessness of humankind to save itself. From this insight came their understanding of salvation by grace alone (*Sola Gratia*) and by Christ alone (*Sola Christus*) through faith alone (*Sola Fide*) (Hannah, 2001:229). In this context, free will or free choice was denied as contrary to the message of grace and, indeed, a denial of divine election. The emphasis of doctrinal exposition fell, not on the more generally anthropological or philosophical question of what constitutes free choice in daily, civil or even ethical matters, but on the foundational soteriological question of the source or foundation of salvation. Given, moreover, the exclusion of human merit from salvation, even the issue of human responsibility to an outward obedience to the law was seldom referenced in the Reformers' definitions of human freedom (Muller, 2017:181).

According to Berkhof (1996:110), the Reformers advocated the strictest doctrine of predestination; it is even true of Melancton in his earliest period. Calvin originally treated the doctrine of predestination in the context of the doctrine of providence, yet late he discussed it within the context of soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) and ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church). In this way, Calvin emphasised how predestination confirms that the believer's salvation is born entirely of God's gracious purposes in Christ and how it undergirds the believer's assurance of God's favour (Barrett, 2017:256). Calvin firmly maintained the Augustinian doctrine of absolute double predestination. His doctrine of predestination of the saints could be spelled out as '**tulip**' which stands for the elements of **t**otal depravity, **u**nconditional election, **l**imited atonement, **i**rresistible grace and **p**erseverance of the saints. The coordinating idea underlying this theology is the complete sovereignty of God. Calvin believed in total depravity of all humankind. Human beings are guilty before God because of Adam's sin and are unable to command themselves back to God because their will is totally corrupted. He taught that salvation is the matter of unconditional election apart from meritorious work or divine foreknowledge. Election is based on the sovereign will of God and is a dual predestination, of

some to salvation and others to condemnation. Calvin also believed that the work of Christ on the cross is limited to those elected to salvation. This he called limited atonement. He taught the doctrine of irresistible grace, which alludes that the elect will be saved apart from their initial desire as the Holy Spirit irresistibly, draws them to Christ. The perseverance of the saints is the final point of importance in his system. The elect, who are irresistibly saved by the work of the Holy Spirit, will never be finally lost. Although there are striking similarities between Calvin and Augustine, Calvin owes his system to his study of the Scriptures rather than to Augustine. He went from the Bible to Augustine to seek support of the prince of the Fathers rather than going from Augustine to the Bible and the doctrines of the Reformation (Cairns, 1996:303).

This teaching was challenged by Arminius, one of the Calvinist scholars who believed that Calvinism should be altered for biblical as well as polemical reasons to adequately answer the attacks being hurled at the Christian faith. The Arminian party asserted that while humankind had certainly fallen from grace, the inheritance from Adam did not affect the will. They believed that humankind's ability to respond to God was not incapacitated by original sin much more than grace can be resisted (Olson, 1999:470).

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the doctrine of predestination of the saints on its Augustine version waned in North America. In a decline which Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) had rightly anticipated. The congregational churches of England which had embraced Arminianism after the Great Awakening gradually moved into Unitarianism and universalism, led by Charles Chauncy (1705-1787) (Piper, 2001:145). The late modern church (1750-present) of the Enlightenment shifted to subjective experience rather than place their view of the doctrine in an objective revelation of God. Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the fountainhead of the liberal tradition of interpreting Christianity, gave the doctrine of predestination an entirely different form. Religion was regarded as a consciousness of utter dependence on the causality that is proper to the natural order with its invariable laws and second causes, which predetermine all human resolves and actions. Predestination was identified with this predetermination by nature or the universal causal connection in the world (Berkhof, 1996:110). Schleiermacher stressed Christianity as a private, subjective experience of God; the philosophical inheritance led him to reject traditional approaches to religious knowledge (Hannah, 2001:239).

Finney (1792-1875) rejected the doctrine of total depravity and embraced moral depravity, and this led him to argue that people have the ability to turn to God and cause their own regeneration based on natural ability (Hannah, 2001:238-239). Barth (1886-1968) affirmed that all humanity is to be included in Jesus Christ, whom God elected and all people are elected and found in him. Barth believed in universal atonement and potentially universal salvation for all humanity (Olinger, 2014:437). Green (2014:177) argues that Barth sees predestination as

above all God's eternal, before-all-things decision to let Jesus stand for all creation to receive the penultimate no and ultimate yes of God's decree. According to Berkhof (1996:111), Barth did not see in predestination a predetermined separation of humankind, and does not understand election like Calvin as a particular election.

It must be said that the doctrine of the predestination of the saints is by no means universally accepted in the Christian church. Among current evangelicals, those in more Reformed or Calvinistic traditions (conservative Presbyterian denominations, for example) accept the doctrine, as well as many Lutherans and Anglicans (or Episcopalians) and a large number of Baptists and some people in independent churches, but it is rejected decisively by nearly all Methodists, as well as by many others in Baptist, Anglican and independent churches (Grudem 1999:288). Pentecostals, by and large, adopt a traditional Wesleyan-Arminian or Open Theist view on questions related to predestination/election and divine/human agency. They reject unconditional election and double predestination and embrace conditional predestination based on God's foreknowledge of who will freely respond positively to God's gracious offer of salvation and the prevenient enablement to accept it (Green, 2014:172). The modern Reformed understanding of divine willing and human free choice is founded upon the ongoing conversation and debate over issues of freedom, eventuality and necessity that extended back through the Middle Ages into the patristic period (Muller, 2017:181).

In the evaluation of this researcher, Augustine's approach is very informative and the centrality in the theological argument is in light of the Scriptural exposition of salvation. The question that is of interest is; "how can South African believers be shaped by Augustine's approach to the doctrine of the predestination of the saints and how can this be applied in the exposition of salvation?"

This research is relevant and important because the church still has to apply the doctrine of the predestination of the saints in light of the Scripture. "Let it, therefore, be our first principle that to desire any other knowledge of predestination than that which is expounded by the word of God, is no less infatuated than to walk where there is no path, or to seek light in the darkness" (Calvin, 1559; 2008:608). Barrett (2017:242) argues that the church's dogmatic pronouncements must always stand the test of Scripture and must be revised where they are at variance with scriptural teaching. As the Canons of Dordt. Article 14 (1618-1619:117) state:

As the doctrine of divine election by the most wise counsel of God was declared by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and the apostles, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures both the Old and the New Testament, so it is to be published in due time and place in the church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed, provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of discretion and piety, for the glory of God's most holy Name, and for enlivening

and comforting His people, without vainly attempting to investigate the secret way of the most high (Acts 20:27; Rom. 11:33, 34; 12:3; Heb. 6:17, 18).

3.2 Problem Statement

The biblical understanding of soteriology is being challenged by the version of predestination presented by section of a black Reformed church that adheres to a different interpretation on predestination. The idea of salvation as something that is not from human capabilities but the sovereign grace of God totally out of reach of human powers has become problematic for them. Miskin (2014:37) elucidates that the doctrine of predestination has been of concern for many people because their view of the doctrine cause them to be worried because of the uncertainty of final salvation. Others find the Augustinian view of predestination unacceptable because of its apparent contradiction of human freedom, with its emphasis on total human depravity. The doctrine has been characterised to be a blasphemous, deductive and speculative doctrine, because of its restriction on human freedom (Park, 2013:71).

The principal concern of the Black Reformed Church is the relationship between God's sovereign grace and the fact that it may render human free will null and void. This relationship is chiefly considered in terms of the balance of power and actions, but very little is said about justifying grace, unmerited pardon and the acquittal of the guilty. The basic problem with the Black Reformed Church: the concept of merit on the basis of grace, forming a fundamental problem of the specific church. It is the very point which brought about the split between Rome and the Reformers (Muller, 2017:185). The Black Reformed Church continues to a certain extent to reject the idea that human's free will is lost, implying that human beings are powerless to act in terms of salvation. The church teaches that human nature was not irrevocably lost by the fall, so that human beings are deprived of the free exercise of their will (Hyde, 2010:235). Human nature has indeed been affected and the free will impaired. It agrees but it is not certain that human nature is entirely or fundamentally corrupt. The church defends human nature as well as the divine will to save; it does not consider human nature to be eternally lost and depraved of salvation outside of grace, but rather considers humanity as wounded and capable of being healed (Skidmore, 2011:123).

Hannah (2001:2008) indicates that, in this age of appeasement, some teachings do not take into account the biblical teaching on the comprehensive impact of sin, which result in a heightened and exalted view of the human ability to propagate the needed heart transformation and this correspondingly denigrates the centrality of the sovereign grace in the predestination of the saints. If anyone has the ability to choose God, a divine intervention is unnecessary. Hiestand (2007:130) indicates that believers have a need of interpreting predestination which qualitatively places the grace and the power of God central in salvation from a biblical

perspective. He further argues that salvation should operate within a comprehensive Christological framework; the terms of such commendation reveal efficaciously the centrality of salvation as the sovereign grace of God. It is the responsibility of the church in our dispensation to be theologically sound in our approach to the sovereign grace of God.

The question is, “Does God’s election of humankind to salvation depends upon his knowledge of the actions of the sinner or upon the undeserved sovereign elective grace?”

The research problem can be stated as follows: “What contribution can this doctrine of predestination make to the exposition of salvation in the Black Reformed Churches of South Africa?”

- In addressing this problem, the study pays attention to the following questions:
- What are the contemporary arguments on the doctrine of the predestination of the saints?
- Why did Augustine develop the doctrine of the predestination of the saints? What are the opposite argumentations and how should we evaluate them?
- How should one evaluate the doctrine of the predestination of the saints in the light of Scripture?
- How should the doctrine of the predestination of the saints be applied in our context in the exposition of salvation?

3.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to provide a Reformational approach on the doctrine of the predestination of the saints as it developed historically and propose how this may be applied in the exposition of salvation, specifically in Black South African Reformed churches.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To look at and evaluate contemporary arguments on the predestination of the saints;
- To look at and evaluate the reason behind Augustine’s theological development of the predestination of the saints;
- To examine and evaluate the predestination of the saints in light of Scripture;
- To formulate and bridge the gap on how South African Reformed theologians can be shaped by Augustine’s approach to predestination of the saints, in the exposition of salvation.

3.4 The central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that predestination of the saints is based on the trinitarian love, God's love for the Son and the union of the saints with Christ.

3.5 Methodology

This study would be approached from a Reformed perspective. In answering of the different research questions, the following methods will be used:

To look at and evaluate contemporary arguments on the predestination of the saints, an analysis of literature is done to determine and evaluate viewpoints in the present. This study will consult recent relevant work that has been completed on this subject. A historical overview within the doctrine of predestination will also be debated by using a biblical-historical method for studying the general view of predestination, seeing that this method is indispensable for understanding the historical background or context of a research problem.

To look at and evaluate the reason behind Augustine's theological development of the predestination of the saints, an analysis of literature is done to determine and evaluate viewpoints in the past. The study will consult books and scholarly articles dealing with the subject under consideration. This would entail the selection of relevant recent work that has been completed in the study.

To examine and evaluate the predestination of the saints in light of Scripture, the applicable parts of Scripture are identified and exegesis is done. The method according to which the exegesis is done is the grammatical-historical method (Vines & Shaddix, 1999:27). The term "grammatical-historical method" is used to indicate the study of Scripture in the light of those historical circumstances that put their stamp on the different books of the Bible. The reason is that this method will provide a general biblical instruction on predestination. Various commentaries and dictionaries will be consulted during this part of the research. This would acquaint us with the significations which the words acquired in the course of time and with the sense in which the Biblical authors used them. Generally, this will provide both the original and the derivative meanings of the words, and generally designate in what sense they are employed in a particular passages (Van Rensburg *et al.*, 2015:20). In addition the Reformed concept on predestination will be examined and evaluated from the perspective of this Reformed theological basis.

To formulate and bridge the gap on how South African theologians can be shaped by Augustine's approach to predestination of the saints in the exposition of salvation, the data will

be selected and categorised through analysis, interpretation and be applied in connection between the past and the present.

3.6 Limitation of the study and definition of terms

The study will be limited to the Black South African Reformed church on how to apply the predestination of the saints in the understanding of salvation. In these churches some of the believers take the universal salvific will of God to mean that all human beings ought to be saved, in their understanding of the grace-freedom dynamic. The study will present a competitive understanding of relationship between divine grace and created freedom such that freedom is authentic only if grace overcomes its capacity for sin. When Scripture is expounded the study will limit itself to a historical-grammatical exegetical analysis.

The key terms in the study include:

- **Predestination**
 - A doctrine on the plan of God before the foundation of the world in determining the destiny of those whom he gathers of humankind as recipients of his grace, bringing them to eternal salvation through divine adoption as the children of God through Christ.
- **Augustinianism**
 - A teaching that asserts that God graciously predestines those who have been incapacitated by sin to repent and believe in Christ.
- **Free will**
 - The ability to make choices to believe or reject the grace of God.
- **Pelagianism**
 - A teaching asserting that people are able to earn salvation based on natural ability and that divine assistance is unnecessary. Today's version of this view is expressed by the proverb "God helps those who help themselves" (Hannah, 2001:372).

3.7 Ethical Consideration

Since this research would involve contemporary and historical argumentations on the doctrine of predestination, the information would be presented from a learning perspective, which will be both informative and transformative. It will be approached from a Reformational standpoint; views from other presuppositions will be dealt with honestly, accountably and professionally. Sources will be read in an ethical way, whereby the study will not misrepresent sources, fake results or caricature opposing views. Alternative views

including objections and reservations will be acknowledged to give more reliable knowledge, better understanding and sounder beliefs. All sources will be identified and duly referenced (Booth *et al.*, 1995:274-276).

3.8 Provisional Classification of headings

1. Introduction
2. Contemporary arguments on the predestination of the saints.
3. The reason behind Augustine's theological development of the predestination of the saints.
4. The predestination of the saints in light of Scripture.
5. The application of the theological development of the predestination of the saints in terms of soteriology to the Black Reformed church.
6. Summary and conclusion

CHAPTER 2 THE REASON BEHIND AUGUSTINE'S THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREDESTINATION OF THE SAINTS

4.1 Introduction

Augustine (354-430) was born in Thagaste in Roman North Africa in AD 354, to a pagan father, Patricius, and a Christian mother, Monica. His mother, a spiritually minded lady, did her best to instil the Christian faith into her son (Needham, 2008:40), but growing up he followed the pattern of many students of his days and indulged his passions by an illegitimate union with a concubine. His son Adeodatus was born of this union in 372 AD (Cairns, 1996:139). In his *Confessions*, Augustine (397-400; 2004:26) writes about his moral failure:

But what was it that delighted me save to love and to be loved? Still I did not keep the moderate way of the love of mind to mind- the bright path of friendship. Instead, the mists of passion steamed up out of the strong desire of the flesh, and the imagination of puberty, and they so obscured and overcast my heart that I was unable to distinguish pure affection from unholy desire. Both boiled confusedly within me, and dragged my unstable youth down over the cliffs of unchaste desires and plunged me into a gulf of infamy. Your anger had come upon me, and I knew it not. I had seen deafened by the clanking of the chains of my mortality, the punishment for my soul's pride, and wandered farther from thee, and thou didst permit me to do so. I was tossed to and fro, and wasted, and poured out, and I boiled over in my fornications.

Hoping to complete his education, Augustine's parents sent him to Carthage where he studied to become a teacher of rhetoric. While in Carthage, he began the study of philosophy in search of truth. This search was sparked by his encounter with the writings of Cicero, the great Latin rhetorician and philosopher, which led him to reject the faith of his mother (Cloud, 2010:25). Augustine in his *Confessions* (397-400; 2004:41) indicates that he read a philosophical book written by Cicero, and the book inflamed him. He was so delighted with Cicero's exhortation, at least enough so that he was stimulated by it, and enkindled and inflamed to love, to seek, to obtain, to hold, and to embrace, the wisdom in philosophy. Muller (2017:103) indicates that Cicero argued in favour of human free choice, arguing that the datum of freedom rendered impossible any foreknowledge of the future inasmuch as things foreknown would necessarily occur.

Augustine also joined the cult-like Gnostic sect of the Manichees¹ in AD 373, because this seemed to offer intellectual answers to life's ultimate questions that seem to the young student

¹ Manichaeism was a major religious movement that was founded by the Iranian prophet Mani (Latin: Manichaeus or Manes; c.216-276 AD) in the Sasanian Empire. This movement taught an elaborate dualistic cosmology describing the struggles between good or spiritual world of light, and evil or material

superior to Christianity or traditional paganism. Upon losing his faith in Manicheism, he joined Neoplatonism². Though intellectually emancipating it did not challenge his moral lifestyle (Needman, 2008:40). Monica's prayers and confident faith in the Lord was instrumental in the conversion of Augustine. When she learned of her son's rejection of the Manichees, for example, she calmly viewed it as only the beginning of his transformation (Haste, 2013:8). When he began reading books on Neo-Platonism, he was convinced that there could be an infinite spiritual reality that is not material. This gave him one of the most important keys to unlock the door that opened onto his mother religious faith (Olson, 1999:257).

It was in Milan that he encountered another of the primary influences of his life, Bishop Ambrose. As he listened to Bishop Ambrose who was noted for his impressive homiletical skills, eventually he began to read Scripture. The prayers of his mother and the power of the Word began to draw him to salvation, and he was convinced of his wrong perception about Christianity. He was converted in AD 386 (Cloud, 2010:26). Augustine (397-400; 2004:159) writes about his conversion:

I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl- I know not which-coming from the neighbouring house, chanting over and over again, "Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it." Immediately I ceased weeping and began most earnestly to think whether it was usual for children in some kind of the game to sing such a song, but I could not remember ever having heard the like.

This conversion occurred while he was agonising his moral failure in the garden. He had a copy of the New Testament with him, so he picked it up and it fell open at Romans 13:13-14 (Ferguson, 2005:270). Augustine connected his conversion to the thought of celibacy. He swore to refrain from marriage and sexual relationships (Paas, 2016:93). Augustine's (397-400; 2004:158-159) remorse about his moral depravity:

world darkness. Through an ongoing process which takes place in human history, light is gradually removed from the world of matter and returned to the world of light, whence it came. Its beliefs were based on the local Mesopotamian gnostic and religious movement. Manichaeism was quickly successful and spread far though the Aramaic-Syriac speaking regions. It thrived between the third and seventh centuries, and at its height was one of the most widespread religions in the world. Manichaean churches and scriptures existed as far east as China and as far west as the Roman Empire. It was briefly the main rival to Christianity in the competition to replace classical paganism. Manichaeism survived longer in the East than in the West and it appears to have finally faded away after the fourteenth century in southern China during the Ming Dynasty. While most of the Manichaeism's original writings have been lost, numerous translations and fragmentary texts as well as discussion of their text in their opponents' publications have survived (Paas, 2016:94-95).

² Neo-Platonism is the last stage of Greek philosophy (identified with Plotinus), which greatly influenced certain early church thinkers, particularly Origen and Augustine. Neo-Platonists taught that everything emanates (flows) from the transcendent principle of the One and is destined to return to the One through a process of purification (Grenz *et al.*, 1999:83).

Now when the deep reflection had drawn up out of the secret depths of my soul all my misery and had heaped it up before the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, accompanied by a mighty rain of tears. That I might give fully to my tears and lamentations... I flung myself under the figure tree – how I know not- and gave free course to my tears. The streams of my eyes gushed out an acceptable sacrifice to thee. And, not indeed in these words, but to this effect, I cried to thee: “And thou, O Lord, how long? How long, O Lord? Wilt thou be angry forever? Oh, remember not against us our former iniquities.” For I felt that I was still enthralled by them, I sent up these sorrowful cries.

His view of grace is primarily determined by his careful study of the Epistle to the Romans and by his general conception of the soul's relation to God. This understanding of the grace of God as the efficient cause of salvation led on to his doctrine of predestination. What God does in time for gracious renewal of the sinner, he willed to do in his eternal plan (Ticciati, 2011:420). Augustine (397-400; 2004:137) writes:

With great eagerness, then, I fastened upon the venerable writings of thy Spirit and principally upon the apostle Paul. I had thought that he sometimes contradicted himself and that the text of his teaching did not agree with the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets; but now all these doubts vanished away. And I saw that those pure words had but one face, and I have learned to rejoice with trembling.

Augustine was led to a deeper and decisive engagement through a Pauline approach to salvation (especially as expounded in the Epistle to the Romans) from which a new understanding on man and salvation started to emerge within the Augustinian theology (Pereira, 2013:98).

Augustine's background of moral depravity where sin determined his life influenced his view of sin and grace, which influenced his thinking on how he emasculated himself when he became a Christian. He (397-400; 2004:172) writes:

You, Lord, who makes men of one mind to dwell in a single house, also brought Evodius to join our company. He was a young man of our city, who, while serving as a secret service agent, was converted to thee and baptized before us. He had relinquished his secular service, and prepared himself for you. We were together, and we were resolved to live together in our devout purpose.

Augustine continued a monastic community life with his clergy, which was later imitated by others. The Augustinian rule is based on his ideas and kind of life. He led an extraordinary busy episcopal career. Many hours each day were spent judging and counselling those with disputes and problems. He also had an enormous literary output (Ferguson, 2005:271).

Distinguished theologians of the past generation and our dispensation attributed to the incomprehensibility of God's mercy in the debate about God's sovereignty and human freedom.

This is called “the question of the ages” (Hesselink, 2003:11). As with other doctrines, the doctrine of predestination was held in somewhat undeveloped form until serious disagreements arose regarding it. There was, particularly in the West, a growing conviction of human sinfulness and of the consequent need for divine transforming grace. The logical implications of this conviction were not worked out until Augustine. His personal experience of God’s grace enabled him to see more clearly than others the teaching of Scripture on these matters (Erickson, 1983:922).

When studying doctrinal or theological development, the student can greatly profit from the insights of former generations. Present researchers are not the first generation to have been fundamentally confronted with theological controversies (DeVries, 2011:84). History unveils that the position one takes on the doctrine of the predestination of the saints, is determined by one’s understanding of the doctrine of hamartiology, anthropology and of the relationship between human freedom and divine grace and that one’s own experience of sin co-determines how one does theology (Brotherton, 2016:603). Needham (2008:39) adds that if we owe our developed trinitarian theology and Christology to Athanasius and the Cappadocians, we owe our developed anthropology and soteriology, our understanding of the Bible’s teaching on the relationship between human sin and divine grace, to Augustine.

The doctrine of the predestination of the saints seems a perplexing subject, with great and difficult questions that arise from it (Calvin, 1559; 2008:607). In history, as well as in modern times, the doctrine has been the subject of criticism, opposition, and even regarded as an abomination. This twofold divine decree of election and reprobation has been labelled as leaving no room for sincere preaching of the gospel and to a free human response to the offer of grace (Velde, 2011:62).

This chapter explores the historical course of the doctrine of the predestination of the saints and its development and will offer a definite knowledge of the doctrine in its original shape and the character of its first modifications, examining when the doctrine of predestination was formally set forth in the writings of Augustine during the Pelagian controversy, the modification from the so-called semi-Pelagian, the rediscovery that took place around the Reformation and the re-evaluation that took place after the Reformation.

4.2 The Pelagian view of sin and grace

Pelagius (c 354-after 418), a British monk equipped with an impressive intellectual respectability, cultural refinement, and high moral qualities, arrived in Rome around 380 and quickly emerged as a spiritual leader of both clergy and laity. Controversies over his religious

views were revealed through his teaching and writing (Hannah, 2001:211). His teachings, even those responding to Augustine or Jerome, were aimed at defeating threats to the church. In his apologetic works, the two most common targets were Arianism³ and Manichaeism. His passion in defeating heresy was apparent not only to the writers of his day, but also to contemporary reviews of his work (Robert, 2011:63). Pelagius had a good background in the classics and the earlier church fathers, but he was especially grounded in the Scriptures. There he found such ideas as free will, moral conduct, doing the will of the Father, good works, following the example of Jesus Christ, and a system of rewards and punishment (Ferguson, 2005:280).

Both Augustine and Pelagius were zealous for orthodoxy; the most important questions in the debate between Pelagius and Augustine were those of free will and original sin. Pelagius accentuated that Adam's original condition was one of neutrality, neither holy nor sinful, but capacitated for both good and evil (Powers, 2017:329). He had a free and entirely undetermined will, which enabled him to choose with equal facility either of those alternatives. Moreover, man did not die because he sinned but because of the law of nature. Adam would have died even if he had not sinned. Pelagius and his doctrine were condemned at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 418 (Badger, 2003:47). As the credo accepted at the Council on the doctrine of sin and grace (Castellano, 418; 2010-2011:11) states:

That whoever says that Adam, the first man, was created mortal, so that whether he had sinned or not, he would have died in body- that is, he would have gone forth of the body, not because his sin merited this, but by natural necessity, let him be anathema.

(Castellano, 418; 2010-2011:12) states:

Likewise it seem good that whosoever denies that infants newly from their mother's womb should be baptised, or says that baptism is for remission of sins, but that they derived from Adam not original sin, which needs to be removed by the laver of regeneration, from whence the conclusion follows, that in them the form of baptism for the remission of sins, is to be understood as false and not true, let him be anathema. For no otherwise can be understood as false what the Apostle says, "By one man sin is come into the world, and death through sin, and so death passed to all men in that all have sinned," than the Catholic Church everywhere diffused has always understood it.

(Castellano, 418; 2010-2011:12) states:

³ Arianism is an early heretical teaching about the identity of Jesus Christ. Arianism was founded primarily on the teachings of Arius (335/336). The central characteristic of Arian thought was that because God is one, Jesus could not have been truly God. In order to deal with the scriptural testimony to the exalted status of Christ, Arius and his followers proposed that Jesus was the highest created being of God. So although Christ was fully human, he was not fully God (Hannah, 2001:366).

It seems good that whoever should say that the grace of justification was given to us only that we might be able more readily by grace to perform what we were ordered to do through our free will; as if though grace was not given, although not easily, yet nevertheless we could even without grace fulfil the divine commandments, let him be anathema. For the Lord spoke concerning the fruits of the commandments, when he said: "Without me ye can do nothing," and not "Without me ye could do it but with difficulty".

Pelagius's point of departure is founded in the natural ability of man. His fundamental proposition is: God's command to man is to do that which is good; if God command it the implication is that human beings can do it. This means that humans have a free will in the absolute sense of the word, so that it is possible for them to decide for or against that which is good, and that they have a moral character in them, for the will is entirely indeterminate (Berkhof, 1996:233-234). Pelagius's denial of human inability to do good and please God was the assertion that God's predestination of human kind into salvation, takes place in view of man's foreseen final faith (Hannah, 2001:212).

Voak (2009:136) adds that efficacious grace would be infallibly effective only because a person freely wills to cooperate with it. It should be noted in this that Pelagius was not a theologian, much less a mystic; rather, he was a moralist, he gained influence as a moral reformer and spiritual director when he was in Rome studying law. His view is summed up in the statement, "we confess that human beings always have free will." God, the Father of all justice, makes no exception of persons, and he does not demand the impossible. Human perfection is possible; therefore, it is obligatory. The implication of the teachings was that a person can live without sin and observe all the commands of God (Ferguson, 2005:280). Pelagius uses the verb *perficio* very widely referring to that "accomplishment" of good works and that "perfecting" of the lives of Christians in virtue, which are such prominent aspects of his teaching (Evans, 1968:81).

Pelagius taught that Adam's fall into sin injured no one but himself, and left human nature unimpaired for good. He opposed the doctrine of Adamic unity (the fact that human beings inherited corruption from Adam's sin) and guilt by birth inheritance (the fact that the sin of the first man plunged his posterity in the same wretchedness) (Calvin, 1559; 2008:150). Barrett (2013:2) agrees with Calvin that Pelagius denied transmitted sin and original sin, consisting of both inherited guilt and corruption. To Pelagius, it is blasphemous to think that God would transmit or impute Adam's guilt and corruption to his descendants. Instead, Adam was an isolated person, not a representative of all mankind, and his act of sin affected himself alone, merely setting a bad example for all who followed him. Man is still born in the same condition in which Adam was before the fall. Not only is he free from guilty but also from pollution. There is no evil tendencies and desires in his nature which inevitably result in sin. The difference

between him and Adam is that he has the evil example before him (Culver, 2005:379). Pelagius (354-418; 1991:7) writes that:

When God created man in his own image, he endowed him with an innate capacity to choose between good and evil according to the prompting of his conscience, a kind of natural sanctity which distinguishes between the two choices by following an inner law and arousing the emotions appropriate to either, that is, shame and fear and guilt for evil, and joy, resolution and confidence for good. It is this innate capacity to make our own free choice between good and evil that we inherited from Adam, not the tainted legacy of original sin, and the sole effect of Adam's first sin upon us is that we habitually imitate him: it is not Adam's concupiscence (in the Augustinian sense) but his example in disobeying God's command which turns us away from good to evil.

Erickson (1983:922) highlights that Pelagius developed his system from a basic principle. His first tenet is that each person enters the world with a will that has no bias in favour of evil. Adam's fall has no direct effect on each human's ability to do right and good, for every individual is directly created by God and therefore does not inherit from Adam evil or a tendency to evil. Surely the God who forgives each person his or her own sin would not hold any of us responsible for the act of someone else. The only effect of Adam's sin on his posterity then is that of a bad example. We do not inherit his corruption and guilt (Bavinck, 2006:86).

Pelagius further accentuates that sin does not consist in wrong affections or desires, but only in the separate acts of the will. In every case it is appropriated by the voluntary choice of man. Man is endowed with a perfect freedom of the will, with a liberty of choice or indifference, so that he can, at a given moment, choose either good or evil (Berkhof, 1995:234). He taught that there is no such thing as a sinful nature, neither are there sinful dispositions. He distinguished capacity, will and action. Grace applies only to the first, as the creation of God. Will and action are founded in human power. Thus, he located grace in things external to us, in the law and teaching of Jesus Christ in forgiveness, and in the example of Christ (Ferguson, 2005:280). Since no guilt or corruption is inherited by Adams' posterity, the will is free, unhindered by a depraved nature. The will is not enslaved to sin and bondage to sin, but is just as able after the fall as before to choose that which is good (Barrett, 2013:3).

Pelagius (360-418; 1991:7) unveils concerning grace:

God's grace, available to all alike and not to certain chosen persons alone, consists of the grace of creation in the gift of free will and of the capacity to do good works, the grace of revelation in the divine law of the Old Testament and Jesus' teaching in the New Testament, and the grace of atonement in the death and resurrection of Jesus and the remission of sins through baptism.

Pelagius distinguished capacity, will and action. Grace applies only to the first, as the creation of God. Will and action are altogether in human power. Thus, he located grace in things external to

us, in the law and teaching of Jesus Christ, in forgiveness, and in the example of Christ (Ferguson, 2005:280). He believed grace is an assisting gift from God if one chooses to avail oneself of it. This illuminating grace influences humankind toward voluntary cooperation with God; this grace is resistible (Hannah, 2001:212). He dogmatically taught that human effort and merit could bring about salvation without divine grace, though its operation is undoubtedly an advantage and will help him to overcome evil in his life (Diprose, 2001:258).

However, the grace of which Pelagius speaks in this connection does not consist in an inward-working divine energy, or, in other words, in the influence of the Holy Spirit, inclining the will and empowering man to do that which is good, but only in external gifts and natural endowments, such as man's rational nature, the revelation of God in Scripture, and the example of Jesus Christ (Culver, 2005:687). Though they would hardly seem to be any place for baptismal regeneration in such system, Pelagius holds that believers should be baptised, but baptism was regarded merely as a rite of consecration or an anticipation of future forgiveness. Rather illogically, he takes the position that children are excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, though not from a lower state of blessedness, which is called eternal life (Hannah, 2001:212). He reasons that since man is not infected by the guilt or corruption of Adam's sin and consequently, human beings' will retains its ability to choose good or evil equally; an assisting grace lacks necessity. For Pelagius, the will is not free if it is in need of God's help. Therefore, he rejected irresistible grace (Barrett, 2013:3).

Pelagius believed that the moral aim of life is sinless perfection and seems to have believed that such perfection could be accomplished without the aid of special or added grace. He derived this from biblical injunctions such as, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), which he applied to his defence of the ability on the part of the hearer to obey the commandment (Diprose, 2001:258). (Pelagius, 360-418; 1991:167) indicates, "Will any man instruct his servant to complete in one day a journey which takes four days or dispatch him to swim across the waves of the wide sea rather than to sail over them or to climb impassable and inaccessible mountains with slippery peaks or to do anything else beyond his natural capability." Pelagianism placed an emphasis on human perfectionism which is accomplished by the knowledge of divine law and discipline instead of divine grace (Ferguson, 2005:276). In his theology there could be no internal grace, no regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit that not only illumines the mind, but also bends the will. He admittedly did speak of grace but meant by it only: natural ability, the gift of being able to will, which God grants to every person. This is the grace of creation, the grace of atonement received through baptism and the grace to be won by righteousness through works performed in faith (Pelagius, 360-418; 1991:213).

The complication with evaluating the use of this distinction is the development of hypothetical universalism. Hypothetical universalism, in its variant forms, may be defined as a belief that God willed to save mankind on the condition of belief, and to this end Christ died sufficiently for every single member of mankind (Voak, 2009:143). Pelagius considered Augustine's emphasis on the extreme corruption of human nature and its corollary, human inability, to be demoralising to any effort at righteous living and insulting to God as well (Erickson, 1983:922).

Therefore, salvation is monergistic for Pelagius, but it is a humanistic monergism because God's aid is not fundamentally necessary or prevenient since man is able in and of himself to exercise works of righteousness that merit eternal life, and therefore save himself (Barrett, 2013:3). "Pelagianism maintains that election is based on God's foreknowledge of those who would merit their salvation, even apart from gracious assistance" (Horton, 2011:313).

4.3 Augustine's view of sin and grace

After Augustine became a Christian, he began to defend Church and faith against the older heresies of Manicheism and Neo-Platonism, and also of Arianism, which had spread to many parts of Europe and North Africa. He was also aware of some newer heresies that mushroomed during his lifetime (Pass, 2016:95). Hesselink (2003:12) remarks that it all began with Augustine's famous debate with Pelagius about the freedom of the will. That is, are sinners able to choose correctly without the assistance of God's grace? Augustine does not regard sin as something positive, but as a negation or privation. It is not a substantial evil added to man, but a privation of good. According to Augustine, the root principle of sin is self-love, which is substituted for the love of God. He strongly believed that death came as a result of sin. Pelagius's emphasis on good works raised questions of free will, original sin, grace and predestination (Ferguson, 2005:276). Barret (2013:5) indicates that ten years prior to the controversy with Pelagianism, in 400 CE, Augustine, reflecting on what Paul says in Romans 9, exposes the depravity and utter inability of human beings' free will and exalts the sovereign grace of God. Augustine's affirmation of sovereign grace was truly a reflection upon the events of his own conversion in the garden at Milan.

Augustine had learned about original sin from his first Christian pastor and preceptor, Ambrose of Milan, but it was his response to a denial of any sort of effect of Adam's sin upon his descendants by the British monk, Pelagius, and his associate, Coelestius, that resulted in his first extensive and fully coherent statement of our oneness with Adam in guilt, corruption and punishment (Culver, 2005:380). The views of Pelagius sharpened Augustine's thinking, forcing him to extend it beyond its previous bounds (Erickson, 1983:922).

(Augustine, 426; 2016:373) writes in connection with original sin, “And what he himself had become by sin and punishment, such he generated those whom he begot; that is to say, subject to sin and death.” He believes that through the organic connection between Adam and his descendants, the former transmits his fallen nature, with the guilt and corruption accompanied by it, to his posterity. He viewed original sin as a fatal wound inflicted upon humanity by the first act of disobedience (Hiestand, 2007:119). The whole human race was in germinal form present in the first man, and therefore also actually sinned in him. The race is not constituted individually, that is, of a large number of relatively independent individuals, but organically forms part of that generic human nature that was present in Adam. And therefore, the sin of the human nature was the sin of all its individualisations (Powers, 2017:328).

For Augustine, the entry of sin into the world occurs at the level of the will and has a catastrophic effect on the human capacity to will in pursuit of that which is truly good. As a result of sin, man is totally depraved and unable to do any spiritual good (Augustine, 354-430; 2004:302). He argues that the corruption inherited from Adam is pervasive in nature, meaning that every aspect of human beings (will, mind, affections, etc.) is infected by sin so that no part of him escapes sin’s pollution. One of the consequences of the fall and the transmission of corruption is the captivity of the will (Barrett, 2013:6). This is not to say that freedom of will in general is gone, but rather that we now invariably use that freedom of will in contrast to God’s intention for us. Without divine assistance we are unable to choose and do the good (Erickson, 1983:922). Augustine does not deny that the will still has a certain natural freedom. It is still capable of acts that accommodate civil good, and from a lower standpoint are even praiseworthy. At the same time, he maintains that man, separated from God, burdened with guilt, and under the dominion of evil, cannot will that which is good in the sight of God (Curley, 2015:13).

Augustine held that will is not the force that determines human action, but the quality of the state in which human agency (the capacity to act in a given environment) takes place. For Augustine, the will follows the desire. This is the power of the larger force of sin for Augustine; our willing can be compelled as those desires and understanding of good can be subtly shaped and distorted. Augustine opposed the free will conception of Pelagius by arguing that in ascribing so much power to human agency, the damage caused by sin to human capabilities to will what is right is ignored (Powers, 2017:330).

Augustine perceives that a biblical soteriology, which is completely founded on divine grace, is required by biblical anthropology and hamartiology. His theology of the fall of man and its permanent effects shaped his view on grace (Culver, 2005:380). The doctrine of predestination forms the foundation of Augustine’s theological identity with particular emphasis on his

anthropological and soteriological insights (Pereira, 2013:98). Biblical hamartiology stresses that original sin is not just a loss of something but simultaneously, a total corruption of human nature (Bavinck, 2013:98). Anderson (2002:31) adds that his approach to the depravity of man emasculated humankind's ability to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps to the portals of heaven. Without God's grace, it would be impossible for anyone to be eternally saved. Total depravity and human ability stands as a direct opposite of each other in the soteriological debates, but grace acts as the corollary of depravity. It should not come as a surprise, then, to discover that Augustine's understanding of grace is rooted heavily in his understanding of the doctrine of original sin, for his doctrine of grace provides the solution to the problem that original sin created (Hiestand, 2007:117).

The doctrine of original sin is one of the weightiest and most difficult subjects in the field of systematic theology. It is astonishing however, that the mystery incomprehensible to us is the transmission of sin, the one thing without which we can have no understanding of ourselves, and yet it remains finally an incomprehensible mystery to us. Adam's disobedience is the originating sin; that is the clear teaching of Scripture (Rom. 5:12) (Bavinck, 2006:100). Augustine taught that children come, not by spiritual regeneration but carnal descent. Guilt is something that human beings are born with, because they descend from a corrupted seed (Calvin, 1559; 2008:152).

Augustine strongly believes that grace is imparted to sinful man, not because he believes, but in order that he may believe, for faith itself is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-10). He distinguishes several stages in the work of divine grace, which he called 'prevenient grace', 'operative grace', and 'co-operative grace'. In the first, the Holy Spirit employs the law to produce the sense of sin and guilt. In the second, he uses the gospel for the production of that faith in Christ and his atoning work which issues in justification and peace with God; and in the third, the renewed man co-operates with him in the life-long work of sanctification (Culver, 2005:662).

Augustine's representation of the grace of God as the efficient cause of salvation led on to his doctrine of predestination. What God does in time for the gracious renewal of the sinner, he willed to do in his eternal plan (Ticciati, 211:422). At first Augustine unveiled a tendency to lean toward the fact that God predestined some people to be saved by looking into the future and seeing who will believe in Christ and who will not (Berkhof, 1996:109). He soon saw, however, that consistency and a fair interpretation of the relevant passages of Scripture demanded that he should consider a human being's choice of the good and his faith in Christ as themselves the effect of divine grace, and therefore modified his doctrine of predestination accordingly (Armstrong, 2003:202). He then emphasised that predestination of the elect to faith, to holiness, and to eternal glory is not just God's foreknowledge, but based on God's gracious choice

(Ferguson, 2005:278). By grace God selects some as recipients of grace whilst leaving the rest to sin and this redemptive transformation of human action is founded in God (Higton, 2015:512).

(Augustine, 396-397; 2004:122) writes on free grace, "This grace, however, of Christ, without which neither infants nor adults can be saved, is not rendered for any merits, but is given *gratis*, on account of which it is also called grace." Augustine insists that the unregenerated human will can play no part in the appropriation of grace. Despite the many biblical imperatives exhorting mankind to repent and believe the gospel, he asserts that even the beginning of "the faith by which we are Christians is a gift of God" (Diprose, 2001:259). Augustine said "that in order to overcome certain things, which are the objects either of an evil desire or an ill-conceived fear, men need the strenuous efforts, and sometimes even all the energies, of the will, and that we should only imperfectly employ these in every instance" (Augustine, 396-397; 2004:44).

This gift is bestowed "by divine grace and predestination," the latter being the preparation for grace. Augustine reasons that faith, should it originate in man himself, would be meritorious. Divine predestination and faith is bestowed as a free gift of grace only to those who have been predestined (Ticciati, 2011:419). The cause of this unconditional election is exclusively the good pleasure of God. This does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or action from among those possible as a condition of salvation, but rather involves his adopting a certain particular person from among the common mass of sinners to be his own possession (Venema, 2015:7). Augustine (396-397; 2004:123) writes:

All human beings, therefore, incurs penalty; and if the deserved punishment of condemnation were rendered to all, it would be without doubt be righteously rendered. They, therefore, who are delivered therefrom by grace are called, not vessels of their own merits, but "vessels of mercy".

According to Augustine both the effectual cause of justification (grace) and the instrumental cause (faith) are products of the free grace of God. To sustain the position that the beginning of saving faith is a divine gift and outside of man's own capacity to will or to exercise, Augustine makes frequent use of Ephesians 2:8-10. These verses practically shaped Augustine's understanding of soteriology (Anderson, 2002:33). Augustine (396-397; 2004:504) affirms in his exposition of this passage:

The apostle distinguishes faith from works, but does not say that it is not of faith. The apostle, therefore, distinguishes faith from works, just as Judah is distinguished from Israel in the two kingdoms of the Hebrews, although Judah is Israel itself. And he says that a man is justified by faith and not of works, because faith itself is first given, from which may be obtained other things which are specially characterized as works, in which a man may live righteously. For he himself also says, "By grace ye have been saved through faith; and this not of yourselves; but it is the gift of God," - that is to say, "And in

saying 'through faith,' even faith itself is not of yourselves, but is God's gift." "Not of works," he says, "lest any man should be lifted up."

Grace is used by Augustine more in soteriological terms. It was also important for epistemology. Human beings are unable to see and know God, not only because of their sinfulness, but also because of their created condition and the limitations of time. Hence, revelation is necessary for the knowledge of God, and grace's effect on the reason is primarily revelatory (Ferguson, 2005:279).

According to Augustine's doctrine of original sin, the will of human beings after the fall had no power to choose good, except by the help of divine grace. All human beings, therefore, are under condemnation for their sin in the fall, but had added to this the guilt of actual personal sin. This absolute inability on the sinner's part necessitates a divine initiative and drawing mercies (Knapp, 2000:66-67). Further, since humankind is unable to be aware of God's grace, God could not have determined to save based upon a foreseen response of the sinner (Hannah, 2001:213). God, by his own decree and from the secret purposes of his own will, has from eternity chosen certain definite persons out of the corrupt mass of mankind to whom he would grant his grace, enabling them to repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ, and upon repentance and faith, these were to be the heirs of eternal life (Ticciati, 2011:420). Augustine believed that believers therefore will, but God works in them also to will. They work, but God causes them to work. The good which they possess in their will, God works it in them to will (Brink, 2011:239). The rest of mankind, left without grace, are powerless to repent or exercise faith, and hence must suffer that eternal punishment to which they are justly condemned. Such predestination comprises of grace, which enables to repent and exercise faith, and also salvation. While salvation is conditioned upon repentance and faith, Augustine is careful to guard against the idea that election is based upon merit (Ferguson, 2005:278-279).

Salvation is not for foreseen merit, but this merit is the fruit of election. God has elected some for eternity. God foreknew their faith because he foreordained it, and in view of this foreordained faith they are saved. However, why grace is given to some to believe and withheld from others, he does not attempt to justify, but dismisses it as a great mystery. He seeks no further explanation than that such is the inscrutable purpose of God and therefore just (Ticciati, 2011:420). Anderson (2005:56) argues that in Augustine's mind his doctrines of original sin, irresistible grace and double predestination were organically linked. Predestination is inseparable from Augustine's doctrine of irresistible grace. Grace marks a divine intervention, whereby God compels the will of man from evil to good and negates the consequences of original sin in those who are predestined. Predestination of the elect to faith, holiness, and eternal glory is not just God's foreknowledge, but based on God's gracious choice (Ferguson,

2005:278). Augustine is looked upon by Protestants as a forerunner of Reformation ideas in his emphasis on salvation from original and actual sin as a result of the grace of a sovereign God who irresistibly saves those whom he has elected (Cairns, 1996:142). Augustine writes about the sovereignty of God in his grace: "As to the reason why he wills to convert some, and to punish others for turning away, although nobody can justly censure the merciful One is conferring His blessing, nor can any man justly find fault with the truthful One in awarding His punishment, yet after all, the purpose of His more hidden judgment is in His own power" (Augustine, 396-397; 2004:54). Augustine (396-397; 2004:503) argues from Ephesians 2:8 that it is only God's saving grace that a human being can be free from his slavery to sin and instead become, as Paul says, a slave to righteousness (Rom. 6:18). Augustine not only taught that grace is necessary but also that it is both particular and efficacious. God does not bestow his special, saving grace upon all and wait to see if man will cooperate with it, but God works upon the elect in an irresistible manner, giving the sinner a new heart and renewed will so that the sinner will respond in faith and repentance. Therefore, it is God's grace that causes and effects man's will to respond in faith, rather than man's will that causes and effects God's grace (Barrett, 2013:7).

Irresistible grace is the natural consequence of an omnipotent Saviour. An omnipotent God cannot have his will defeated. God has omnipotent power over human hearts to turn them where he pleases. However, irresistible grace does not mean that man does not resist God, but rather that when God so chooses to act upon his elect he overcomes all man's resistance (Olson, 199:274). Augustine demonstrates that there are two distinct callings; one is universal and the other particular. The former is the gospel call that many people reject while the latter is efficacious, so that those whom the Father draws always come to Jesus. Those who have been awakened to new life by efficacious grace have a will that has been liberated, renewed, and reoriented to desire God rather than sin (Ferguson, 2005:278).

Pelagius deviated more from the Scriptural representation of the application of redemption than any other of the early church fathers. It may even be said that he forsook the biblical foundation which was sacred to them, and re-asserted the self-sufficient principle of heathen philosophy (Hannah 2001:214). His conception of sin and its results led him to deny the absolute necessity of the grace of God in Christ unto salvation, and to consider it quite possible for man to obtain salvation by keeping the law. He did not altogether despise the help of grace or divine assistance but even considered this desirable in order that what is commanded by God may be more easily fulfilled (Pelagius, 1991:167). However, the grace of which he speaks is not the regeneration grace of God by which the mind is enlightened and the will is inclined to goodness and holiness. It consists only in: the good of nature, that is human's endowment with free will,

so that a person can sow either good or evil and the preaching of the gospel and the example of Christ, both which are directed to the mind of a human and to teach the way of salvation (Ferguson, 2005:278). The grace of nature is universal and absolutely essential or necessary, but the grace of the gospel is neither universal nor necessary, though rendering it easier for men to obtain salvation. It is only given to those who make proper use of their natural powers. This grace does not operate directly and immediately on the will of a person, but only on the understanding, which illuminates, and through this on the will. Moreover, it is quite possible for a person to resist its operation (Hannah, 200:212).

Augustine takes his starting point in a radically different view of human natural condition. He regards the natural humans as totally depraved and utterly unable to perform spiritual good (Bavinck, 2006:509). He also speaks of grace in the objective sense, consisting in the gospel, baptism, the forgiveness of sins, and so on, but realises that this is not sufficient, and that sinful humans have a need of an internal, spiritual grace, a supernatural influence of the Spirit of God by which the mind is enlightened and the will is inclined to holiness. This grace, which is the fruit of predestination, is freely distributed according to the sovereign good pleasure of God, and not according to any merits. It is a gift of God that precedes all human merits (Bruyn, 2016:25). It renews the heart, illuminates the mind, inclines the will, produces faith, and enables humans to do spiritual good. This grace is irresistible, not in a sense that it constrains humans against their will, but in the sense that it inevitably renews the heart, so that the will voluntarily chooses the right (Augustine, 396-397; 2004:503). Augustine's framework was shaped by the conviction that human salvation, from election, predestination and justification to eternal life has a single architect, God. It is on account of this theological claim that grace naturally assumes the position of cornerstone in the entire Augustinian theological building (Pereira, 2013:100).

4.4 Semi-Pelagianism

Between the two opposite viewpoints of Augustinianism (limiting human freedom and the extent of God's will concerning salvation) and Pelagianism (limiting grace to the gifts of creation and to externals of Christ's example and death) a mediating movement arose, which is known in history as Semi-Pelagianism (Ferguson, 2005:282). Olson (1999:278) indicates that; this represents the greatest debate of all over Augustine's theology and its ramifications which took place within the century after his death. Its outcome, like so many in the history of theology, was ambiguous. The Roman Catholic Church decided in favour of some aspects of Augustinianism and against other aspect of it, and remained neutral about some issues of the debate.

The name "Semi-Pelagianism" is an inaccurate name, for the viewpoints included under the label had nothing to do with Pelagius. Semi-Pelagianism was a Western formulation of the

general Christian orthodoxy on human nature. Pelagianism's doctrine was condemned at an ecumenical synod at Carthage in 418 AD and one at Ephesus in 431 AD (Ferguson, 2005:282).

In 427 AD when the writings of Augustine on grace and predestination reached Gaul (France), monks in southern Gaul sought a middle course between what they saw as the extremes of Pelagianism (limiting grace to the gifts of creation and to the externals of Jesus Christ's example and death) and the extremes of Augustine (limiting human freedom and the extent of God's will concerning salvation). The tendency among the church leaders was to separate the doctrine of predestination from the doctrine of the necessity of God's unmerited favour (Hannah, 2001:214).

John Cassian (360-430 CE) was the leading intellectual figure in monasticism in southern Gaul. He rejected Pelagianism, but also rejected Augustine's view of predestination, particularism of grace, and complete bondage of the will. He affirmed the paradox that everything is the work of God's grace, yet everything can be ascribed to free will (Cassian, 2004:325). Cassian argued that while death and the corruption of human nature passed from Adam and all his descendants, and humanity was not spiritually dead as a result of Adam's sin, it merely weakened humankind's powers for doing good. Human beings are not so corrupted by the fall that they cannot initiate salvation in the first place (Bavinck, 2006:509). Semi-Pelagians taught a human-initiated synergism. A human being is able to take the first move toward God, cooperating with or resisting his grace (Barret, 2013:4). Augustine argued that Adamic unity involved complete human impotence, and whereas Pelagius suggested that humankind came into the world healthy, Cassian proposed that we are partially disabled. Therefore, grace is needed to save us, but the nature of the required help is only that of the assistance and strengthening of natural abilities (Harwood, 2013:48).

Semi-Pelagianism was an attempt to sail between the two extremes of Pelagianism and Augustinianism. It made a futile attempt to steer clear of all the difficulties by giving a place to both divine grace and human will as causative cooperative ability in the renewal of man (Berkhof, 1996:110). In teaching causative cooperative ability, Cassian asserted that God does most of what is needed to save the sinner, though not all. Each person often, though not always, does a part to earn salvation. Thus, he rejected the concept of unconditional election and based predestination on foresight rather than foreknowledge. Those who perish do so against God's will (Hannah, 2001:215). Cassian's teaching on predestination undercuts the entire theology of divine predestination and publicly denounces the predestination by divine decree, the doctrine taught by Augustine. Semi-Pelagian doctrine exalted human freedom and articulated divine predestination as simply God's foreknowledge of human choices and the soteriology was initiated through human free will (Gumerlock, 2009:320).

Barrett (2013:5) indicates that in the growing controversy, a series of synods were called that culminated in the Synod of Orange (529 CE). The bishops of Rome, who generally held Augustine's view in high esteem, rejected Cassian's semi-Pelagian opinions, while ignoring the doctrine of predestination. As a result of the synod, a moderate Augustinianism prevailed through the insistence of Felix IV and Boniface II of Rome. Moderate Augustinianism affirmed Adamic solidarity in guilt and spiritual death, embraced the concept of human inability to cooperate with God in causing salvation, denied freedom of the will and affirmed that salvation is a gift from God through Christ without any human merit. Augustinianism became formally the accepted system of the Western church (Berkhof, 1996:110). Yet, those who took up the defence of Augustine felt constrained to yield on some important points. They failed to do justice to the doctrine of double predestination. The harsher side of the doctrine of rejecting some had already received some modifications. While election is recognised, unconditional election was not mentioned (though it was implied), grace was not irresistible and the fact that some are predestined to evil by divine power was not amended. The Synod of Orange in AD 529 vindicated a moderate Augustinianism that advocated cooperative salvation from an Augustinian perspective (Hannah, 2001:216).

This Semi-Pelagianism ignores the character and seriousness of sin as wilful lawlessness, separates sin and guilt, and fails to resolve the question of human freedom. An intact but weakened will is not a real improvement on a will bound by original sin. While imitation is a superficial explanation for the universality of sin, Semi-Pelagianism's rejection of imitation leaves it with no explanation at all (Bavinck, 2006:76). Semi-Pelagianism held that although the beginning of salvation was due to human free will, growth and final salvation required divine grace (Cassian, 2004(360-430):326).

4.5 The doctrine of predestination of the saints in the Middle Ages

The historical development of the doctrine of predestination is detectable during the Middle Ages. The consecration of Gregory 1 (540-604 CE) as the bishop of Rome constitutes a watershed that divides the ancient period of the church history from a medieval period (Cairns, 1996:159). So now the researcher will look at this period focusing on the early medieval church (600-950 CE), middle medieval church (950-1300 CE) and the late medieval church (1300-1500 CE) (Hannah, 2001:216).

4.5.1 The view of Gregory the Great

Gregory the Great 1 (540-604 CE), born in Rome about AD 540, was a diligent student of Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose. Gregory's greatness was as a pastor, a builder of the church,

a populariser of a modified Augustinianism, a moral theologian, and a spiritual master (Ferguson, 2006:319).

The Augustinianism of Gregory was somewhat weakened. He explains the entrance of sin into the world by the weakness of man. The first sin of Adam was a free act, in which he surrendered his love to God and became subject to spiritual blindness and spiritual death. Through the sin of the first man all men became sinners and as such, subject to condemnation. This sounds rather Augustinian, but Gregory did not carry these ideas through consistently (Cairns, 1996:163). He regarded sin as a weakness or disease rather than as guilt, and taught that man had not lost the freedom but only the goodness of the will. At the same time, he stressed the fact that without grace there can be neither salvation nor any human merits (Olson, 1999:288). The work of redemption is begun by the grace of God. Prevenient grace causes a human being to will the good, and subsequent grace enables him to do it. The change in man is begun in baptism, which builds faith and cancels the guilt of past sins. The will is renewed and the heart is filled with the love of God, thus man is enabled to merit something with God (Hannah, 2001:217). He taught that when a person's will and effort cooperate with that grace so that the person perseveres to the end and goes to the eternal kingdom, the result is that such a person may be said to have been "predestined to salvation." Electing grace must be activated. In Gregory's mind, there is nothing automatic about it (Olson, 1999:288).

Gregory retained the doctrine of predestination only in a modified form. While he advocated the irresistibility of grace, and of predestination as the secret counsel of God respecting the certain and definite number of the elect, this is after all only a predestination based on foreknowledge. He advocates that predestination is based on foreseen faith; the action of some people is the ground upon which predestination rests and the fruits in which it is said to result (Cairns, 1996:163)

4.5.2 The Gottschalkian controversy

In the ninth century, the Western church was challenged by a renewal of Augustine's view in the teachings of Gottschalk of Orbais (806-869 CE). Gottschalk embraced Augustinian doctrine of election, and contended earnestly for a double predestination, that is predestination of the lost as well as of the saved (Hannah, 2001:217). He believed that the choice of will, which was naturally implanted in humans by God from the beginning, became vitiated, weakened and depraved by merit of the first transgression, so that it cannot rise to the love of truth and righteousness unless it is raised up, healed, and nourished by the gift of Christ and set free from the vice of its depravity (Gottschalk, 848-863; 2010:202).

Gottschalk (848-863; 2010:207) writes concerning the doctrine of predestination:

He absolutely predestined that they be good here not from themselves but from him and that they be blessed here and there, not through themselves but through him. Therefore, in both, God foreknew and predestined that his own good things be in them and concerning them.

God also from eternity willed and decreed that some should repent and exercise faith; and that others should continue in sin. Again, from eternity he willed and decreed that for their foreseen faith; these should receive eternal life and that those for the foreseen continuance in sin; receive the eternal punishment which their sins justly merited (Hannah, 2001:217). The most exalted is Gottschalk's idea of the nature of God, that we may readily believe that he could conceive of these decrees, together with the foreknowledge upon which one is conditioned, as being comprised in a single act of the infinite mind, and to say that this is impossible, were to subject God to the limitations of the human mind. His doctrine of predestination is built upon the one thought: God is supreme, and man in comparison is nothing (Thorsell, 2016:154). Because he is most truly the true and only God, the omnipotent God completely foreknew in his eternal and immutable knowledge all things before they happened. Therefore, he without a doubt foreknew both the good that good people are going to do and the bad things that bad people are going to do. However, he brings it about by his grace in good people that they are good. Yet he does not bring it about in the bad people that they are bad (Gottschalk, (848-863; 2010:206).

He was careful, however, to limit the divine efficiency to the redemptive line and the production of holiness. He explicitly rejected the idea of a predestination based on foreknowledge, since it makes the divine decree dependent on the acts of man (Erickson, 1983:925). "We ought to believe in the grace of God by which the human race is saved without any preceding good merits of its own, but by the gracious goodness and mercy of God alone" (Gottschalk, 848-863; 2010:200). He met a great deal of unwarranted opposition. His opponents did not understand him and lodged against him the familiar accusation that his teachings made God the author of sin. Gottschalk's views were condemned by the synod of bishops at Mainz in 848 (Hyde, 2010:239).

4.5.3 Anselm's contribution (1033-1109 CE)

There was a great thinker during the Middle Ages who not only reproduced the Augustinian anthropology, but also made a positive contribution to it, namely, Anselm of Canterbury. In the very dawn of scholasticism, the question was taken in the true scholastic⁴ spirit, discussed and

⁴ Scholasticism was originally the educational tradition of the medieval schools, but more especially the method of philosophical and theological reflection set forth most succinctly by Thomas Aquinas. In attempting to understand better the deep meanings of Christian doctrine, scholasticism aimed to

speculated upon for the mere sake of discussion and speculation (Hannah, 2001:218). The scholastics encouraged a healthy reasoning with respect to faith, which led to a new respect and study of Scripture. Nevertheless, scholasticism also led to “intellectualism” (defined as “elevating man’s reason above biblical revelation”). Scholasticism suggests an educational shift from a monastic educational theory (which emphasises the passivity of the intellect, inner submissiveness of heart, and the contemplative life) to a cathedral and university educational model. This shift can be explained by needs arising in the church from its confrontation with Islam (Ferguson, 2005:423-424).

Anselm emphasises the doctrine of original sin, but stresses the fact that the term “original” does not refer to the origin of human race, but to that of the individual in the present condition of things (Anselm, 1106-1109; 2008:359). In his opinion, original sin may be called natural sin, though it does not belong to human nature as such but represents a condition into which it has come since creation. By the fall, man became guilty and polluted, and both guilt and pollution are passed on from father to child. All sin, original as well as actual, constitutes guilt (Phelps, 2016:268). Anselm (1106-1109; 2008:360) writes,

Therefore, if Adam and Eve had retained their original justice, their descendants would, like them, been originally just. But they committed personal sin, and so whereas originally they had the strength and integrity to remain just without trouble, their whole being was now weakened and corrupted. Their bodies after their sin became like those of brute beasts, subjected to corruption and carnal appetites, and their soul, ruled by this bodily corruption and those appetites, and deprived of the gifts they had lost, were themselves infected with carnal appetites. And because the whole of human nature was contained in Adam and Eve, and nothing of it existed outside them, the whole human nature was weakened and corrupted.

Like Augustine, Anselm defined freedom of the will as an ability to make choices. The fall did not destroy the freedom of the will, but it did limit the choices one can make, that is, humanity is free to choose evil. Freedom according to Anselm is the ability to continue in an upright will (Anselm, (1106-1109; 2008:451). This was lost in Adam, though the will was not. We are free, but having lost uprightness, we are only free to sin (Hannah, 2001:218). Between 1106-1109 CE, Anselm produced a great scholastic work, on the agreement of foreknowledge, predestination, and the grace with free will, in which he took a position very much like Augustine’s (the work was titled *De Concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae Dei cum libero arbitrio*; Agreement of foreknowledge, predestination, and the grace with free will)

synthesize classical Greek and Roman philosophy with Christian writings and Scripture using Aristotelianism and Platonism to provide a clear and defined systematic structure. After the Reformation, certain Protestant theologians continued the scholastic tradition, especially as they came to focus on the quest for the right doctrine understood in the form of correct assertions or proportions (Grenz *et al.*, 1999:106)

(Southern, 1963:212). In fact, Anselm always considered the great North African bishop his theological mentor, and his overall theology was strongly influenced by Augustine (Olson, 1999:317).

In his work, he gives the question of election a short paragraph, affirming the justice of God in election, but acknowledging its deep mystery. Anselm seems to have embraced the theological ideas of Augustine in a less abrasive but inconsistent manner. He taught that humankind owes to God “justice or rectitude of will, which makes persons upright or right of heart” (Phelps, 2016:277). He believed salvation is a gift from God to humanity, yet humanity has the ability to resist God’s grace. Saving grace is a free and unmerited gift from God, not in any human merit (Anselm, 1106-1109; 2008:457-458). Anselm can speak of faith as coming through grace, and like Augustine, he leaves it a mystery why this grace, which cooperates with the act of faith by being its necessary precondition, should be given to some human beings and not to others (Hannah, 2001:218).

4.5.4 Attributes of Roman Catholic on the predestination

The Roman Catholic Church clearly cherished two tendencies, the one Semi-Augustinian and the other Semi-Pelagian, of which the latter gradually gained the upper hand. Time would not permit to follow the discussion of all the scholastics here, and therefore, only the characteristic teachings that gradually emerged will be stated (Culver, 2005:351). The view gradually prevailed that original righteousness was not a natural but a supernatural endowment of man. It was held that naturally man consists of flesh and spirit and from these diverse entities arise conflicts, which often complicate right actions. With the entrance of sin into the world man lost this original righteousness (Sutanto, 2016:179). This means that the apostasy of man did not involve the loss of any natural endowment of man, but only the loss of a supernatural gift, which was foreign to the essential nature of man. Original righteousness was lost and man lapsed back into the condition of an unrestrained conflict between flesh and spirit. Man was brought back to the neutral condition, in which he was neither sinful nor holy but from the very constitution of his nature subject to a conflict between the flesh and the spirit (Berkhof, 1996:220).

Since Adam, the head of the human race, was the representative of all his posterity, they all have sinned in him and come into the world burdened with original sin. While the scholastics differ very much as to the nature of original sin, the prevailing opinion is that it is not something positive, but rather the absence of something that ought to be present; particularly the privation of original justice, though some add a positive element, namely, an inclination to evil (Sutanto, 2016:185).

Some Roman Catholics in the medieval period rejected the idea of man's spiritual impotence and his utter dependence on the grace of God for renewal. They adopt the theory of synergism on regeneration, that is, that man co-operates with God in the spiritual renewal of the soul. He prepares for and disposes for the grace of justification, which is said to consist in infused righteousness (DeVries, 2011:85). It is significant that Thomas Aquinas, the most respected theologian in the Roman Catholic Church, at least among conservative Catholic apologists, strictly adhere to an Augustinian understanding of predestination (Armstrong, 2003:202).

In the tradition of Augustine, at the Synod of Orange (1225-1274) Aquinas argued that humankind is an absolute debtor to God and has no ability to accomplish salvation by merit. He demonstrated the necessity of grace for salvation. He understood the gospel as the "gospel of grace," which is the power of God for salvation (Raith, 2012:321). Aquinas (1265-1274; 1948:660-661) argues that:

Man by his natural powers, cannot produce meritorious works proportioned to eternal life; but for this a higher power is needed, the power of grace. And thus, without grace, man cannot merit eternal life; yet he can perform works leading to a good which is connatural to man, as to toil in the fields, to drink, to eat, or to have friends.

On Aquinas's account of faith and grace, a human being is justified when God operates on him in such a way as to bring him faith. As a result of God's operating grace, that person desires God's goodness and hates his/her own sins (Stump, 2003:389).

He affirmed God's unconditional election and reprobation of people as part of his eternal decree and held that everything that actually happens in God's eternal plan is secret to us (Horton, 2011:313). He drew a distinction between God's general will that all be saved and his special will in electing some and rejecting others (Erickson, 1983:925). The theological background necessary for understanding Aquinas's view of salvation is his overall view of God's providence, including predestination. Aquinas followed Augustine very closely in these doctrines, while adding his own theological spin to them. Aquinas added to Augustine's thought the idea that God works in nature and history through the second cause. That is, although God is the primary cause of everything's existence, he uses created things to bring about many individual events. Not everything that happens is directly caused by God, yet everything in reality is within God's overall plan, purpose, knowledge and control (Olson, 1999:344).

Aquinas seems to have been confused when it came to the doctrine of justification, because he clearly affirmed that grace is given to the professing Christian gradually, not instantaneously. With this insight, redemption was perceived as a process that culminated in salvation at the time of death or more likely, after a period of time in purgatory. The acquisition of degrees of grace

was through the sacramental system. Christ's death was understood to have procured forgiving grace, but the grace was merely made available. Reception of grace was tied increasingly to the sacraments (Hannah, 2001:220). The Roman Catholic view has always emphasised the controlling place of human will in salvation. God's grace alone provided the means of human salvation through the gift of his Son Jesus Christ, by personally accepting the Church's sacramental provisions whereby the treasure of Christ's merits become available to those who repent and agree to the penitential ministries of the church as the extension of Christ's body in history (Montgomery, 2010:2). It was believed that Christ and the saints have achieved so much merit during their earthly lives that the excess merit was laid up in the heavenly treasure of merit on which the Pope could draw on behalf of the living faithful (Cairns, 1996:276)

Berkhof (1996:110) indicates that toward the end of the Middle Ages it became quite apparent that the Roman Catholic Church would allow a great deal of latitude in the doctrine of predestination. As long as its teachers maintained that God willed the salvation of all men, and not merely of the elect, they could with Thomas Aquinas move in the direction of Augustinianism in the doctrine of predestination, or with Molina (Spanish Jesuit who devised the theological system known as Molinism, which endeavoured to confirm that man's will remain free under the action of divine grace), follow the course of Semi-Pelagianism, as they thought best. This means that even in the case of those who like Thomas Aquinas, believed in an absolute and double predestination, this doctrine could not be carried through consistently, and could not be made determinative for the rest of their theology (Beeke, 2013:233). This was on the eve of the Reformation; the church had drifted from semi-Augustinianism to semi-Pelagianism and at times even to Pelagianism. It was the opinion of many that the church was in need of moral and theological reform. This is described as a confusing period that the church entered into after Aquinas (Hannah, 2001:220).

At least two scholastic schools of thought emerged toward the end of the Middle Ages, represented on the one hand by William of Ockham, Pierre d'Ailly, Robert Holcot, Gabriel Biel who held an optimistic view of human ability, arguing that man is able to do everything needed to be right with God. In contrast and on the other hand, Thomas Bradwardine, Gregory of Rimini, and Hugolino of Orvieto held a pessimistic view of man's ability, that man can do nothing apart from effectual grace (Barrett, 2013:10). Hannah (2001:221) opines that many in the medieval church believed that God saved by grace, but they also believed that their own free will and cooperation have a role to play in salvation. This most popular medieval phrase is "God helps those who help themselves."

4.6 The Reformation

The medieval synthesis in Western Europe was challenged during the Reformation in its polity by the idea that the universal church should be replaced by national or state churches and free churches (Cairns, 1996:267). Its scholastic philosophy tied to Greek philosophy gave way to Protestant biblical theology. Justification by faith, sacraments, and works gave way to justification by faith alone. The Bible, rather than the Bible and tradition as interpreted by the church, became the norm (Allert, 2004:330).

The classical Reformers were, in fact, calling the church back to its earlier teaching, back to a one source concept of revelation (Sproul, 2003:35). The Reformation doctrine of predestination and election was based on scriptural teaching, and represents a continuation of a long-standing Augustinian legacy. Contrary to the teaching of Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism, which grant a measure of human autonomy and free will to the believer's response to the gospel call to faith and repentance, the doctrine of predestination undergirds the teaching of salvation by grace alone through faith alone through the work of Christ alone (Barrett, 2017:241). The emphasis of doctrinal exposition fell, not on the more generally anthropological or philosophical question of what constitutes free choice in daily civil, or even ethical matters, but on the foundational soteriological question of the source or foundation of salvation. Given, moreover, the exclusion of human merit from salvation, every issue of human responsibility to an outward obedience to the law was seldom referenced in the Reformers' definitions of human freedom (Muller, 2017:181).

The careful study of the writing of the Reformers reveals that they went to Augustine from the Bible, but they did not arrive at the doctrine of justification by faith by studying the writings of Augustine. It was the Scriptures that brought home that profound truth to them (Curley, 2014:236). The theological cause of the Reformation was the desire of the Reformers to go back to the classic source of the Christian faith, the Bible, in order to counter the claims of Thomistic theology that salvation was a matter of grace through the sacraments dispensed by the church hierarchy (Barrett, 2013:12). Barrett (2017:242) indicates that the Reformers insisted that Christian theology must be informed by the teaching of Scripture, properly interpreted. The church's dogmatic pronouncements must always stand the test of Scripture and must be revised where they are at variance with scriptural teaching. Berkhof (1996:110) writes,

The Reformers of the sixteenth century all advocated the strictest doctrine of predestination. This is even true of Melancthon in his earliest period. Luther accepted the doctrine of absolute predestination, though the conviction that God willed that all men should be saved caused him to soft-pedal the doctrine of predestination somewhat late in his life. Yet Calvin firmly maintained the Augustinian doctrine of an absolute double predestination.

Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings were a very instructive and informative resource for the Reformers in establishing their view of the servitude of the human will and the freeness and the power of divine grace (Barrett, 2013:12). Space would not allow us to follow the discussion of all the Reformers here and therefore, we will mainly focus on John Calvin.

4.6.1 John Calvin

John Calvin was born near Noyon, France, in a Catholic cathedral town northeast of Paris on July 10, 1509. He died in Geneva, an independent republic that later became part of Switzerland. Calvin virtually ruled as "chief pastor"; the French Protestant Reformers established the Geneva Academy to which Protestants flocked from all over Europe (Olson, 1999:408). It seems as though Calvin earned more intellectual respectability as an exegete than as a dogmatician (Brink, 2011:235). He acquired a leading position within the international Reformed church and theology. In his dealing with theological concepts and distinctions, one recognizes the brilliant self-taught person, who had acquainted himself with the traditional exegetical and systematic language, but felt free to judge independently on the basis of his understanding of Scripture (Velde, 2011:59). Boer (2011:75) adds that Calvin was an authority who could be appealed to, a great man who had meant much for the reform of the church and was for that reason worthy of high esteem. Beeke (2010:79) writes, "God's sovereignty was one of the dominant principles of John Calvin's life as well as of his biblical exposition and theology." It is true that in the city of Geneva and others he influenced, Calvin taught a soteriological doctrine of election. He believed that God is sovereignly free to act as he wills and in accord with his own nature. God's actions are not conditioned by any considerations other than being true to himself. There are no obligations, on God's part, to anyone or anything outside of himself. There are no limitations imposed on him or his action by anyone or anything other than his own will and attributes (Picirilli, 2002:21)

Calvin rejected natural theology in favour of God's Word as the surest path to knowledge of God and elevated Scripture, inspired and illuminated by the Holy Spirit, as the supreme authority for Christian faith and practice (Calvin, 1559; 2008:42). Calvin was convinced that God necessarily wills everything that happens and is done. He tightly connects God's will and necessity. If God necessarily wills everything there is, then he necessarily knows everything too. His knowledge cannot be different from the reality what he wills. Because the whole reality is necessary, God knows and acts necessarily, everything is necessary too (Vos, 2011:34).

4.6.1.1 Calvin's view on sin

Calvin begins with the first sin of Adam, and like Paul in Romans 5, draws the connection from Adam to all of humanity (Beeke, 2008:53). When Adam sinned, he entangled and immersed his posterity in the same miseries. He stressed the fact that original sin is not merely a privation, but also a total corruption of human nature. The punishment by a withdrawal of the ornament of wisdom, virtue, justice, truth, and holiness and in their place blindness, impotence, vanity, impurity and unrighteousness, and his descendants are plunged into the same wretchedness (Calvin, 1559; 2008:150). Where Augustine sought this corruption primarily in the sensual appetites, Calvin pointed out that it has its seat in the higher as well as in the lower faculties of the soul, and that it operates through the positive evil (Barrett, 2013:15). Man is by nature guilty and polluted in Adam and justly condemned in the sight of God. He believes that this state is not altered by the sacrament of baptism; human kind is lost apart from a heartfelt faith in Christ (Hannah, 2001:230). In his Institutes he defines original sin as a "hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God and then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh" (Calvin, 1559; 2008:152).

Vos (2011:32) writes that Calvin taught that sin corrupts the will, and only the bondage of the will to sin matters. He is willing to affirm that the will is free in the sense that it is not coerced but at all times self-determined, willing of itself, of its own accord and wilfully. The choices of the will are voluntary or wilful. The yoke of sin means the corruption of the will and the involved necessity is only the bondage of the will. Sin has blinded humans that they cannot gain a true knowledge of God (Olson, 1999:410). Calvin (1559; 2008:150) indicates that all of mankind, therefore, are produced by impure seed and come into the world contaminated with the transmittable sin. Before person is born, he or she is in God's sight defiled and polluted.

Calvin strongly taught that as the result of the fall, man is totally depraved, incapable of doing any spiritual good, and therefore, also unable to make the least advance toward his recovery. When the will is enslaved as the slave of sin, it cannot make a movement toward goodness, far less steadily pursue it. Every such movement is the first step to conversion, which Scripture entirely ascribes to divine grace. The will remains and hastens on with the strongest affection toward sin (Calvin, 1559; 2008:180-181). But while maintaining the doctrine of total depravity, he also holds that the unregenerate could still perform civil righteousness, a righteousness which God approves in the social relations of men (Barrett, 2013:15-16). It is exemplified in sinners who have not been renewed by God's grace. They can only sin and have no possibility in them to do the spiritual good. Still, they have not lost the essential freedom of the will and choice. Although they are bound to sin, they sin willingly and by their own choice (Van Asselt,

2006:36). Total depravity emphasises the vandalising impact of sin on the person and covers three related concepts: the pollution and corruption of all aspect of a person, the complete inability of a person to please God, and universality, in that all are conceived and born as sinners (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467). Erickson (1983:928) indicates that the concept of total depravity, as taught by Calvin, means that every individual is so sinful as to be unable to respond to any offer of grace. This condition, which is fully deserved, involves both moral corruption and liability to punishment. Total depravity does not mean that fallen man is as evil as possible, but that every aspect of his being of mind, will and emotions, is under the effects of sin, which is of original sin in the garden (Ellis, 2002:29). Since common grace does not finally set unbelievers free from the power of sin over their minds, they simultaneously suppress the truth and provide ultimately misguided theories of reality which are hostile to the God of the Bible (Baird, 2015:95).

4.6.1.2 Calvin on grace and predestination

The natural correlative of the doctrine of total depravity is absolute dependence of man on the grace of God for renewal, and this was Calvin's concern, to preserve absolute divine sovereignty and human dependence (Minkema, 2011:245). He affirms that everything that happens does so because God has designed it to happen that way. He associates this primarily with the doctrine of election and perseverance (Shellrude, 2011:69).

Calvin believes that because of humankind's desperate condition, salvation has to be the work of God alone. Since it is from God, it must be based solely on the unmerited favour of God, for the simple fact that if God was caused to be moved to mercy by anything other than himself, it would not be of grace but of reward and merit (Picirilli, 2002:23). Grace alone is enough to express the biblical doctrine of salvation. Grace teaches absolute human passivity in the process of salvation (Brink, 2011:236). Calvin's broad doctrine of salvation can be summarised as TULIP, which stands for total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints (Badger, 2003:17).

In view of the preceding, it was but natural that Calvin should be strictly predestinarian. He firmly maintained the Augustinian doctrine of an absolute double predestination and he was committed to strenuously defending the doctrine of absolute predestination. It did in fact assume quite different shapes in his work (Baschera, 2011:49). He affirms that all are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation and accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, it can be said that someone is predestined to life or to death (Calvin, 1559; 2008:610). He uses predestination as a means of securing the believer's assurance of salvation. This teaching was not unique to him

but he stood within the ongoing Western anti-Pelagian tradition which stretched back to Augustine himself (Trueman, 2011:26). Calvin, 1559; 2008:610) defines predestination as “The eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man.”

Calvin’s summary of the doctrine of predestination includes the two branches of election and reprobation. According to God’s eternal and immutable counsel, Calvin indicates that Scripture, then clearly shows that God once established by his eternal and immutable plan those whom he long before determined, once for all, to receive into salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, he would devote to destruction (Eph. 1:4-5). It is asserted that, with respect to the elect, this plan was founded upon his free mercy, without regard to human worth (Beeke, 2010:91). Calvin, 1559; 2008:616) comments concerning Ephesians 1:4, the phrase that some were elected before the foundation of the world, that it takes away all reference to worth. For what ground of distinction was there between persons who as yet existed not? But if they were elected in Christ, it follows not only that each was elected on some extrinsic ground, but that some are placed on a different footing from others, since it is seen that all are not members of the body of Christ.

Calvin appeals to the sovereignty of God and claims that God’s justice is above our understanding, and therefore, humankind can merely humble themselves under his righteous judgements. He refuses to offer any speculation for the reasons for the decree of either election or reprobation, because these reasons are hidden in God’s eternal wisdom. Behind the discussion on election and reprobation is the question as to the cause by which salvation is received (Barrett, 2013:21). Boer (2011:79) agrees that Calvin continually appealed to the incomprehensibility of God’s will and the unknowability of his justice.

In elaborating the efficacy of grace, Calvin makes a strong statement of God’s will as the ultimate cause of all that happens in the world, particularly in relation to election and reprobation (Velde, 2011:65). Macarthur & Mayhue (2017:493) agree with Velde that the sovereignty of God extends to the plan of redemption. The doctrine of God’s eternal and universal decree and the doctrine of predestination are not separate doctrines, therefore, that which characterises God’s decree to accomplish all things, also characterises his decree concerning the salvation damnation of man. Calvin taught that salvation is a matter of unconditional election apart from human merit or divine foreknowledge (Calvin, 1536-1559; 2008:619).

Election is based on the sovereign will of God by and for his good pleasure and is a dual predestination of some to salvation and others to condemnation. He believed that the Christological work on the cross is limited to those who are predestined to salvation, and the

elect will be saved apart from their own initial desire as the Holy Spirit irresistibly draws them to Christ (Cairns, 1996:303). This does not mean that Christ's death is limited in its ability to save everyone, but that it is effective to save only those who were corporate participants in his death, and who therefore, belong to Christ by grace through faith (Ellis, 2002:30).

The Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election states that God's choice was out of his sovereign good pleasure and not based on any foreseen faith in human beings (Picirilli, 2002:28). We owe our faith to election. Our salvation finds its origin in eternity, before the creation of the universe, in the electing grace of God (Lescelius, 2003:26). For Calvin, if justification is by faith, it is therefore not by merit (Raith, 2012:315). It is not a decision made at some point in time when the individual is born. It is what God has always purposed to do. It does not depend on human performance of specific actions or meeting certain conditions or terms of God (Erickson, 1983:930). God has gloriously and sovereignly decided to accord to each sinner the responsibility of surrendering to the Holy Spirit's leading in the preaching of the gospel (Hankins, 2012:66). He affirms that the merit and mediation of God the Son who accomplished our salvation become ours when the Holy Spirit by means of grace, applies it to us (Strange, 2011:179).

4.7 Jacob Arminius

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Calvinistic doctrine of sin and grace met with a determined opposition in the Netherlands, which centred in the great Arminian controversy. Jacob Arminius, (1559-1609), a Calvinist scholar, arrived at the conclusion that Calvinism should be altered for biblical, as well as polemical reasons, to adequately answer the attacks being hurled at the Christian faith (Hannah, 2001:231). Arminius moved to Geneva to attend the Geneva Academy under the teaching of Beza, Calvin's epigone and successor (Barrett, 2013:23). He is remembered as an anti-Calvinistic theologian whose views were in contradiction with the very essence of Calvinist Reformation (Boer, 2011:73). The Arminian party focused on the issues of the relationship of Adam's sin on the human race, including the degree of human inability, and the relationship between sovereignty and the human will (Hannah, 2001:232). It should be noted that Arminius expressed profound admiration for Calvin's exegetical qualities and a broad agreement with the most important parts of his theology, yet he was resolutely opposed to Calvin's statements on God's relationship with sin and evil because of their consequences (Boer, 2011:85).

4.7.1.1 Arminian's view on sin

The position adopted by the Arminians is practically the same as that of the Semi-Pelagianists. Though they believe that Adam's transgression had an evil impact on the spiritual condition of all his posterity, they reject the doctrine of original sin as it was taught by the churches of the Reformation (Arminius, 1603-1609; 2005:356). He maintains that the guilt of Adam's sin is not imputed to his posterity, though its pollution is passed on from father to son. This pollution is not regarded as sin in the proper sense of the word, but only as a disease or a weakness. It does not bring human beings under a sentence of condemnation, but weakens their nature, so that they are incapacitated to attain eternal life. He confesses a corruptive influence in the realm of the moral and intellectual nature of humankind but argued that it did not affect the ability to make choices (Hannah, 2001:232).

4.7.1.2 Arminian's view on grace and predestination

He believed that God extends the same manner of grace to all; humankind is free to accept or reject it. The influence of the Holy Spirit succeeds only to the degree that the human will concur. The belief that human will is not incapacitated by sin results in the promotion of human ability relating to salvation (Hannah, 2001:232). Arminianism holds that grace is necessary not only for the perfecting of faith and obedience but as a precondition for both. Nevertheless, sufficient prevenient grace is given to all people to exercise their free will, and election is based on God's knowledge of those who will in fact cooperate with his grace in faith and good works (Horton, 2011:313-314). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:185) indicates that predestination has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would, through prevenient grace, believe, and through subsequent grace would persevere. He interprets predestination in light of Romans 8:29, which connects predestination with God's foreknowledge about believers (Olson, 2006:179).

They advocate that all persons are able to meet the condition of salvation. If this was not the case, the universal invitation to salvation would make little sense. As generally understood, prevenient grace is God's grace given to all humanity indiscriminately. It is also the basis of all the goodness found in humans everywhere (Erickson, 1983:933). The point of departure for Arminian theology is not the free will, but its view of the goodness of God. The Arminians' doctrine of free will is rooted in their doctrine of theology proper, not in anthropology or soteriology (Smith, 2011:207).

In harmony with these views, the Arminian theologians reject the teaching of unconditional election. They contend that it would be unfair for God to save some and not others, all things

being equal between them. They believe God has chosen those whom he will save based on man's foreseen final faith as a ground of election (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:498). As a result, the Arminian type of the doctrine of absolute predestination has been supplemented by the doctrine of conditional predestination (Berkhof, 1996:110). The main objective of Arminianism is to formulate a doctrine that would recognise Christ as the centre and ground of predestination, because, in evaluating Calvinism, Arminius thought that it is contrary to the witness of Scripture and it removes Christ as the centre of the doctrine of predestination (Green, 2014:178). He felt that the traditional Calvinistic approach did not adequately honour Christ (Picirilli, 2002:49). It is believed that the Calvinist doctrine of election contradicts the character of God as revealed in Scripture (Smith, 2011:208).

They teach that those who are predestined by God, in his infinite knowledge are those who are, able to foresee, and who will accept the offer of salvation made in Jesus Christ. This view is based on the close connection in Scripture between foreknowledge and foreordination or predestination (Pinson, 2010:27). Arminianism makes salvation a divine-human synergism; it logically appears to end up with a salvation by works. It apparently supposes that God makes the availability of salvation to anyone who can exercise enough faith to receive it (Ellis, 2002:34).

4.8 The late modern church and predestination

Toward the end of the eighteenth century the doctrine of the predestination of the saints in its Augustinian version waned in North America. In a decline which Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) had rightly anticipated. The Congregational Churches of England which had embraced Arminianism after the great Awakening gradually moved toward Unitarianism⁵ (a belief that God is one in a nature as well as a person) and universalism⁶ (a belief that all human beings will be saved) led by Charles Chauncy (1705-1787) (Piper, 2001:145).

Liberal theology in the period since the Enlightenment shifted to subjective experience rather than place its view of the doctrine in an objective revelation of God (Hannah, 2001:247).

⁵ Unitarianism's roots are the Arian denial of the doctrine of the Trinity (thus asserting that the Father begat the Son at a point in time so that the Son is not eternal). Modern, humanistic Unitarianism reflects the influences of the Enlightenment and nineteenth-century transcendentalism in its further rejection of the authority of Scripture and the supernatural. Modern Unitarians generally speak of Jesus as an ethical ideal, a great moral teacher or even a messenger from God. But in Unitarian thought Jesus cannot be the eternal Son of the eternal Father, because God is one, not three persons (Grenz *et al.*, 1999:118).

⁶ Universalism is known historically as *apokatastasis*, (name given in the history of theology to the doctrine which teaches that a time will come when all free creatures will share in the grace of salvation, in a special way, the devils and lost souls) the belief that all people will be saved. Hence universalism involves the affirmation of universal salvation and the denial of eternal punishment. Universalists believe that ultimately all humans are somehow in union with Christ and that in the fullness of time they will gain release from the penalty of sin and be restored to God (Grenz *et al.*, 1999:118)

Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the fountainhead of the liberal tradition of interpreting Christianity, gave the doctrine of predestination an entirely different form. Religion was regarded as a consciousness of utter dependence on the causality that is proper to the natural order with its invariable laws and second causes and which determines all human resolves and actions (Berkhof, 1996:110). He writes, "This feeling of absolute dependence, in which our self-consciousness in general represents the finitude of our being, is therefore not an accidental element, or a thing which varies from person to person, but a universal element of life; and the recognition of the fact entirely take the place, for the system of doctrine, of all the so-called the proofs of the existence of God" (Schleiermacher, 1830; 1999:133-134). He stresses Christianity as a private, subjective experience of God; the philosophical inheritance of Kant⁷ led him to reject traditional approaches to religious knowledge (Hannah, 2001:239).

In Schleiermacher's interpretation of the doctrine, the reprobates are those who have so far been overlooked and are not yet affected by the Spirit. They do not cease to be incorporated into the shared religious life and remain objects of divine love, and they therefore do not lose the potential of being regenerated as some point in the future - even after death (Schleiermacher, 1830; 1999:549). His universalist interpretation of predestination departs from both Lutheranism and the Reformed tradition, as well from Augustine, Luther and Calvin, and indeed from Western Christian orthodoxy across the broad spectrum, including Roman Catholicism (Anette, 2014:116). He argued that the eternal damnation of even a single person would make it impossible for God to extend eternal blessedness to anyone (Reitan, 2002:429).

The greatest critic of the nineteenth-century liberal tradition was Karl Barth (1886-1968), probably the most or one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century. Unlike his liberal opponents, Barth tenaciously affirms the necessity and integrity of revelation (Barth, 1961:10). Barth defines predestination "as a divine decree in action, the divine decreeing concerning us in which at every moment God is free in relation to us and goes forward with us from decision to decision" (Barth, 1934; 1991:454). What is primary is the question, "Who is God who elects and what does a knowledge of this God tell us about the nature of election?" Barth's revolution is finally a resolution in the doctrine of God which means, among other things, that he is working with a different divine ontology than did his forebears in the reformed tradition (Webster, 200:93).

⁷ Immanuel Kant represents the beginning of the movement of Romanticism that replaces Rationalism by feelings and idealism. In his view, human reason cannot know God and the soul. Religion does not have its roots in historical facts, but in man's conscience which gives human beings a sense of moral obligations. One's moral nature is the beginning of religion. There is no need for historicity. Man does not need a Redeemer. With his or her free will, following the 'categorical imperative' of God's law, man can develop the 'sparks' of Divinity in oneself (Paas, 2016:263).

He affirmed that when we formulate the doctrine of predestination, we must do so in the light of God's work of revelation and atonement. He maintained that there is an intricate connection between the fact that Christ is at the centre of God's work within time and the eternal foreordaining of that work in divine election (Barth, 1961:80). He reinvigorated the doctrine of predestination when; he introduced the novel view that every human being is elected in Christ, with the purpose of restoring the Christocentric nature of election (Picirilli, 2002:51). He held that God's decree of election was logically prior to all other decrees. In this account, predestination and Christology are combined to form a single event. In this purified supralapsarianism⁸, election is God's choice, preceding all his other choices, which are fulfilled in his eternal willing of the existence of the man Jesus and of the people represented in him (Horton, 2011:318). Barth (1957:187) writes that the understanding of predestination depends wholly and utterly upon the identifying of it with the election of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is impossible, then, to separate the doctrine of predestination from Christology and soteriology. As in the Reformed tradition, Barth argues that God's sovereignty is not constrained, conditioned or obligated by anything external to himself in the decision of his election. His decision is independent of and prior to and thus fully over-rules our human volition and achievement (O'Neil, 2004:312).

In an attempt to formulate a less troublesome position (a position that will be between Calvinism and Arminianism), Barth was conscious that he was departing from the conventional Reformed position. He affirms that all humanity is to be included in Jesus Christ, whom God elected and all people in him. All are found in him. Barth believes in universal atonement and potential universal salvation for all humanity (Bender, 2005:99). He has an understanding that neither the incarnation nor the crucifixion represents or effects a change in the divine being because God had already and eternally determined himself to be God in this relationship of oneness with humanity in and through the person of the Son, and to be God only in this form and this relation (O'Neil, 2004:314). He insists that election lies at the heart of what God has revealed regarding himself. God can only be known through God and that knowledge is given to us exclusively in his acts in Christ, the eternal Word of God become incarnate. The doctrine of election reveals who God is in his eternal self-determination to be God for us in Jesus Christ (Venema, 2015:15). Scheuers (2015:113-114) adds that God's free election of grace which is out of a "free decision of his love," embraces humankind in Jesus Christ. His Christological centeredness of the doctrine of predestination reorients the division of election and reprobation

⁸ Supralapsarianism a Calvinistic view of predestination that maintains that in the "logical order of decrees" God decreed the election of some persons and the reprobation of others before allowing the fall of Adam, hence the decree of election is supralapsarian. In supralapsarianism the emphasis is on God's predestination of uncreated and unfallen humans rather than on created and fallen humanity (sublapsarianism). Consequently, the supralapsarian view leads to the idea of double predestination: God has chosen to glorify himself by predestining certain persons to eternal life and others to eternal condemnation (Grenz *et al.*, 1999:110).

such that both are first and foremost true in Jesus Christ, the true human being (Puffer, 2012:262).

According to Berkhof (1996:111), Barth did not see in predestination a predetermined separation of men and does not understand election like Calvin as a particular election. There is no absolute difference between the elect and the rejected, the believers and the unbelievers, according to Barth, for all have been elected (Erickson, 1983:936). He sees predestination as above all God's eternal, before-all-things decision to let Jesus stand for all creation to receive the penultimate no and ultimate yes of God's decree (Green, 2014:177).

Barth's doctrine of election represents a significant departure from that of Augustine and Reformed confessional theology. His repeated reference to Christ Jesus as both the electing God, the subject of election and as the object of election have met with significant opposition, currently and in the past, from Reformed and non-Reformed theologians alike (Scheuers, 2011:161). It should not then come as a surprise that Barth places the doctrine of election not within the discussions of God's relation to the world in creation, reconciliation, or redemption, but within the doctrine of God itself, for election precedes, grounds, and shapes these other correspondent relations (Bender, 2005:100).

It must be said that the doctrine of the predestination of the saints is by no means universally accepted in the Christian church. Among current evangelicals, those in more Reformed or Calvinistic traditions (conservative Presbyterian denominations, for example) will accept the doctrine, as well as many Lutherans and Anglican (Episcopalians) and a large number of Baptists and people in independent churches, but this would be rejected decisively by nearly all Methodists, as well as by many other Baptists, Anglicans, and independent churches (Grudem, 1999:288). Pentecostals, by and large, adopt a traditional Wesleyan-Arminian or Open Theist view on questions related to predestination/election/human agency. They reject unconditional election and double predestination and embrace conditional predestination based on God's foreknowledge of who will freely respond positively to God's gracious offer of salvation and the prevenient enablement to accept it (Green, 2014:172).

4.9 Conclusion

The understanding of the doctrine of the predestination of the saints requires some foundational assessment. The doctrine of predestination was first formally set forth in the writings of Augustine during the Pelagian controversy. We would have failed in our unveiling of history if we would not affirm that both Augustine and Pelagius were zealous for orthodoxy and defending

it. They tenaciously and fearlessly stood against those who attacked the Scripture and distorted the gospel.

What has been impactful and made a huge difference is their understanding of the doctrine of man and sin. Pelagius rejected the hereditary transmission of sinful nature and as a result he did not believe in original sin. Therefore, salvation is a humanistic monergism; he affirmed that God's aid is not fundamentally necessary, since man is able of himself to exercise works of righteousness that merit eternal life. Yet Augustine understood that a biblical doctrine of salvation, which is completely founded on divine grace, is required by a biblical doctrine of man and sin. He regards the natural man as totally depraved and utterly unable to perform spiritual good.

Augustine's understanding of the doctrine of soteriology by irresistible grace alone is rooted in his understanding of the doctrine of original sin, for his doctrine of grace provides the solution to the problem that original sin created. The teaching that the grace of God is the efficient cause of salvation led to his doctrine of predestination. He emphasised that predestination of the elect to faith, holiness, and eternal glory is not just God's foreknowledge, but based on God's gracious choice.

The Semi-Pelagianism, which was an attempt to sail between the two opposite viewpoints of Pelagianism and Augustinianism, tried to give place to both divine grace and human will as causative cooperative ability. Semi-Pelagianism took an intermediate position, denying the total inability of human beings to do spiritual good, but admitting their inability to perform really saving work without the assistance of divine grace. The grace of God illuminates the mind and supports the will, but always in such a manner that the free will is in no way compromised. There was a protracted struggle between Augustinianism and Semi-Pelagianism, which revealed a strong opposition of the doctrine of predestination, the total inability of human beings to do spiritual good, and irresistible grace. The position that was finally sanctioned by the Church was that of a moderate Augustinianism. The doctrine of grace alone came off victorious; but the doctrine of predestination was abandoned. The irresistible grace of predestination was driven from the field by the sacramental grace of baptism. The doctrine of grace was thereby brought into a closer relationship with the popular Catholicism, as also the exaltation of good works as the aim of the divine impartation of grace.

Gregory the Great retained the doctrine of predestination in modified form. He advocates that predestination is based on foreseen faith; the action of some people is the ground upon which predestination rests. People like Gottschalk of Orbais found rest and peace for his soul only in the Augustinian doctrine of election and contended earnestly for a double predestination. He

rejected the idea of predestination based on foreseen faith since it makes the divine decree dependent on the acts of man.

In the dawn of Scholasticism, Anselm of Canterbury believed salvation is a gift from God to humanity, yet he did not affirm the irresistibility of grace. The Roman Catholic Church adopts the theory of synergism on regeneration. Thomas Aquinas the most respected theologian in the Roman Catholic Church, at least among conservative Catholic members, strictly adhered to an Augustinian understanding of predestination. He affirmed God's unconditional election and reprobation of people as part of God's eternal plan. Yet, toward the end of the Middle Ages a compromise appeared, when the Roman Catholic Church allowed a great deal of latitude in the doctrine of predestination. The church shifted from Semi-Augustinianism to Semi-Pelagianism and at times even to Pelagianism.

The theological cause of the Reformation was the desire of the Reformers to go back to the classic source of the Christian faith, the Bible. In the Protestant Reformed tradition, free will was denied as contrary to the message of grace and, indeed, a denial of divine election. John Calvin affirmed the Augustinian doctrine of an absolute double predestination and he was committed to strenuously defending it. Election is based on the sovereign will of God and consists of a dual predestination of some to salvation and others to condemnation. He believes that the Christological work on the cross is limited to those who are predestined to salvation. The elect are saved apart from their own initial desire as the Holy Spirit irresistibly draws them to Christ.

Arminius affirms that although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, human beings have not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but he does so in a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his/her eternal destiny depends on how he/she uses it. He affirms that God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon his foreseeing that they would respond to his call. He selected only those whom he knew would themselves freely believe the gospel.

Schleiermacher brings in a shift to experience, rather than placing his view of the doctrine in an objective revelation of God. The doctrine of predestination of the saints has been shaped differently. It is eluded as all men are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Karl Barth reinvigorated the doctrine of predestination; he introduced a view that every human being is elected in Christ. It must be said that the doctrine of the predestination of the saints is by no means universally accepted in the Christian church. There are those who had accepted and those who did not. The most difficult part of the doctrine of predestination of the saints for most

people is the idea that some sinners are passed over by God's electing plan and left in their sins.

This helps us to understand the background of the issue of predestination from its historical perspective to acquire definite knowledge of the doctrine in its original shape and the character of its first modifications. This traces the course of the doctrine of predestination from the patristic period through to the re-evaluation that took place after the Reformation. It provides the historical information on the ongoing conversation and debate over the doctrine of predestination. It is not approached on the more generally on anthropological or philosophical question of what constitutes free choice in daily, civil, or even ethical matters, but on the foundational soteriological question of the source or foundation of salvation.

CHAPTER 3 CONTEMPORARY ARGUMENTS ON THE PREDESTINATION OF THE SAINTS

5.1 Introduction

The doctrine of predestination has consistently been widely debated amongst scholars just as it has largely been misunderstood amongst believers. It is a theological issue defined by complexity and difference of opinion among theologians, therefore, it cannot be ignored; because of the implications that arise depending on the view one adopts. Berkhof (1996:109) indicates that predestination serves to reveal the purpose of God respecting all his moral creatures. He further expounds it as the counsel of God in particularly to fallen human beings, which entails the sovereign election of some and the righteous reprobation of the rest. Predestination includes both aspects of election for believers and reprobation for unbelievers (Grudem, 1994:670). It is God's eternal decree, by which he determined by himself what he willed for each man. It qualitatively exposes that eternal life is foreordained for some and damnation for others (Wright, 2011:335). It is defined as God sovereignly, on the basis of grace, foreordaining before time on which individuals he would bestow his saving grace (Badger, 2003:17). The doctrine of predestination converges at the point of the eternal covenant of redemption between the persons of the Godhead. In the covenant, before the world existed, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit already turned towards human beings with a purpose to create, redeem, and gather a church for everlasting fellowship (Horton, 2011:309).

A biblical experience of God's sovereign grace in predestination is vital for spiritual comfort and assurance. Salvation worked out in the souls of believers is inseparable from sovereign predestination in Christ. Far from being as a judgmental doctrine, sovereign predestination is the foundation upon which experimental faith could be built. It offers hope to the true believer (Beeke *et al.*, 2012: 119). Hankins (2012:66) further expounds that predestination demonstrates that salvation is accomplished through the Father's initiative; the guarantee is based on the person and work of Christ alone and efficaciously actualised through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it communicates that salvation is completely gracious and dependent on God. It represents the counsel of God as absolute and unconditional, independent of the whole finite creation, and as originating solely in the eternal counsel of his will (Sproul, 2003:54)

History unveils that distinguished church historians of the past generation have dealt with this doctrine with efforts to reconcile the doctrine of predestination and human free will. Pope Gregory 1 of Rome (540-604) rejected Augustine's view on predestination and irresistible grace to causative cooperation. He affirmed there is cooperation between God's grace and free will.

Even Thomas Aquinas (1300-1500 CE) did not do much to clarify the situation. It was Luther who denounced the position in the sixteenth century (Hesselink, 2003:13). Right from the very beginning of Genesis, God reveals his sovereign purpose of salvation in pursuit of the pre-ordained plan that God elected men, families, and eventually a whole nation to be the recipients and the bearers of promised salvation and the election would be initiated by God (Ferguson, 2013:108). This is a guarantee that God not only invites people to be delivered but he also delivers them. He undertakes with omnipotence to save his people. He plans it in election and accomplishes it through Christological work and applies it infallibly by His Holy Spirit through faith (Piper, 2009:145). Yet because the doctrine of predestination by reflection has turned to be unpopular in our world today among some believers, we need to modestly rediscover the proper perspective (Beeke, 2010:77).

Because this doctrine is increasingly challenged, the true biblical perspective must be pursued so that the inferences and deductions would not be of our own making and would indicate biblical boundaries. This chapter would give attention to both the Arminian and Calvinist way of describing predestination and the Calvinist way of describing predestination will be embraced.

5.2 Arminian way of describing predestination

Arminius (1559-1609) studied theology at Geneva, under Beza. Upon graduating he returned to his native Amsterdam to take up a call to ministry in the Dutch church. Later, he joined the theological faculty at the University of Leiden. Arminius enjoyed success as a professor but also drew criticism from his strong Calvinist colleague Franciscus Gomarus (Peterson, 2007:25).

To understand how and why the system of theology known to history as Calvinism came to bear this name and to be formulated into five points, one must understand the theological conflict which occurred in Holland during the first quarter of the seventeenth century (Steele *et al.*, 2004:1). In the beginning of the seventeenth century the Calvinistic doctrine of sin and grace met with a determined opposition in the Netherlands, which centred in the great Arminian controversy. Arminius, a disciple of Beza, and at first a strict Calvinist, became a convert to the doctrine of universal grace and free will. He would use medieval scholasticism to develop a synergistic doctrine of conditional divine decrees (Williams, 2004:16).

A few years after Arminius's death, an influential Arminian minority arose among the Dutch Reformed clergy. The Arminian pastors drafted a systematic defence of their views, called the Remonstrance, and the men themselves came to be called the Remonstrants (Steele *et al.*, 2004:1). The Remonstrance was made up of five articles corresponding to the five points of doctrine at the centre of the debate: Conditional election, Universal atonement, Total

depravity/prevenient grace, Resistible grace and Conditional perseverance (Peterson, 2007:26-27). It was the Arminians who set the boundaries of the debate, even to the point of establishing much of the language around which the controversy would unfold. This suggests that in no small measure what we have traditionally thought of as the very definition of Calvinism, the five points were created not by Calvinists themselves, but by their Arminian opponents (Williams, 2004:11).

5.2.1 Total Depravity

Contrary to much scholarly and popular opinion, Arminius did not believe in the natural human moral ability after the fall of Adam. He believed in total depravity including the bondage of the will to sin. He believed strongly in original sin as inherited corruption that affects every aspect of human nature and personality, and renders human persons incapable of anything good apart from supernatural grace (Picirilli, 2002:42). He rested every good in human life including the ability to respond to the gospel with faith on prevenient grace that restores free will. The free will of human beings in Arminius theology and in classic Arminianism is more properly denoted as freed will. Grace frees the will from bondage to sin and evil, and gives it ability to cooperate with saving grace by not resisting it (Olson, 2006:142). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:189) writes:

This is my opinion concerning the free will of man: In his primitive condition as he came out of the hands of his creator, man was endowed with such a portion of knowledge, holiness and power, as enabled him to understand, esteem, consider, will and to perform the true good, according to the commandment delivered to him. Yet none of these acts could he do, except through the assistance of divine grace. But in his lapsed and sinful state, man is not capable, of and by himself either to think, to will, or to do that which is really good; but it is necessary for him to be regenerated and renewed in his intellect, affections or will, and in all his powers, by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, that he may be qualified rightly to understand, esteem, consider, will, and perform whatever is truly good. When he is made a partaker of this regeneration or renovation, I consider that, since he is delivered from sin, he is capable of thinking, willing and doing that which is good, but yet not without the continued aids of divine grace.

Arminius affirms that human beings who were formerly unable to contribute the slightest to their own redemption, and who were deprived by and enslaved to sin, are sufficiently restored by God's gift of prevenient grace so that they are able to choose for or against the work of Christ. Grace nullifies the moral, affective and intellectual effects of the fall (Williams, 2004:30). "The third divine decree is that by which God decreed to administer in a sufficient and efficacious manner the means which were necessary for repentance and faith; and to have such administration instituted, according to the divine wisdom, by which God knows what is proper and becoming both to his mercy and his severity, and according to divine justice, by which he is prepared to adopt whatever his wisdom may prescribe and put it in execution" (Arminius, 1603-

1609; 2015:185). Arminius while still holding a belief in the deleterious effects of the fall on the human mind, heart, and body, is yet willing to affirm a human's ability to do good and achieve saving faith with the regenerating power of God (Sandage *et al.*, 2017:21). Arminius (1603-1609; 2005:156) writes concerning total depravity:

The whole of this sin, however, is not peculiar to our first parents, but is common to the entire race and to all their posterity, who, at the time when this sin was committed, were in their loins, and who have since descended from them by the natural mode of propagation, according to the primitive benediction. For in Adam "all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Wherefore, whatever punishment was bought down upon our first parents, have likewise pervaded and yet pursues all their posterity. So that all human beings "are by nature the children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3), obnoxious to condemnation, and to temporal as well as to eternal death; they are also devoid of that original righteousness and holiness. (Rom. 5:12, 18, & 19) with these evils they would remain oppressed forever, unless they were liberated by Christ; to whom be glory forever.

Arminius believes that since the fall of Adam and Eve, all human beings inherit from the original parent corrupt nature, as inclined toward evil now as Adam and Eve were toward good before the fall. In consequence of this condition, a human's will is no longer naturally free to choose God apart from the supernatural work of the Spirit of God (Picirilli, 2002:149). He holds that although sinners are unable to believe on their own, none of them are actually on their own. Rather, because God gives prevenient (preparing) grace to every human being, no one is actually unable to believe (Peterson, 2007:128). He affirms that grace frees the will from bondage of sin and evil and gives it ability to cooperate with saving grace by not resisting it (Olson, 2006:142). Though the will is viewed as unable to obey without the work of the Holy Spirit, the relationship between divine and human agency is that of cooperative assistance. Regeneration is explained not much as the Holy Spirit overcoming a hostile will, melting it into compliance, as it is a work of God assisting and increasing the power of natural faculties to respond to God (Hannah, 2001:232).

5.2.2 Conditional Election

Few of Arminianism theological critics would claim that Arminians do not believe in predestination in any sense. They know that classical Arminians include belief in God's decree respecting salvation and God's foreknowledge of believers in Jesus Christ (Olson, 2006:179). Arminius insists that God's decree of election is conditional. Since no one benefits from Christ's saving work apart from faith, and since such faith is genuinely free response to the gracious call of the gospel, God's decree of election is based upon his foreknowledge of those who will believe the gospel. From before the foundation of the world, God knew those who would chose to believe and those who would not (Venema, 2016:7). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:185), writes:

The first absolute decree of God concerning salvation of sinful humanity, is that by which he decreed to appoint his Son, Jesus Christ, for a Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, Priest and King, who might destroy sin by his own death, might by his obedience obtain salvation. The second precise and absolute decree of God, is that in which he decreed to receive into favour those who repent and believe, and, in Christ, for his sake and through him, to effect the salvation of such penitents and believers as persevered to the end; but to leave in sin, and under wrath, all impenitent persons and unbelievers, and damn them as aliens from Christ.

Arminius argues that his concept of predestination honours Jesus Christ as “the foundation of predestination” and “the meritorious as well as communicative cause of salvation (Skidmore, 2011:129). He regarded Christ as the primary focus of predestination. God chose Christ as the Redeemer for that group of people who repent and believe, and those who repent and believe in Christ as the elect (Olson, 2006:185). God’s first decree, according to Arminius, was his decision to be gracious toward sinful human beings by providing a Saviour in Jesus Christ. In his appointment as Redeemer, Jesus would die for sin and thus provide salvation for sinners. The second decree also pertains to classes rather than particular persons and it presumes the first decree. God decrees to accept those who repent and believe in Christ, but the unrepentant and unbelieving in their sin and to hold them over to the wrath of damnation (Williams, 2004:20). Further examinations to his writings reveal that the predestination of individuals is conditional, in his fourth decree (1603-1609; 2015:185), writes:

To these succeeds the fourth decree, by which God decreed to save and damn certain particular persons. This decree has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would, through his preventing grace, believe, and, through his subsequent grace would persevere, according to the before described administration of those means which are suitable and proper for conversion and faith and by which foreknowledge, he likewise knew those who would not believe and persevere.

For Arminius, neither election nor reprobation is casual in any way. The decree is conditioned by contingent causes that are determined by human choices. The predestination of particular persons is conditional, being based on God’s prescience of human choices. God knows from eternity those particular persons who will believe, and on the basis of that prescience he elects them to salvation (Williams, 2004:21). God’s choice of certain individuals for salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon his foreseeing that they would respond to his call. He selected only those whom he knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by, or conditioned upon, what human beings would do (Steele *et al.*, 2004:6). Peterson (2007:107) adds that, Arminius holds that election in Christ means that God chose individuals for salvation based on his foreknowledge of who would be in Christ by believing him. Election and predestination are not the unconditional and mysterious choosing of

certain individuals known only by God, but rather the election and predestination of those who have faith in Christ the Redeemer (Olson, 2006:185). Arminius insists that any unconditional redemptive decision or action necessarily coerces the human will, and therefore is a violation of human freedom (Williams, 2004:19). He rejects the teaching of unconditional election and contends that it would be unfair for God to save some and not others, all human beings equal before him. Instead, on the basis of Paul's comment on God's foreknowledge in Romans 8:29, he posits that God has chosen those whom he will save because in eternity past he looked ahead into the future and foresaw who would believe in Christ and who would reject him (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:498).

Arminius's view takes election out of the hands of God and puts it into the hands of human beings. This makes the purposes of Almighty God to be conditioned by the precarious wills of apostate humans and makes temporal events to be the cause of his eternal acts. It means further that he has created a set of sovereign beings upon whom, to a certain extent, his will and actions are dependent (Beeke, 2008:49).

5.2.3 Unlimited Atonement

Arminius argued that according to the Scriptures, Christ died for all people without prejudice to anyone and that his death satisfied the demands of justice for those who believe (Olson, 2006:226). Universal atonement is implied in the doctrine of conditional salvation or election, just as limited atonement makes sense for unconditional election, so does universal atonement for the Arminian system (Picirilli, 2002:105-106). Arminius (1603-1609; 2005:405) writes:

All these blessings really flow from the sacerdotal functions of Christ; because he has offered to God the true redemption for us, by which he has satisfied divine justice and interposed himself between us and the Father, who was justly angry on account of our sins and has rendered him appeaseable to us... nor is it at all repugnant to the merits and satisfaction of Christ, which belong to him as a priest and a victim, that God is himself said to have "loved the world and given his only begotten Son," (John 3:16), to have delivered him unto death, (Rom. 4:25), to have reconciled the world unto himself in Christ (2 Cor. 5:19), to have redeemed us (Luke 1:68) and to have freely forgiven us our sin.

Arminius affirms that the penal substitution of Christ is the only available and effective sacrifice for the sins of every person. Jesus' death on the cross satisfied the justice and wrath of God against our sins (Allen, 2012:41). If Christ's death satisfied God's justice for all, why aren't all saved? God decided that the sins of all the people would be expiated by Christ's death in such a way that only if people believe on Christ would their sins actually be forgiven (Olson, 2006:227). Universal atonement matches the plain biblical assertion that God wills the salvation of all. An atonement that did not provide for all would be inconsistent with this and self-

defeating, “The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some account slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance” (2 Peter 3:9) and “... it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:3-4) (Picirilli, 2002:106). Arminius explains the reason for and the effect of atonement by appealing to God’s compassion and justice. God’s main motive in sending Christ was compassion, but justice played a role as well. The two are inseparable, God wants to remit the sins of fallen people and reconcile them to himself, but he could not do it without satisfaction to his justice, which sin injured (Olson, 2006:226).

5.2.4 Resistible Grace

Anyone who reads Arminius’s theology with a fair and open mind cannot miss his passionate commitment to the grace of God. Nowhere did he attribute any causal efficacy of salvation to human goodness or even will power. For him then, the issue was not whether salvation is all of grace but whether grace is irresistible or not (Olson, 2006:161-162). For Arminius grace is not efficacious as in the Augustinian and Calvinist sense that by God’s power his grace effects its goal namely, the redemption of sinners such that their redemption comes by no power of their own but is due solely to the power and work of the triune God (Williams, 2004:30). As stated in his *Declaration of Sentiments* (1603-1609; 2015:190):

I ascribe to grace the commencement, the continuance and the consummation of all good, and to such an extent do I carry its influence, that a man, though already regenerate, can neither conceive, will nor do any good at all, nor resist the temptation, without this preventing and exciting, this following and co-operating grace; from this statement it will clearly appear, that I am by no means injurious or unjust to grace, by attributing, as reported of me, too much to man’s free will: For the whole controversy reduces itself to the solution to this question, “Is the grace of God a certain irresistible force?” That is, the controversy does not relate to those actions or operations which may be ascribed to grace, (for I acknowledge and inculcate as many of these actions or operations as any man did,) but it relates solely to the mode of operation, whether it be irresistible or not: with respect to which, I believe, according to the scriptures, that many persons resist the Holy Spirit and rejects the grace that is offered.

For fallen sinners, in bondage to sin and death, God’s gracious initiation is absolutely necessary for belief and salvation. This grace is given to all human beings and enables the response of faith. God’s preceding grace goes before, accompanies follows, excites and assists the sinner, and in doing so effectively removes the slavery produced by the fall so that a person can repent from sin and turn to Christ (Williams, 2004:24).

Theologically, this concept of preventing grace, meets the need of the totally depraved sinners. It simply means that the Spirit of God overcomes that inability by a direct work on the heart, a

work that is adequate to enable the yet unregenerate person to understand the truth of the gospel, to desire God, and to exercise faith (Picirilli, 2002:154). The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; he does all that he can to bring every sinner to salvation. However, inasmuch as human beings are free, they can successfully resist the Spirit call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is a human being's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth (Steele *et al.*, 2004:7). Williams (2004:24) adds that God will not impose this grace upon human beings. Grace does not coerce or annul the free will. Grace allows the sinner to hear the call to believe the gospel free from the shackles of sin's binding and blinding effects. Thus the sinner is enabled to freely accept the gospel. While the ability to believe is made possible by grace, salvation is dependent upon free choice of the sinner empowered by preceding grace. Aloisi (2016:204) indicates that according to Arminius, God gives enabling grace to every person. However, this grace is not necessarily effectual. Although God in his justice gives people the opportunity to accept his grace, they may choose to reject it through free will.

5.2.5 Perseverance of the saints

In strong contrast to Calvin's perspective of perseverance of the saints, the second tradition that stands as the most longstanding theological alternative for the Evangelical is commonly known as the Arminian understanding of perseverance. Simply put, proponents contend that believers are admonished in the New Testament to persevere in their faith because if they fail to do so for some reason, they could lose their salvation (Berry, 2016:58). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:190) writes:

My sentiments respecting the perseverance of the saints are, that those persons who have been grafted into Christ by true faith, and have thus been made partakers of his life-giving Spirit, possess sufficient powers (strength) to fight against Satan, sin, the world and their own flesh, and to gain the victory over these enemies, yet not without the assistance of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ also by his Spirit assists them in all their temptations and affords them the ready aid of his hand; and provided they stand prepared for the battle, implore his help, and be not wanting to themselves, Christ preserves them from falling. So that it is not possible for them, by any of the cunning craftiness or power of Satan, to be either seduced or dragged out of the hands of Christ. But I think it is useful and will be quite necessary in our first convention, (or Synod) to institute a diligent inquiry from the scriptures, whether it is not possible for some individual through negligence to desert the commencement of their existence in Christ, to cleave again to the present evil world, to decline from the sound doctrine which was once delivered to them, to lose a good conscience, and to cause Divine grace to be ineffectual.

Arminius affirms that believers were to be circumspect in how they live so that they would not potentially sear their conscience, abandon their faith, and ultimately fall short of the final

salvation in Christ (Berry, 2016:58). Although not quite denying Calvin's doctrine of the perseverance of the saints - that the redeemed are kept by the same gracious and efficacious divine power that saved them, Arminius leans heavily in the direction of conditional perseverance, that staying saved is contingent not only upon the grace of God but also human effort (Williams, 2004:32). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:191) further writes:

Though I here openly and ingenuously affirm, I never taught that a true believer can, either totally or finally fall away from faith, and perish, yet I will not conceal, that there are passages of Scripture which seem to me wear this aspect, and those answers to them which I have been permitted to see, are not of such a kind as to approve themselves on all points to my understanding (Heb.2:1-4; 3:7-4:2; 6:4-6 & 2 Peter 2:18-21). On the other hand, certain passages are produced for the contrary doctrine (of unconditional perseverance) which are worthy of much consideration.

Arminius admits that he should not readily affirm that true and saving faith may finally and totally fall away, but he does not exclude such possibility (Henzel, 2003:140). Key to this belief is the conviction that salvation is conditional. In that case, continuation in salvation originates from a continuous meeting with the biblical condition of faith. He affirms that the Bible warns the regenerate against apostasy (Picirilli, 2002:198).

5.2.6 The Arminian argument that predestination of the saints denies free will

The debate about sovereignty and human freedom on salvation is a series of complications and perplexities with differences among theologians. Those who are proponents of free will do not commit to absolute predestination but to a conditional predestination idea. They take into consideration that human freedom was not wounded by sin as to incapacitate it to choose salvation (Brotherton, 2016:608-609). They advocate the enfranchisement of human free will by expounding that human beings have the power to reject the highest measure of grace which God bestows in this life. Further, they elucidate that there is no type of grace given in this life which intrinsically cannot be resisted. In this sense, efficacious grace would be infallibly effective only because a person freely wills to cooperate with it (Voak, 2009:136). Free will is grounded and rooted in the understanding of God's goodness. The point of departure from the Arminian view is not free will at all but its view on the goodness of God, so this is rooted in their understanding of God as simultaneously omnipotent, all loving (Smith, 2011:207).

This has been a challenge since the inception of Pelagianism which holds that human nature is only wounded but not destroyed, such that everyone is capable of performing all good acts without divine aid. The Roman Catholic teaching added that human nature is only wounded not destroyed, promoting the idea that natural power of free will has capabilities to perform good acts leading to salvation, but for people to persevere to the end and avoid habitual sin they

need divine grace (Brotherton, 2016:617). Moreover it is believed that when God touches any individual with his sovereign grace he frees the person from bondage. As a result, a person willingly trusts Christ. God doesn't force people to believe against their will, he liberates the will by his Spirit. He doesn't violate the personalities, but sets individuals free to be the people whom he intended (Peeler, 2015:3-4). They would expound it to the point whereby; it is articulated that human beings must have free will and responsibility to respond to God, otherwise, if God is to determine everything that happens in a person's life, then he would also be responsible for the evil deeds that are committed and ultimately be accountable for the fate of that person. If we sin and it is pre-determined by God, how then can God hold us responsible for that action on the Judgement day (Janosik, 2012:22)?

5.3 Calvinist way of describing predestination

Calvinism is rooted in the sixteenth-century religious renewal in Europe that we refer to as the Protestant Reformation. However, this great movement was not an isolated phenomenon (Beeke, 2008:3). Early modern Reformed understandings of divine willing and human free choice belong to the ongoing conversation and debate over issues of freedom, contingency, and necessity that extend back through the Middle Ages into the patristic period. The intense debates of the Reformation over the issues of grace, free choice, and election focused the early Reformed discussion and definition of human freedom on the problem of human inability in the sinful condition of humanity after the fall (Muller, 2017:181). No person in the history of Christianity, with the possible exception of Augustine of Hippo (354-430), has been so identified with the doctrine of election as John Calvin (1509-1564) has been (Hall & Lillback, 2008:90).

The Reformed Tradition has its roots in Switzerland with Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), who established and systematised it after Zwingli's death. Calvin, its greatest representative and most influential exponent, established Geneva as the model reformed city. In many respects, Geneva was the most important Protestant centre in the sixteenth century. This is not only because of the presence of Calvin, but also because the seminary Calvin established sought to train and educate Reformers for all Western Europe (Beeke, 2008:6). Historically, the five points are often associated with the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) and its repudiation of Arminianism with the Dutch Reformed Church of the earthly seventeenth century. But the habit of delineating the issues of contention between the followers of Arminius and those of Calvin in the five points was well established before the Synod of Dort (Williams, 2004:11).

5.3.1 Total Depravity

Total depravity is synonymous with total inability. It is seen as a biblical teaching which is the first integral component in the process of salvation (Curley, 2015:29). It affirms that because of the fall, human beings are unable of themselves to believe the gospel into salvation. Human beings are dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; their hearts are deceitful and desperately corrupt. Their wills are not free; they are under bondage to evil nature. Therefore, human beings are incapable to choose good over evil (Steele, 2004:23). "That part in which the dignity and excellence of the soul are most conspicuous, has not only been wounded, but so corrupted, that mere cure is not sufficient" (Calvin, 1559; 2008:153). Calvin affirms the negative impact of sin and the impossibility of human beings performing meritorious or salvific good in their sinful condition (Muller, 2017:189).

Calvin taught that original sin affects the entire race and that it pervades the total person. Original sin is not confined to an individual's flesh or mind, it has overturned the whole human being (Aloisi, 2016:195). He (1559; 2008:153) writes

Paul himself leaves no room for doubt, when he says, that corruption does not dwell in one part only, but that no part is free from its deadly taint. For, speaking of corrupt nature, he not only condemns the inordinate nature of the appetites, but, in particular, declares that understanding is subjected to blindness, and heart to depravity (Eph. 4:17, 18). The third chapter of the Epistle of the Romans is nothing but a description of original sin. The same thing appears more clearly from the mode of renovation. For the spirit, which is contrasted with the old man, and the flesh, denotes not only the grace by which the sensual or inferior part of the soul is corrected, but includes a complete reformation of all parts.

Thus, Calvin did not confine original sin to deprivation of original righteousness. To him, it involved a pervasive corruption of the entire person. Original sin is corruption and depravity, and it causes all mankind to be born guilty before God (Aloisi, 2016:196). He maintains that humans ultimately have no part to play in determining whether or not they accept Christ as their Saviour and that a person's coming to salvation is totally of God (Loke, 2013:29). MacArthur & Mayhue (2017:467) indicate that the Bible teaches what has been called total (or pervasive) depravity to describe the corruption and pollution of sin passed down from Adam. Total depravity emphasises the devastating impact of sin on the person and covers three related concepts: the pollution and corruption of all aspects of a person; the complete inability of a person to please God; and universality, in that all are conceived and born as sinners.

Total depravity is an inwardness that stems from our profound and tragic fall in Adam. This means we are active under the bondage of sin by nature. There is no thought, no word, no act, and no area of human life that is not affected by sin. Romans 6:16 says that we are by nature

slaves to sin: “Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?” consider this literally for a moment. A slave was his master’s property. A slave had no time, property, or wealth of his own. We are spiritually impotent by nature, unable and unwilling to save ourselves. We cannot appreciate the Christian faith and we are powerless to work toward our conversion (Beeke, 2008:55).

Calvin distinguished between the issue of free choice in daily activities or civil matters and the issue of free choice in matters of salvation. His highly necessitarian denials of free choice are confirmed to discussion of sin, grace and salvation (Muller, 2017:189). Calvin (1559; 2008:153), writes:

I have said, therefore, that all parts of the soul were possessed by sin, ever since Adam revolted from the fountain of righteousness. For not only did the inferior appetites entice him, but abominable impiety seized upon the very citadel of the mind, and pride penetrated to his inmost heart, so that it is foolish and unmeaning to confine the corruption thence proceeding to what are called sensual motions or to call it an excitement, which allures, excites, and drags the single part which they call sensuality to sin.

Total depravity is often misunderstood. As understood in Reformation theology, it does not mean that each of us has committed every possible sin or that everyone is equally depraved in terms of outward actions. What it does mean is that everyone is equally guilty and condemned and that there is no aspect of our existence that is unscathed or open to God’s grace. No less than our bodies and desires, our mind, heart, and will are under the command of death. The “total” in total depravity refers to extensiveness, not intensiveness, that is, to the all-encompassing scope of our fallenness. It does not mean that we are as bad as we can possibly be, but that we are all guilty and corrupt to such an extent that there is no hope of pulling ourselves together, brushing ourselves off, and striving (with the help of grace) to overcome God’s judgement and our own rebellion (Horton, 2011:41).

5.3.2 Unconditional Election

Everyone who takes the Bible seriously must believe in election in some sense; it is a prominent theme throughout Scripture. The real difference (especially between Arminianism and Calvinism) emerges over whether the elect are chosen unto faith or in view of their faith. In other words, is election unconditional or conditional? Does God choose who will be saved, apart from their decision and effort, or does he choose those whom he knows will trust and obey? (Horton, 2011:53).

Calvin originally treated the doctrine of predestination in the context of the doctrine of providence. In the final edition of the *Institutes* he discussed it within the context of soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) and ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church). In this way, Calvin expounds how predestination confirms that the believer's salvation is born entirely of God's gracious purpose in Christ (Barrett, 2017:256). There is a long line of argumentation that has identified Calvin as a strict determinist, usual with reference to human willing, on the assumption that the divine decree imposes absolute necessity on all events and actions in the world order. His view has also been characterised as allowing for human freedom only through the gift of grace (Muller, 2017:185). Calvin rejected Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism on the ground that both systems were unscriptural. Like Augustine, Calvin held to the doctrines of the sovereignty of God, the total depravity of man, and of the unconditional election (Steele *et al.*, 1963:21). Calvin (1559; 2008:610) defines predestination:

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death.

The word predestination is often employed as a synonym for God's decree, since he predestines all things. However, it is also used more narrowly to summarise God's dealing with fallen human beings concerning salvation, and in that sense it has a twofold meaning: the doctrine of predestination concerns God's decision to elect some to salvation (election) and his decision to pass over others and punish them for their sins (reprobation) (Macarthur & Mayhue, 2017:493).

Calvin finds the confirmation of the doctrine of predestination on a careful exposition of Ephesians 1:4 "Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him". In his comment on this verse he indicates that, "by saying they were elected before the foundation of the world, it takes away all reference to worthy" (Calvin, 1559; 2008:616). Before the foundation of the world, God chose particular individuals for salvation. His selection was not based upon any foreseen response or act performed by those chosen. Faith and good works are the result, not the cause, of God's choice. God's choice was made before the foundation of the world (Steele *et al.*, 2004:31). To make God's foreknowledge the cause of election is to move the ground of election from God to the creature (Hall & Lillback, 2008:109). For Calvin, in such a case, election would no longer be a free divine act, grounded in the free will. It would condition the divine will by something outside of God, and this, for Calvin, was almost unthinkable (Calvin, 1559; 2008:617). He declares that election is unconditional. In other words, the foreknowledge of God is based upon his decree, plan, or

purpose that expresses his will, and not upon some foreseen act of positive volition on the part of human beings (Spencer, 1979:40).

The essence of Calvin's view of predestination includes both election and reprobation. He teaches that God's election is always sovereign and gracious; none of the elect deserves to be elected and to enter into heaven (Beeke, 2008:66). Calvin (1559; 2008:616) comments on Romans 9:11-13:

"Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls –she was told, "The older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." If foreknowledge had anything to do with this distinction of the brothers, the mention of time would have been out of the place. Granting that Jacob was elected for a worth to be obtained by future virtues, to what end did Paul say that he was not yet born? But in explaining the difficulty, the apostle goes on to show, that the adoption of Jacob proceeded not on works but on the calling of God.

Spencer (1979:40) indicates that the apostle declares that the ground of election is God himself, which is to say in his will and purpose and not in the act of faith or some condition in the children of God or evil. Election is unconditional; human beings can do nothing to merit it. Calvin (1559; 2008:620) comments on John 15:19:

"If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." We must indeed hold, when he affirms that he knows whom he has chosen, first, that some individuals of the human race are denoted; and secondly, that they are not distinguished by the quality of their virtues, but by heavenly decree.

If the formulation of the doctrine of Total Inability or Original Sin be admitted, the doctrine of unconditional election follows by the most inescapable logic. If, as the Scriptures and experience tell us, all human beings are by nature in the state of guilt and depravity from which they are wholly unable to deliver themselves and have no claim whatever on God for deliverance, it follows that if any are saved, God must choose who shall be the object of his grace (Taylor, 2005:12). The Augustinian-Calvinistic view insists that God freely and mercifully elected in Christ to save a definite number of persons out of the whole human race that has fallen in Adam. God's determination to save the elect in and for the sake of the work of Christ is unconditional in the strict sense. Before the foundation of the world God purposed in Christ to save some but not others (Venema, 2016:7).

5.3.3 Limited Atonement

The doctrine of limited atonement is a natural outgrowth of the doctrine of unconditional election coupled with the idea that everything God does has a purpose. Limited atonement is the doctrine offered in answer to the question, “for whose sins did Christ atone?” (Taylor, 2005:17). Picirilli (2002:88-89) adds that limited atonement is implied in the doctrine of unconditional election. If salvation by grace means that it is sovereignly and unconditionally the work of God, applied to individuals in such a way that they make no choice prior to regeneration (and are withheld from the non-elect in such a way that they never really can be saved), then it makes sense to say that atonement was made only for the elect.

Stele (*et al.*, 2004) in their book *The Five Points of Calvinism, Defined, Defended, Documented*, says, “Christ’s redeeming work was intended, to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary sacrifice of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of his people, Christ’s redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith, which united them to him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation.” In his *Institutes* Calvin devoted no special section to the extent of the atonement. Consequently, his view must be determined from more or less passing comments here and there in the *Institutes* and commentaries (Picirilli, 2002:87). Calvin (1559; 2008:619-120) comments on John 6:37, 39:

“All that the Father gives to me” “And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me...” Observe that the donation of the Father is the first step in our delivery into the charge and protection of Christ... the elect are said to have belonged to the Father before he bestowed them on his only begotten Son. It is asked if they were his by nature. No, they were aliens, but he makes them his by delivering them. The words of Christ are too clear to be rendered obscure by any of the mists of cavilling. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” “Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.”

The limited design in the atonement follows, necessarily, from the eternal choice of the Father of certain ones unto salvation. Scripture clearly teaches that the Father chose many, but not all to eternal life and entrusted their salvation to the Son (John 6:38-39; Eph. 1:4-5). Scripture also teaches that the Spirit effectually calls the elect and unites them to Christ. Although they indeed believe in Christ, it is because of God’s sovereign grace rather than their own free will, the spirit brings the elect to Christ, giving them faith, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8) (Horton, 2011:94).

5.3.4 Irresistible Grace

Irresistible grace is the idea that the elect, those who Calvin believes have been unconditionally elected to eternal life, cannot resist the grace of God and heaven's determination to save them. He teaches that only the direct operation of the Holy Spirit could make one who is dead in sin hear the gospel and believe (Horton, 2011:105). The Lord through the Holy Spirit must appear to the sinner in a direct, miraculous way in order, to bring about the sinner's conversion. And if the sinner is one whom God had predestined to life before the foundation of the world, the sinner must submit to God's grace as revealed to him by the Spirit (Taylor, 2005:21). The doctrine of irresistible grace says that the Holy Spirit never fails in his objective to bring his own to faith. This point is the inevitable product of the first three. Our total depravity necessitates it; unconditional election is its mooring; and limited atonement is its corresponding truth, for if saving grace was resistible, Christ would have died in vain (Beeke, 2008:102). Calvin (1559; 2008:642) writes:

Moreover, this is clearly demonstrated by the nature and dispensation of calling, which consists not merely of the preaching of the word, but also of the illumination of the Spirit. Who those are to whom God offers his word is explained by the prophet, "I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not ask for me I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that was not called by my name" (Isa 65:1). And lest the Jews should think that mercy applied only to gentiles, he calls to their remembrance whence it was he took their father Abraham when he condescended to be his friend (Isa 41:3); namely, from the midst of idolatry, in which he was plunged with all his people. When he first shines with the light of his word on the undeserving, he gives a sufficiency clear proof of his free goodness. Here, therefore, boundless goodness is displayed, but not so as to bring all to salvation, since a heavier judgement awaits the reprobate for rejecting the evidence of his love. God also, to display his own glory, withholds from them the effectual agency of his Spirit. Therefore, this inward calling is an infallible pledge of salvation.

Calvin holds that the conditionality of the fallen human beings is such that if left for themselves they would continue in their state of insubordination and refuse the offer of salvation. Christ would then have died in vain (Barrett, 2017:453). But since it was promised that he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, Isaiah 53:11, the effects of that sacrifice have not been left suspended upon human beings' changeable and sinful will. Rather, the work of God in redemption has been rendered effective through the mission of the Holy Spirit who so operates on the chosen people that they are brought to repentance and faith, and made heirs of eternal life (Steele *et al.*, 2004:53). Irresistible grace means that the Holy Spirit never fails to call, regenerate, and save those whom the Father has elected and Christ has redeemed. It is absolutely infallible; it will fulfil its intent (Beeke, 2008:103). Calvin (1559; 2008:350), writes:

Here, it will be proper to point out the titles which the Scripture bestows on the Spirit, when it treats of the commencement and entire renewal of our salvation. First, he is called the "Spirit of adoption," because he witness to us of the free favour with which God the Father embraced us in his well-beloved and only begotten Son, so as to become our Father, and give us the boldness of access to him, no, he dictates the very same words, so that we can boldly cry "Abba, Father." For the same reason, he is said to have "Sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," because, as pilgrims in the world, and persons in a manner dead, he so quickens us from above as to assure us that our salvation is safe in the keeping of the faithful God.

Grace teaches us that the salvation of ill-deserving, hell-worthy sinners (total depravity) is the work of the triune God alone. Each of the persons of the Trinity participates in and contributes to that work. Before the foundation of the world, the Father marked those who would be saved. He then gave his own to the Son to be his people (unconditional election/predestination). In the fullness of time, the Son came into the world and redeemed them with his blood (definite atonement) (Beeke, 2008:103). But the two great acts of election and redemption do not complete the work of salvation. Included in God's plan for saving lost sinners is the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, by which redemption is applied to the elect. It is the aspect of salvation that can be said to be irresistible or efficacious (Taylor, 2005:21). If humans are dead in sin, then nothing short of this supernatural life giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever cause them to do that which is spiritually good. In the nature of the case the first movement toward salvation can no more come from human beings, because being dead spiritually and that could only originate its own life. Regeneration is a sovereign gift of God, graciously bestowed on those whom he has chosen; and for this great re-creative work of God alone is competent (Picirilli, 2002:142-143). Calvin (1559; 2008:350), affirms this point:

In fine, the Holy Spirit is described to us as a fountain, whence all heavenly riches flow to us; or as the hand by which God exerts his power, because by his divine inspiration he so breathes divine life into us, that we are no longer acted upon by ourselves, but ruled by his motion as agency, so that everything good in us is the fruit of his grace, while our own endowments without him are mere mind and perverseness of heart. Already, indeed, it has been clearly shown, that until our minds are intent on the Spirit, Christ is in a manner unemployed, because we view him coldly without us, and so at a distance from us... this is to be referred that sacred marriage, by which we become bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and so one with him (Eph. 5:30), for it is by the Spirit alone that he unites himself to us.

Calvin unabashedly confesses that grace causes redemption. The only reason anyone believes the gospel and comes into saving relationship with Jesus Christ is because grace brings the sinner into the company of the redeemed. God does not merely initiate redemption; he effects the entirety of it (Williams, 2004:30).

5.3.5 Perseverance of the saints

Steele (2004:64) indicates that the elect are not only redeemed by Christ and renewed by the Spirit, but also kept in the faith by the almighty power of God. All those who are spiritually united to Christ through regeneration are eternally secure in him. Nothing can separate them from the eternal and unchangeable love of God. The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints teaches that all who partake of the grace and power of the saving union with Christ by faith continue in that union with its benefits and fruits. By preserving work of the triune God, they persevere in true faith and in the works that proceed from faith so long as they continue in the world (Beeke, 2008:116). Calvin (1559; 2008:641) writes:

Another confirmation tending to establish our confidence is that our election is connected with our calling. For those whom Christ enlightens with the knowledge of his name, and admits into the bosom of his church, he is said to take under his guardianship and protection. All whom he thus receives are said to be committed and entrusted to him by the Father that they may be kept unto life eternal. What would we have? Christ proclaims aloud that all whom the Father is pleased to save he has delivered into his protection. "All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day (John 6:37-39).

The verse conformably shows that God's people are given eternal life the moment they believe. They are kept by God's power through faith and nothing can separate them from his love. They have been sealed with the Holy Spirit, who has been given as a guarantee of their salvation, and they are thus assured of an eternal inheritance (Steele, *et al.*, 2004). Picirilli (2002:189) indicates that the doctrine of the "covenant of redemption" implies that God gave a certain number of "elect" to his Son in the covenant between the Father and the Son. The existence of such a "covenant" is clearly implied when Jesus referred both to promises and to a mission given to him by the Father. Among these covenant promises is the fact that the Father "gave" to Jesus certain people as his: namely, the elect, and the terms of agreement included his mission to atone for his people's sin. In fact, then, these covenant promises to the Son were conditioned only by Jesus' fulfilment of the terms of agreement between him and the Father, which he completely fulfilled, and not on any such thing as the certain faithfulness of human beings. Hall & Lillback (2008:290-291) add that union with Christ merges objective and subjective assurance; to look to Christ alone for assurance means also to look at ourselves in Christ as his body. Assurance of salvation is a derivative self-knowledge, whose focus remains on Christ as united to his body, the church of which we are members. Calvin (1559; 2008:642) writes concerning perseverance:

In fine, we are sufficiently taught by experience itself, that calling and faith are of little value without perseverance, which, however, is not the gift of all. But Christ has freed us from anxiety on this head; for the following promises undoubtedly have respect to the future: "All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out." Again, "This is the will of him who sent me, that I should not lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day" (John 6:37, 39). Again "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28). He intimates conversely that those who have their root in God can never be deprived of their salvation. Agreeable to this are the words of John, "If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (1 John 2:19). This must be founded on the gift of perseverance. There is no doubt that he employs the sentiments as applicable to the elect.

From all the other elements of the order of salvation, it should be obvious that not just some but all of those who are chosen in Christ, redeemed by Christ, and called into union with Christ receive every blessing including glorification. Jesus assured his disciples and us that all whom he has come to save, those who were given to him by the Father will be raised to everlasting life on the last day (Horton, 2014:117). Such a foundation is possible only in a Christocentric context; hence, Calvin constantly lifts up Christ as the mirror of election, wherein we must and without self-deception may, contemplate the election of believers. Through union with Christ the assurance of salvation becomes real and effective assurance of election. Christ becomes ours in fulfilment of God's determination to redeem and resurrect us (Hall & Lillback, 2008:290). When we speak of the perseverance of the saints, we do mean that having brought the elect into a vital union with himself, Jesus Christ continually supplies them with his grace. He is the life of their life and strength of their strength (Beeke, 2008:116). Calvin (1559; 2008:641) writes concerning the foundation of this calling and election:

First, if we seek for the paternal mercy and favour of God, we must turn our eyes to Christ, in whom alone the Father is well pleased (Matt 3:17). When we seek for salvation, life, and a blessed immortality, to him also must retake ourselves, since he alone is the fountain of life and the anchor of salvation, and the heir of the kingdom of heaven... those whom God has adopted as sons, he is said to have elected, not in themselves, but Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:4), because he could love them only in him, and only as being previously made partakers with him, honour them with the inheritance of his kingdom. But if we are elected in him, we cannot find the certainty of our election in ourselves; and not even in God the Father, if we look at him apart from the Son. Christ, then, is the mirror in which we ought, and in which, without deception, we may contemplate our election... if we are in communion with Christ, we have proof sufficiently clear and strong that we are written in the Book of Life.

We are confident that God will finish his work of grace he has begun in his own (Phil. 1:6), since Christ is both the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). Believers are preserved through Christ's purchase and intercession (John 17:15), the abiding ministry of the Holy Spirit (John

14:16), God's unchanging nature and eternal grace toward his elect (Rom. 11:29), his promises of perseverance (John 10:27-30), his covenantal love (Rom. 8:29-39), and his provisions for perseverance (1 Cor. 10:13) (Beeke, 2008:117). Election turns the believer's eyes from his hopeless inability to meet any conditions of salvation to focus on the hope of Christ as God's pledge of undeserved love and mercy (Hall & Lillback, 2008:290). Calvin based his understanding of final perseverance on the doctrine of election. He believed that God gives believers faith as his seed that brings forth both presence and final salvation (Henzel, 2003:136).

In conclusion Arminians insists that God's decree of election is conditional. Since no one benefits from Christ's saving work apart from faith, and since that faith is a genuinely free response to the gracious call of the gospel, God's decree of election is founded upon his foreknowledge of those who will believe the gospel. From the foundation of the world, God knows those who will choose to believe and those who will not (Olson, 2006:184). Though the grace of God is commonly and equally given to all those to whom the gospel call is extended, those who choose to believe and persist in believing are foreknown by God, and upon that basis, elected to salvation (Loke, 2013:31). In the traditional Arminian theology, God foreknows and elects those who meet the condition for salvation by freely choosing to believe. God's decree of election is therefore conditioned or dependent upon the free decision of some to believe or not to believe (Venema, 2016:7). It is affirmed that enabling grace is needed to counter the negative influences of a person's depravity, such as their sinful desires, corrupted thoughts and pride. This enabling grace would cause humans to have a desire for God by exerting on them certain influences and illuminating their minds through the work of the Holy Spirit, and then they could freely determine whether to respond positively to this desire or to resist the Holy Spirit (Loke, 2013:31).

Contrary to this view, the Augustinian-Calvinistic insists that God freely and mercifully elected in Christ to save a definite number of people out of the whole human race that had fallen in Adam (Barrett, 2017:259). God's determination to save the elect in and for the sake of the work of Christ is unconditional. Before the foundation of the world, God purposed in Christ to save some but not others (Williams, 2004:12). While the salvation of the elect requires the saving work of Christ and the communication of all the benefits of that work to believers in the course of redemptive history, God's eternal decree is the basis for Christ's work and it's saving benefits (Barcellos, 2010:11). Although all fallen sinners are graciously summoned to believe in Christ for salvation, only the elect to whom God grants faith by his Spirit and word are saved. Unconditional election is the source from which salvation and every spiritual blessing in Christ proceed (Venema, 2016:7). The doctrine of predestination and election must be handled

judiciously and in a way that not only ascribes glory to God for his free grace in Christ but also comforts believers and assures them of the certainty of their salvation (Barrett, 2017:260).

5.4 The necessity of predestination: Total Depravity

Wilkin (2012:3) indicates that the unassailable influence of Calvinism in Evangelicalism in our dispensation has propagated an insupportable pain for others who feel that if God has predestined their destiny the actions would be to relax and rest in whatever God decided. On the contrary, others embrace the emancipation in the doctrine of the predestination of the saints. Predestination states that God established by his eternal and immutable plan those whom before the foundation of the world he determined once and for all to receive salvation and those whom on the other hand, he would devote to destruction by his just and irreprehensible but incomprehensive judgment he has barred the door to life (Wright, 2011:335).

Evangelicals are divided in their understanding of the pre-formed Augustine's doctrine of depravity, with warmed over old-line Pelagianism and Arminianism that says that human beings can to some degree, cooperate with God in the salvation process. In the history of theology, when God's sovereignty is emphasised and taught, God is exalted and the truth of depravity and distortion of humanity becomes more certain. However, when the Lord is as it were dethroned in Arminianism, his omnipotence and sovereignty is lowered and the spiritual ability and moral goodness of humanity is elevated (Couch, 2005:225). When people encounter the gospel, they are graciously enabled by the Spirit to respond freely and the decision to accept or reject the gospel is genuinely and terrifyingly theirs. Why some accept or reject God's grace is a mystery residing in people rather than God and this would make electing grace conditional (Keathley, 2006:19). This is an assumption which is also highlighted by Shellrude (2011:71) that God gifted his people with libertarian freedom and has extended the grace which will enable their responsiveness to salvation. It is further argued that God created people with the ability to trust and that ability was not lost with the fall. Nevertheless, that ability was so twisted by the fall that we are now unable to trust in God without the grace of God. He gives this grace to all men but this grace can be resisted (Reynolds, 2012:54).

The impartation derived from the Calvinists proponents of predestination of the saints is grounded and exalted in their biblical understanding of the doctrine of man and sin, specifically their understanding of total depravity. In order to properly understand the doctrine of predestination of the saints, someone must first comprehend the doctrine of total depravity and identify how depravity relates to the doctrine of original sin (Barret, 2013:38). Since the fall of Adam, every person is now born into the world spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Horton, 2011:411).

Berkhof (1996:225-226) indicates that no part of human nature is untouched by sin. The body and the soul are impacted and this total depravity manifests itself as spiritual inability. Man broke away from the source of life and blessedness and the result is a condition of spiritual death. Grudem (1999:498) asks, if we have a total inability to do any spiritual good in God's sight, then do we have any freedom of choice? Certainly those who are outside of Christ do still make voluntary choices. They decide what they want to do, then do it. In this sense there is a kind of freedom in the choices that people make. Yet because of their inability to do good and to escape from their fundamental rebellion against God and their fundamental preference for sin, unbelievers do not have freedom in the most important sense of freedom, that is a freedom to do right and to do what is pleasing to God. Total depravity means that the corruption inherited from Adam extends to every aspect of a sinner's nature. Additionally, it indicates that man cannot do anything spiritually good toward God but is a slave to sin. "There is not spiritual good, that is, good in relation to God, in the sinner at all, but only perversion" (Barrett, 2013:40). Therefore while a man may perform a civil good toward his neighbour, such an act is never done purely out of love and reverence for the one true God (Berkhof, 1996:247).

Nelson & Wawire (2004:44) describes depravity based on the Latin word *dipraviti* meaning crooked, distorted, or twisted out of shape. His recommendation outlines that history, conscience, and intelligence all bear witness to the universal corruption of human beings. Human beings are depraved and their moral, mental and spiritual capabilities have been perverted and twisted and their love is toward sin. While original guilt is a legal concept involving one's status, original corruption is a moral concept meaning that human beings' moral nature has been corrupted after the fall as a result of imputed guilt (the transfer of the sin and guilty of Adam to the rest of humankind) (Barret, 2013:38). Schreiner & Ware (2000:58) concludes by saying that divine predestination and human free will cannot stand on exactly the same level. Divine predestination cannot be harmonised with the dogmatic view that sinful human beings have an ultimately autonomous capacity to choose Christ and be saved, sinners do not have the real potential to elect God and eternal destiny by their own free will.

Meisinger (2005:73) demonstrates that occasionally, we encounter argumentations indicating that human beings have the ability to choose God without divine aid. Whereas the Biblical boundaries are clear, sin has distorted our ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying to salvation; the natural man being dead in sin, is not able, by his strength, to convert himself to salvation. Ellis (2002:31) adds a crucial question asked by many who strongly believe in the doctrine of predestination. If our parents (Genesis 1-3), whose will was truly free, chose against God, do we suppose that any of their children, depraved by sin from earliest experiences, would make more godly choices than they? He concludes by saying, if salvation came through our

free will, we would all be lost, and no one would be saved except Jesus Christ. MacArthur (2001:113) elaborates that we Christians were once dead in trespasses and sins. The point of deadness is that we were incapable of any life with God. Our hearts were like stone, blind and incapable of seeing the glory of God in Christ. He expounds it by indicating that (salvational) election is established and sustained upon the sovereignty of God, totally apart from human consideration and purely on the basis of His own will. Beeke & Jones (2012:210) add that natural man is blinded spiritually and cannot come to a true and proper understanding of God. The will of man is corrupted, darkened and disordered by sin. The fall has incapacitated man's response to God.

In substantiating the point, Curley (2015:29) formulates that Scripture affirms that man's will is in bondage to sin apart from Christ, and this results in the inability of man to be saved apart from the drawing of the Spirit. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God. His heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not, indeed he cannot, choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation, but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation. It is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God (Badger, 2003:41). This should be understood that the first Adam secures a sinful state that all men receive; the second Adam secures a righteousness that is more certain for those to whom he grants faith (Stout, 2011:11). Humans have not, as a result of sin, lost their will and freedom, but their free inclination of the will toward the good (Bavinck, 2006:121).

Barrett (2013:42) outlines that Scripture affirms the doctrine of depravity. Both the Old and New Testament emphasise that the pervasiveness of man's depravity is evident after the fall of Adam. Adam's descendants (Gen. 5) increasingly multiplied on earth; the social background building up to the Noahic covenant is described in the Bible as a wicked time (Gen. 6:1-8). There was a great expansion of evil in the world that began most notably with the murder of Abel (Gen. 4:1-12). The mind too has been perverted an emphasis made again in Genesis 8:21. The heart is continuously evil.

Some of the Old and New Testament passages ascribing to total depravity are now discussed in more detail to prove the point:

5.4.1 Isaiah 64:4

“From the old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God beside you, who acts for those who wait for him” (This is quoted from the ESV translation and it will be used consequently).

Does Isaiah 64:4 not imply natural deadness and the inability to comprehend higher thoughts? Isaiah gives a parallel expression for dead in sin; this verse implies the idea of complete and total inability to respond to spiritual truth without the aid of the Holy Spirit. Paul quotes this passage in 1 Cor. 2:9 and he goes on to say in verse 11 “so also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” It is clear from Isaiah that mankind fails to meet the condition required of them “...no eye has seen a God beside you, who acts for those who wait for him” (Motyer, 1999:442). The fulfilment of the condition is met by God on behalf of the people. It is not in the power of anyone to do any good but only evil, derived from sinful desires and therefore departing from the Lord. Man cannot do any good unless God graciously intervenes and capacitates him (Bryc’ko, 2013:97).

5.4.2 Ephesians 2:1-5

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience – among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desire of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved...”

What exactly do we mean when we say humans are “fallen”? Is he now completely incapable of understanding any spiritual truth? There have been a lot of deliberations and conclusions from theologians of these questions for centuries. One of the most used passages in this matter is Ephesians 2.

In vv. 1-10 the theme of redemption is developed in terms of God’s raising of man from the death of sin to the new life in Christ. One would not dismiss the proposed point on the spiritual deadness that features in man without God. He is utterly unable to meet the requirements of the divine law (Rom. 7:9). This means the most vital part of man’s personality which is the spirit is dead to God (Wood, 1981:33). MacArthur (1986:52) strongly emphasises that spiritual deadness is the result of a sinful nature; humankind’s problem is not to establish meaningful relationships with other human beings but that humankind has no right relationship with God,

from whom he is alienated by sin (Eph. 4:8). Humankind's condition has nothing to do with the way one lives; it has to do with the fact that one is dead even while he is alive. He is spiritually dead while being physically alive. He further illustrates that one indication of physical death is the body's inability to respond to stimuli, no matter what they might be. A dead person cannot react. The deepest dimension of death is not biological but spiritual and in that sense a sinner is dead already. A person who is spiritual dead has no capacity to respond to spiritual things, much less live a spiritual life.

Couch (2005:231) adds that the Greek word 'trespass' is 'παράπτωμα' that visually portrays laying down beside and being tied to the corpse. What could be more graphic in describing the idea of "deadness"! Is the lost world truly cut off from God without the ability of the will to turn to him? The apostle Paul is depicting that in this dead state humans are totally given over to sin without the power to turn to God. The will is captive to the world system and to the unbending influence of Satan. People cannot extricate themselves from these forces.

Thielman (2010:121) in his comprehensive study on the impact of sin indicates that the adjective dead, 'νεκρός' was sometimes used metaphorically in Greek literature and philosophy to refer to those who were "morally or spiritually deficient". This presents formidable difficulties for the will to respond to God because only God could do anything about the state of deadness. Our fate beyond dead is completely dependent upon how we stand before God and what God chooses to do. Sin cuts us off from God, the source of life; thus we are dead and condemned before God (Dunnam, 1982:165). What choice can someone who is dead in trespasses and sin make concerning a relationship with God? Our nature is not to respond to God. If left to ourselves, no persuasion, no technique will ever change our basic character of independence from and rejection of the authority of God. We do not choose God in our natural state not just because we cannot do so but also because we will not, because we are blind and out of touch with the eternal and divine (Horton, 1990:43).

The hope for this state of human nature is the grace of God (vv. 4-10), not free will. Here Paul speaks of salvation with all its joy and expounds on the most wonderful of words in Christian vocabulary: grace (unmerited favour). Paul shows that the only hope for those who are spiritually dead is a miracle that comes from outside them. The spiritually dead have no power within themselves to change their circumstances, but rather God raises them together by the resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ (Gardner, 2007:49). The verse is clear about the condition of a person before the gracious act of God; verse 4-5 expounds that it is only the power of God that is directed toward mankind that gives life (Couch, 2005:235).

What Augustine has seen in Scripture is that all human beings, since Adam and Eve, are pervasively depraved- so depraved that not only are they unable to atone for their sins (Ps. 49:7, 15), but they are also unable to humble themselves and trust the Redeemer (Hannah, 2001:213).

The Bible teaches that since the original sin of Adam all human beings are spiritually dead and morally incapable of submitting to God in faith and obedience. By nature we have a mind-set that cannot submit to God. The reason for this moral inability is given in Ephesians 2:1-3 (Piper, 2011:134). The pervasiveness of man's corruption and depravity has negatively impacted the will, mind, and affections. Every man after the fall is a slave to sin; this is a wilful slavery as man's will is necessarily inclined toward evil. The depravity that pervades mankind is due to the corruption inherited from Adam due to the fall (Barrett, 2011:240). Because mankind is dead in sin and, is unable to initiate a response to God, therefore, in eternity past God elected certain people to salvation. Election and predestination are unconditional, they are not rooted in anything a human can do (Badger, 2003:22).

“In him we have redemption through the blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he set lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his own will, according to the purpose which he set forth in Christ as plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1:7-10)

There is a great shift from the past tense “he chose” (ἐκλέγομαι) in Eph. 1:4) to the present tense “we have” (ἔχω) in Eph. 1:7). Paul was dealing with the past acts of God the Father- election and predestination- and now deals with present blessings in Christ. God's pretemporal purpose is brought to historical accomplishment and application in Christ. This is further illustrated by the antecedent to the relative clause “in him” which begins v. 7. Redemption is integrally related to Christ (Barcellos, 2010:12). The word redemption denotes deliverance from bondage or imprisonment through the payment of some price. For example, a slave attained freedom from slavery upon the payment of the required fee. Using this metaphor, Paul pictures what Christ has done to secure forgiveness for his people: he died for them (Garland & Longman 2008:50).

Paul writes that God has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to the purpose which he set forth in Christ. Through Christ God has revealed the redemptive programme of the ages. The reason God revealed the mystery was because of his good pleasure (Eph.1:9). It is God's good pleasure which he has purposed in himself. God's desire and decree are contingent upon nothing outside of himself. What he wills to do, he does and what he does is right and

good (Gromacki, 2016:28-29). The ultimate aim throughout the divine plan of redemption is that the recognition of God's merciful dealing with human beings, which are his glory (Eph. 1:6). The grace that evokes such praise finds its richest outlet in God's love-gift to humans - his Son (Wood, 1981:24). Arnold (2010:84) adds that God's ultimate purpose in selecting and predestining a people for himself is that it would lead to his glory.

God's wealth of grace has been lavished upon believers. He has poured it upon believers unsparingly. The particulars of lavished grace (vv. 8-9) are, three clusters form the basis for the outline at these point- two prepositional phrases "upon us" and "in all wisdom and insight" and one participial clause "making known to us..." All three are subordinate to the main verb lavished. Paul includes himself as a recipient of the lavished grace. This again points to the fact that Paul is talking about the application of redemption. What Jesus did in the accomplishment of redemption, his objective work gets applied to souls (Barcello, 2010:18).

5.4.3 Romans 3:10-18

As it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "Their venom of asps is under their lips." "Their mouth is full of courses and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Paul demonstrates that sin is universal and pervasive, so that men's throats, tongues and lips speak evil, their feet are swift to evil, and their eyes lack any fear of God. Paul's point is obvious: corruption and depravity are universal and utterly enslaving, so that no one can be justified by obedience to the law (Barrett, 2013:47). This passage depicts mankind's condition accurately and faithfully. It affirms the universality of sin in the human family and to assert its inroads upon every facet of individual and corporate life. The language is clear and sharp, no exception is allowed. Paul wants the full impact of human depravity to register on his readers. The effects on the sinner are total because the entire being is saturated (Harrison, 1976:38-39).

Paul deals strictly with the self-saving soteriological framework of the audience. He writes that, everyone is held accountable, so that everyone should understand that the gospel of works of the Law does not justify any person. Paul climaxes his argumentation with the conclusion to which he has been building the climax, by exposing that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles because they are all under sin. And he concludes the section with an assertion that no one can be righteous in the sight of God by observing the Law (Clark, 2013:67).

As Paul approaches his final point, he clearly expounds that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin. The statements in these verses expose the total inability to commend ourselves to God (Hughes, 1991). This passage portrays human beings as unable to do even a single thing either to please, understand, or seek after God. Our natural ability to please God is incapacitated, so that we could not turn to God out of our own abilities. We are dead so far as our being able to do anything to please, understand, or find God is concerned (Boice, 2005:291). Barnett (2007:69) further outlines that Paul introduces other Old Testament texts that point to the wickedness in speech and violent behaviour (Psalm 14:1-3; 140:3; Jer. 5:16). It is an unfortunate picture which human history and experience affirms. The deceptiveness of sin had drilled through humanity so much that it killed all its abilities to do good and please God beyond comprehension.

5.4.4 1 Corinthians 2:14

“The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

Here is the plain statement on the theological implications of being dead in sins and that the natural human being cannot respond to the offer of salvation without divine aid. The apostle teaches that a human being’s inability cannot only impact the will, but also the potential of understanding, that a human does not attain the things of the Spirit. This verse identifies that natural man regards divine revelation as foolishness, because he is without the ability to receive or know spiritual things (Meisinger, 2005:82). Piper (2011:135) indicates that the way we are in our sinful nature, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, makes us unable to desire the gospel. Instead, we consider the truth of the gospel to be foolishness, so we cannot embrace it as true and precious. This expounds that we are totally unable to trust Christ and do the work of faith.

In using the generic term “man” (*anthropos*), the apostle now shows he is speaking of unsaved man in general, controlled by his nature, not accepting the enlightenment and truths from the Spirit of God. Because of spiritual inability toward God, man has lost the ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation. That goes for the natural man being altogether averse to the good and dead in sin being unable by his own strength to respond to the offer of salvation (Mare, 1976:202).

Couch (2005:337) indicates that through the generations almost all Calvinist held tightly to issues of depravity, the sovereignty of God, the inability of a human being to believe unless the Holy Spirit works and the doctrines of the absolute sovereignty and providence of God. Deadness has been at the core of those in the Reformed circles.

5.4.5 Summary

Logically following the assertion of the doctrine of a human's total inability to believe or merit salvation, we insist that election is not conditioned on man's response to the gospel but man's response is founded upon the unconditional election (Badger, 2003:20). Man contributes absolutely nothing to his salvation, not even a slightest cooperation of his free will, because the first sin, for which our original human ancestors are responsible, has had calamitous consequences for them as well as all their descendants and unleashed a flood of misery on the human race. In consequence, humanity as a whole and every person in particular, is burdened with guilt, defiled, and subject to ruin and death (Bavinck, 2006:78). It is God alone who works to effectually call and regenerate the dead and depraved sinner, bringing life out of death (Barrett, 2011:243).

5.5 Contemporary arguments on predestination

5.5.1 Calvinist predestination exalts the sovereign grace of God

The deliberations and conclusions on this doctrinal formulation result in the conclusion that salvation is absolutely and solely of grace. God is free, in consistency with the infinite perfection of his nature, to save none, few, many or all, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his will. It also follows that salvation is not based on any merits in the creature, and that it depends on God, and not on men (Culver, 2005:657). God enlightens mankind's mind spiritually, to grasp the things of God; taking away their hearts of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power calling them to what is good and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, and being made willing by his grace (Beeke, 2013:240). God's grace is so powerful that it conquers sin and inducts believers into the sphere of salvation (Schreiner, 2010:109). Yet some as much as they would agree salvation is by grace, they would absolutely, meticulously and deterministically not support the concept of irresistible grace (Reynolds, 2012:54).

We learn from Ephesians 1:7-10 that the primary purpose of God in redemption was to display his glory of the divine attributes so that throughout the ages all might admire it, as made known through His unmerited love and boundless goodness to guilty, vile, helpless creatures. When people deserved only God's wrath and curse, he determined that he would graciously provide redemption for them by sending his own eternal Son to assume their nature and guilt and to obey and suffer in their place and his Spirit to actualise the redemption purchased by the Son. Mankind depends on grace for the inception and development of spiritual life, it is God's work totally and exclusively; it is pure grace and undeserved salvation (Bavinck, 2006:229).

Predestination teaches that from eternity God has had one unified purpose which he is bringing to perfection through this world order of events. It holds that all of his decrees are rational determinations founded on sufficient reason, and that he has fixed one great goal toward which the whole creation moves for the glory of God and the good of his people (Pomplun, 2014:528). Belief in divine predestination or election is the strength of Reformed faith providing, as it does, profound assurance of the love of God toward man, who is justified by the grace of Christ (Wright, 2011:336). The experience of grace is seen to depend entirely on divine predestination with the result that faith is given as a free gift of grace only to those who have been predestined. Both the effectual cause of salvation, “grace”, and the instrumental cause, “faith”, are the outcomes of the free grace of God (Diprose, 2001:259).

Paul calls this the “election of grace” (Rom. 11:5). If grace means, “unmerited favour”, then the Bible teaches that election is not based on anything either actually in or foreseen in, the creature who is chosen (Horton, 1990:47). Irresistible grace is a reminder that no human method or strategy can save a sinner. Humankind is totally depraved and dead spiritually; it is for the power of God that works irresistibly within the dead human being’s heart that saves (Barrett, 2011:243). Hunter (2013:21) adds that if a man is bound by his will to only choose according to his sinful desires, then he simply cannot choose godliness. God breaks in and draws the lost man out of his will and into a grace that is, quite literally, irresistible. There is nothing meritorious about faith; indeed, it is the irresistible grace of God which empowers a person to exercise faith in Christ, it is pure grace not merit (Smith, 2011:211).

5.5.2 Calvinist predestination is not based on God’s foreknowledge of our faith

It would be correspondingly fundamental to ask the question before a detailed elaboration of the matter beforehand, “is God’s predestination an eternal sovereign choice made out of the good pleasure of his will without consideration of a foreseen positive response in man, or is it a ratification of a human choice made in time, known about ahead of time?” Or we can put it in this way, is man’s choice of God a result of God’s choice of him, or is God’s choice a response to man’s choice? Do we owe our faith to our election, or do we owe our election to our faith?

Similar to Augustinianism, Calvinism would actualise the answer in favour of the answer that we owe our faith to our election. Semi-Pelagianism and Arminianism would correspondingly disagree. Quietly common people would agree that God predestines some to be saved, but they would affirm that he does that by looking into the future and seeing who will believe in Christ and who will not. If God sees that the person is going to come to the saving faith, then he will predestine that person to be saved, based on foreknowledge of that person’s faith. If he sees that the person will not come to saving faith, then he does not predestine that person to be

saved (Grudem, 1994:676). They believe that a straightforward reading of Romans 8:29 fits well the Arminian view that predestination to salvation is based upon God's will to save and human response to the possibility of salvation. Arminians sometimes argue that their view is supported even more clearly in 1 Peter 1:2; drawing from passages such as these, Arminians maintain that predestination is based upon God's foreknowledge of which human persons will or will not accept the offer of salvation (McCall, 2005:19). Badger (2003:25) in his evaluation of the Arminian view of predestination outlines that they believe God elected those whom he knew would believe of their own free will. Election is conditionally based on people's response in faith.

We would not take away that Calvinists and Arminians have more points of agreement than disagreement in their respective soteriologies. They agree on the following: the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, justification by faith, adoption, and union with Christ, sanctification as the outworking of one's justification and union with Christ, and the full and final salvation- glorification- of all who truly believe. The areas where significant disagreement exists concern the doctrines of divine election and of God's calling of sinners to saving faith through grace (Schreiner & Ware, 2000:204-205). Arminians argue that God has exhaustive knowledge of all things, including exhaustive knowledge of the future; he knew those who will in fact freely come. On the basis of this advanced knowledge, God is said to elect in Christ those whom he knows will believe in Christ. The argument continues to state that the notions that the future is certain and foreknown by God, neither strengthens nor undermines human freedom and moral responsibilities (Studebaker, 2004:471).

Some would go to the extreme that God only knows the past and present both exhaustively- a view called "presentism." Except for the relatively small number of things he has predestined to do, God's only "foreknowledge" of the future is derivative, resulting either from his determination and promises to act in certain ways or from his reading of the past and present personalities and events, further alluding that God can make mistakes and risk failure of his plans for human beings. This depends on our response to him, not on his foreordaining. Things sometimes turn out differently from what he believes will transpire, therefore the concepts of omnipotence and immutability must be revised (Picirilli, 2001:468).

In our time the adherents of Free-Will theism⁹, though they reject unconditional election, also reject the standard Arminian view of foreknowledge, because it still makes the free choice of the

⁹ A late-twentieth-century theological development in the doctrine that seeks to steer a middle path between the "classical" view of God as largely unaffected by human creatures and a "process" view that understands God to be integrally involved and constantly changing with creation. Instead free will theism asserts that God enters into a "give-and-take" relationship with humanity and freely risks his sovereignty by giving humans a substantial measure of freedom. Arguably the main thinker behind the "free-will-theism" idea is the Canadian theologian Clark H. Pinnock (Grenz *et al.*, 1999:54).

believing sinner certain. It is too deterministic in their thinking. They propose that God has no pre-knowledge of the outcome of a human being's actions. He is all-knowing with respect to knowable things, but as for what man's free will can produce, he does not know. This view reduces the prophecies of Scripture and destroys the historic view of inspiration of the Scripture. It is a view which has never been held by any recognised Christian church (Lescelius, 2003:26).

Grudem (1994:676) in his response to the Arminians' interpretation of the word "foreknowledge" in Roman 8:29 writes:

But this verse can hardly be used to demonstrate that God based his predestination on foreknowledge of the fact that person would believe. The passage speaks rather of the fact that God knew persons, not that he knew some facts about them, such as the fact that they would believe. It is personal, relational knowledge that is spoken of here: God, looking into the future, thought of certain people in saving relationship to him, and in that sense he "knew them" long ago.

The biblical perspective grants a strong view that our salvation finds its origin in eternity, before the creation of the universe, in the electing grace of the Father. Reformed doctrine of predestination states that God's choice was out of his sovereign good pleasure and not based on any foreseen faith on man's part (Eph. 1:4). We truly owe our faith to our election (Lescelius, 2003:1).

The abovementioned argument from the Free-Will-theism destroys the omniscience of God and sacrifices the sovereignty of God in order to preserve the freedom of human beings, implying that God must then wait until the event has had its issue before making his plans. To deny God the perfections of foreknowledge and the immutability is to represent him as a disappointed and unhappy being that is often checkmated and defeated by his creatures (Beeke & Jones, 2012:131)

We find that Scripture never speaks of our faith or the fact that we would come to believe in Christ as the reason God chose us (Eph. 2:8-9). Paul seems to clearly exclude the consideration of what people would do in life from his understanding of God's choice of Jacob rather than Esau (Rom. 9:11-13). He makes his appointment before they were born and had done nothing either good or bad, so that it depends not on human will or extortion, but God, who has mercy (Grudem, 1994:667).

If we say that predestination is based on our faith that would be the beginning of salvation by merit. And Romans 9:11-13 correspondingly disagrees with our deliberations and conclusions. Verse 11 emphasises the divine purpose Paul goes back to the time before the children were born. At that time there is no question of merit or good works (Morris, 1988:355-356). We would

not doubt that it is God's choice of Isaac not Ishmael and of Jacob not Esau. This does not originate from them or in any work they may have done, but in the mind and the will of him who calls. Paul feels impelled to cite the case of the twin brothers, both of them sons of Isaac and Rebecca, with nothing in the least lacking regarding their parentage. According to human expectation they should have stood on equal terms before God in his dealings with them. But it was not so. God made a distinction between them before they were born, before their character shaped or any deeds had been performed that might be the basis for evaluation (Stott, 1994:267)

Faith does not come first, and then God's decision to ordain to life. It's the other way around. First comes God's choice, and that determines who will believe as Acts 13:48 also recaps "...as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." First comes God's sovereign purpose of election as Paul says in Romans 9:11; then comes faith. Faith and repentance are gifts (Eph. 2:8, 2 Tim. 2:25). Therefore, the condition of who gets the gifts cannot be that one has the gift already. God chooses for reasons that are wise and mysterious and shattering to human self-exaltation. So the purpose of election is not conditional on faith or any other human decision. It is unconditional (Piper, 2011:143). The doctrine of predestination demonstrates that God has elected some to salvation and this election is without respect to any qualities, actions, behaviour, virtues, vices or choices of those individuals themselves. Then his calling of them to salvation must be through irresistible grace upon those who in eternity have been unconditionally elected to salvation (Schreiner, 2000:208).

In conclusion, the above argumentation highlights that God chose us simply because he decided to bestow his love upon us. It was not because of any foreseen faith or foreseen merit in us. This understanding of election has traditionally been called "unconditional election." It is unconditional because it is not conditioned upon anything that God sees in us that makes us worthy of his choosing us (Grudem, 1994:679). We would not take that man is pervasively depraved and spiritually unable to choose God. The argumentation that God elects on the basis of foreseen faith in mankind correspondingly disagrees with scriptural teaching that election is unconditional, not based on anything in man, but purely due to the good pleasure and mercy of God (Barrett, 2011:229).

Salvation is superintended by God's sovereign power from the commencement to consummation (Gardoski, 2005:51). God's election is not based on seeing what human beings would do or what in fact they actually perform. God's saving promise is not based on works but on the one who calls (Barrett, 2013:90). Foreseen faith and good works are never to be looked upon as the cause of predestination or divine election. They show that the person has been chosen and regenerated. To make them the foundation in which election is grounded is

retrogression to the covenant of works, and places God's purpose in time rather than eternity, resulting in post-destination rather than predestination (Badger, 2003:21). This makes God's decision contingent upon man's choice, which puts man on God's throne because a salvation that depends upon man's decision makes God powerless and waiting (Keathley, 2006:19).

5.5.3 Predestination contradicts the universalistic Scripture passages

It may be asked, is not the doctrine of predestination flatly contradicted by the Scriptures which declare that Christ died for "all men" or for "the whole world," and that God wills the salvation of all men? "...it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3-4) and "The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some account slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

Universalism is defined as a system which holds that Christ died for men and that eventually all shall be saved, either in this life or through a future probation. This view perhaps makes the strongest appeal to our feelings, but is un-scriptural and has never been held by an organised Christian church (Grudem, 1994:1256). Payne (2012:292) outlines that the design and the purpose of Christ's blood had created possibilities for all to be joined together in one body. Jesus's death has put an end to sin and death and has bridged the divide that existed between humankind and God. God sees all humanity through Christ, and humanity sees God through Christ. Some Reformed theologians who argue that God's essential nature of love compels a singular will for the salvation of all also often arrive at universalism (Keathley, 2006:5).

One of the fundamental arguments from the adherents of universalism articulates that Christ died for all people without exception. In 1 Timothy 2:3-4 Paul refers to "God our Saviour, who desired all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." With the word "all" (*pantos*) adherents of universalism think it refers to every human being (Gardoki, 2011:78). They expound that God is not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (Barrett, 2011:238). According to Hansen (2004:85), those who affirm that Christ's death was intended for all essentially argue that the "all" passages take precedence over the limited passages. They affirm that "all" simply mean all persons and that the limited passages are viewed as not referring to God's intention in the death of Christ, but to some benefits bestowed on those who received Christ. As every human being lives under God's judgement, so every human being is ultimately destined in God's mercy to eternal life. Some would expound the possibility that God may expand the circle of election to include the whole of humanity, based on the fact that the covenant of grace finds its satisfaction in the Christological work and not in

some hidden decree it must potentially embrace. The cross ensured universal salvation because God intends salvation for all; this is called a hypothetical possibility (Wright, 2011:338).

In contradistinction to the idea of limited efficacy of Christ's double grace through priestly office, some promote a universal satisfaction (Paul, 2008:197). Furthermore, salvation would not be particularistic and the promise of God would be fully revealed in eschatology, when all things would be consummated (Wiele, 2010:9).

5.5.3.1 1 Timothy 2:3-4

"...it is pleasing in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." It would be correspondingly effective to ask the question, "does this passage support a universalistic salvation or not?"

MacArthur (1995:69) in his commentary indicates that God's desire for the world's salvation is different from his eternal saving purpose. God genuinely desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Yet in the "eternal purpose which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11), he chose only the elect out of the world (John 17:6). As Paul laid his theological foundation for the great intercession, he reveals that prayers must be made on behalf of all, (1 Tim. 2:1-2) because there is an invitation to all (1 Tim. 2:4) and a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6). Here the Scripture teaches the universal offer of the gospel. In Timothy's day, there were several attempts to limit salvation to one elite group. Prayer should not be indiscriminate, it should be done for all, yet it is not our responsibility to guess whom God plans to save. There is a distinction between God's general and specific wills. God's desire –what he wants- is somehow less strong than what he wills or perhaps we can make a theological distinction between God's revealed will (that all should be saved) and his secret will (that only certain persons should be saved) (Ryken, 2007:64-65). The most compelling example of two wills in God would be the death of Christ. The betrayal of Jesus by Judas was a morally evil act inspired by Satan. The betrayal was sin and it involved the instrumentality of Satan, but it was part of God's ordained plan. That is, there is a sense in which God willed the delivering of his Son, even though Judas's act was sin (Piper, 2013:19).

Hughes (2012:62-63) indicates the fact that the Scriptures and Paul in particular teach divine election. Paul says in various passages that we should be thankful before God because "...God chose you as the first fruits to be saved" (2 Thess. 2:13). And Ephesians 1:4 affirms that God chose us before the foundation of the world. Yet Scripture also teaches the complementary truth clearly stated in verse 4, that he desires all people to be saved. This does not mean that God wills everyone to be saved; it is an expression of divine desire that brought about the

incarnation and Christ's death on the cross. The passage is not dealing with questions of election or universalism, but it does bring such matters to mind. God wants all men to be saved. This is not the same as willing them into salvation, which would be contrary to the whole direction of Scripture; it may be comprehensive rather than universal, meaning that God wants people to be saved whoever and wherever they are (Liefeld, 1999:86). Earlie (1981:358) expounds that the statement is in accord with John 3:16 and with the declaration in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, that Christ died for all. Salvation is universal in its scope but conditional in its effect. There are many biblical affirmations that God desires the salvation of every person. Yet we could see that God has an extraordinarily limited salvific will which embraces a small subset of humanity that is unconditionally elected for salvation (Shellrude, 2011:78).

It is possible that a careful evaluation and interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:4 would lead us to believe that God's desire for all people to be saved does not refer to every individual person in the world but rather to all sort of people, since "all people" in verse 1 may well mean groups such as "kings and all who are in high positions" (v. 2) (Piper, 2013:14). The verses simply tell us that God invites and commands every person to repent and come to Christ for salvation, but it says nothing about who should be saved which is a secret decree of the Father (Grudem, 1994:683). Keathley (2006:12) remarks that if the sovereign God desires salvation for all, provides redemption sufficient for all, but all are not eventually saved yet the will of God is ultimately done, then this presents a formidable difficulty.

5.5.4 Calvinist limited atonement

For centuries Christians have been divided on the topic of atonement, a topic that has separated believers, often with great enmity. Some have preferred the term "definite atonement" or "particular atonement" to emphasise the positive focus on the doctrine and eliminate any suspicion of the value of Christ's work. However, whichever term is used the basic question remains. "Did God intend to save only the elect in the death of Christ or provide salvation for all?" (Hansen, 2004:85). The doctrine of limited atonement presents difficulties because it is surrounded with a lot of controversies, such as: If indeed Christ provided a propitiation and expiation for all human beings and for all their sins, then, clearly all persons would be saved. It is a reality and not only potential this would mean universal salvation (Sproul, 2017:2). More broadly, the debate of the extent of the atonement takes place between Calvinists and Arminians. The latter hold that Christ's death was for all people alike, and that it secures for everyone a measure of common grace whereby all are able to believe if they will and the former generally claim that Christ's death did not just make salvation a mere possibility for all people; instead, the death of Christ is part of God's plan to secure the salvation of those he has chosen to save (Gardoski, 2011:68-69).

Both Calvinist Reformed and Arminian theology affirm the atoning death of Christ as the supreme accomplishment of salvation, however, disagreement begins, when the cross is fitted into a larger theological frame that each embraces (Schreiner & Ware, 2000:287). Traditionalists (adherence to tradition as authority, in the matter of faith) would lean more toward Arminianism by maintaining that salvation is not limited to the chosen but that everyone who hears the gospel can be saved (Hunter, 2013:23).

The difference between Reformed theology and Arminianism is not whether or not all people will be saved; the argumentation arises in the relationship between Christ's death and other doctrines such as God's sovereignty and grace, election, and total depravity. Arminians adhere to the unlimited atonement or universal redemption and those who hold limited atonement or particular redemption (Gardoski, 2011:69). Examining the High Priestly prayer offered in John 17, it is clear that the actualisation of salvation is for those that the Father had given it. The whole point of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ was that he was giving his life in the place of those who had been given him by the Father (Sproul JR, 2003:101).

Berkhof (1996:393-394) indicates that the purpose of Christ's death was not merely to make salvation possible for all but to make it certain for the elect. This is so important for Berkhof that when he comes to defining the extent of atonement he does so in terms of this one purpose: the question of the extent of the atonement does relate to the design of the atonement. Did the Father in sending Christ, and did Christ in coming into the world, to make atonement for sin, do this with the design or purpose of saving only the elect or all men? The Reformed position is that Christ died for the purpose of actually and certainly saving the elect and the elect only. He died for the purpose of saving only those to whom he actually applies the benefits of his redemptive work.

For Grudem (1994:594) the main question regarding the extent of the atonement is this, "when Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those whom he knew would ultimately be saved?" The answer must be the latter, because if Christ's death actually paid for the sins of all the people then all people must ultimately be saved; otherwise, in condemning anyone God would have to demand double payment for their sins, which will be unjust. Grudem specifically rejects the label 'limited atonement' because it could be taken to mean Christ's death was deficient in some way. The better term is "particular redemption": Christ died for particular people, namely those who will be saved and those whom Christ came to redeem.

Both Grudem and Berkhof reject universalism in salvation but Grudem does not agree with Berkhof that we should focus solely on the purpose of the atonement. To focus on God's

purpose is just to give voice to the larger Calvinist-Arminian debate which cannot be decided narrowly regarding discussion of the extent of atonement. Rather than focusing on the purpose of atonement, it is better to zero in on what actually happened in the atonement. Berkhof limits the provision of Christ linking it to God's limited purpose in Christ "to save the elect," Grudem limits Christ's provision by linking it to limited payment of sin "for the elect only" (Gardoski, 2011:76). Culver (2005:573) remarks that the doctrine of particular election is that out of the mass of lost humanity, before the creation of the world, God chose each individual person upon whom he would confer the benefit of salvation and Christ atoned for these individuals.

Sproul (2017:2) indicates that the overwhelming majority of Christians who reject limited atonement also reject universal salvation. They are particularists not universalists, because they insist on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Only believers are saved by the atonement of Christ. If that is so, then atonement, in some sense, must be limited, or restricted, to a definite group, namely believers. Others writing from a Calvinistic Reformed perspective, encounter this by articulating that indeed there is no question as to the fact that the atonement of Christ is universal in three aspects, it is sufficient for all, the atonement is applicable to all and the atonement is offered to all, but there is a sharp contrast between the two schools of thought with respect to the design and intention of the atonement. Christ's atonement is applied in a unique way to the elect and God's decrees accomplish just what they were intended to accomplish (Hansen, 2004:87). These elected people are purchased by the blood of the Lamb, and it is their sins that are paid for in full at the cross (Barrett, 2011:239). The value of Christ's sacrifice is so high, His merit so extensive, that its worth is equal into covering all the sins of the human race. But the benefits of the atonement are only efficient for the elect. There is a special sense in which Christ died for his own, for the sheep the Father had given to him (Sproul, 2017:2).

The doctrine of limited atonement is connected to the doctrine of unconditional election. If God has elected certain ones to salvation from everlasting past, then it logically follows that He will provide for the redemption of precisely those whom he has chosen. Note that the doctrine limits or restricts the number of people for whom Christ died (Badger, 2004:34). Barrett (2011:238) argues that universal atonement exposes that Christ died for all people without exception. Such death actually saves no one but merely makes everyone saveable and he further indicates that Christ's death in and of itself is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world but God designed and intended Christ's death to efficaciously save and atone only for the sins of those whom he unconditionally elected.

The difference between Reformed and Arminian theology on the atonement lies in the Reformed theology on the particularity of God's love for his elect when dealing with the doctrine of salvation. Reformers argue the fact that Christ died for everyone equally, thus making

salvation possible for all though guaranteeing it for none, which further accentuates that Christ died at the Father's will with a specific purpose of saving the elect (Schreiner & Ware, 2000:287).

5.5.5 Predestination weakens evangelism

We might ask, how can the offer of salvation be sincerely made to those whom God foreknows will reject it, especially when their guilt and condemnation will only be increased by their refusal? (Ferguson, 2013:119). Historically the misunderstanding of the doctrine of election has caused so many Reformed pastors to restrict who are candidates to hear the gospel, in the seventeenth century and eighteenth century many Scottish and English Baptists argued that the gospel should be presented indiscriminately only to members of the visible church and to human beings whose lives gave evidence of divine grace (Keathley, 2006:10).

The difficulty, however, is due to our limited knowledge and to our inability to comprehend the ways of God, which is past finding out. We are under a divine command to sincerely preach to all men of whom the doctrinal of predestination of the saints must be the ground where our confidence is rooted (Piper, 2013:54).

Paul writes this objection in his second letter to Timothy. From prison he wrote to his "son in faith", "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10). Needham (2016:2) examining this verse indicated that Paul feels no tension between the doctrine of election and the desire to win the lost. Election had been the foundational truth where Paul's passion for gospel proclamation was founded and grounded (Acts 18:9-10). It would then be accurate to say that the proper understanding of God's electing purpose of grace led Paul to a strong evangelistic spirit (Ferguson, 2013:120). We have been commissioned to exalt the unutterable, unstoppable power of the Word to all, which will prevail with the elect so that they will be saved and brought to eternal glory, but the message is preached to all, it is God who chooses among the hearers those to whom he is speaking through the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit (Hughes & Chapell, 2000:204).

It may also be true that the adherents of the doctrine of election in the Christians church have failed in their evangelistic responsibilities; we are called to profess Christ to others unreservedly (MacArthur, 2008:221). Jamieson (2012:13) adds that Jesus calls the church to a corporate life of unity and love in order to display and commend the gospel to the world. Horton (1990:54) indicates that election affects evangelism in three major areas: our message, our methods and

our motivation (Acts 18:9-10). The knowledge of electing grace was a solace and encouragement to Paul in such a dark and difficult period of his ministry (Ferguson, 2013:120).

Since there is no revelation given to us as to which one among the people are elect and those who are non-elect, it is our duty to look with hope on all to whom we proclaim the gospel sincerely and pray earnestly to God on their behalf, for God and God alone is the one who calls them to himself (Barrett, 2011:241). Reformed soteriology affirms the same that the gospel is offered to all, but efficacious grace is given only to the elect. The limits of salvation are set by the sovereign and secret choice of God and since we are not acquainted with who is chosen and who is not we should desire salvation of all (Keathley, 2006:17).

5.6 Conclusion

The historical information on Arminius and Calvin provides us with knowledge of where contemporary argumentation originated. It acquaints us with the original writings from the historical data at hand and with aid of historical hypotheses and the environment in which the particular writings under consideration originated. A doctrine is never fully understood until it is apprehended as it is stated by the original proponent. It is impossible to understand authors and to interpret their words correctly unless they are seen against the proper historical background. The place, the time, the circumstances, and the prevailing view of the world and of life in general will naturally colour the writings that are produced under those conditions of time, place and circumstances.

There are two main positions among Christians concerning God's election of human beings for salvation, Arminianism and Calvinism. Arminians believe that God in his sovereignty and grace chooses for salvation people whom he foresees will believe in Christ. By contrast, Calvinists hold that God in his sovereignty and grace chooses people for salvation without taking their responses into account; God chooses for reasons within himself.

Arminius teaches that God bestows a universal grace on humans, which is sufficient to enable the sinners to believe and obey the gospel; and that the call which comes to humans through the preaching of the word exerts a merely moral influence on mankind's understanding and will. If human beings assent to the truth, trust in the grace of God and obey the commandments of Christ, they receive a greater measure of divine grace, are justified on account of their faith and if they persevere to the end, become partakes of life eternal.

Calvin consistently took his starting point in an eternal election and in the mystical union established in the decree and covenantal agreement between God and the Son. His fundamental position is that there is no participation in the blessings of Christ, except through a

living union with the Saviour. And if even the very first of the blessings of saving grace already presupposes a union with Christ, then the gift of Christ to the church and the imputation of his righteousness precedes all else. In the covenantal agreement between God and the Son a union was already established between him and those who were given unto him by the Father and in virtue of that union, which is both legal and mystical, all the blessings of salvation are ideally already the portion of those who are of Christ.

The salvation of the elect is not conceived atomistically, since they are all eternally in Christ, and are born in him, who is the head, as members of his mystical body. Regeneration, repentance, and faith are not regarded as mere preparations altogether apart from any union with Christ, nor as conditions to be fulfilled by human beings, either wholly or in part, in their own strength. They are blessings of the covenant of grace, which already flow from the mystical union and the grant of Christ to the church.

The doctrine of predestination of the saints is deliberated upon and the conclusion is made from a biblical presupposition of the doctrine of sin, specifically the doctrine of total depravity. One would not absolutely, meticulously and deterministically comprehend predestination of the saints without a biblical perspective of the doctrine of total depravity. The mind is given over to blindness and the heart to depravity. Original sin is so profound a corruption of human nature as to leave nothing sound, nothing incorrupt in the body and soul of a human. As a result the impact of sin has incapacitated the natural man to respond to God.

God saves sinners by grace, and there is no other way of salvation offered to human beings. It is also necessary that every obligation be cancelled, and to this end salvation has been made an absolute gift from God. The biblical meaning of grace, which is salvation truth has but the one meaning of unmerited favour and represents a divine method of dealing with sinful human beings from Adam until the present time. Augustine insists that salvation from start to finish is all by grace; faith is the gift of God.

God's eternal predestination did not take place in view of man's foreseen final faith; on the contrary a human has become a believer in time because of his eternal predestination to salvation. In other words, a person is brought to saving faith in time just because God from eternity has graciously predestined him to salvation. Faith does not come first and then God's decision to ordain life. It's the other way around. The doctrine of predestination demonstrates that God has elected some to salvation and this election is without respect to any qualities, actions behaviour, virtues, vices or choices of those individuals themselves.

The doctrine of limited atonement is connected to the doctrine of unconditional election. If God had elected certain ones to salvation before the foundation of the world, then it logically follows that he will provide for the redemption of precisely those whom he has chosen. Christ's death in and of itself is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world, but God designed and intended Christ's death to efficaciously save and atone only for the sins of those whom he unconditionally elected. The Reformed position is that Christ died for the purpose of actually and certainly saving the elect and the elect only. This doctrine has been the foundational truth where Paul's passion for gospel declaration was founded and grounded. The doctrine of sovereign predestination should be publicly taught and preached in order that true believers may know themselves to be special objects of God's love and mercy, and that they may be confirmed and strengthened in their assurance of their salvation. We are commanded to go and preach the gospel and the doctrine of predestination of the saints should be the ground where our declaration is founded.

CHAPTER 4 THE PREDESTINATION OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

6.1 Introduction

The subject of election has been a controversial one in the history of the church. Two apparent opposing views have traditionally dominated the debate: unconditional, individual election (normally associated with Calvinistic theology) and conditional individual election (normally associated with Arminian theology) (Crawford, 2000:75). The doctrine of election is a divine revelation found in the Bible, not a human speculation. It was not invented by Augustine of Hippo or Calvin of Geneva. On the contrary, it is without question a biblical doctrine and no biblical Christian can ignore it. According to the Old Testament, God chose Israel out of all the nations of the world to be his special people. According to the New Testament he is choosing an international community to be his saints, his holy or special people (Stott, 1989:37). A biblical experience of God's sovereign grace in predestination is vital for spiritual comfort and assurance. Salvation worked out experimentally in the souls of believers is inseparable from sovereign predestination in Christ (Beeke & Jones, 2012:119).

For this issue, as for any, we must try our best to grapple with the Scripture as carefully as we can. One's doctrine must never be determined by someone's system, but by exegetical theology, by honest effort to determine what God has said on the issues at stake (Picirilli, 2002:65). Calvin (1559; 2008:608) writes:

For it will show us that the moment we go beyond the bounds of the word we are out of the course, in darkness, and must every now and then stumble, go astray, and fall. Let it, therefore, be our first principle that to desire any other knowledge of predestination than that which is expounded by the word of God, is no less infatuated than to walk where there is no path, or seek light in the darkness... therefore, in order to keep the legitimate course in this matter, we must return to the word of God, in which we are furnished with the right rule of understanding. For Scripture is the school of the Holy Spirit, in which as nothing useful and necessary to be known has been omitted, so nothing is taught but what is of importance to know.

Election is a revealed truth of Scripture not a philosophically derived notion. Calvin, for example, approached the teaching from Scripture in all writings wherein he discussed it. Election was not a philosophical presupposition of his teachings, not a point of departure in theological formulation, but of arrival in submission to scriptural theological formulation (Culver, 2005:672). For Calvin, the word of God is the only norm for our dealing with predestination. He believes that we must teach all that God revealed, including predestination. But we must not go beyond Scripture, speculating where God has not revealed (Calvin, 1559, 2008:608). As the revealed

will of the living God, Scripture is the single source of any doctrinal point of view, and so it is evident that the entire teaching on this doctrine should be drawn exclusively from Scripture. In examining the doctrine, Calvin warns against two dangers, namely, excessive curiosity where there is speculation beyond what Scripture teaches, and excessive timidity that would prevent speaking where the Scripture does speak (Miskin, 2014:39).

Barrett (2017:242) indicates that Christian theology must be normed by the teaching of Scripture, properly interpreted. The dogmatic pronouncements must always stand the test of Scripture and must be revised where they are at variance with scriptural teaching. For instance, both views of monergism and synergism can pile up impressive lists of supporting Scripture passages and scholarly exegesis that undergird their conclusions (Olson, 2006:70). The biblical data on divine election and predestination demand that we give thoughtful attention to the subject. Our goal is to give election the amount and type of attention that Scripture itself does (Peterson, 2007:9). Augustine (396-397; 2004:510) writes:

And since these things are so, the judgment of the Bible ought not to be repudiated, since for so long a course of years that book has deserved to be read in the Church of Christ, from the station of the readers of the Church of Christ and to be heard by all Christians, from bishops downwards, even to the lowest lay believers, penitents, and catechumens, with the veneration paid to divine authority. For assuredly, if, from those who have been before me in commenting on the divine Scripture, I should bring forward a defence of this judgement, which we are now called upon to defend more carefully and copiously... that is, that God's grace is not given according to our merits and that it is given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but God that shows mercy.

Predestination is clearly taught in Scripture, but ongoing debates over its interpretation and meaning have occupied the greatest minds in church history (Horton, 2011:309). It is an essential component of the doctrine of salvation. It emphasises the fact that salvation is accomplished through God's initiative, based on Christ's accomplishment on the cross and actualised through the power of the Holy Spirit (Hankins, 2012:66).

This chapter will give attention to the scriptural doctrine of predestination and election. We will look at both Old and New Testament, identifying the applicable parts of Scripture and doing exegesis.

6.2 Predestination in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the ideas of election and predestination play a major role and provide one of the basic themes of the Old Testament theology. The history of the Jewish nation is seen as the story of the "chosen people". Their very existence depends upon the choice of God

(Ferguson, 2013:108). As the book of Genesis demonstrates vividly, right from the very beginning, God reveals his sovereign purpose of salvation (Gen 3:15; 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Not surprisingly, in the book of Exodus, the story of Israel's election narrows specifically upon the election and call of Moses. The story of Moses' deliverance shows that God's elective purpose for Israel cannot be thwarted. Election entails completion; what God elects to do, he does and completion entails omniscience and omnipotence (Waltke, 2007:356-357). God has promised to redeem, and election speaks of God's intention and plan to keep that promise. Election functions within God's sovereign commitment to bring about his ultimate purposes for all things (Hankins, 2012:70).

Some Old Testament passages ascribing to predestination/election are now discussed in more detail to prove the point:

Scripture quotations are from the ESV 2007, unless noted.

6.2.1 Genesis 18:19

“For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised”

Verse 19 “for” presents the rationale for the revelation to Abraham; the divine election of humans (chosen lit. known) will result so that in a people characterised by righteousness and justice, which in turn result in the Lord fulfilling his promise of worldwide blessing (v. 18). The idea of election, promissory blessing, and righteousness come together in (v. 19). The Lord chose Abraham for the purpose of blessing all nations (Jer. 4:2). This appointment also included the intermediary step of creating a righteous people whose conduct would be a beacon for the nations (Matthews, 2005:223). The use of (*yâda'*) “to know” in the sense to “choose, elect,” (Amos 3:2; Ex. 33:12, 17; Deut. 34:10), If the ground of election was God's promise (v.18), its fuller purpose is now stated for the first time: to create a God fearing community (v. 19) (Wenham, 1994:50). In Genesis 18:19 God says he knows Abraham; he cared for him in the sense that he chose him from among other human beings and saw to it that certain things happened to him. The emphasis is upon the fact that God “knew” him intimately and personally. A similar use of this word relates to God's relationship to Israel as a chosen and elect nation (Amos 3:2) (Lescelius, 2003:33).

Abraham is instructed to direct his own children and household to keep the way of the Lord, doing justice and righteousness (Gen. 18:19). The order in which God does things is of a great fundamental importance. Grace comes first, as God declared to Abraham, “I have chosen him.”

Out of all the people of the earth, God's graciously choose Abraham to be his friend. Abraham was not chosen to be God's friend because of his great faithfulness and righteousness, but God chose him so that he might become what God wanted him to be- a holy, faithful friend (Duguid, 2015:98).

In chapter 14 Abraham rescues Lot, is blessed by Melchizedek, and declines any profit from his booty. In chapters 15 and 17 he receives a covenant from God. In chapter 18 he not only shows hospitality to strangers but is singled out as chosen by God for moral purposes (18:19) and has to engage with God on the question of righteousness, probing the justice and mercy of God (18:22-33) (Rogerson *et al.*, 2001:110). The text focuses on Abraham's transmitting the faith to the next generation, without which there would be no community to whom the promises apply. The promises are not generically transmitted (Fretheim, 1994:468).

Foundationally, ancient covenants were legal instruments. Like any formal, contractual document, stringent conventions surrounded their creation, implementation, execution, and perpetuation. It signified a formal agreement between two parties that affected specific impositions and liabilities which uniquely interrelated those parties (Beacham, 2011:112). Goldingay (2006:182) defines covenant as "a solemnly sealed pledge made by one party to another in a particular context. It thus involves commitment in a relationship, as opposed to a mere acquaintance without obligation." The ancient covenant is the central unifying concept of Scripture. The grasp of covenant is vital to an understanding of Scripture and God's interactions with mankind, Israel, and the church (Dean, 2014:281).

Just a rudimentary understanding of the ancient Near East customs will help us better understand how it is applied in the Hebrew thinking of YHWH's covenant with Israel. Often in and ancient Near East, covenants were ratified by the act of cutting (e.g., circumcision, as a sign of the covenant) as dramatised in Genesis 15:17. By passing through the animal halves alone, God is saying that he will experience the curse of the covenant by being ripped in two if he fails to keep it (Trueman, 2017:27). According to extant ancient Near Eastern texts passing between the slain animals is a ritual that invokes a curse on the participants if they break the covenant. To walk between the carcasses is to submit oneself to the fate of the slaughtered animals as a penalty for covenant breaking (VanDrunen, 2014:269). Note that only God walks between the carcasses, signifying that the covenant is not conditioned upon Abraham's future action, but based on God's faithfulness. This passing through the animal halves alone gives Abraham the assurance that the covenant will be fully and faithfully kept to the end (Waltke, 2007:319).

On the heart of Old Testament teaching on God's grace is God's covenant with his people. The covenant provides the historical revelation, thread, and structure to God's gracious dealing. The covenant becomes the key to the administration of God's grace at several important moments in Israel's history (Niehaus, 2009:242). In 2 Kings 13, we read of how Hazael, king of Syria (whom the Lord had raised up to discipline his own people, 1 Kings 19:15-17), had been oppressing the kingdom of Israel. We are told that the Lord decided to be gracious toward his people and to preserve them "because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" (v. 23). In other words, the basis for God's gracious dealing with his people in the midst of their continual sin and rebellion was the covenant promises he had made to the patriarchs (Trueman, 2017:26-27). The Old Testament affirms that the bond between God and Israel is not one inherent in nature but one that God graciously brought into being. This is an aspect of the significance of calling the relationship a covenant (Goldingay, 2006:182).

Given the importance of the covenant in God's gracious dealings with his people, the narrative of grace toward them was vital to Israel's identity. It shaped the public worship of the nation, both in the stories that are shared in the homes and in the great declarations that it made before the nation and before the world (Waltke, 2007:449-450). In Exodus 12, Moses expounds to people a time when their descendants will have no first-hand memory of the events of the exodus and no immediate understanding of the meaning of the Passover meal. In this context, he instructs them to recite and retell the story of God's great rescue of his people from Egypt. God's grace forms the foundation of their national identity. They are people formed by grace and sustained by grace (Trueman, 2017:27).

This shows us that election does not remove the need for faith and obedience. Rather, it is the foundation for them. Abraham must train up his child in the way he should go, calling Isaac to faith in the Lord and a love for his ways. Far from removing the need for trust and obedience, divine election is what ensures that we will trust and obey (Duguid, 2015:99). We have begun to see that God's election of human beings is gracious and everlasting, resting on his oath that should it fail, he will be torn in two (Gen. 15). The relationship of course, by its very nature includes the response of the individual. "Abraham believed, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6) (Harman, 2007:105). But never are the works of humans the deciding factor in whether or not this relationship gets accomplished. The people of God are elected to be God's mediatorial kingdom of universal blessing, and since the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, they are ultimately destined to consummate that mission (Waltke, 2007:355).

In conclusion God's eternal knowledge of and sovereignty over every person's salvation or condemnation are affirmed. In reference to salvation, election speaks of God's eternal,

gracious, and certain plan in Christ to have people who are to be his possession (Hankins, 2013:5). Abraham's election was not as a result of human accomplishments, it was not dependent upon his obedience, but on God alone because the election of grace ultimately relies on God's faithfulness (Gromacki, 2014:112). The decision to choose Abraham was not based on intrinsic merit or foreseen faith but solely on the Lord's will and his gracious plan. God reminded Abraham's descendants that their election was an act of sovereign grace (Deut. 7:6-8) (Trueman, 2017:42).

6.2.2 Deuteronomy 7:7-8

"It is not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt"

Christensen (2001:156) indicates that though large numbers were part of the promise from the time of Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 17:12), Israel was a small people compared to many other Near Eastern nations. God chose them not because of any inherent superiority, but because he loved them. It was a matter of grace. From the time of Abraham, God's love is the matter of Israel's historical experience. Moses highlights four divine actions behind Israel's holy status. Firstly, Israel is the beneficiary of Yahweh's affectionate grace (v. 7a) (Fernando, 2012:289). Secondly, Israel is the beneficiary of Yahweh's electing grace. Out of all the people groups, he has chosen her that she might be his treasure possession. In verse 7a Moses insists that Yahweh's election of Israel for covenant relationship with himself had nothing to do with their personal qualification, for they are the least significant of the people (Stewart, 2013:118). Thirdly, Israel is the beneficiary of Yahweh's saving grace (v. 8). Lest the Israelites claim merit as a basis for their privileged position, Moses declares that Yahweh was the one who brought them out of Egypt (Currid, 2006:183). Fourthly, Israel is the beneficiary of Yahweh's redemptive grace (v. 8b). For the first time in the book Moses employs the word *pādâh* (פדה) "to redeem" which is associated with rescuing a slave through the payment of a ransom (Block, 2012:210-211). The word *pādâh* comes from the business world, in Deuteronomy the word used there stresses the ransom price rather than the restoration of a relationship. God in his love had taken the initiative to redeem his people from oppressive slavery under Pharaoh (Harman, 2007:100).

This expounds that Israel's call is linked, first of all to the Lord's elective grace and then to his faithfulness to his promise to the patriarchs. In addition to the strongly elective verb *bâchar* (בחר) "choose" in verse 6 stands the equally evocative covenant verb *'ahăbâh* (אהבה) "love" in verse 8.

In covenant context these verbs are synonymous, for the Lord chooses those he loves and loves those he chooses (Deut. 4:37; 10:15) (Merrill, 1994:180).

God's sovereign purpose in choosing people for himself is of course a familiar idea in the Old Testament, which testifies to Israel's consciousness of God's choice of her in the midst of the twists and turns in her historical fortunes. God called Abraham so that in him the nations of the earth would be blessed, and Israel's election was not for her own self-indulgence but for the blessing of the nations: it was a privilege but also a summons to service (Lincoln, 1990:23). God knew Israel as his beloved, chosen, covenant nation even before he promised Abraham or redeemed Israel from her Egyptian bondage. Thus, both elect Israel and elect believers, both Jews and Gentiles, can be confident that God will never cast them away (Gromacki, 2014:68).

Yahweh did not choose Israel because they were impressive, but because he loves them and he is faithful in keeping the oath he swore to their fathers. Therefore, they are to know Yahweh, who is everything he declared himself to be in Exodus 34:6-7, which is also alluded to in Deuteronomy 7:9-10. Faithfulness to Yahweh is the path to blessing and triumph (7:11-16) (Hamilton, 2014:24).

In Deuteronomy God's love means his election of Israel. Because of love he elected Israel out of all the nations to enter a privileged, exclusive and binding relationship of love with him (4:37; 7:7-8; 10:15). This relationship showed up in an unprecedented experience of the living God's presence on earth (4:36) and found its expression in an exclusive covenant (7:6; 14:2; 26:18-19) (Vang, 2011:186). The theme of love is to give the reasons for God's election of Israel, to underline the paradoxical reality behind his covenant and to motivate the audience to respond to God in love. From their experience of God's love, manifesting itself in an exceptional liberation from slavery in Egypt, they should realise that the Lord is the only God, the reliable God, which again should motivate them to a sincere observance of his commandments (7:8-11) (DeRouchie, 2014:101). The Pentateuch does not say much about why Israel of all the nations was chosen. Its focus is on God's love rather than any human qualifications. We know from the promise made to Abraham that God's faithfulness has something to do with Abraham's call (Gen. 22:18). But, more importantly, five times in Genesis God gives the promise to bless all the nations of the world through his seed (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). The whole world would benefit from the revelation of the law culminating in the appearing of the Messiah himself through Israel. Therefore, this nation needed to be protected (Fernando, 2012:289-290).

The reason for Israel's special position is explained in verse 7. Other nations were far greater in number, and in comparison the Israelites were the fewest of all the people. The explanation could only be that God set his sovereign love upon them (Fernando, 2012:289). God's first-born

was chosen in love, a truth which also applies to New Testament believers. Paul reminded the Ephesian believers that “God had chosen us in Christ before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will” (Eph. 1:4-5) (Stewart, 2013:118). The same theme is taken up later in Deuteronomy 9:4. There was nothing intrinsic in Israel which moved God to separate her from the other powerful nations. The thought is carried over into the New Testament and the language from this passage is applied to the church. In Titus 2:14 it is said that “our Saviour gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession...” Peter takes the words over even more graphically when he tells his readers “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of the darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9) (Harman, 2007:104). Moses tells the Israelites that God did not love them because of their righteousness. There was no virtue in them that merited God’s blessing (Stewart, 2013:119).

In summary, in the Old Testament the idea of election and predestine plays a major role and provides one of the basic themes of the Old Testament theology. The history of the Jewish nation is seen as the story of the “chosen people”. Their very existence depends upon the choice of God. Right from the very beginning of Genesis, God reveals his sovereign purpose of salvation (Gen. 3:15; 12:3, 18:18, 22:18; 26:4; 28:14) (Waltke, 2007:355). In pursuit of his revealed plan God chooses human beings, families, and eventually a whole nation to be the recipients and the bearers of his promises of salvation. From the early stages of divine revelation God has chosen human beings out of the world to his servants and evangelists. In making a covenant with Noah and his family, God chose to graciously save them from the perilous deep. In Genesis 6:8 we see that God’s favour was upon Noah. Grace is the definitive word in God’s relationship with Noah (Gonzales, 2012:377).

In the later chapters God’s choice takes centre in Abraham and descends through his family. It is repeated in Exodus that their existence depends upon the sovereign choice of God (Exod. 20:2; 34:6-7) (Waltke, 2007:347). Later on, in both the law and the prophets Israel is warned that she is the object and not the cause of God’s favour (Deut. 4:37; 7:7-8; 9:4-6). On the biblical basis the prophets set forth their case against the distortion of divine election which later appeared when the people failed to grasp the principle that privilege brings corresponding responsibility (Ferguson, 2016:109).

6.3 Predestination in the New Testament

God's ultimate purposes for creation are grounded in the life, death and resurrection of the Son. All that was promised to, in, and through Israel has been fulfilled in Christ (Hankins, 2012:70). The New Testament teaches that God granted people grace before Creation: "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began" (2 Tim. 1:8-9). That is, before we even existed, despite doing nothing good or bad, God placed his love upon us (Peterson, 2007:101).

Some New Testament passages ascribing to predestination/election are now discussed in more detail to prove the point:

6.3.1 Matthew 25:34

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'come, you who are blessed by my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'"

Jesus has been described as the Son of Man, who judges the nations as a shepherd separates a flock. But when he begins to speak here, he is identified as a king who determines who will enter his kingdom. Jesus calls them, "come" (δεῦτε) coming from the imperative (εἶμι) (to go; come) and he address them as "εὐλογέω μου πατήρ" (literally translated, having been blessed of the Father of me) "my Father's blessed one." Κληρονομέω ὁ, ἡ, τό βασιλεία "inherit the kingdom," he says to them where this verb draws attention to a significant aspect of their salvation. Something that is inherited comes to one as a gift, not as a result of one's own earnings and that may be why the word is used of the life in the world to come (Morris, 1992). Mathew previously used (Κληρονομέω) (inherit) in one of the beatitudes, 5:5 (will inherit the earth) and in 19:29, where those who have left things behind to follow Jesus "will inherit eternal life," which in the context is equivalent to "will enter the kingdom" (Nolland, 2005:1025). Notice, God's preparation of the kingdom for the blessed one is since the foundation of the world (Turner, 2008:609).¹⁰

The use of the similar phrase in 24:21, ἀπό ἀρχῆ κόσμος (from the beginning of the world) may have helped to call the earlier phrase to mind. That which in 13:35 was said had been hidden

¹⁰ ἐτοιμάζω (Louw & Nida, 1988:683) under domain ready, prepared, is translated to cause to be ready, defined as "to make ready, to prepare." This implies to make ready or to prepare in advance. The perfect passive tense of (ἐτοιμάζω) "having been prepared" has being used in a related way in 20:23 (of the positions at Jesus' right and left hand). ἀπό καταβολῆ κόσμος (from the foundation of the world) repeats language from 13:23.

since the foundation of the world, accentuates that this was God's attention, it includes his attention to bestow on his people royal rule in the coming kingdom (Nolland, 2005:1028). The strong expression (having been prepared for you kingdom from the foundation of the world) (Greek- English Interlinear) brings out the truth that this has always been in the plan of God. Jesus is not speaking of some afterthought, but of what God had always planned to bring about, and that will come to its consummation at the end of this age (Morris, 1992:637).

In conclusion Jesus chooses the sheep to represent those individuals who are blessed by God to inherit his kingdom, here envisioned in all its future fullness, though prepared for them from the creation of the world. God intended from the beginning to fashion creatures in the community for fellowship with himself (Blomberg, 1992:377). The blessing consists of their inheritance, which is the kingdom they now receive, not because they have earned it through their own efforts but because it is a gift of their relationship with the Father and the Son. God's assured purpose is carried out as the blessing of the inheritance of the kingdom for the sheep is realised (Wilkins, 2004:810). Taking into the consideration the words commending those who go into the kingdom, we should not overlook that here we have the kingdom prepared for them by God before they were born. We should not miss the implication that they are God's elect (O'Donnell, 2013:751).

6.3.2 John 6:35-40, 44

“Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, but raise it up on the last day...no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

Throughout John 6:37-40 Jesus speaks confidently about the success of his work and the fulfilment of his mission. The confusion of the crowd in Capernaum and refusal of some to believe will not frustrate him. He is not worried, for the success of his efforts depends entirely on the Father, who is at work in him. Indeed Jesus' entire mission is to subject his life to the will of the Father (6:38). It is God who has sent him (6:39) and who has gone before him, sovereignly calling people to come to him (6:37, 44). The darkness of the world is so severe that God alone must penetrate it in order to free people to see Jesus clearly (Burge, 2000:199). Borchert (1996:265) adds that the emphasis on the human dimension of the relationship with Jesus, however, must not be isolated from the divine dimension of salvation, which is highlighted in the

statement of the Father's role in salvation (6:37). The coming of the disciples to Jesus is here described as a gift of the Father. They are those whom the Father "gives" to Jesus, they are given, since faith is the work of the Father (Heb. 12:2) (Murray, 1999:92).

Jesus speaks in more general approximation: "All that the Father gives me will come to me." "All" is a neuter and singular (literally, "everything"), referring to all believers corporately, while the particle (the person who comes) is masculine singular, focusing on any individuals who might come to Jesus in a sense of believing in him or giving him their allegiance. God decides who they are, for they are God the Father's gift to Jesus, and by coming to him they prove that they belong to God (Michael, 2010:376-377).

We see clearly that faith is the gift of God given only to those whom God has chosen. Jesus says in verse 35, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst again." The words "comes" and "believes" in this sentence mutually interpret one another, so that both designate a coming and believing that saves, for those who come to Jesus and believe in him find life through his death (MacArthur, 2006:245). Two verses later we read, "All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (37). It is evident from verse 35 that "comes" is another way of speaking of believing. Furthermore, the coming and believing in both verses 35 and 37 clearly refer to action of individuals, for John uses the third person singular (Schreiner, 2006:379).

Verse 37 teaches that all those given by the Father to the Son will come to the Son, but all those given will come and believe (Carson, 1991:290). It is clear that not all human beings come to the Son, for not all believe. So, only some come to the Son, and those who do come have been given by the Father to the Son and all those given by the Father to the Son come, so that it follows that those who come do so because the Father has given them to the Son (Schreiner, 2006:379). Moreover, verse 44 clarifies that human beings who do not come to the Son have not been drawn by the Father: "No one can come to me unless the Father who send me draws him." Those who do not come refuse to believe because they were not given by the Father to the Son. We can conclude, then, that John 6 teaches individual election unto salvation. All those given by the Father to the Son will come to faith, whereas those not drawn by the Father cannot and will not come (Kostenberger, 2004:211).¹¹ John 6:44 the grammatical language is in support of an irresistible, effectual drawing. The word linguistically and lexicographically means to compel. Therefore, Jesus cannot be saying that the drawing of the Father is a mere wooing or persuasion that can be resisted. Rather, this drawing is an

¹¹ ἔλκω the verb draw (Louw and Nida, 1988:208) under domain of Linear Movement and subdomains pull, draw, drag, defined as to pull or drag, requiring force because of the inertia of the object being dragged, they reference Acts 14:19 "they stoned Paul and dragged him out of town."

indefectible, invincible, unconquerable, indomitable, insuperable, and unassailable summons (see footnote) (Barrett, 2013:110). Calvin (1559; 2008:642) writes:

Christ proclaims aloud that all whom the Father is pleased to save he has delivered into his protection (John 6:37-39; 17:6, 12). Therefore, if we would know whether God cares for our salvation, let us ask whether he (God) has committed us to Christ, whom he has appointed to be his only Saviour of all his people. Then, if we doubt whether we are received into the protection of Christ, he obviates the doubt when he spontaneously offers himself as our shepherd, and declares that we are of the number of his sheep if we hear his voice (John 10:3, 16). Let us, therefore, embrace Christ, who is kindly offered to us and comes forth to meet us: he will number us among his flock, and keep us within his fold.

It is in this framework of sovereignty and election that Jesus holds out the universal sounding declaration that “whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” The words “never cast out” are just as emphatic and final as “shall not hungry” or “shall not thirst” (v.35). Yet they do not add up to universalism (Michaels, 2010:377). The verb here is ἐκβάλλω ἔξω “cast out” refers regularly to something that is already “in” (2:14; 9:35; 12:31). Therefore, the idea is not about Jesus’ welcoming people, but Jesus keeping people whom the Father has given into his care. Verse 37 is about the protecting, nurturing capacity of Jesus. This interpretation is confirmed by (6:38), Jesus will not lose a single one of those who have come to him (Burge, 2000:200).

6.3.3 Romans 8:28-30

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

The verb foreknown (προγινώσκω)¹² is the most controversial in (v. 29). Its etymology in both Greek and English suggests, usually means “to know ahead of time” (Moo, 2000:270). But that does not mean God determines people’s decisions beforehand. Also, the other passages using foreknowledge, especially 1 Peter 1:2 where the choosing is based on the foreknowing. The passages on knowing “before the foundation of the world” more naturally would connote God’s foreknowledge of who would make a faith decision. Therefore, it is better to link this with the

¹² (Louw & Nida, 1988:363) Προγινώσκω: is under the domain think and subdomain to choose, to select, to prefer, defined as “to choose beforehand, to select in advance.” Meaning those whom he had chosen beforehand, he had already decided should become like his Son (Rom.8:29). This word may also be understood as meaning “to know beforehand.”

emphasis on faith decision and interpret it as God's foreknowledge regarding those who would respond in faith to his call (Osborne, 2004:221-222).

In Acts 26:5 "they have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee." This being the commonest meaning of the verb, it is not surprising that many interpreters think it carries the same meaning in Romans 8:29. In this manner the human response of faith is made the object of God's "foreknowledge" and this foreknowledge, in turn, is the basis for predestination: for "whom he foreknew, he predestined" (Moo, 1996:532).

In what sense is the verb (προγινώσκω) "know beforehand" used here? It means that God chose them before the foundation of the world, God knew them intimately and chose them, or loved them specially and chose them. God's foreknowledge involves his ordaining; the history of the church and who is a part of it not a result of arbitrary human will or chance, but God's plan (Abernathy, 2006:581). It is the first in the series of five verbs outlining what God has done in fulfilment of his saving purpose. Each verb differs in meaning from the others, yet each is related to and grows out of the one which it follows. The series begins with foreknew and continues with predestined, called, justified and glorified. The progression demonstrates the position and situation of the believer past, present, and future. The progression demonstrates how things are being worked together for those who love God and are called (Santos, 2013:170)

Arminius (1629; 2015:185), concerning his understanding of "foreknowledge" writes:

This decree (predestination) has its foundation in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from all eternity those individuals who would, through his preventing grace, believe, and, through his subsequent grace would persevere, according to the before described administration of those means which are suitable and proper for conversion and faith; and, by which foreknowledge, he likewise knew those who would believe and persevere.

Arminius's understanding of the word foreknowledge differs from Calvin in a crucial way. He bases election of specific individual on God's foreknowledge of their treatment of his offer of saving grace, meaning foreknowledge of merit is the cause of predestination (Olson, 2006:184). Foreknowledge for him unpacks that God elected those he knew would enter Christ by faith to be his people and condemned those he foreknew would reject Christ. He posits that God has chosen those whom he will save because in eternity past he looked ahead into the future and foresaw who would believe in Christ (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:498).

He believes that a straightforward reading of Romans 8:29 fits well with the argument that predestination is based upon God's will to save and human response to the possibility of

salvation, for here we read that the predestined are “those God foreknew.” He supports his view by attributing to 1 Peter 1:2, for here we see that the elect are “those who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God.” Drawing from passages such as these, Arminius maintains that predestination is based upon God’s foreknowledge of which humans will and will not or would not accept the offer of salvation (McCall, 2005:19). But this would mean that God would not be sovereign; he would be dependent upon what he would see happening in the future.

On the contrary Calvin (1559; 2008:275) writes:

But the foreknowledge of God, which Paul mentions, is not a bare prescience, as some people absurdly imagine, but adoption by which he has always distinguished his children from the reprobate. In the same way Peter says, that the faithful had been elected to the sanctification of the Spirit according to the foreknowledge of God... Peter does not indeed flatter the faithful, as though everyone had been elected on account of his merit; but reminding them of the eternal counsel of God, he wholly deprives them of all worthiness.

Foreknowledge according to how Calvin understood it refers to God’s selective choice of individuals with whom to enter into a loving relationship. It involves God’s favourable disposition to certain people, even before they existed. Predestination does not in any way depend on the foreseen faith or good work of human beings, as Arminius indicates, but exclusively on the sovereign good pleasure of God, who is also the originator of faith and good works. Since all humans are sinners and have forfeited the blessings of God, there is no basis for such a distinction in them; and since even the faith and good works of the believers are fruit of the grace of God (Berkhof, 1996:115). The prescient view of election also fundamentally misunderstands the nature of God’s foreknowledge, especially as taught in Romans 8:29. To begin, this verse does not say that God foreknew facts concerning the actions or choices of his creatures; it says that God foreknew particular persons themselves (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017).

Calvin differs with Arminius’s interpretation of Romans 8:29, which God’s foreknowledge of faith is in view, as clearly reading one’s theology into the text. Paul does not say “whose faith he foreknew,” but “whom he foreknew.” He foreknew us, that is not to say that God was ever ignorant of the fact that we would believe. But in Romans 8:29, predestination is not dependent on faith, rather, God predestines us on the basis of his gracious commitment to us before the world was formed (McCall, 2005:21).

The biblical use of “know” and “foreknown” creates a different picture. In Scripture God’s knowing often refers to his entering into a relationship with someone. “You only have known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2). In four

of its six New Testament occurrences, “foreknow” and its cognate noun, “foreknowledge” has this sense (Acts 2:23; Romans 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2; 3:17) (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:500). This is probably the meaning the verb has here. What Paul is saying, then, is that God’s plan for us began in a decision to enter into a relationship with us. This led, in turn to his decision to predestine us (Moo, 2000:270). It is to be understood in the light of the use of (*yâda*) in such passages as (Gen. 18:19; Jer. 1:5) where it denotes that special taking knowledge of a person which is God’s electing grace (Cranfield, 1975:431).

Paul is using the biblical idiom of “know” for “love,” and he means, “whom God loved beforehand, he foreordained.” If “foreknew” here means only intellectual knowledge, then God does not know everything for then he would not know those whom he had not foreordained to justification and glorification (Palmer, 1972:38).

One should note the consistent use of the same morphology since the same implied subject (God) is also maintained throughout the entire passage, thus (προορίζω)¹³ is translated as “he predestined.” This is another rare verb in the Bible and ancient literature; it is found only six times in Scripture (Acts 4:28; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5, 11). Predestination is understood as occurring “before the ages” and related to the unchangeable glory that will be realised in the future by believers (Santos, 2013:169). This exposes that the Lord has predetermined the destiny of every person who will believe in him. Just as Jesus was crucified “by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23), so God also predestined every believer to salvation through the means of that atoning sacrifice (MacArthur, 1991:497). Paul is saying that God is the author of our salvation, and that from the beginning to the end. We are not to think that God can take action only when we graciously give him permission. Paul is saying that God initiates the whole process (Morris, 1988:332). The point is that God has predestined those upon whom he has set his covenantal affection. Note that the object of the verb *proorizō* is personal, “those whom” God has set his affection upon (Schreiner, 1998:452). We are not Christians first of all because of what we have decided about Christ, but because of what God decided about us before the foundation of the world Ephesians 1:4 (MacArthur, 1991:497).

Paul writes that those who were known beforehand and predestined are to be conformed to the image of his Son. Conformed (συμμορφός) is a unique adjective that is followed by a genitive phrase “to the image of his Son.” (Συμμορφός) is the accusative adjective which means “having a similar form, nature, or style” (Santos, 2013:171). In Ephesians he says that God predestined

¹³ (Louw & Nida, 1988:360) Προορίζω is under the domain think and subdomain to decide, to conclude defined as “to decide beforehand, to determine ahead of time, to decide upon ahead of time.” He uses the Romans 8:30 and Ephesians 1:5 as references.

believers to be adopted as his children (Eph. 1:5) and to live for his praise and glory (Eph. 1:11-12) (Kruse, 2012:356). Here in Romans 8:29 Paul points out that God predestined believers “to be conformed to the image of his Son”. It is God’s plan that his people become like his Son, not that they should muddle along in a modest respectability. This is all part of God’s predestination; he predestined us not only to be released from an unpleasant predicament, but in order that we might become like his Son (Morris, 1988:333).

In verses 28-30 Paul unfolds the mystery of predestination. Apart from Augustine, who embraced it wholeheartedly, most of the fathers found it somewhat puzzling to accept the apostle’s teaching at first value. They did not want to deny that the world was planned and ordered by God, but neither did they want to suggest that there were some people whom God had predestined to damnation. They were convinced that predestination did not remove the human free will. God’s call to salvation was generally understood to be universal (Bray & Oden, 1998:233). When we come across terms like “chose” and “predestine” (Rom. 8:29-30) we tend to read them in light of later theological debates such as the Greek fathers’ defence of free will against fatalism, Augustine’s defence of God’s sovereign grace against Pelagius, or the debates of the Reformation era. Paul’s own audience would think of Israel as the people God had chosen, and recognise that Paul’s argument was designed to show that God was so sovereign that he was not bound to choose (with regards to salvation) based on Jewish ethnicity (Keener, 2009:109-110).

Brendan (2007:268) indicates that Paul is applying to all believers the idea of election so central to the self-understanding of Israel as people of God. Behind the existence of all who are in Christ, Gentiles as well as Jews stand in the eternal choice of God. The emphasis is on the second verb predestined, it connotes that God knew his people, not just about what they would decide to do, since it refers to prior intimate knowledge of believers. It by nature becomes synonymous with God’s choice “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:20) (Osborne, 2004:221).

The word “called” (καλέω) in Romans 8:30 can scarcely mean “invited to be saved” here, for it is quite obvious that not all those who are invited to believe in Jesus are justified. Some will experience judgement on the last day as Paul teaches in many texts (Rom. 2:5, 26; 3:5-6) (Schreiner, 1998:454). Calvin (1559; 2008:141) says, “Another confirmation tending to establish our confidence is, that our election is connected to our calling.” Hence, the word “called” καλέω here must refer to an effectual calling, as described previously by Paul in Romans 8:29 all those who are called are justified (Santos, 2013:172).

Furthermore, it is evident that the calling is restricted only to some and not offered to all, since not all are justified. It follows, then, that calling must create faith since justification is by faith alone. What Paul teaches here is quite clear. God grants saving faith in his grace to some but not all, and those who thereby believe are justified (Schreiner, 2006:380). After they are called by God, they are also justified by him. Just as foreknowledge, predestination, and calling are the exclusive work of God, so is justification (Macarthur, 1991:499). The same construction was used here as the second half of the previous phrase but a new verb is introduced into this unbreakable chain that began in eternity past. The verb translated he justified *δικαιώω*, which has the idea of being legally declared righteous. Those who are called are declared righteous because they have become children of God by grace through faith in Christ Jesus (Santos, 2013:173). Augustine (390; 1982:27) writes:

“Those whom he called, these also he justified” (8:30), can likewise lead to the question whether all who are called are justified. But elsewhere we read, “many are called, but few are chosen” (Mt. 22:14). Still, since the elect have certainly been called, they obviously are not justified unless they have been called. But not all are called to justification, only those who are “called according to the purpose,” as Paul said above (8:28). This purpose, it must be understood, is God’s not theirs who are called. Paul explains “according to the purpose” when he says: “since those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son” (8:29). For not all who are called are called according to the purpose, for that purpose pertains to the foreknowledge and predestination of God.

As with foreknowledge, predestination, calling, and justification, glorification is inseparable from the other elements and are exclusively the work of God. As noted previously no one whom God foreknows will fail to be predestined, called, justified, and ultimately glorified (Macarthur, 1991:500). Using the same construction as previously, *δοξάζω* (“and those whom he justified”) is now mentioned in relation to being “glorified.” Furthermore, the final clause and final verb are both introduced with the same construction. The clause *τούτους καὶ δοξάζω* is translated “he also glorified”. The verb *δοξάζω* means glorify, praise, or honour; it is used in 53 different verses of the New Testament (Santos, 2013:174).

In conclusion Romans 8:28-30 is a depiction of God’s sovereign work in election, salvation, and ultimately glorification of the believer. The passage is both soteriological and eschatological. It primarily addresses God’s calling to the elect, and the process of justifying them, and glorifying them in the future (Schreiner, 1998:454). Verses 28-30 serve in a complementary relationship to the first 27 verses of Romans 8 (and, of course, to the final verses of the chapter). Romans 8:1-11 addresses the empowerment by the dwelling Holy Spirit to be free from sin. Verses 12-17 describe the sonship through adoption that allows the believer to enjoy in the inheritance with Christ. Verses 18-27 describe how the believer should understand present sufferings of the

world. Verses 28-30 forge a relationship wherein believers understand their position in God, which is summarised in verse 39 to affect that nothing can separate believers from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus (Santos, 2013:174).

Paul explains that believers are foreknown and predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son. They are being conformed in this present day by the refiner's fire of suffering. In the future, these same believers will be completed by the glorification done by God. The transition from suffering to glory proves that God has everything under subjection and is working all things together for the believer's future glorification (Venema, 2016:44). Between the start and finish of God's plan are three steps: being called (Rom. 1:6; 8:28), being justified (Rom. 3:24), and being glorified (8:17), and in the process not a single person is lost. God completes his plan without hindrances. Believers can rejoice in the knowledge that if they love God and are called according to his purpose, they are secure in their salvation (Santos, 2013:174). The exposition of the doctrine of election places special affirmation on the comfort that believers may derive from this doctrine. The doctrine of predestination and election must be handled judiciously and in a way that not only ascribes glory to God for his grace in Christ but also comforts believers and assures them of the certainty of their salvation (Barrett, 2017:259-260).

6.3.4 Romans 9:10-13

“For this is what the promise said: “About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son.” And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad-in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls- she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

At this point a Jewish antagonist might have questioned Paul's argument on the basis that Ishmael, as compared with Isaac, was not a true son of Abraham. His mother was Hagar, the maidservant of Sarah. So Paul strengthened his case by bringing in the account of the two sons of Rebekah (Morris, 1988:356). In this case there could be no question of legitimacy. Not only did Jacob and Esau have the same mother and father, they were twins as well. Even before they were born or had done anything either good or bad, Rebekah was informed that the older would serve the younger (Gen. 25:23) (MacArthur, 1994:25-26). In his sovereignty God determined that was the way it would be. This confirms the divine purpose that election depends not upon what we might do but upon God's calling. Neither national heritage nor personal merit has anything to do with the sovereign freedom of God in assigning priority (Morris, 1988:356).

The one Scripture which most emphatically of all asserts the absolute sovereignty of God in connection with his determining the destiny of his creatures is the ninth of Romans. We shall not attempt to review here the entire chapter, but will confine ourselves to verses 10-13 (Sproul, 2009:303). This pericope has repeatedly been a battleground in theological debate over soteriology (doctrine of salvation). The focus has been on issues of election, human freedom and divine sovereignty. Romans 9, has provided foundational material for the theologies of Augustine, Luther and Calvin (Taylor, 2013:25). Paul's treatment of the doctrine of election in Romans 9-11 is arguably the most extensive treatment of the topic in all of Scripture. Due to the extensiveness of Paul's engagement with the doctrine of election in this passage, the interpretation of this passage has inevitably played a crucial role in theological reflection on the Scripture's teaching (Venema, 2015:7). Arminius (1635; 2015:75) writes:

There is a manifest difference between Esau and Jacob, and Adam and Eve. For the former, though not yet born, could be considered as sinners, for both had already conceived in sin; if they had not been created, they could not be considered as such, for they were such in no possible sense; not even when they had been created by God, and remained yet in their original integrity. It cannot be inferred from this, that "persons, and all causes originating from, or situated in persons" preceded election. For sin, in which Jacob and Esau were then already conceived, did not proceed. Yet I admit that sin was not the cause that God should love one and hate the other, should elect one and reprobate the other, but it was a condition requisite in the object of that decree... this is apparent from Romans 9. For Esau had been conceived in sin when those words were addressed by God to Rebecca, in the same chapter also, the elect and the reprobate are said to be "vessels of mercy" and "of wrath," which terms could not be applied to them apart from a consideration to sin.

Arminius argues on the other side, and indicates that this is no reason why election of God should not make a difference between human beings according to merits of works, for God foresees who those are who by future works would be worthy or unworthy of his grace. He affirms that Esau was justly rejected, for he was naturally a child of wrath (Skidmore, 2011:121). He believes in prevenient grace that enabled depraved person to believe and be saved, but it does not guarantee such since it may be rejected. Prevenient grace is sufficient for salvation but not efficacious (irresistible) (Combs, 2005:4). By grounding God's electing purpose in human beings' foreseen faith; Arminius makes humans the determinative cause of salvation and not God. On this view, what ultimately differentiates the saved people from unsaved is not something God does but something human beings have done (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:502). Calvin (1559; 2008:617-618) writes:

The advocates of foreknowledge insist that it is to be found in the virtues and vices of humans. For they take the short and easy method of asserting, that God showed in the person of Jacob, that he elects those who are worthy of his grace; and in the person of Esau, that he rejects those who he foresees to be

unworthy. Such is their confident assertion: but what does Paul say? "Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of him who calls- she was told "the older will serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:11-13). If foreknowledge had anything to do with this distinction of the brothers, the mention of time would have been out of place... if works procure favour, a value ought to have been put upon them before Jacob was born, just as if he had been of full age. But in explaining the difficulty, the apostle goes on to show that the adoption of Jacob proceeded not on works but on the calling of God.

In contrast Calvin expounds that God's choice was based upon his sovereign elective will. He chose before the boys were born. He chose before they had done any good or evil. Historical and theological truths have demonstrated that God, out of his sovereign purpose, has chosen some to salvation, but not others (Gromacki, 2014:54). Just as Paul did when he stated that election occurred "before the foundation of the world" in Ephesians 1:4, so here he makes the point that God's choice predates Jacob and Esau precisely in order to rule out personal merit as the ground of his decision (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:502). Although there is not an exact symmetry between election and reprobation, election reveals God's undeserved mercy, reprobation reveals God's justice in leaving some in their sin, the ultimate explanation for the salvation of some and not others rests in God's electing purpose (Barrett, 2017:258). Calvin's place as a leading theologian in the Reformed tradition is undeniable. With respect to the articulation of the doctrine and the interpretation of Romans 9, his influence is very important. He understands Paul's appeal to God's purpose of election in the distinction made between Jacob and Esau. He characteristically argues that God's purpose of election terminates upon individuals whom he elects to save (Venema, 2015:9).

At this stage Paul's analysis of scripture moves to the next patriarchal generation. Here God has given a strong indication that his eschatological design runs solely by free choice and the exercise of creative power (Schreiner, 1998:501). The indication comes in the divine attitude taken towards Rebecca's twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Before the twins were born and therefore either had a chance to do good or evil and so merit one way or the other (vv. 10-11), God reversed the natural order by telling their mother that the "older" was to serve the "younger" (V. 12b, quoting Gen. 25:23) (Brendan, 2007:292).

Paul uses the Old Testament story of God's sovereign selection of Isaac and Jacob to establish a basic principle about the way God selects people. The language Paul uses and the context of the verses make it clear that he applies this principle to God's election of individuals to salvation (Moo, 2000:307). He witnesses that those twins had not yet been born and had done neither good nor evil, so that God's purpose according to election might stand and would not be preceded by human merits. Paul is not referring to a divine election of human will or human

nature, since both of these were subject to death and condemnation. He referred to an election which was clearly of grace, an election that does not seek out those who deserve to be chosen but choose those who do not deserve by grace (Burns, 2012).

God's love for Jacob and hatred for Esau ought not to be construed as temperamental. Malachi 1:2 is appealing to the course of history as fulfilling the purpose of God declared long before. This should not be interpreted to mean that God actually hated Esau, because Paul is arguing that the exclusion of so many Jews from the family of God did not constitute a failure on God's part to maintain his covenant relationship with Israel. He had not broken his promise to the progeny of Abraham. The "hatred" is simply a perhaps to us strange- way to saying Esau was not the object of God's electing purposes (Garland & Longman, 2008:151). Kruse (2012:279) adds that what distinguishes Jacob from Esau, Israel from Edom is God's choice to love the one and hate the other, just as it was his sovereign choice that the elder would serve the younger. The illustration proves that God has not simply guaranteed his blessing to all the physical descendants of Abraham. Receiving the blessing of the promise has always been a matter of God's own choosing (Moo, 2002:149).

Paul's argument by using Jacob and Esau proves that grace is completely free and based on the sovereign choice of God. Grace does not discover some to be chosen but chooses them prior to any operation of their wills: Paul does not mean the choice of the human will or of nature since the condition of death and condemnation was equally present in both of them, but he undoubtedly means the choice of grace, which does not discover those to be chosen but makes them such (Roach, 2008:137). This election is out of divine grace, totally undeserved by anyone. Romans 11:6 says "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." Neither Jew nor Gentile can do religious works to gain the righteousness of God. Salvation is a free gift, based upon trust in the giver of that gift, not a reward for meritorious effort (Gromacki, 2014:68).

This is the case in respect to Jacob and Esau, something Paul's Jewish contemporaries would affirm, then it should come as no surprise to them that God's choice is the determining factor in the present time as well. He decides who will experience the blessings promised in the gospel preached by his apostle (Kruse, 2012:379). His quotation of (Mal. 1:2-3), introduced with one of his favourite formulas ("just as it is written"), reinstates v. 12b and expands on it by making clear that the contrasting destinies of Jacob and Esau were not simply seen in advance by God but were caused by him (Moo, 1996:584). Paul witnesses that those twins had not yet been born and had done nothing of good or evil, yet God set his affectionate love upon Jacob and withheld it from Esau (Schreiner, 1998).

These verses are among the most important verses in this chapter for a distinctive formulation of free grace apart from human merit. Every human has a sinful nature inherited from Adam and deserves to die prior to committing any good or evil actions. The point of election is that God gives grace without any regard to works, faith, deeply hidden merit or the activity of the soul in the past life (Roach, 2008:137). Venema (2015:8) adds that the purpose of election does not involve the choice of an indefinite number of persons who meet certain God-ordained stipulations in order to be saved. If this were the case, divine election would only entail the choice of a class of persons who do what is required of them in order to be saved.

Paul's appeal to these passages may not, therefore, lose sight of the broader, historical perspective references to God's dealing with the people of Israel and Edom that are part of the meaning of these passages in their original setting (Venema, 2015:49). Since the distinction between Jacob and Esau in the Old Testament is the distinction between two peoples, Paul's appeal to this distinction must likewise be regarded as a distinction between corporate peoples, elect Israel and non-elect Edom (Schreiner, 2006:381). While it is undeniable that the two individuals Jacob and Esau, are closely linked in the history of redemption with two peoples, it is most important to consider why Paul in this instance appeals to God's merciful choice of Jacob instead of Esau (Morris, 1988:356).

Priority has to be given to the way Paul appeals to Malachi's prophecy, not to its meaning solely in terms of its original Old Testament setting (Venema, 2015:49). Since Paul uses the example of Jacob and Esau to make a point regarding God's purpose of election, which distinguishes between those who are true children of the promise and those who are not, it is impossible to deny the particularity of God's choice of Jacob, the younger of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca (Taylor, 2013:28). Undoubtedly, God's merciful choice of Jacob has implications for his purpose with respect to all who belong to the true Israel. This was true in the Old Testament history, and it remains true, as Paul argues more extensively throughout the entirety of Romans 9-11 (Miskin, 2014:42). But the purpose of God in the salvation of all the elect from among the people of Israel more generally can only be understood, when it is recognised that this purpose issues in the salvation of specific persons to whom God is pleased to show his mercy (Kruse, 2012:380).

When Paul adduces the example of God's choice of Jacob, he reinforces what he has already established in the case of Isaac. Because God's word has always been effective unto salvation in the case of those who are the recipients of God's mercy according to his purpose of election, God's promises to the people of Israel are not void or ineffectual (Venema, 2015:50). Just as the distinction between Isaac and Ishmael is grounded in God's gracious choice, so the distinction between Jacob and Esau illustrates the sheer graciousness of God's undeserved mercy toward

those whom he saves (Kruse, 2012:378). In the case of Jacob and Esau, because they are twin sons of one father and distinguished within God's purpose of election before they were born, this point becomes most clear (Ferguson, 2013:114).

6.3.5 Ephesians 1:4-6

“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

Ephesians is Paul's trinitarian epistle. The trinity is seen in several texts in Ephesians (1:3-14; 2:18, 22; 3:14-17; 4:4-6; 5:18-20). Ephesians 1:3-14 focuses on the work of the triune God in accomplishing salvation. God the Father planned our salvation (Eph. 1:3-6). God the Son (Jesus Christ) purchased our salvation by his death on the cross (Eph. 1:7-12). God the Spirit (the Holy Spirit) protects our salvation as the seal (Eph. 1:13-14) (Gromacki, 2015:9).

Paul starts with the conjunction καθώς which can be translated “even as” “according as” (“for” NIV), probably expressing some casual sense and introduces the long and detailed description of the way in which God blessed us. We know that God has blessed us in Christ because he chose us in him and accomplished the entire blessings mentioned in this pericope (Longman & Garland, 2006:48). The conjunction he uses to introduce this is often interpreted as a comparative adverb, it makes better contextual sense to take it as a usual conjunction (translated for NIV) and see it is giving the basis for praise. The force of this carries throughout (1:4-14) with the rest of the passage providing important reasons why God is so worthy of blessing and praise (Arnold, 2010).

This passage makes it clear that God's sovereignly chose us before he made the heavens and the earth. The two parallel sections (1:4-6 and 1:11-12) strongly emphasise God's initiative, decision, and choice in our salvation. It is conspicuous that Paul never says that we chose God or that the basis of election is rooted in God's choice of those who would believe in him (Arnold, 2010:95). Paul begins his description of God's blessing by saying that God “chose us” which is common word meaning to pick up, select, or choose something or someone (Longman & Garland, 2006:48). Grammatically, the verb (ἐκλέγομαι)¹⁴ in (vv. 3-14) is not subordinate to some other element and although grammatical priority does not always translate into conceptual priority, it probably does so here. Conceptually, Paul considers God's free choice of people to

¹⁴ ἐκλέγομαι (Louw & Nida, 1988:361) under domain think and subdomain to choose, to select, to prefer, defined as “to make a special choice based upon significant preference, often implying a strongly favourable attitude toward what is chosen.” He references Luke 9:35, Acts 13:17, Romans 9:11.

be the clearest indicator of the lavished nature of his grace, as the frequent repetition of the theme of God's gracious initiative in blessing his people (vv. 5, 9, 11) (Thielman, 2010:48).

The Greek middle voice of the verb "to choose" allows to translation "God chose for himself" (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:11). The Father chose the heirs of salvation, select those who were to be quickened from dead (Eph. 2:1) and saved. He chose them in Christ in connection with his work and office as mediator, giving them to him to be redeemed (John 17:11, 12); not after humankind was created, nor after the fall of humankind, but "before the foundation of the world" (Arnold, 2010:79). Election means that God chooses people, and this teaching cannot be turned around to the thought that people choose God. It means that the existence of the people of God can be explained only on the basis of God's character, plan, and action, not in some quality in the people who are chosen (Snodgrass, 1996:48). The concept of God's choosing his people goes back to Israel's experience in the Old Testament, where again and again the point made that Israel's election is due only to God's decision and action, not Israel's work or choice. Yahweh chose Israel to be his own people; Israel did not choose Yahweh. The initiative was his alone (Deut. 7:6-8) (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:11).

Verse 4 contains a strong statement of predestination (ἐκλέγομαι ἡμᾶς ἐναυτός πρό καταβολή κόσμος) "before the foundation of the world." The expression signifies, before the earth was founded. For Ephesians, God chose those who were to be saved before the creation (Slater, 2012:42). Calvin (1558-1559; 1999:159) writes,

The foundation and first cause, both of our calling and of all the benefits which we received from God, is here declared to be his eternal election. If the reason is asked, why God has called us to enjoy the gospel, why he daily bestows upon us so many blessings, why he opens to us the gate of heaven, the answer will be constantly found in this principle, that "he has chosen us before the foundation of the world". The very time when the election took place proves it to be free; for what could we have deserved, or what merit did we possess, before the world was made? ... We were all lost in Adam; and therefore, had not God, through his own election, rescued us from perishing; there was nothing to be foreseen. The argument is used in the Epistle to the Romans, where, speaking of Jacob and Esau, he says, "Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls."

Calvin informs us of the time when God made choice of those who were to be his children by Jesus Christ. It was before Adam had fallen and plunged his race into sin and wretchedness, long before Adam was created, even before the world itself was founded, that God chose us in Christ. When we pay careful attention to the separate clauses of this passage, there is no reason to doubt the doctrine of election. Paul clearly states that anything good appearing in humans is the result of election. They are elected to be holy which refutes the argument that election is derived from foreknowledge (Miskin, 2014:41). The temporal clause "before the

foundation of the world” indicates that God’s decision was made in eternity, before time and creation. The world “foundation” depicts the creation of the world in terms of a building. The meaning of the temporal clause is expressed simply by “before the world was made” or “before God created the world” (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:11).

Arminius (1635; 2015:99) in his examination of verse 4 writes:

Election is said here to be “from eternity;” I grant it. It is said to have been made “in Christ;” I acknowledge it. It is said to be “unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ;” I consent to it. I do not, however, see that either of these statements is opposed to the idea, that sin is the condition, requisite in the object of election and reprobation. It is true that any reference to us, as a cause of our own election, is denied. Predestination precedes persons, in respect to their actual existence, not as they are considered by the deity. It refers to causes, before they actually exist, but not before they are foreseen by God from eternity, though, in the foresight of God, they exist, not as the causes of predestination, but as a condition requisite in the object.

Arminius unpacks that while faith is the condition for being elected, God alone is the cause of election. In response to the fall of humanity, which was not in a sense willed or rendered certain by God, God chose Christ as the Redeemer for that group of people who repent and believe, and chose all who repent and believe in Christ as the elect (Olson, 2006:185).

In the choice of a word to translate “choose” or “select,” it is important to check the connotation, for many times a term for “choose” may suggest a selection based upon a desire to eliminate or to discard rather than to choose because of some value or worth. At times one would not want to use a term “choose” based on special worthiness of the object chosen, since this would violate the whole theological implications of God’s choice of his people. Therefore, the implication of any verb meaning, “to choose” must point to some purpose for the person who does the choosing and should not be dependent upon the idea of worthiness in the individual chosen (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:11).

The verb ἐκλέγομαι means to make a choice in accordance with significant preference, select someone or something for oneself, is in the middle voice and may signify that God chose in his own interest. Salvation, including election must be seen as theocentric (God centred) rather than anthropocentric (human centred) (Gromacki, 2015:22). Chrysostom (1889, 2004:51) writes:

“Even as,” he proceeds, “He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love.” His meaning is somewhat of this sort. Through whom he has blessed us, through him he has chosen us. And he, then, it is that shall bestow upon us all those rewards hereafter. He is the very judge that shall say, ““Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘come, you who are blessed by my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mat. 25:34). And this is the point which he is anxious to prove in almost all his Epistles, that ours is no novel system, but that is had thus been figured from the very first, that it is not the result of any change of purpose, but had been in fact a divine dispensation and fore-ordained.

In this view one's eternal destiny is predetermined before the person is even born. Whether a person goes to the kingdom or lake of fire, it is based solely on God's choice (Wilkin, 2012:5). "Before the foundation of the world" does not mean just prior to creation rather it expresses that God's purposes are rooted in the depths of his nature. God is the kind of God who loves and seeks his people (Deut. 7:7-9). From all eternity, before the foundation of the world, and therefore, completely apart from any merit or deserving that any person could have, God chose us in Christ. By sovereign election, those who are saved were placed in eternal union with Christ before creation even took place (MacArthur, 1986:11). Election is not some strange, unnecessary doctrine, but merely another way to speaking of God's grace and salvation (Snodgrass, 1996:49).

The principal reason for the praise in verse 6 is that "he chose us" (ἐκλέγομαι), this term was commonly used for God's choice of individuals: he chose Abraham (Neh. 9:7), Aaron (Ps 105:26) David (1 Kings 11:34) and Eli's father (1 Sam. 2:28). Most importantly, he chose Jacob/Israel (Isa. 41:8; 44:1-2) to set his love upon him and his descendant (Deut. 7:7; 10:10) and for Jacob to be his special possession (14:2). The verb is also used to speak of God's choosing Christ. When God spoke from the cloud at the scene of the transfiguration, he said, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him" (Luke 9:35) (Arnold, 2010:79-80). God chose certain individuals to be saved before he created the world, without any foreseen merit in them (Gromacki, 2015:21).

The simple pronoun (ἡμᾶς) easily translated "us," expresses the object of the divine activity in this context contains no indication of any preconditions related to election or predestination. The sealing of believers by the Holy Spirit has two prerequisites: hearing and believing, but since those activities in human history, occurs at the point of conversion, they are not to be transferred into eternity past as conditions for election (Crawford, 2000:82). Human beings are the direct object of God's election, not Jesus Christ. Hence, the emphasis in the verse is not on the election of Christ, but the election of human beings (Schreiner, 2006:380).

He chose us in him, (ἐκλέγομαι ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτός) "in him" (ἐν αὐτός) (v. 4a), Calvin (1558-1559; 1999:159) writes:

This is the second proof that election is free; for if we are chosen in Christ, it is not of ourselves. It is not from a perception of anything that we deserve, but because our heavenly Father has introduced us through privilege of adoption, into the body of Christ. In short, the name of Christ excludes all merit, and everything which humans are capacitated to accomplish; for when he says that we are chosen in Christ, it follows that in ourselves we are unworthy.

God's purpose of election is made known through the gracious call of the gospel; Christ is the mirror of our election. Only as believers place their trust in Christ will they find the comfort and assurance that election properly affords them. The scriptural teaching regarding predestination especially emphasises that believers are saved by grace alone and it affords believers a solid

basis for the assurance of God's favour (Barrett, 2017:260). The first chapter to the Ephesians clearly asserts that the election is made in Christ, because it is of the grace, by which we have redemption in the blood of Christ (Arminius, 1635; 2015:75).

The "in Christ" formula is one of Paul's favourite phrases in this epistle, occurring at least thirty-four times. There are ten references in this section alone (1:3-14) and two in this passage. The exact meaning is difficult to determine and there is much diversity of opinion, but an accurate understanding of election and predestination is impossible with it (Crawford, 2000:83). The preposition can express locality or instrumentality. The latter sense is predominant in Paul's use of it in Ephesians in connection with Christ. The assertion in Christ is that it indicates that it is the agent through whom election is accomplished (Abasciano, 2006:267). It may be relatively easy to render our union with Christ as "our being united with Christ" or "in close fellowship with Christ." But what is perhaps more complicated with the phrase is the manner in which it is to be combined with the statement God had already chosen us to be his. Some scholars assume that through our union with Christ could be combined directly with "he chose us". Calvin in his comment relates through our union with Christ more closely to the fact of our belonging to God. It therefore may be appropriate to render the phrase through our union with Christ as a type of means (often expressed as cause), as in the following statement: God had already chosen us to belong to him by means of our being united with Christ or because of our being one with Christ (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:12).

The whole process of salvation is a gift from God. Scripture does not speak of salvation as accomplished by works which we perform and merit salvation. Over and over again Paul opposes faith to works (Helm, 2014:72). We should praise God not only because he has given us Christ's blessings; we should praise God because he gives us Christ's status. Spiritual blessings are ours because through our union with Christ, we have his sanctity and his sonship (Chapell, 2009:22).

God chose believers so that they might be (ἅγιος καὶ ἄμωμος κατενώπιον αὐτός ἐν ἀγάπῃ) (holy and blameless before him in love). Here too Paul uses the traditional language of election. According to Deuteronomy, the Lord's choice for Israel "out of all the people of the earth" as his people meant they should be "holy" (separated) by their behaviour from the peoples who surrounded them in the land (Thielman, 2010:49). Longman & Garland (2006:49) add that these adjectives have a rich background in the Old Testament and describe God's requirements for animals to be used in sacrifices. Calvin (1558-1559; 1999:159) writes:

This leads us to conclude that holiness, purity, and every excellence that is found among human beings, are the fruits of election; so that once more Paul expressly puts aside every consideration of merit. If God had foreseen in us anything worthy of election, it would have been stated in language the very

opposite of what is here employed, and which plainly means that all our holiness and purity of life flow from the election of God.

We are not elected to give ourselves over to permissiveness, but to show by our deeds that God has adopted us to be children and taken us into his keeping in order to dwell in us by his Holy Spirit and to unite us to himself in all perfection of righteousness (Kuivenhoven, 2014:58). According to Arnold *et al.*, (2002:9) God's purpose for his people has always been for them to become like him in holiness. When he gave the Israelites the law after delivering them from Egypt, he declared, "For I am the LORD who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy". They must take precautions not to fall under the influence of the idolatrous customs of the indigenous peoples because God's choice of Israel as his own people has set them apart (Thielman, 2010:49). The two Greek adjectives are here used in an ethical sense and are largely synonymous. The second one means "without defect, blemish, or imperfection"; the idea is based on the requirement in the Hebrew sacrificial system that an animal offered in sacrifice to God had to be perfect, without any defect or blemish. The two adjectives occur together in 5:27, and the whole clause here is closely related to Colossians 1:22, "to present us as holy, blameless, and faultless before him" (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:12).

God has chosen us before the foundation of the world in order to create for us the possibility of holiness. It is what he has purpose for us; not possibility but realization (Jones, 1978:103). The attachment of the phrase ἐν ἀγίατη to holy and blameless means that in the benediction Paul anticipates the concrete ethical exhortation that he gives later in the letter (4:1-6:20). Paul begins that part of the letter by urging his readers to live in a way that is worthy of the calling with which they were called and then specifies that they should bear with one another in love (4:1-2; 4:15-16; 5:2, 25, 28, 33; 6:23) (Thielman, 2010:50-51).

Election does indeed bring the privilege, but not so that people would bask in privilege or disdain others. Election always brings responsibility; God has chosen us to do something—namely, to live holy and blameless lives before him, verse 4 (Snodgrass, 1996:47). "Holy" (recall Paul's description of the reader as "holy one" in v. 1) implies separated to God for his purposes. By extension, holy connotes moral purity, an idea brought out more clearly in the companion term. "Blameless" (Ex. 29:1, 37-38; Lev. 14:10) conveys the senses of sound, whole, without defects, innocent, and pure. God purposed in choosing the church to establish a spotless people who accomplish his purposes (Longman & Garland, 2006:49). Barker & Kohlenberger (1994:752) add that the two words "holy" and "blameless" demonstrate that election in Christ has a moral view. The meaning of holy in this context is primarily ethical; it is more than just "good." In some languages the word traditionally used for "holy" means "taboo." This idea should be avoided here, and a word or expression that mean "clean" or "pure" should be used, if it is clearly understood that spiritual or moral purity is meant. The phrase "with

blemish” is simply a negative way of stating essentially what is stated positively in the term holy (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:12)

The verb προορίζ¹⁵ is used only of God, and it serves to emphasise God’s sole and complete initiative and authority in the experience of salvation, his independence of action based on a decision already made in the past, in God’s own eternal time. The full theological implication of the word is brought out in Romans 8:29-30 (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:13). It expresses the fact that the decree is prior to the realisation of its object. It does not mean before others, but before fulfilment, which is not strictly a time referent, but it is clear from the immediate context that this divine activity is before creation also (Crawford, 2000:80). By predestination Paul affirms that God determined ahead of time certain states of affairs: that he conforms believers to Christ’s image (Romans 8:29-30). The verb’s only other use in the New Testament is in Acts 4:28, and specifies God’s determination of details of Christ’s death. In keeping with these uses, Paul then affirms that God is determined to adopt us into his family through the redemptive work of Christ (1:7) as his own (Longman & Garland, 2006:49).

Paul next uses the aorist participle (προορίζ) “having predestined” to describe God’s choice fully. Just as the preposition (before) in verse 4 placed God’s choice of his people before the foundation of the world, so Paul prefixed this preposition to place the verb “predestined” to place God’s decision to mark off a people for himself chronologically before the world began (Thielman, 2010:51). The aorist participle translated “having predestined” is related to the main verb “he chose us” in verse 4. It expresses either antecedent action or else, which means more likely, the manner or means by which the choice was made: “he chose us... by predestining us” (Bratcher & Nida, 1982:13).

The verb appears six times in the New Testament and is used exclusively of God (Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 1:5 in relation to sonship; 1:11; Acts 4:28) and serves to emphasise his sole initiative and authority in our salvation (Kuivenhoven, 2014:45). This was understood in Graeco-Roman law as referring to the adoption as sons of those who were not so by birth. It signified entry to a privileged position. Paul applies this term from the Graeco-Roman world to the special relationship which believers have with God (O’Brien, 1999:102). God not only chooses us to be in Christ, but at the same time he decided to bring us into a relationship with himself that could best be described through the metaphor of adoption. The advancement in thought here is the emphasis placed on the close personal relation with God. We also find that he made this decision out of a heart of love (Arnold, 2010:82). Ephesians 1:5 indicates that before the time

¹⁵ προορίζ (Louw & Nida, 1988:360) is under the domain think and subdomain to decides, to conclude, meaning to come to a decision beforehand “to decide beforehand, to determine ahead of time. God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would bring us to himself as his sons (Eph. 1:5). It appears in the New Testament in Romans 8:29, 30; Acts 4:28; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Ephesians 1:5, 11.

began God chose to adopt humans into a personal and intimate relationship with himself (O'Brien, 1999:103).

Paul argues that election and predestination create expressions of God's will and purpose in the world (Newman, 1996:242). In this full phrase which focuses on the divine purpose that believers should praise God for his grace, the noun "glory" is used adjectivally to assert that this grace is truly glorious (Gromacki, 2015:85). "Glory" is often used in the Bible to describe the manifestation of God's presence with his people; it refers to his saving presence (O'Brien, 1999:104). Paul opens this discussion of God's blessing of the world with praise for God (1:3), and now, having narrated two chief examples of such blessing (election in Christ; predestination through Christ), he again fittingly invites worship (Newman, 1999:243).

The purpose for which he predestined believers to be his adoptive children is related to the attitude of praise. He did this for the praise of his glorious grace, which he graciously gave us in Christ (Thielman, 2010:53). Verse 5 explains the goal of God's predestination for us. It was God's will and pleasure to adopt us as members of his family through the work of Christ. We should not miss the remarkable statements of verse 2 and 3. First we are told that grace and peace come from the God our Father (1:2), and then we are told to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Chapell, 2009:24).

We conclude by asserting that the cause, reason and foundation of our election are God himself- his sovereign will and good pleasure. The cause is not good works. Election is unto good works and does not arise out of good works (Eph. 1:4). Election is decreed before the foundation of the world, so that the elected did not yet exist to perform good works. Thus neither is the cause foreknowledge of works (Arnold, 2010:79). We are all lost in Adam; and therefore, had not God, through his own election, rescued us from perishing by his own election; there was nothing to be foreseen. Election cannot be pushed beyond the bounds of God's good pleasure; otherwise humans could begin to wickedly investigate the causes of God's will. His will alone is the cause of all things (Miskin, 2014:44).

Ephesians 1:4-6 highlights the very important doctrine of election, an examination of individual words and phrases within the section reflects whether it supports the teaching of cooperate or individual election. The verses are part of a doxology that occupies 1:3-14 and emphasises God's activity in benefiting his people. Various words and phrases within the doxology that contribute toward a correct understanding of election are "he chose," "he predestined," "us," "in Christ," "holy," "blameless," "with spiritual blessing," and "in the heavenly places." An examination of those leads to the conclusion that God in eternity past selected certain individual to receive a comprehensive spiritual package that includes justification and adoption (Crawford, 2000:75). The decree is specific and particular; it concerns specific individuals. The decree does not concern some general concern on the part of God to save those who believe. Rather, it

concerns individuals, not yet existent, whom God destines for eternal salvation. It determines and provides the means for the accomplishment of this end for each elected individual (Miskin, 2014:42).

6.4 Conclusion

We have begun to see that God's covenant with human beings is gracious and everlasting, resting on his oath that should it fail, he will be torn in two (Gen. 15). The covenant, of course, by its very nature includes the response of humans. "Abraham believed, and it was reckoned to him as righteous" (Gen. 15:6). However, never are the works of human beings the deciding factor in whether or not this covenant gets fulfilled. To be sure, Abraham's participation and obedience were integral to the covenant, but in order for the covenant to be everlasting, there must be a covenant keeper who is himself internally faithful.

The doctrine of predestination is not in question, God elected or sovereignly chose Israel not because they were the biggest, the best or the most righteous people (Deut. 7:7-8). He chose Abraham who was an idolater. Since God is the only true God, he is not obliged nor does he need to love anyone or anything or show kindness to anyone. But he graciously extended his love to the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, we see election everywhere, Jesus chose the disciples, they did not chose him (John 15:16). No one comes unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). Salvation in the New Testament is the gift of God by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). It is expounded that believing is the consequence and not the cause of God's degree. Election is limited to those who are ordained to eternal life, Acts 13:48 says, "... as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." This appointment of God is not to mere external privileges but to "eternal life," not to service but to salvation itself, all that are appointed to eternal life will most certainly believe.

This gift of God was given before the foundation of the world. God loved his own people before the foundation of the world. They are all his and he gave them to the Son. We have learned from the several passages that God has ordained to eternal life certain ones, and that in consequence of his ordination they in due time believe that God's predestination to salvation of his own elect, is not due to any good thing in them nor to anything meritorious from them, but solely of his grace. We are saved by the unconditional election of God. God graciously supplies the individual with the ability to meet the condition of faith, or trust, in the redemptive work of Christ on the individual's behalf.

In order that no flesh should glory in his presence, that God chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, not because they were so, but in order that they "should be holy and without blame before him." The very grace by which we are saved was in God's purpose, given

us in Christ Jesus before the world began; that long before we were actually created, God's elect stood present before his mind.

CHAPTER 5 THE APPLICATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREDESTINATION OF THE SAINTS IN TERMS OF SOTERIOLOGY TO THE BLACK REFORMED CHURCH

7.1 Introduction

The doctrine of predestination has been rejected both in former times and in our days by a greater part of the professors of Christianity. It is the source of endless controversy in the Protestant churches and hinders the acceptance of the Reformed faith more broadly (Skidmore, 2011:139). Calvin (1559; 2008:607) says, "The covenant of life is not preached equally to all, and among those, to whom it is preached, does not always meet with the same reception."

The great difficulty of election is not how to understand it, but how to accept its rich truth that we who, by grace, have been made believers are accepted by God in Christ. Paul says that God chose us before we were born, before we had done right or wrong, before anything existed except God himself (Eph. 1:4). He chose us when we were ungodly and unlovable so that we should become holy and blameless in God's sight (Beeke, 2010:93).

The doctrine of predestination is intimately linked and correlated with typical Reformation emphasis on salvation by grace alone (*sola gratia*) through the work of Christ alone (*solus Christus*). Since fallen human sinners are incapable of saving themselves, and since the faith required to benefit from Christ's saving work is a gracious gift of God, then the formulation of the doctrine of predestination should provide a theological account of the divine provision of Christ as mediator and the efficacy of his saving work for his people (Barrett, 2017:277). Grace is the favour of God that is lavished on us entirely apart from considerations of merit. Since humans are totally depraved there can be no one deserving grace; there is no merit for one who has no good (Picirilli, 2002:23). It is the heart of the Christian gospel. It is a doctrine that touches the very depths of human existence because it not only reveals to us the very heart of God but draws us back into that precious communion with him that was lost at the fall (Trueman, 2017:19).

In the present chapter we shall consider, somewhat briefly, the practical application to the church of the great truth which we have pondered in its various ramifications in earlier pages. We will focus in particular on the view of the Black Reformed Church on predestination, the biblical model for the church and progress to show that the church should look at the doctrine of predestination from its basis (trinitarian love), its purpose (God's love for the Son), and its result (union with Christ). We will look at specific texts in both the Old and New Testament, to identify

the applicable parts of Scripture that show the basis, purpose and result of predestination. We shall find that some Scripture passages do teach about the basis, purpose and result of predestination. However, the texts used do not exhaust all biblical evidence in this regard, but do provide sufficient teaching.

Before discussing these texts with the view to apply it to the Black Reformed Churches in South Africa, it is necessary to discuss the current debate, or lack of it, concerning predestination in these churches.

7.2 The view of the Black Reformed Church on predestination

The principal concern of the Black Reformed Church is the relationship between God's sovereign grace and the fact that it may render human free will null and void. This relationship is chiefly considered in terms of a balance of power and actions, but very little is said about justifying grace, unmerited pardon and the acquittal of the guilty. This is in this author's observation the basic problem with the Black Reformed Church: the concept of merit on the basis of grace¹⁶, forming the fundamental problem of the specific church. It is the very point which brought about the split between Rome and the Reformers (Muller, 2017:185). The Black Reformed Church continues to a certain extent to reject the idea that humans' free will is lost, implying that human beings are powerless to act in terms of salvation. The church teaches that human nature was not irrevocably lost by the fall, so that human beings are not deprived of the free exercise of their will (Hyde, 2010:235). Human nature has indeed been affected and the free will impaired. It agrees but it is not certain that human nature is entirely or fundamentally corrupt. The church defends human nature as well as the divine will to save; it does not consider human nature to be eternally lost and deprived of all salvation outside of grace, but rather considers humanity as wounded and capable of being healed (Skidmore, 2011:123).

In harmony with this view of sin, the church naturally would not affirm absolute predestination, but based or qualified predestination on foreseen faith, obedience and perseverance in the life of the individual, which leans more toward Arminianism (Hannah, 2001:232). Some of the objections against absolute predestination are that it affirms that predestination destroys the individuals' moral effort and weakens evangelism. The former is concluded that if God has chosen us it is of no consequence how we live and the latter is concluded that if God's sovereign choice of human beings is the foundation of their salvation, then there can be no point to preaching the gospel (Ferguson, 2013:118-119).

¹⁶ Such a hypothesis can be tested empirically and may form part of continuous study; for this research, however, no empirical observations were made

In the next section these objections in the Black Reformed Churches and observations will be placed alongside the biblical evidence for the doctrine of predestination with the purpose to develop a model that the churches may apply to ensure that the doctrine receives the attention that it requires, given its centrality in theological endeavours.

7.3 The biblical model for the church

The hypothesis of this study is that the doctrine of predestination and election must be based on scriptural teaching, and should represent a continuation of a long-standing Augustinian legacy taken up by John Calvin. The doctrinal formulation of the church must be born out of a renewed attention to the teaching of Scripture; we are bound to include a renewed consideration of the scriptural teaching on predestination and election. The doctrine of predestination must be normed by the teaching of Scripture, properly interpreted. The church's dogmatic pronouncements must always stand the test of Scripture (Calvin, 1559:2008:608).

Contrary to the teachings of Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism, which grant a measure of human autonomy and free will in the believer's response to the gospel call to faith and repentance, the doctrine of predestination undergirds the teaching of human beings' absolute depravity as a result of the fall and salvation by grace alone through the work of Christ alone, without human beings' earning any merit by own efforts (Muller, 2017:103). Augustine taught that salvation is rooted in God's gracious choice in and for Christ to save some fallen sinners and to grant them the gift of faith (Barrett, 2017:241).

The understanding of the grace of God as the efficient cause of salvation leads on to the doctrine of predestination. What God does in time for the gracious renewal of the sinner, he willed to do in his eternal plan. Predestination most clearly presupposes human beings as fallen and lost. It is hence indeed, that the words derive their meaning. "That it is God's eternal purpose to choose some of humans' fallen race, and leave others to perish, it is clearly taught us" (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:493).

The two Scriptures that most emphatically remove all possibilities of works or merit-based predestination is Romans 9:11, "though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad –in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls" and Ephesians 1:4-5, "even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will..." The apostle Paul shows that God in making a difference could not have had any regard for works, for they were not yet done (Kruse, 2012:377). The purpose clause is "in order that

God's purpose of election might continue." He stresses purpose and election. There is a strong emphasis on the divine acts. It is not that Jacob could be said in any way to merit selection. God had a purpose, and he worked it out in his own way. Paul says that God did what he did so that his purpose in election might continue (Morris, 1988:356). Moreover, that no ground of dispute might remain on the subject, the author removes all doubt by adding another clause, "not because of works but because of him who calls." Let us now then apply our minds more closely to this passage, since the purpose of God according to election is accomplished in this way, that before the brothers were born, and had done nothing good or bad, one was rejected and the other chosen. Therefore, when anyone ascribes the cause of the difference to their works, he thereby distorts the purpose of God (Schreiner, 1998:498). This means, not on account of works, but of the calling only, for the apostle excludes works altogether. We have then the stability of our election enclosed in the purpose of God alone. Here merits avail nothing; no worthiness is regarded, for there is none, but the goodness of God reigns alone (Kruse, 2012:378). In Ephesians 1:4-5 we are told at what point in time, if time it could be called when God exercised the choice of those who were to be his children by Jesus Christ. It was not after Adam had fallen and plunged his race into sin and wretchedness, but long before Adam saw the light, even before the world itself was founded, that God chose us in Christ (Thielman, 2010:48).

The collapse of free will caused by Adam's fall means that human beings could no longer turn to God in their own strength. Salvation is only possible at God's initiative (Trueman, 2017:81). Unconditionally, and completely apart from any consideration of human merit, God elects those who will become his heirs of promise. Jacob and Esau not only had the same father and mother but were born at the same time. Technically, Esau was born slightly ahead of Jacob, but God purposely disregarded that fact, telling the mother that, contrary to the custom of those days, "the older will serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). False then is the dogma, and contrary to God's word, that God elects or rejects, as he foresees each to be worthy or unworthy of his favour (MacArthur, 1994:26).

At this point, however, we should note that grace is more than simply the unmerited favour of God displayed and enacted in Christ. We also learn from Scripture the purpose which God had in Christ before the foundation of the world in connection with his own elect: it was that they should be holy and blameless before him. Predestination and election is the foundation of holiness (Trueman, 2017:44). It is on the basis of the electing purposes of God which Paul had expounded in Romans 9-11 that he is able to make his appeal in Romans 12:1-2. The thrust of the biblical teaching is that election produces transformed living. It is the foundation of holiness, and consistently expresses itself in a life which is morally transformed through Spirit-filled

obedience to the word of God. Hence nothing could be further from the truth than the suggestion that God's choice destroys moral effort on our part (Ferguson, 2013:118-119).

The author of this research proposes that the chief focus of the church should be to look at predestination from its basis, purpose and result.

7.4 The basis of predestination

First we need to understand that predestination/election does not begin with God looking at sinful humanity and deciding who to save. It is not some arbitrary choice by God. Predestination begins with an expression of love. The Bible teaches that God is love (1 John 4:8). This is the defining characteristic of God. God is love, and because of this God is trinity; he exists as a trinity of love and communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The God of the Bible is the only true God. From eternity past, there has always been a Father, Son, and Spirit—all who are the same in essence. However, how can God be love before creation? Is there anything or anyone to love? The answer is straightforward. There has always been a Father, Son, and Spirit in a love relationship.

Each of the three persons of the Trinity is concerned with our salvation: with the Father it is predestination; with the Son propitiation; and with the Spirit regeneration. The Father chose us; the Son died for us; the Spirit quickens us. The Father was concerned about us; the Son shed his blood for us; the Spirit performs his work within us (O'Brien, 1999:91).

Scripture quotations are from the ESV 2007, unless noted otherwise.

7.4.1 John 3:35

“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.”

Some Scripture passages do teach about the love relationship that exists between the Triune God with unmistakable clearness. John 3:35 and John 5:20 do not exhaust all biblical evidence in this regard, but provide sufficient teaching on the fact that there is a love relationship which exists between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

In John 3:27, it was John the Baptist's testimony that, “a person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.” Here it is said what the Son has been given by the Father: “all things.” The ground of this bountiful equipment is the Father's love for the Son, through whom believers also become objects of God's love (Kostenberger, 2004:139-140). The Father's love for the Son is a recurring theme in this Gospel. The Father gives glory to his Son because he loved him before the foundation of the world (John 17:24). The Father loves the Son

because he lays down his life, to take it up again (John 10:17). The Father's love for the Son is the pattern for the Father's love for believers (John 17:26), and the pattern also for Jesus' love for believers (John 15:9). In this verse the evangelist implies that the Father's love for the Son is the reason why the Father "has given all things into his hand" (Kruse, 2003:126).

The first part of this verse and the first part of John 5:20 are almost identical, "the Father loves the Son," but a different verb is used for love in each of the two passages. The Greek verb used in John 3:35 is ἀγαπάω, and in John 5:20 it is φιλέω. According to these passages there is no distinction in meaning between them. There is certainly no distinction in these two verses as Wiersbe (2001:298) also argues. When translating either of the verbs for "love," one should remember that the primary focus in the biblical concept of love is always that of giving rather than receiving. One loves another for the sake of benefitting the one he/she loves, rather than for the sake of receiving benefit from the object of love. The verb ἀγαπάω is in the present tense and indicates that the Father constantly and always continues to love his Son (Newman & Nida, 1993:104).

Though it is the Father who sends and the Son who is sent (John 3:16, 17), it is the Son who invariably obeys the Father, not the reverse (John 8:29), their relationship is nevertheless one of love. The verb ἀγαπάω and φιλέω occurs in a similar declaration of the love of the Father for the Son, in John 5:20. Both the verb "to love" (ἀγαπάω) and the noun love (ἀγάπη) occur much more frequently in chapters 13-17 than anywhere else in the fourth gospel, reflecting the fact that John devotes special attention to the love relationship amongst the Father, the Son and the disciples (Walvoord & Zuck, 1985:283). The Father loves the Son (3:35; 10:17; 17:23-24, 26), the Son loves the Father (14:31); Jesus loves his own, his true disciples (11:5; 13:1, 33, 34; 14:21), and they must love him (14:15; 21:15-26). Sometimes John speaks of the Father's love for the disciples (14:21, 23), but more frequently the Father's love for the disciples is mediated through his Son (Borchert, 1996:194). From this pattern of relationship it is clear that there is nothing in the words ἀγαπάω and ἀγάπη themselves to suggest that the love of which John speaks is invariably spontaneous, self-generated, without reference to the loved one. John uses the same words both for God's spontaneous, gracious love for mankind and also for the responsive relation of the disciple to God, to which humankind is moved not by free unmerited favour to God, but by a sense of God's favour to them (Carson, 1991:213) Because of his love for the Son, the Father has given the Spirit to him without limit, and has placed everything in his hands. Even the unfolding of redemptive history finds its ultimate source in the loving relationship in the Godhead (Wiersbe, 1996:298).

Because the Father loves the Son, all who believe in his Son receive eternal life. The greatest thing we can ever do for God is to believe in the Son whom he loves (Kruse, 2003:126).

7.4.2 John 5:20

“For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.”

The latter part of John 5:19 features the first of four consecutive (γάρ) clauses, asserting that it is impossible for the Son to take independent self-determined action that would set him over or against the Father as another God. The second (γάρ) clause states the basis for the Son’s dependence: the Father loves the Son (5:20). Clauses three and four speak of the Son’s delegated authority to raise the dead and exercise judgement (5:21, 22) (Kostenberger, 2004:187). Kruse (2003:152) indicates that underlying these verses may be apprenticeship imagery. An apprentice copies the work of a qualified artisan. In the ancient world the artisan was often the father and the apprentice one of his sons. An artisan would show his son what to do, because he loved him. In John 14:31, Jesus affirms his love for and obedience to the Father. This is to serve as a testimony to the world (14:17) (Kostenberger, 2004:445).

The ministry of Jesus is rooted in and empowered by the love of the Father. The present tense “loves” (filei/) suggests a continual, habitual love. Love is described in John 3:16 as unseen motivation behind all God’s actions for the world; now it is also included in the relations between the persons of God. This is manifested in the Son’s intimate union with the Father, who shows the Son all he does, again described as continual and habitual by the use of the present tense (Klink, 2016:286). This is the first instance of the verb φιλέω for love in the Gospel; it is the only instance of the verb designating the Father’s love for Jesus (ἀγαπάω is used elsewhere: 3:35; 10:17; 15:19; 17:24, 26) (Von Wahlde, 2010:230).

This love of the Father for the Son is one of the foundational building blocks of Christian theology. For John no redemptive plan would be adequate that would treat lightly the love of God for the Son in dealing with the wrath of God. Failure to account satisfactorily for God’s love for the Son can damage our theological understanding of God’s love for the people of the world. Inherent in the love of the Father is his desire to reveal to the Son all the activities of God. The use of the Greek verb δεικνύω (meaning “show” or “reveal”) twice in verse 20 is John’s way of indicating the intimate relation between the Father and Jesus (Borchert, 2002:1996).

7.5 The purpose of predestination/election

From before the foundation of the world, God is love. Every person of the Trinity is defined as love since they are co-equal in essence. They can love because there is someone to love—even before creation. But how is election based on this love? Divine election of sinners to salvation is God’s expression of his love to his Son (Gromacki, 2015:11). Throughout the New

Testament, we see the Father giving chosen people to the Son. They are so special that their names are written in the book of life of the Lamb. Their names are recorded for eternity. Now if the Father gives them to the Son, this means that they belonged to the Father from the beginning. How is this possible? The answer is in Jesus' highly priestly prayer to his Father (John 17:23). The doctrine of election is not a reaction by God to save sinners, but rather is an expression of the Father's love to his Son. In time the elect are created specifically to be a love gift to the Son (MacArthur, 2008:301). This demonstrates the purpose of election of predestination.

7.5.1 John 6:39

“And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”

Some Scripture passages teach about God giving believers to the Son with unmistakable clearness, as discussed above. The three passages used (John 6:39; John 17:2, 6, 9; 23 & Ephesians 1:4), however, do not exhaust all biblical evidence in this regard, but they provide sufficient teaching on the fact that the elected people are a gift from the Father to the Son.

Jesus addresses the role of the Father and the notion of giving. It will be noticed that Jesus does not discuss how the Father gives bread but how the Father gives people to Jesus. With the usual use of the neuter, Jesus speaks of “everything” the Father gives him as coming to him. All who are given will come and no one who comes will be rejected because the will of the Father is that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life. In these statements, Jesus once again affirms his relationship of total dependence upon the Father, not only in terms of the Father, as source of his power but in terms of doing the Father's will (Von Wahlde, 2010:308). Jesus wants even this most serious human responsibility to be seen as mainly his Father's gift to us. Not only does the Father give us to the Son as a gift, but he also gives us our faith in his Son (John 6:37, 44). Our faith in God is a divine gift to us. The whole transaction, from above and from below, is originally and finally a divine gift. This additional promise should help us to rest and keep us from turning our coming to and trusting Jesus into good works that get us faith or that earn us good graces (Bruner, 2012:406).

Jesus continues to expound the unity between the Father and Son with a formal description. “This is the will of him who sent me” (οὗτος δὲ εἰμί τό θέλημα τό πέμπω ἔγω) contains a substantival participle that is functioning as a subjective genitive, which could be translated, “This is what the one who sent me wills.” The will for the Son is that “I should lose nothing of all that he has given me.” This verse provides further insight into Jesus's earlier statement that he

“will never cast away” those whom the Father had given to him (v. 37). Just as it is within the will of God that some be given to the Son, so also it is within the will of God that the Son should not lose those he has received (Klink, 2016:333).

Divine sovereignty in salvation is a major theme in the Gospel of John. Moreover, the form of it in these verses, that there exists a group of people who have been given by the Father to the Son, and that this group will inevitably come to the Son and be preserved by him, not only recurs in 6:39 and perhaps in 10:29, but is also central to the Lord’s prayer in 17:1, 6, 9, 24 (Carson, 1991:291). The doctrine of election is not a reaction by God to save sinners, but rather is an expression of the Father’s love for his Son. Certainly, the Son would never reject any part of the Father’s gift to him (MacArthur, 2006:249). Calvin (1559; 2008:619) writes:

Observe that the donation of the Father is the first step in our delivery into the charge and protection of Christ. Someone, perhaps, will here turn around and object, that those only peculiarly belong to the Father who makes a voluntary surrender by faith. But the only thing which Christ maintains is that though the defections of vast multitudes should shake the world, yet the counsel of God would stand firm, more stable than heaven itself, that his election would never fail. The elect are said to have belonged to the Father before he bestowed them on his only begotten Son.

By repeating the whole phrase, “the will of him who sent me,” Jesus defines it as God’s intention “that I should not lose anything of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.” God’s gift to Jesus becomes even more conspicuous, with references to either losing “it” or raising “it at the last day.” The divine intention that Jesus does “not lose” that which God has given him echoes and reinforces his promise that he will “never cast out” (those who come to him) (v. 37). It is noticeable that those who come to him in verse 37 are a gift from the Father. Earlier, he had announced God’s intent “that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (3:16). If he were now to reject those who came to him in genuine faith, he would not only be denying them salvation, but he would “lose” that which his Father wanted him to have. Their loss would be his as well (Michaels, 2010:379).

If then, God had from the beginning chosen certain individuals to salvation, and then because the will of Christ was in perfect accord with the will of the Father, he would not seek to enlarge upon his election. Again and again our Lord refers to those whom the Father has given him, and concerning whom he was particularistic in his mission. “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out and this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:37, 39). In verses 37-44 Jesus affirms that those whom the Father has given him will certainly come to him (Bass, 2007:317).

Wallace (2004:124-125) indicates that Jesus affirms his faith that everything of any final significance that is taking place is what is decreed by the Father (v. 37). He expresses his own confidence that he has in no way failed God's purpose (vv. 38, 39). He is certain that everything he has done would be vindicated in the last great day of judgement (v. 40). Neither the power of evil nor the human will could in any way prevent the salvation of one of those whom God the Father has given to the Son (v. 39). The emphasis on God's sovereign control in the salvation of his people is repeated in the book of John; Jesus is direct and to the point. People are unable to come to the Father (for salvation) unless the Father himself "draws" them (v. 44). The coming of the disciples to Jesus is here described as a gift of the Father (Borchert, 1996:265).

Indeed, it must be God who draws those who come toward Jesus, accordingly, as he announces, one of the realities of the new covenant that the prophets envisioned is being fulfilled through his words and deeds: "All your children shall be taught by the Lord..." (Isa 54:13). The quotation that Jesus cites is a paraphrase of Isaiah 54:13, a text that is drawn from Isaiah's second pledge that God is faithful to "the covenant of grace" and will deliver Israel from exile. Everyone who is taught by God through the ministry of the incarnate Son, "hears and learns from the Father" and at the very same time comes to him in order to be, to hear and to learn in the presence of the Father (Waetjen, 2005:211). Moreover, the spontaneous result of being drawn by God into a union with Christ is the assurance of resurrection on the last day. For resurrection envisioned by Jewish apocalypticism is a corporate event and union with Jesus, who will resurrect after his death on the cross, guarantees participation in this corporate reality (Berkhof, 1996:453).

7.5.2 John 17:2, 6, 9, 23

"Since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him...I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours...I in them and you in me that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and love them even as you loved me."

Jesus prayed for himself, in particular for his glorification (vv. 1-5). That glorification is integrally bound up with the benefit of all the Father has given him (v. 2), so it is not surprising that he now turns from petition for himself to petition for his disciples. Those people for whom Jesus now lifts his voice in prayer are those whom the Father has given to the Son (vv. 2, 6) (Michaels, 2010:862). This gift was not rooted in anything intrinsic to the people themselves. They were part of the wicked world (1:19), but God gave them to Jesus out of the world—apparently

functionally equivalent to the fact that Jesus chose them out of the world (15:19). In a profound sense they belonged to God antecedently to Jesus' ministry (yours they were and you gave them to me) (Carson, 1991:558).

An acknowledgement that verse 6 is the interplay between the human side and the divine side of salvation helps us to understand the role of God in our salvation. Christ expands on each of those topics, as he establishes the disciples' believing response on the one hand (vv. 7-8), and God's sovereign election on the other (vv. 9-10). Christ further describes the disciples to the Father as the "the people whom you gave me out of the world." The truth that believers are a gift from the Father to the Son is absolutely and meticulously articulated in the book of John (Macarthur, 2008:262). Calvin (1559; 2008:620) writes:

Accordingly our Saviour, shortly after declaring that his disciples who were given to him were the common property of the Father, adds, "I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours" (John 17:9). Meanwhile, though Christ interposes as a Mediator, yet he claims the right of electing in common with the Father, "I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen" (John 13:18)... we must indeed hold, when he affirms that he knows whom he has chosen, first, that some individuals of the human race are denoted; and secondly, that they are not distinguished by the quality of their virtues, but by a heavenly decree.

Before the foundation of the world the Father gave certain individuals to be conformed to the image of his Son, and the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was in order to accomplish that divine purpose. The very nature of this gift is evidence that in its application to sinners, it is limited in the purpose of God (Michaels, 2010:862). Everything is traced back to the Father: he has assigned the work, he has given the people, he is the one to whom Jesus is about to return, and he is the recipient of Jesus' petition (Kostenberger, 2004:490).

7.5.3 Ephesians 1:4

"...Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him..."

Wuest (1997:25) remarks that the contents of verses 3-14 make one long sentence, possibly the longest sentence of connected discourse in existence. Here we have some of the most important doctrinal words and profoundest and richest truths regarding what God has done for the saints, in all the Pauline writings. Paul brings praise to God for the blessings he gives to believers in Christ. The riches promised to believers in the heavenly realms throughout this letter prepare them for a successful battle with the forces of evil who are also part of the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12). Paul next introduces the foundation of the blessing: the fact that believers are chosen by God (Eph. 1:4-6). The spiritual blessings are described. God's choosing

of believers is directly related to their holiness in behaviour (Eph. 1:4) (Hughes & Laney, 2001:591). The particular spiritual blessings with which we are blessed in Christ, and for which we ought to bless God, are here enumerated and enlarged upon (v. 4, 5, 11) (Henry, 1994:2307).

The words καθώς (even as) here designates the ground of the “blessing” and so is also the note of its grandeur. The “blessing” proceeded on the divine election, and took effect in accordance with that. It has its foundation, therefore, in eternity and is neither an incidental thing nor an afterthought of God (Wuest, 1997:29). The verb rendered “he chose” (κλέγομαι¹⁷) is an ordinary term for “choosing” or “selecting” something or someone. For example, Jesus “chose” certain men as the twelve (Luke 6:13); they did not “choose” him (John 15:16) (Baugh, 2016:80). In this verse, Paul focuses the attention of his readers completely on the unmerited, gracious nature of God’s choice of believers to be his people with two adverbial prepositional phrases, “in him” (ἐν αὐτόῳ) and “before the foundation of the world” (πρὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου) God’s choice of believers becomes effective in Christ Jesus (Thielman, 2010:48).

This language functions to give believers assurance of God’s purpose for them. It highlights the idea that God’s choice of them was a free decision not dependent on temporal circumstances but rooted in the depth of his nature. To say that election in Christ took place before the foundation of the world is to underline that it is not based on human merit (Lincoln, 1990:23). This signifies that in him the people of God are chosen. He is the foundation, origin, and executor; all that is involved in election and its fruits depend on him. Election is always and only in Christ. That choice in Christ was made in eternity, before time and creation, as the phrase “before the foundation of the world” makes plain (O’Brien, 1999:100).

The phrase “in him” can express locality or instrumentality; the latter brings the directionality upon which the condition of election is founded (Crawford, 2000:83).

Paul uses “in him” in an instrumental or causal sense. Related to this instrumental usage are passages that describe Christ as the source or locus of the benefits believers have. Believers receive certain things in him because of what he has done. For example, Paul declares in Ephesians 1 that believers have adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, inheritance, hope and sealing in Christ. He tells the Corinthians that they have been “enriched in him” (1 Cor. 1:5); he tells the Romans that the locus of God’s love is in Christ (Rom. 8:39) (Fowl, 2012:41).

¹⁷ ἐκλέγομαι (Louw & Nida, 1988:361) under domain “think” and subdomain “to choose, to select, to prefer,” defined as “to make a special choice based upon significant preference, often implying a strongly favourable attitude toward what is chosen.” Louw and Nida reference Luke 9:35, Acts 13:17 and Romans 9:11.

The prepositional phrase “in him” expounds the relation of Christians to Christ in the experience of salvation. This may relatively easily render our union with Christ as “our being united with Christ” or “in close fellowship with Christ.” But perhaps what may be more difficult with the phrase is the manner in which it is to be combined with the statement that God had already chosen us to be his. Some scholars assume that through our union with Christ (which is indicated by the prepositional phrase “in him”) could be combined directly with “he has chosen us”. It should be related more to the fact that we belong to God. It therefore, may be appropriate to render the phrase “in Christ” as a type of means (often expressed as cause), as in the following statement: God had already chosen us to belong to him by means of our being united with Christ (Bratcher, 1982:11). The repeated idea “ἐν Χριστῷ” (Eph. 1:3), implies the paramount importance of the truth that it is in him, and by virtue of union to him, the Second Adam, the restorer ordained for us from before the foundation of the world, the head of the redeemed humanity, believers have all their blessings (Eph. 3:11) (Jamieson, 1997:341).

Calvin (1559; 2008:616) indicates that if we are chosen in Christ, it is not of ourselves. It is not from a perception of anything that we deserve, but because our heavenly Father has introduced us, through the privilege of adoption, into the body of Christ. In short, the name of Jesus excludes all merit and everything which humans possess, for when Calvin says we are chosen in Christ it follows that in ourselves we are unworthy. Election is profoundly Christological. Paul’s “in Christ” language legitimately carries an enormous amount of interpretive weight; here a small prepositional phrase “in him” points to the way God fulfils his purpose. God executes his mysterious plan “in him.” Election is the clearest expression of God’s will and love for Christ (Newman, 1996:238). Hankins (2012:70) accentuates the same sentiment that election is Christocentric. This speaks to where and how, the location and means of election. God’s ultimate purposes for creation are grounded in the life, death, and resurrection of the Son. All that was promised to, in, and through Israel has been fulfilled in Christ. In Christ, the universal need for the salvation of humankind by God was met in the particular appearing and ministry of the God-man. Paul speaks of believers being chosen and predestined “in him” (Eph. 1:4, 11) and predestined to be adopted “through Jesus Christ” (v. 5) (Thielman, 2010:48). We see from Ephesians 1:4 that the Father’s election is rooted in Christ. Paul also tells us in 2 Timothy 1:9 that God gave us grace “in Christ Jesus before the ages began.” Though the Father’s work of election occurred before we even existed, his choice to save his people is nevertheless in Christ. This means there was never a time when God contemplated his elect apart from their vital union with Christ (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:604).

It is as though Paul is unpacking for us the bundle of blessings which God has given us in the Son, and holding them up for us to see: forgiveness, redemption, acceptance, and all we need to travel from this world to the next in the joy of the Lord. As he unpacks these blessings it becomes clearer that he is speaking of a plan God had even before we were born. Even before the foundation of the world he began to pack all these blessing in Christ and the moment the Father gives us to Christ those blessings become ours (Ferguson, 2016:115). Paul uses the phrase “before the foundation of the world,” to emphasise the graciousness of God’s choice; it happened before believers could do anything to effect it, and therefore it came as an absolutely free gift. This understanding of the phrase meshes with the emphasis of the benediction on the extravagance of God’s grace (found in vv. 6, 7b) and with the link that Paul makes elsewhere in his letters between God’s choices of his people before they existed (Rom. 9:11) (Thielman, 2010:48-49). Paul’s teaching here communicates relevant and extraordinary truth about the ultimate reality for the believers in Asia. Contrary to popular belief, their fate was not wrapped up in the stars and the planets, but in the one true almighty God, who made the sun and the stars. God had in fact chosen them to be in Christ before he made the heavens and the earth (Arnold *et al.*, 2002:9).

7.6 The result of predestination

We have already noted that every aspect of the application of redemption is by grace and is in Christ. Before Jesus came we were already in Christ, for his name was to be called Jesus, because he would save his people from their sin (Matt. 1:21). From this heavenly point of view, that union is as ancient as eternity past, presently prevails, and according to Romans 8:11 and 18-25, will never end. However, as the last quotation above indicates, the union is actually affected together with regeneration and faith. It is in this sense that union with Christ has a place in the *ordo salutis* (Culver, 2005:665). Divine sovereignty, expressed in effectual calling, enables an attendant human response, so that the moment God calls the sinner, the sinner is united to Christ by Spirit-wrought faith. Faith, then, supernaturally wrought in effectual calling, is the instrumental bond of union with Christ (Tipton, 2013:3). The union with Christ is the key idea in the teaching on the way we receive grace of Christ and it forms the result of election of predestination. It reflects that joining together of head and members, is the indwelling of Christ in our hearts (Gatiss, 2009:194).

7.6.1 The Necessity of union

Fundamental to the thought regarding our need for union with Christ is our pre-existing union with Adam. It is true that, while we are out of Christ (or disqualified from a relationship with him), all is under the dominion of Satan. Yet more importantly it is this relationship with Adam which

separates us from God and renders us liable to his judgement. This makes renewal “in Christ” an absolute necessity for us (Gatiss, 2009:196). Calvin (1558-1559; 1999:245) writes concerning the two fountainheads:

The old man means the natural disposition which we bring with us from our mother’s womb. In two persons, Adam and Christ, he describes to us what may be called two natures. As we are first born of Adam, the depravity of nature which we derive from him called the old man; and as we are born in Christ, the amendment of this sinful nature is called the new man.

Note that we are implicated in Adam’s fall and our nature is affected by it. Calvin sees the human plight from the angle of separation from God which makes us devoid of all good, both righteousness and holiness, and also from the angle of our union with Adam. He goes on to prescribe the remedy for such separation in terms of union with Christ (Gatiss, 2009:197). He begins with the sin of Adam and, like Paul in Romans 5, draws the connection from Adam to all humanity. When Adam sinned, he “entangled and immersed his offspring in the same miseries” (Barrett, 2017:484). This is called original sin and it encompasses the sinful state and condition of all people because of their relationship to Adam, which is the reason people are depraved and tainted with sin from conception (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:461).

7.6.1.1 Psalm 51:5

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Among the outpouring of the human heart agonised by the consciousness of sin, this Psalm stands pre-eminent. It must surely be rooted in the events of 2 Samuel 11: David coveting and then theft of another man’s wife, his adultery with her, and his murder of her husband. In desperate need of divine forgiveness, David acknowledges that he needs to cast himself on God’s mercy. The verb “have mercy” occurs frequently in psalms of lament (4:1; 6:2; 31:9). The same connotation is used in the priestly benediction “and be gracious to you” (Num. 6:25) (Motyer, 2001:185). In verse 2 we learn that forgiveness is an act of divine grace whereby sin is blotted out and the sinner is “cleansed by the washing away of his sins (vv. 2, 7, 9). In verse 3-4 in his search for forgiveness, the psalmist opens his sinful heart. To this end he uses the three synonyms for sin: “transgression,” “iniquity,” and “sin” (vv.1-3). The variety of words for sin is for poetic reasons, as they express the seriousness of sin. David is fully aware of his condition before God (VanGemeren, 1991:380).

In Psalm 51:5, David recognises the fact of original sin, the fact that sin is a matter not just of what we do, but of what we are, and always have been. From birth, even from conception, before we were born or had done anything either good or bad, the inherited warp in human

nature was there. Indeed, the inner parts, inward being of verse 6 may possibly mean the womb, and reflect a Jewish belief that divine truth is made known to the unborn child (Motyer, 2001:186). David is not making excuses and blaming his parents or God for a faulty gene. In fact he is doing the reverse: accepting full responsibility; the sins are his own and come from his own nature (Wilson, 2002:774).

The confession of depravity is not an excuse for the psalmists treachery but serves to heighten the distance between the Lord and David. God is just, whereas humans are so corrupt that their whole beings cry out for help (VanGemeren, 1991:380).

7.6.1.2 Romans 5:12

“...Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...”

We should take Paul’s “therefore” seriously. He is linking the new section to the preceding. It is because of the reconciliation Christ has brought about that the evil Adam introduced into the world has been overcome. Had it not been for a pervasive evil our first father brought into the world, there would have been no need and place for reconciliation (Morris, 1988:228). Paul begins an analogy of Christ with Adam, the common principle being that, in each case, a far-reaching effect on countless others was generated through one man (MacArthur, 1991:292).

“Sin came into the world.” He does not call Adam by name until verse 14, but there is no doubt that he is referring to Adam. He emphasises his point by putting “just as” in the first clause. This one man, and indeed one evil deed of this one man, is very important and underlies the whole discussion. Looking at the whole pericope in verses 12-19 the word “one” is repeated referring to Adam (and to one sin of that one man), and opposite him, the man Jesus Christ (and his one work of grace) (Morris, 1988:229). Arnold (2002:31) indicates that important for our appreciation of this famous theological text is the fact that the word “man” in Hebrew (’ādām) is also the name “Adam.” The very same name Adam, therefore, suggests his representative significance. Calvin (1539; 2007:170) writes:

Paul distinctly affirms that sin extends to all who suffer punishment: and this he afterwards more fully declares, when subsequently he assigns a reason why the posterity of Adam is subject to the dominion of death; and it is even this – because all have sinned. But to sin in this case, is to become corrupt and vicious, for the natural depravity which we bring, from our mother’s womb, though it brings not forth immediately its own fruits, is yet sin before God and deserves his vengeance and this is that sin which they call original.

When Paul says, “sin came into the world through one man”, he is alluding to Genesis 3 and Adam’s disobedience in eating forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

(Kruse, 2012:241). Indeed, Paul is likely reflecting on the threat of Genesis 2:17, where Adam is warned that he will die on the very day he transgresses God's command. The account of Genesis 3 reveals that Adam died when he sinned, in the sense that upon sinning he was immediately separated from God (Schreiner, 1998:272). The consequence of Adam's sin and the death that it brought into the world is that death came to all human beings. The emphasis is on the fact that the whole race is involved partly from the position of all, and partly from the inclusion of all human beings. Adam was one man and he did one act, but the result spread to all of posterity (Morris, 1988:230).

Adam's sin is imputed to all who were united to him as the representative of humanity. Adam's guilt is our corporate guilt. While affirming that a corrupt nature is passed down from Adam, representative headship teaches that all people are condemned because of their direct relationship to Adam (Moo, 2000:186-187). The representative-headship view (often called federal headship) asserts that the action of a representative is determinative for all members united with him/her. When Adam sinned, he represented all people; therefore, his sin is reckoned to his descendants (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:464). Calvin (1539, 2007:170) writes:

For as Adam at his creation had received for us as well as for himself the gifts of God's favour, so falling away from the Lord, he in himself corrupted, vitiated, depraved, and ruined our nature; for having been divested of God's likeness, he could have generated seed but what was like himself.

Essentially the same point of view may be expressed in terms more acceptable today; we all sin, but our sin is the result of tendencies we inherit. This recognises the fact that we are sinful and that we are punished because we are sinful, but the Bible traces the origin of our sinfulness to our human nature (Morris, 1988:231). The teaching of the unity with Adam in his sin and condemnation is introduced to serve as a help to understand our oneness with Christ in righteousness and life. Paul calls attention to differences between our oneness with Adam and our oneness with Christ by several negatives: "but the free gift is not like the trespass" (v. 15), again "the free gift is not like..." (v. 16) and several contrasts indicated by the adversative conjunction, "but" (vv. 15, 16, 20) (Culver, 2005:393).

The decisive terms are "all sinned" (πᾶς ἁμαρτάνω) (v. 12, past tense, aorist active) and "made sinners" (καθίστημι ἁμαρτωλός) (v. 19, past tense, aorist active). As to the first, "because all sinned," the usual aorist tense as used here indicates acts committed in the past. The passage connects our guilt and corruption to Adam's one act of disobedience (Kruse, 2012:241-242). The Bible teaches what has been called total (or pervasive) depravity to describe the corruption and pollution of sin passed down from Adam. Total depravity emphasises the devastating impact of sin on the person and covers three related concepts: the pollution and corruption of all

aspect of a person, the complete inability of a person to please God, and universality, in that all are conceived and born as sinners (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467).

7.6.2 The benefits of union

Jesus Christ, as crucified and resurrected, contains within himself distinctly, inseparably, simultaneously and eschatologically every soteriological benefit given to the church and there are no benefits of the gospel apart from union with Christ (Gatiss, 2009:198). One of the most precious truths in all Scripture is the doctrine of the believer's union with the Lord Jesus Christ. The concept of being united to Christ speaks of the most vital spiritual intimacy that one can imagine between the Lord and his people (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:602).

7.6.2.1 2 Peter 1:4

"...By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire..."

The theological centre of gravity of the letter's message is 1:3-18, with its emphasis on God's gift, promise, call and election including its claim that we might become "sharers of the divine nature" with its list of virtues extending from faith to love and with its account of the transfiguration of Jesus. The first (vv. 3-4), however, is not to provide arguments against false teachers or attack their errors. Instead, he reminds us, in brief, of God's saving work on our behalf and of our share in God's very own life (Harink, 2009:137). It is through his glory and honour that Jesus has given us very precious and great promises. The term "great" ("μέγιστος") which can be translated "exceeding great," "very great" or "greatest" is found only here in the New Testament, but it is the normal superlative of "great." As frequently happens in 2 Peter, the author has paired two words, "very great" and "precious" (τίμιος) which can be translated "valuable" or "honourable." What is so valuable is the promise that Jesus had made (Davids, 2006:171).

Δωρέομαι (he has granted) is also used in verse 3, in both instances the perfect tense is used, indicating that the promise has already been given and continues to be effective even into the unknown future. The text most probably refers to God, and this should be made clear in the translation, especially if in the verse translators identify "him" in the final clause with Jesus (Arichea & Hatton, 1993:75).

Peter began by rooting our life in the divine power, grace, and calling of Jesus Christ. The "divine power" of Jesus Christ has given us "everything needed for life and godliness" (v. 3).

Peter is not reluctant later to exhort us to make every effort (v. 15) to take up the way of virtue and moral action, but that is not where he begins. He begins by declaring that the power to live a godly life does not reside in us, but in Jesus Christ and his gifts (Harink, 2009:138).

MacArthur (2005:30) expounds that Christ's character of glory and honour has made it possible for him to accomplish all that is necessary for believers' salvation so that he also granted them his precious and magnificent promises. The term "has granted," rendered δωρέομαι occurs in verse 3 in the perfect tense, describing past action with continuing effects. The most striking and controversial image is that these Christians will become "sharers of divine nature." While this language is fairly rare in Jewish and Christian thought, it is common in Greek philosophy and religion. It is used in a variety of ways, depending on the system of thought in which it occurs. The most common sense of the phrase concerns the immortality of the gods and the mortality of humans (Vinson *et al.*, 2010:295-296).

To partake of the divine nature means, first of all, to partake in immortality. Second Peter's promise of escape from "the corruption that is in the world" reflects this usage. Probably the other divine attribute most often evoked in this imagery is escape from the polluting power of the passions (Moo, 1996:44). Immortality includes being cleansed from desires and the vice that results from desire. Thus 2 Peter fits in the standard usage of the image. It also asserts that the corruption of the world is caused by the passions and that acquiring the divine nature will lead to virtue (Donelson, 2010:219-220).

However, while Peter probably borrows the language from this cultural context, he applies it to a different concept. "Participating in the divine nature" means not to become absorbed in a mystical union with God, but rather refers to the indwelling of God's Spirit and the consequent holiness of life that arises from that indwelling (Arnold, 2002:157). The result of all this is that the believers escape from the corruption that is in this world and become partakers of the divine nature. The word ἀποφεύγω ("escape") is used only in this letter in the New Testament (2 Pet. 2:18, 20). The Greek form (aorist participle) clearly indicates that escaping from corruption comes before participating in the divine nature. Escape here does not mean "run away from" or "flee" but puts the main focus on being free or being delivered from something, which in this case is the corruption that is in the world (Arichea & Hatton, 1993:76).

In what sense, then, does the Christian believer "participate in the divine nature"? The reference is not intended to be primarily eschatological, since it is contextually qualified by the believer's behaviour in the present world. Rather, in 2 Peter the concept is markedly temporal and Christocentric: our union with Christ, based on grace, enables us to resist worldly corruption and live lives that are relevant and morally excellent (Longman & Garland, 2006:385)

The purpose for giving such promises is outlined in the following clause: ἵνα διὰ τούτων γίνωμαι κοινωνός θεῖος φύσις (“so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature”). The purpose clause “so that” points to the objective behind the giving of the promises. The purpose of God’s promises is so that the believers might become partakers of the divine nature (Green, 2008:185-186). This is the same point made by Paul when he says that a Christian is clothed in Christ and becomes a new man (Rom. 6:5; Eph. 4:22). Since Christians “partake of Christ” and are brought into fellowship with him, the Father and the Holy Spirit, this surely must involve their participation in the divine nature common to the persons of the Godhead (Strange, 2003:24). The followers of Christ gain two benefits from the promises: the first is positive (participate in the divine nature) and the second is negative (escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires) (Davids, 2006:172).

The word γίνωμαι¹⁸ (“may become”) is a purpose clause with ἵνα and the second aorist middle subjunctive. It is not intended to present merely a future possibility but a present certainty. The verb builds on all Peter has written. He says that in salvation saints are called effectually by God through the true knowledge of the glory and excellence of Christ, and thus they receive everything related to life and godliness (MacArthur, 2005:30).

Because of the quality of believers, they can share in the very same nature of God. This teaching accords with Roman 6, that by virtue of who Christ is, and through faith-union with him, Christians enjoy the possibility of a life here and now free from sin and its defilement, a life constantly growing more like Jesus (Carson *et al.*, 1994:1389). Sanctification is the imparting to us of God himself by the Holy Spirit in the soul. Therefore, as Louw and Nida define the verb γίνωμαι as “to be formed”, or “to come to exist” (see footnote), we can come to exist in the nature of God (Jamieson *et al.*, 1997:517). In the words of Samra (2016:203): “Participation in the divine nature does not mean that believers somehow become God. It means that believers’ nature is transformed so that we are like God. This is the essence of the process of growth for Peter. Every promise that believers are given is for the purpose of causing us to escape from the corruption of this world and make us like God (in Paul the language is “being conformed to the image of Christ” Rom. 8:29).

This participation in the divine nature is solely an act of God’s graciousness, his undeserved generosity, in order that we might escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (Green & Lucas, 1995:51-52). Human perfectibility is not divorced from grace. Both the gracious promises of God as benefactor and human moral responsibility are part of the ethical

¹⁸ Γίνωμαι (Louw & Nida, 1988:158) is under the domain be, become, exist, happen and the subdomain exist, defined as “to come into existence” “to be formed, to come to exist. They reference John 1:3 “all things came into existence through him” and John 8:58 “before Abraham came into existence, I existed.”

equation. On the one hand, the divine provision covers every conceivable contingency for the purpose of moral growth; on the other hand, development of moral character is contingent on one's willingness to grow (Longman & Garland, 2006:385).

The doctrine of predestination is purposed toward our union with Christ that takes place when Christ mystically indwells believers, which Peter calls participation in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) (Barrett, 2017:424).

7.6.2.2 1 John 3:1

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

Henry (1994:2447) highlights that the apostle here magnifies the love of God in our adoption (v. 1, 2). He thereupon argues for holiness (v. 3), and against sin (v. 4-19). He presses brotherly love (v. 11-18). John begins by urging his readers to recognise the greatness of the love of God: “see the kind of love the Father has given to us.” The exact expression of the love of God John has in mind here is “that we should be children of God.” In his love God has called us his children. He includes himself with his readers “we” among those who are called the children of God (Kruse, 2000:114-115). The world is alienated from God, and God's love creates people who are his children and who then also become alienated from the world. John is concerned about the topic of children of God living righteously, but he now brings love into the discussion again (Jobes, 2014:141).

What is in the Greek word ποταπός (literally “what kind of”) which occurs only seven times in the New Testament, is the element of astonishment. Admiration is usually conveyed as well. Being a child of God stirs within John a sense of wonder, awe and amazement. The expression carries both a qualitative and quantitative character: “what glorious, measureless love” (Akin, 2001:132). Here it is expressing a high degree of love, hence, how glorious, wonderful the love the Father has given us. The verb δίδωμι is in the perfect tense, to show that God's gracious gift determines the present situation (Haas *et al.*, 1994:80). It is significant here and further accentuates the permanent result of this divine love. It is the gift from God the Father that cannot be earned or bought; it is given freely and cannot be withdrawn. Furthermore, God has not just shown his love to humans, but he has given it to them in such a way that it becomes a part of them. He lavishes, or imparts, permanent and abiding love to his children (Akin, 2001:133). Wuest (1997:142) highlights that the verb δίδωμι indicates that the gift becomes the permanent possession of the recipient. God has placed his love upon the saints in the sense that they have become the permanent objects of his love.

Therefore, John breaks forth into this admiration of that grace that is the spring of such a wonderful award: behold (see, observe) what manner of love, or how great the love is that the Father has given to us, that we should be called, effectually called (he who calls things that are not makes them to be what they were not) the sons of God. The Father adopts all the children of the Son. The Son calls them, and makes them his brethren; and thereby he confers upon them the power and dignity of the sons of God (Henry, 1994:2447). The word “see or behold” is plural here, the usual form is singular. John is calling upon all the saints to wonder at the particular kind of love God has bestowed upon them (Wuest, 1997:142).

We become his children solely because he lavishly bestows on us a gracious, unmerited, sovereign love apart from any that has human merit (MacArthur, 2007:115). In the context of the apostle Jesus loved as the author, John is preoccupied with divine love, his usage of ἀγάπη (agápē) and ἀγαπάω¹⁹ (agapāō, to love) being the indication. This unconditional love lies in its effect: it makes people τέκνον θεός (children of God). The phrase is also found in 1 John 3:2, 10 and 5:2. Paul uses the expression in connection with the ideas of adoption (Rom. 8:16) and election (Rom. 9:8) (Yarbrough, 2008:174-175).

God’s love provides a way for us to be called “children of God” (τέκνον θεός). God’s love transforms those who exercise saving faith into his children. Furthermore, those who believe take on more than a mere title, for they actually become God’s children. The words express a fact, a reality of relationship. We are members of a family, God’s children, a divine progeny (Akin, 2001:133). It expresses the content of God’s love, not its purpose. God’s love is expressed in allowing us to become his children and in providing a way for that to happen through Jesus’s death and resurrection. Therefore, this new nature originates not with the desire and impulses of the world, but the righteousness of God (Jobes, 2014:141). Therefore, the doctrine of predestination exists so that humankind should receive the privilege of such a glorious title, along with the glorious reality of being called τέκνον θεός (Jamieson *et al.*, 1997:531). Haas *et al.*, (1994:81) highlight that the purpose clause “that we should be called children of God” gives the measure, and so explains the greatness of God’s love.

The love’s greatness lies also in its quality. The Father’s love stands in grim contrast to some impressions of parental love of the era. While the natural love of the father for children was of course present, it is also true that human fathers in the Greco-Romans world were not always affectionate or even equitable. Children might be abused and were often unwanted. When they

¹⁹ ἀγαπάω (Louw & Nida, 1988:293-294) under the domain- “attitudes and emotions” and subdomain, “love, affection, compassion.” They explain it as to have love for someone or something, based on sincere appreciation of and high regard for- to love, to regard with affection, loving concern, love. They reference John 3:35: “the Father loves the Son.”

were born, a father was free to order them to be exposed, that is, that they be taken to an out of the way place and left to die (Yarbrough, 2014:175). Arnold (2002:195) shares the same historical account of the human fathers in the Greco-Romans world, who had power and right of life and death over their children. They were not always affectionate; children who were unwanted would be exposed to the harsh environments after birth so that they would die. The Father's love is so unearthly, so foreign to this world that John wonders from where it may come. God's love is foreign to humankind in that we cannot understand the magnitude of such love. It astonishes, amazes, and creates wonder within those who properly reflect upon it. John claims that this love is divine in nature. It is a love that originates only with the Father (Akin, 2001:132).

John uses the term "children". This is a term that describes origin, birth, family relationship, family likeness and family characteristics, signifying the union believers have with God and Jesus Christ. It means that believers do not just glorify God, but they share in his glory (Hughes, 2013:135-136). Anderson (1992:97) indicates that the designation "child" exposes that God acts towards believers as a father does towards his children, having an intimate relationship that is between a father and child. Being a child also means that the person has a similar nature to his father. The Greek word rendered "child" refers to filial relationship rather than age. It is used here metaphorically to describe the intimate relationship which God has made possible between himself and the believers (Haas *et al.*, 1994:81).

The reason why the world does not know the children of God is that it did not know their father. The connecting thought is that, since children are like their father, their character can only be known from that of their father (Akin, 2001:134).

7.6.2.3 John 17:22-23

"The glory that you have given me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me and loved them even as you loved me."

In this chapter, God the Son envisions himself as having already completed his mission and as having returned to the Father in heaven. The traditional division is as follows: Jesus prays for himself (17:1-50, for his disciples (17:6-19), and for the world (17:20-26). The last part Jesus prays for unity of future believers "that they may be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me (John 17:21) (Peterson, 2013:25-26). The shared unity between God and the church is not only in purpose, in love, and in action (v. 21) but also in "glory," which like the word of God was given from the Father to the Son and from the Son to the disciples. Jesus began his prayer by asking the

Father for the consecration of his original glory which he had before the creation of the world (vv. 1, 5), a glory that is properly basic to his person and placed in the identity of God. It is this glory- the glory of God- that Jesus now claims to have given the disciples. This glory does not belong to the church but to God from whom it was received and with whom it is shared. Since glory is the manifestation of God's being, nature and presence, in a manner accessible to human experience, the Father consecrates the disciples' participation in the fullness of God for the purpose of including them in the personal manifestation of God through Christ, which is again depicted as the great act of unification (v. 21) (Klink, 2016:723).

Importantly, this unity is not merely a unity of love, it is predicated upon the acceptance and transmission of the revelation imparted to the disciples by the Father through the Son (Kostenberger, 2004:497). The glory the Father had given Jesus was the triumphant task of redeeming human beings to God. As Hebrews states, "he was crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death in the process of bringing many sons to glory" (Heb. 2:9-10). By sharing in his calling, believers participate in his glory and are united with him and with one another (Tenney, 1981:167). The divine glory that the Father gave to the incarnate Son is the basis for believers being unified even as the Father and Son are unified (v. 22). Jesus then adds, "I in them and you in me" (v. 23). He combines the Father's indwelling of the Son with his own indwelling of believers. Therefore, though John never says so, we may systematise and conclude that the trinity indwells believers (Peterson, 2013:26-27).

Jesus completes his prayer of the church by restating some of the major premises of his prayer: the unity between God and the church ("I in them and you in me") and the testimony of this unity to the world ("that the world may know that you sent me"). Here, however, the testimony to the world is not only the fact that the Father sent the Son, as in verse 21, but also the love of the Father for the Son and for the church. That is, the great act of unification, the reconciliation of the world to God in Christ, may have been made possible by the person and work of the Son, but it is driven by the love of the Father (Klink, 2016:723).

Calvin (1559; 2008:349) writes,

We must now see in what way we become possessed of the blessings which God has bestowed on his only begotten Son, not for private use, but to enrich the poor and needy. And the first thing to be attended to is, that so long as we are without Christ and separated from him, nothing which he suffered and did for the salvation of the human race is of the least benefit to us. To communicate to us the blessings which he received from the Father, he must become ours and dwell in us. Accordingly, he is called our Head, and the first-born among many brethren, while, on the other hand, we are said to be engrafted into him and clothed with him, all which he possesses being, as I have said, nothing to us until we become one with him.

Calvin places union with Christ as the prerequisite for receiving any soteriological benefits. This is shown not only by the abovementioned, but by placement of the abovementioned quotation. He does not discuss justification first, as a prerequisite before discussing justification, sanctification, or any other benefit; he mentions the primary reality that grounds them all. He notes with emphasis that without union with Christ, none of the benefits of salvation can be obtained (Miller, 2013:50). Arminius (1629; 2015:79) agrees with Calvin that union with Christ is the prerequisite for receiving any soteriological benefits:

As Christ is constituted by the Father the Saviour of those that believe, who, being exalted in heaven to the right hand of the Father, communicates to believers all those blessings which he has solicited from the Father, and which he has obtained by his obedience and pleading, but as the participation of blessings cannot be through communication, unless where there has previously been an orderly and suitable union between him who communicates and those to whom such communications are made, it is, therefore, necessary for us to treat in the first place, upon the union of Christ with us, on account of its being the primary and immediate effect of that faith by which men believe in him as the only Saviour.

Union with Christ by a Spirit- wrought faith is the central redemptive reality of the gospel, viewed from the standpoint of salvation applied. In effectual calling, the Spirit of Christ persuades and enables the sinner to embrace Jesus Christ as he freely offered in the gospel (Tipton, 2013:3). We should note the significant parallel with the idea of imputation, particularly in terms of an ontological-theological safeguard within the reality of union with Christ: the distinctive righteousness of Christ, which is proper to him alone, is attributed to believers only within and because of the reality of the union with him. This attributed righteousness, proper to Christ alone, is ours improperly but truly because of the reality of the union (Gracia, 2006:246).

The grace of redemption and salvation is offered to all human beings, which indeed is not communicated to all but only to the elect, who are made one with Christ. The elect are chosen in Christ from before the beginning of the foundation of the world, reflecting the language of the first chapter of Ephesians. The elect are chosen in Christ to be members of his body and to be God's children (Fesko, 2010:68). The union with Christ is the central soteriological reality constituting the context for the application of every benefit of redemption (Edwards, 2012:35).

From all of this we conclude that the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit) are in one another or indwell one another. They share the divine life; each of the trinitarian persons is wholly God. Because of this unity, seeing Jesus means seeing the invisible Father. Because of the Father's love for the Son and their love for the world and because of the Son's incarnation, death, and resurrection, believers are in the Father and the Son (Tenney, 1981:167). They are mutually indwelt by the trinitarian persons as an act of grace insofar as creatures can partake of the

divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4). John concludes that the Holy Spirit is in the mission of God. Jesus will ask the Father to send the Spirit to indwell and be with believers, and they will know him (John 14:17). Although John does correlate the Spirit's work and union as does Paul, John provides the raw material for systematic theology to do so (Peterson, 2013:28).

It is important to note that the final goal of the church is not unity as such, however that might be understood "in the church," but unity "in us" (v. 21), being one "as we are one" (v. 22). Only this can explain the meaning of the statement "that they may become perfectly one." The last phrase could be translated as "into one." This perfection does not refer to heaven, for it is intended to serve as a witness to the world. However, the unity depicted here is not a unity that stems from just "being with one another," nor is it a call to organise and form a united group for friendly and effective collaboration (Michaels, 2010:877).

The point here rather is a unity that is established in the unity controlled, defined, and shared by the unity of the Father and the Son. This kind of oneness cannot be obtained by a human process but can only be an act from above, a unity that is divine from commencement to consummation (Klink, 2016:174). Johannine oneness means that believers become one with each other as Jesus is one with the Father. This is ultimately a call not so much to social harmony but to social identity and this is also a call to corporate participation within the divine interrelation of Father and Son (Byers, 2017:106). The redeemed become one by participating in the followership of the Father and the Son. This participation is through their union with the Son, a concept in harmony with representation within the entire gospel of the mediatorial role of the incarnate Son of God. Accordingly, the unity envisaged is possible only through the accomplished redemptive action of God in Christ (Beasley-Murray, 1999:302).

7.7 Conclusion

First we need to understand that predestination does not begin with God looking at sinful humanity and deciding who to save. It is not an arbitrary choice by God. Predestination/election begins with an expression of love. The Bible teaches that God is love (1 John 4:8). This is the defining characteristic of God. Each of the three persons in the blessed Trinity is concerned with our salvation: with the Father it is predestination, with the Son propitiation, and with the Spirit regeneration.

The basis of salvation is the trinitarian love; the love of the Father for the Son is one of the foundational and fundamental building blocks of Christian theology. No redemptive plan would be adequate that would treat lightly the love of God for the Son in dealing with the wrath of God.

Divine election of sinners to salvation is God's expression of his love for his Son. The Scriptures inform us that, before the Lord became incarnate he said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb. 10:7), and after he had become incarnate he declared, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). God had from the beginning chosen certain ones to salvation, then, gave them to the Son. And because the will of Christ is in perfect accord with the will of the Father, he would not seek to enlarge upon his election. This is in harmony with the express teaching of the word. Again and again our Lord referred to those whom the Father had "given" him, and concerning whom he was particularly exercised. He said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37). Before the foundation of the world the Father predestined a people to be conformed to the image of his Son and the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was in order to the carrying out of the divine purpose.

Fundamentally to the thought regarding our union with Christ is our pre-existing union with Adam. When our father Adam was once fallen and had become alienated from the fountain of life, he was spiritually dead.

We have already noted that every aspect of the application of redemption is by grace and is "in Christ." From the standpoint of the eternal counsels of God and appointment of the Father, God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). Before Jesus came we were already "in him" for his name was to be called Jesus because he would "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). From a heavenly point of view, that union is as ancient as eternity past, presently prevails, and according to Romans 8:11, 18-25 will never end.

We may, therefore, correctly affirm that in the broad sense salvation has its origin in union with Christ in the mind of God. As elected believers in Christ we have been identified with him at every stage of his redemptive work.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Summary

The doctrine of predestination is a theological issue defined by complexity and differences of opinion among theologians. However, it cannot be ignored, because of implications that arise depending on the view one adopts. The doctrine of the predestination of the saints as argued from a Christological point of view is concerned with the role played by human free will to make a decision on salvation and God's predetermined decision about an individual's eternal destiny. Some teach that works accomplished in a state of grace have a meritorious and redeeming power and that a human being is obliged to accomplish good works to earn entrance into heaven because good works count as a way to receive eternal life.

The biblical understanding of soteriology is being challenged by the version of predestination presented by some. The idea of salvation as something that is not from human capabilities but the sovereign grace of God totally out of reach of human powers has become problematic for them. The doctrine of predestination has been of concern for many people because their view of the doctrine causes them to be worried because of the uncertainty of final salvation. Others find the Augustinian view of predestination unacceptable because of its apparent contradiction of human freedom, with its emphasis on total depravity. The doctrine has been characterised to be blasphemous, deductive and speculative doctrine, because of restrictions on human freedom.

In this age of appeasement, some teachings do not take into account the biblical teaching on the comprehensive impact of sin, which results in a heightened and exalted view of the human ability to propagate the needed heart transformation and this correspondingly denigrates the centrality of the sovereign grace in the predestination of the saints. If anyone has the ability to choose God, a divine intervention is unnecessary.

The study answers the question "does God's election of humankind to salvation depend upon his knowledge of the actions of the sinner or upon the underserved sovereign elective grace?"

This problem is resolved by looking and evaluating the reason behind Augustine's theological development of the doctrine of the predestination of the saints, looking and evaluating the contemporary arguments on the doctrine from its historical intellectualistic perspective, examining and evaluating the doctrine of predestination in light of Scripture and formulating and bridging

the gap on how South African Reformed theologians can be shaped by Augustine's approach to predestination of the saints, in the exposition of salvation.

The study provides a Reformational approach on the doctrine of the predestination of the saints as it developed historically and proposes how this may be applied in the exposition of salvation, specifically in the Black South African Reformed Churches.

In chapter 2 the objective was to look at and evaluate the reason behind Augustine's theological development of the predestination of the saints.

The understanding of the doctrine of the predestination of the saints requires some foundational assessment. The doctrine of predestination was first formally set forth in the writings of Augustine during the Pelagian controversy. We would have failed in our unveiling of history if we would not affirm that both Augustine and Pelagius were zealous for orthodoxy and defending it. They tenaciously and fearlessly stood against those who attacked the Scripture and distorted the gospel.

What has been impactful and made a huge difference is their understanding of the doctrine of man and sin. Therefore, in order to understand Augustine's gracious monergism one must first understand Pelagianism. Pelagius rejected the hereditary transmission of sinful nature and as a result he did not believe in original sin. To Pelagius, it is blasphemous to think that God transmits or imputes Adam's guilt and corruption to his progeny. Instead, Adam was an isolated person, not a representative of all mankind, and his act of sin injured himself alone, merely setting a bad example for all who followed to imitate. Since no guilt or corruption is inherited by Adam's posterity, the will is free, unhindered by a depraved nature. The will is not enslaved to sin or in bondage to sin, but is just as able after the fall as before to choose that which is good. Therefore, salvation is a humanistic monergism; he affirmed that God's aid is not fundamentally necessary, since human beings are able of themselves to exercise works of righteousness that merit eternal life. Yet Augustine understood that a biblical doctrine of salvation, which is completely founded on divine grace, is required by a biblical doctrine of man and sin. He regards the natural man as totally depraved and utterly unable to perform spiritual good.

When Augustine first came to affirm sovereign grace, Pelagianism was not what initially motivated him. Ten years prior to the controversy (c. 400 CE) Augustine, reflecting on what Paul says in Romans 9, wrote *Confessions*, in which he exposes the depravity and utter inability of humans' free will and exalts the sovereign grace of God. Augustine's affirmation of sovereign grace was truly a reflection upon the events of his own conversion in the garden at Milan. However, Augustine was officially provoked by Pelagius's understanding of the freedom of will.

Augustine's understanding of the doctrine of soteriology by irresistible grace alone is rooted in his understanding of the doctrine of original sin, for his doctrine of grace provides the solution to the problem that original sin created. The teaching that the grace of God is the efficient cause of salvation led on to his doctrine of predestination. He emphasised that predestination of the elect to faith, holiness, and eternal glory is not just God's foreknowledge, but based on God's gracious choice.

The Semi-Pelagianism, which was an attempt to sail between the two extremes of Pelagianism and Augustinianism, tried to give place to both divine grace and human will as causative cooperative ability. Semi-Pelagianism took an intermediate position, denying the total inability of human beings to do spiritual good, but admitting his inability to perform really saving work without the assistance of divine grace. The grace of God illuminates the mind and supports the will, but always in such a manner that the free will is in no way compromised. There was a protracted struggle between Augustinianism and Semi-Pelagianism, which revealed a strong opposition of the doctrine of predestination, the total inability of human beings to do spiritual good, and irresistible grace. Moreover, the position that was finally sanctioned by the Church was that of a moderate Augustinianism. The doctrine of grace alone came off victorious; but the doctrine of predestination was abandoned. The irresistible grace of predestination was driven from the field by the sacramental grace of baptism. The doctrine of grace was thereby brought into a closer relationship with the popular Catholicism, as also the exaltation of good works as the aim of the divine impartation of grace.

Gregory the Great retained the doctrine of predestination in modified form. He advocates that predestination is based on foreseen faith; the action of some people is the ground upon which predestination rests. People like Gottschalk of Orbais found rest and peace for his soul only in the Augustinian doctrine of election and contended earnestly for a double predestination. He rejected the idea of predestination based on foreseen faith since it makes the divine decree dependent on the acts of man.

In the dawn of Scholasticism, Anselm of Canterbury believed salvation is a gift from God to humanity, yet he did not affirm the irresistibility of grace. The Roman Catholic Church adopted the theory of synergism on regeneration. Thomas Aquinas, the most respected theologian in Roman Catholicism, at least among conservative Catholic members, strictly adhered to an Augustinian understanding of predestination. He affirmed God's unconditional election and reprobation of people as part of God's eternal plan. Yet, toward the end of the Middle Ages a compromise appeared, when the Roman Catholic Church allowed a great deal of latitude in the doctrine of predestination. The church shifted from Semi-Augustinianism to Semi-Pelagianism and at times even to Pelagianism.

The theological cause of the Reformation was the desire of the Reformers to go back to the classic source of the Christian faith, the Bible. In the Protestant Reformed tradition, free will was denied as contrary to the message of grace and, indeed, a denial of divine election. John Calvin affirmed the Augustinian doctrine of an absolute double predestination and he was committed to strenuously defending it. Election is based on the sovereign will of God and consists of a dual predestination of some to salvation and others to condemnation. He believes that the Christological work on the cross is limited to those who are predestined to salvation. The elects are saved apart from their own initial desire as the Holy Spirit irresistibly draws them to Christ.

Both Calvin and Arminius agree on the doctrine of total depravity and bondage to sin. Though they come so close together, in reality they are worlds apart due to the doctrine of prevenient grace. One could ask, for example, how is it that Arminius can, on the one hand, affirm total depravity and spiritual inability, and yet at the same time- and while avoiding Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian notions of cooperation affirm that human beings' free will is able to accept or resist God's grace (synergism)? For Arminius, the answer lies in the doctrine of prevenient grace because it is here that a free will ability to cooperate with or resist subsequent grace is restored to humans.

The idea is that God provides the first form of grace (prevenient grace) which mitigates depravity and enables human beings to either resist or cooperate with the Spirit. Therefore, while Calvin views God's grace as effectual, Arminius disagrees, arguing that while grace must be the initiator, nevertheless, the efficacy of grace is ultimately conditioned upon a human's free will and it is therefore synergistic. Consequently, prevenient grace is no small doctrine, but the very hinge of Arminius's soteriology which diverges so drastically from Calvin.

Arminius affirms that although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, human beings have not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but he does so in a manner as not to interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his/her eternal destiny depends on how he/she uses it. He affirms that God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon his foreseeing that they would respond to his call. He selected only those whom he knew would themselves freely believe the gospel.

Schleiermacher in the eighteenth century brings in a shift to experience, rather than grounding his view of the doctrine in an objective revelation of God. The doctrine of predestination of the saints has been shaped differently. It is eluded as all men are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Karl Barth in the twentieth century reinvigorated the doctrine of predestination; he introduced a view that every human being is elected in Christ. It must be said that the doctrine

of the predestination of the saints is by no means universally accepted in the Christian church. There are those who accept and those who reject it. The most difficult part of the doctrine of predestination of the saints for most people is the idea that some sinners are passed over by God's electing plan and left in their sins.

The historical development of the doctrine of predestination helps us to understand the background of the issue of predestination from its historical perspective to acquire definite knowledge of the doctrine in its original shape and the character of its first modifications. This traces the course of the doctrine of predestination from the patristic period through to the re-evaluation that took place after the Reformation. It provides the historical information on the ongoing conversation and debate over the doctrine of predestination. It is not approached more generally on the anthropological or philosophical question of what constitutes free choice in daily, civil, or even ethical matters, but on the foundational soteriological question of the source or foundation of salvation.

In chapter 3 the objective was to look at and evaluate contemporary arguments on the predestination of the saints.

The researcher established the historical information on Arminius and Calvin to provide us with knowledge of where contemporary argumentation originated. It acquaints us with the original writings from the historical data at hand and with the aid of historical hypotheses and the environment in which the particular writings under consideration originated. A doctrine is never fully understood until it is apprehended as it is stated by the original proponent. It is impossible to understand authors and to interpret their words correctly unless they are seen against the proper historical background. The place, the time, the circumstances, and the prevailing view of the world and of life in general will naturally colour the writings that are produced under those conditions of time, place and circumstances.

There are two main positions among Christians concerning God's election of human beings for salvation, Arminianism and Calvinism. Arminians believe that God in his sovereignty and grace chooses for salvation people whom he foresees will believe in Christ. By contrast, Calvinists hold that God in his sovereignty and grace chooses people for salvation without taking their responses into account; God chooses for reasons within himself.

Arminius teaches that God bestows a universal grace on humans, which is sufficient to enable the sinners to believe and obey the gospel and that the call which comes to humans through the preaching of the word exerts a merely moral influence on mankind's understanding and will. If human beings assent to the truth, trust in the grace of God and obey the commandments of

Christ, they receive a greater measure of divine grace, are justified on account of their faith and if they persevere to the end, become partakes of life eternal.

Calvin consistently took his starting point in an eternal election and in the mystical union established in the decree and covenantal agreement between God and the Son. His fundamental position is that there is no participation in the blessings of Christ, except through a living union with the Saviour. And if even the very first of the blessings of saving grace already presupposes a union with Christ, then the gift of Christ to the church and the imputation of his righteousness precedes all else. In the covenantal agreement between God and the Son a union was already established between him and those who were given unto him by the Father and in virtue of that union, which is both legal and mystical, all the blessings of salvation are ideally already the portion of those who are of Christ.

Sovereign grace is typically associated with Calvinism, and for good reason, since it was John Calvin and his followers who articulated the doctrine of effectual grace so clearly against the synergists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, in reading Calvin it is immediately apparent that he was not inventing the doctrine but was himself tremendously indebted to Augustine (354-430 CE).

The salvation of the elect is not conceived atomistically, since they are all eternally in Christ, and are born in him, who is the head, as members of his mystical body. Regeneration, repentance, and faith are not regarded as mere preparations altogether apart from any union with Christ, nor as conditions to be fulfilled by human beings, either wholly or in part, in their own strength. They are blessings of the covenant of grace, which already flow from the mystical union and the grant of Christ to the church.

The doctrine of predestination of the saints is deliberated upon and the conclusion is made from a biblical presupposition of the doctrine of sin, specifically the doctrine of total depravity. One would not absolutely, meticulously and deterministically comprehend predestination of the saints without a biblical perspective of the doctrine of total depravity. The mind is given over to blindness and the heart to depravity. Original sin is so profound a corruption of human nature as to leave nothing sound, nothing incorrupt in the body and soul of a human. As a result the impact of sin has incapacitated the natural man to respond to God.

God saves sinners by grace, and there is no other way of salvation offered to human beings. It is also necessary that every obligation be cancelled, and to this end salvation has been made an absolute gift from God. The biblical meaning of grace, which is salvation truth has but the one meaning of unmerited favour and represents a divine method of dealing with mankind from

Adam until the present time. Augustine insists that salvation from start to finish is all by grace; faith is the gift of God.

God's eternal predestination did not take place in view of man's foreseen final faith. On the contrary, a human has become a believer in time because of his eternal predestination to salvation. In other words, a person is brought to saving faith in time just because God from eternity has graciously predestined him to salvation. Faith does not come first and then God's decision to ordain life. It's the other way around. The doctrine of predestination demonstrates that God has elected some to salvation and this election is without respect to any qualities, actions, behaviour, virtues, vices or choices of those individuals themselves.

The doctrine of limited atonement is connected to the doctrine of unconditional election. If God has elected certain ones to salvation before the foundation of the world, then it logically follows that he will provide for the redemption of precisely those whom he has chosen. Christ's death in and of itself is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world but God designed and intended Christ's death to efficaciously save and atone only for the sins of those whom he unconditionally elected. The Reformed position is that Christ died for the purpose of actually and certainly saving the elect and the elect only. This doctrine has been the foundational truth where Paul's passion for gospel declaration was founded and grounded. The doctrine of sovereign predestination should be publicly taught and preached in order that true believers may know themselves to be special objects of God's love and mercy, and that they may be confirmed and strengthened in their assurance of their salvation. We are commanded to go and preach the gospel and the doctrine of predestination of the saints should be the ground where our declaration is founded.

Based on the exposition of both Calvin and Arminius's original writings, the work was looked at and evaluated from a historical intellectualistic perspective which informed the intelligibility of contemporary argumentations around the doctrine of predestination of the saints.

In chapter 4 the objective was to examine and evaluate the predestination of the saints in light of Scripture.

We have begun to see that God's covenant with human beings is gracious and everlasting, resting on his oath that should it fail, he will be torn in two (Gen. 15). The covenant, of course, by its very nature includes the response of humans. "Abraham believed, and it was reckoned to him as righteous" (Gen. 15:6). To be sure, Abraham's participation and obedience were integral to the covenant, but in order for the covenant to be everlasting, there must be a covenant keeper who is himself internally faithful.

The doctrine of predestination is not in question, God elected or sovereignly chose Israel not because they were the biggest, the best or the most righteous people (Deut. 7:7-8). He chose Abraham who initially was an idolater. Since God is the only true God, he is not obliged nor does he need to love anyone or anything or show kindness to anyone (Jacob). However, he graciously extended his love to the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, we see election everywhere, Jesus chose the disciples, they did not chose him (John 15:16). No one comes unless the Father draws him (John 6:44). Salvation in the New Testament is the gift of God by grace (Eph. 2:8-9). It is expounded that believing is the consequence and not the cause of God's degree. Election is limited to those who are ordained to eternal life Acts 13:48, says, "... as many as were appointed to eternal life believed." This appointment of God is not to mere external privileges but to "eternal life", not to service but to salvation itself, all that are appointed to eternal life will most certainly believe.

This gift of God was given before the foundation of the world. God loved his own people before the foundation of the world. They are all his and he gave them to the Son. We have learned from several passages that, God has ordained to eternal life certain ones, and that in consequence of his ordination they in due time believe that God's predestination to salvation of his own elect, is not due to any good thing in them nor to anything meritorious from them, but solely of his grace. We are saved by the unconditional election of God. God graciously supplies the individual with the ability to meet the condition of faith, or trust, in the redemptive work of Christ on the individual's behalf.

In order that no flesh should glory in his presence, that God chose in Christ before the foundation of the world, not because they were so, but in order that they "should be holy and without blame before him". The very grace by which we are saved was in God's purpose, given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; that long before we were actually created, God's elect stood present before his mind.

The answer to objective of examining and evaluating the predestination of the saints in light of Scripture is founded on the premise that good theology derives from exegesis, and good exegesis is more than just lexical and syntactical work.

The objective of chapter 5 was to formulate and bridge the gap (application) on how South African Reformed theologians can be shaped by Augustine's approach to predestination of the saints, in the exposition of salvation.

The author formulated the application of the doctrine of predestination by briefly focusing on the view of the Black Reformed Church on predestination, the model for the church and progress to shows that the church should look at the doctrine of predestination from its basis, its purpose and its result. First we need to understand that predestination does not begin with God looking at sinful humanity and deciding who to save. It is not an arbitrary choice by God.

Predestination/election begins with an expression of love. The Bible teaches that God is love (1 John 4:8). This is the defining characteristic of God. Each of the three persons in the blessed Trinity is concerned with our salvation: with the Father it is predestination, with the Son propitiation, and with the Spirit regeneration.

The basis of salvation is the trinitarian love; the love of the Father for the Son is one of the foundational and fundamental building blocks of Christian theology. No redemptive plan would be adequate that would treat lightly the love of God for the Son in dealing with the wrath of God.

Divine election of sinners to salvation is God's expression of his love for his Son. The Scriptures inform us that, before the Lord became incarnate he said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb. 10:7), and after he had become incarnate he declared, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). God had from the beginning chosen certain ones to salvation, then, gave them to the Son. And because the will of Christ is in perfect accord with the will of the Father, he would not seek to enlarge upon his election. This is in harmony with the express teaching of the word. Again and again our Lord referred to those whom the Father had "given" him, and concerning whom he was particularly exercised. He said, "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (John 6:37). Before the foundation of the world the Father predestined a people to be conformed to the image of his Son and the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was in order to the carrying out of the divine purpose.

Fundamentally to the thought regarding our union with Christ is our pre-existing union with Adam. When our father Adam was once fallen and had become alienated from the fountain of life, he was spiritually dead.

This author has already noted that every aspect of the application of redemption is by grace and is "in Christ." From the standpoint of the eternal counsels of God and appointment of the Father, God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). Before Jesus came we were already "in him" for his name was to be called Jesus because he would "save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). From a heavenly point of view, that union is as ancient as eternity past, presently prevails, and according to Romans 8:11 and 18-25, will never end.

The doctrine of predestination is based on the trinitarian love, purposed on God's love for the Son and results in the union with Christ. We may, therefore, correctly affirm that in the broad sense salvation has its origin in union with Christ in the mind of God. As elected believers in Christ we have been identified with him at every stage of his redemptive work.

8.2 Limitation

The study is limited to the Black South African Reformed church on how to apply the predestination of the saints in the understanding of salvation. In these churches some of the believers take the universal salvific will of God to mean that all human beings ought to be saved, in their understanding of the grace –freedom of the will perception. The study presents a competitive understanding of relationship between divine grace and created freedom such that freedom is authentic only if grace overcomes its capacity for sin. When Scripture is expounded the study limits itself to a historical-grammatical exegetical analysis.

8.3 Recommendation for further study

The first area of recommended study is to further explore the foundational assessment of the Arminian soteriology, specifically the doctrine of prevenient grace which makes a huge difference between Calvin and Arminius.

A second area of study that could yield much benefit is to apply the same methodology of a biblical theological and exegetical approach to many other passages both in the Old and New Testament.

8.4 Application drawn

Every truth that is revealed to us in God's word is there not only for our information but also for our inspiration. The doctrine of predestination most clearly presupposes humankind as fallen and lost, it is hence indeed, that the words derive their meaning. That it was God's eternal purpose to choose some people from the fallen race and it is clearly taught to us that the purpose is irrespective works done by fallen humanity. Nothing can be more conceived conclusive in argument than what is contained in the word of God. The reason of foreseen works as the ground of election is wholly excluded. The Bible unequivocally denies that human will and human effort have anything to do with the basis of God's election to salvation. The choice is expressly denied to be on account of any works, and is as expressly ascribed to the sovereign will of God.

Not only in our age, but many other theologians seem to have gone in this respect somewhat beyond the limits of revelation. It is true, by a process of reasoning apparently obvious, but when we begin to reason on this high and mysterious subject, we become soon bewildered and lost in the mazes of difficulties.

Predestination/election, in the Scripture, is something for which we worship God because in it he reveals the greatness and the freeness of his love for sinful humankind. The Bible has been

given to us not to gratify an idle curiosity but to edify the souls of its readers. The doctrine of predestination is something more than an abstract teaching, which explains the rationale of the divine government, it is designed as a motive for godly fear, it is made known to us for the promotion of righteous living, and it is revealed in order to bring into subjection our rebellious hearts. A true recognition of the doctrine of predestination humbles as nothing else does or can humble us, and brings the heart into lowly submission before God, causing us to relinquish our own self and making us delight in the perception and performance of the divine will.

Paul concludes his treatment of the doctrine of election and reprobation by bowing in worship before the magnificence of this sovereign God: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! (Rom. 11:33). Meditating on these truths caused him in the opening verses of his letter to the Ephesians to erupt in praise of the God who “blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him” (Eph. 1:3-4). The same must be so for us who are the beneficiaries of such glorious grace. Above all else, the doctrine of predestination should lead us to bow our minds in humble wonder of the God whose wisdom is inscrutable and whose grace is so bountiful as to save such wretched rebels as ourselves. We are graced with every spiritual blessing, not because of any commendable or redeemable quality in ourselves but because of the free and sovereign mercy of the God who delights to set his love on the underserving. Such truth must evoke praise from the depths of our souls.

Predestination/election need not to excuse us from the urgency of preaching. In fact, these rather are an impetus to zeal in preaching, for one’s work has the promise of a sure reward. We labour in hope, and so we labour more intensely. We see this in the case of Paul in Corinth, when his message was met with rejection by the Jews. God encouraged him through a night vision: “Do not be afraid any longer but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10). The result was more earnestness on Paul’s part and the birth of the Corinthian church (Acts 18:11).

The doctrine of predestination and election should be based on an engagement with the teaching of Scripture and represent a continuation of a long-standing Augustinian legacy. The church should be fundamentally concerned with its doctrinal formulation and it should be distinguished in its deepest theological concern of the gospel itself. Christian theology must be normed by the teaching of Scripture, properly interpreted. The doctrinal formulation of the church must always stand the test of Scripture and must be revised where it is at variance with scriptural teaching. The doctrinal productions of the church are to lean rather heavily on the

word of God. The Black Reformed church needs to interpret predestination which grounds the grace and the power of God central in salvation qualitatively from a biblical perspective. It is the responsibility of the church in our dispensation to be theologically sound on our approach to the sovereign grace of God.

8.5 Conclusion

In this age of appeasement, some teachings do not take into account the biblical teaching on the comprehensive impact of sin, which results in a heightened and exalted view of the human ability to propagate the needed heart transformation and this correspondingly denigrates the centrality of the sovereign grace in the predestination of the saints. If anyone has the ability to choose God, a divine intervention is unnecessary.

The understanding of contemporary argumentation on the doctrine of predestination requires some foundational reassessment. Our contemporary understanding of the doctrine of predestination is influenced by either Calvinism or Arminianism. The historical information on Calvin and Arminius is established to provide us with knowledge of where contemporary argumentation originated. It acquaints us with the original writings from the historical data at hand and with the aid of historical hypotheses and the environment in which the particular writings under consideration originated. However, in reading Calvin it is immediately apparent that he was not inventing the doctrine of predestination but was himself tremendously indebted to Augustine.

This problem is solved by giving attention to Augustine's exposition of the doctrine of predestination, the historical arguments of theologians opposed to Augustine's view, while biblical teaching on predestination in both Old and New Testaments is utilised to evaluate the arguments on both sides and the conclusion is applied in the exposition of the basis, purpose and result of predestination as an important part of the biblical plan of salvation presented in the gospel.

The doctrine is viewed and founded on the premise that good theology derives from exegesis, and good exegesis is more than just lexical and syntactical work. A primary consideration for exegesis is that it should be consistent within the framework of both the Old and New Testament on the doctrine of salvation.

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