

**The historical perspective on grace in salvation
according to Calvin and Arminius: Revisiting the
doctrine of grace in the African Baptist Church**

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Thesis accepted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree *Doctor of Philosophy in Church and Dogma History*
at the North-West University

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Graduation: October 2022

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I first started this study, I was very aware of my weaknesses and lack of experience; yet I soon realised that others had dealt with these colossal difficulties in the past and that I had benefited from their efforts.

While I make no claim to originality, I have assiduously studied the writings of many scholars and stood on the mountains of their research to aid my understanding with the points presented in this study. Though I do not agree with all their conclusions, I willingly declare my sincere gratitude for their efforts.

My promoter, Professor Marius Nel, deserves credit for his patience and expertise in guiding me through the research process and, finally to completion. Through his keen insights, reliable comments, and constructive ideas, he provided a fair view on my deficiencies, which alleviated numerous obstacles during my studies.

The staff at Christ Baptist Church who encouraged me to keep going and gave me resources that enabled me to complete the study and provided me time to study and research.

This research was made possible due to my wife, Brenda and my three children, Vunene, Vukulu and Vuhluri, for whom I am grateful. Thank you for allowing me to spend so many days and nights away from you to finish this research.

I would like to thank Hester Lombard at the Potchefstroom Theological Library for assisting me in finding credible and relevant resources for the study.

It is with a deep sense of gratitude to God for providing us with his written word as well as the skills to comprehend it. As a result, our faith should be based on God's strength rather than human wisdom

This study continues the research that I begin at NWU in 2016 with the title "Augustine and predestination of the saints: Application for the South African Church".

ABSTRACT

The Reformational doctrine of grace in salvation, which is founded on scripture teaching, is a continuation of a long-running argument between Calvinists and Arminians (Barrett, 2017:241). The language of grace pervades the Bible and all Christian theological traditions to the point that were one to say that salvation is solely through grace is to claim very little. It makes no distinction between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius. They were both fervent believers in God's grace in salvation. Their methodological approach to the doctrine of grace in salvation is what sets them apart in terms of how grace is interpreted. As a result, it is necessary to properly comprehend this doctrine as stated by the original proponents (Trueman, 2017:17). Calvin and Arminius' questions were not unusual in that period of scholarly intellectual development. These questions, it will be claimed, are addressed to the modern church, even though the contemporary church's setting differs from Calvin's and Arminius' time. The focus is on Calvin's and Arminius' differing views on grace in salvation, with biblical teaching on grace within both the Old and New Testament being utilised to assess both sides' argument. The conclusion is applied to the African Baptist Church's position and focuses on the era from 1975 to the present, as well as how African theologians should be formed in their perspective on grace.

Key terms

Calvinism, Arminianism, prevenient grace, free will, African Baptist Church, salvation

OPSOMMING

Die Reformatiese leerstelling van redding deur genade soos gebasseer op die skriftuurlike leering verteenwoordig 'n lang debat tussen Calvinistiese en Arminiaanse nalatingskap. (Barrett, 2017:241). Die taal van genade deurtrek die hele Bybel en die tradisies van die Christelike teologie so volledig dat om aanspraak te maak dat redding slegs deur genade geskied is eintlik om op baie min aanspraak te maak. Dit onderskei nie tussen Johannes Calvyn en Jakob Arminius nie. Hulle albei had 'n hartstogtelike passie in hulle toewyding aan die leerstelling van redding deur die genade van God. Waar hulle egter verskil is in hulle siening van hoe genade verstaan moet word en hulle sistematiese benadering tot die leerstelling van redding deur genade. Dit is dus belangrik om hierdie leerstelling ten volle te verstaan soos oorspronklik geformuleer (Trueman, 2017:17). Die vraagstukke waarmee Calvyn en Arminius gekonfronteer was, was nie uniek in daardie tyd van akademiese ontwikkeling nie. Hierdie studie stel dit dat dieselfde vrae vandag nog die modern kerk konfronteer, alhoewel die konteks van die huidige kerk verskil van die van Calvyn en Arminius. Aandag word gevestig op die verskil in benadering tot redding deur genade tussen Calvyn en Arminius terwyl die Bybel se onderrig oor genade in beide die Ou- en Nuwe Testament gebruik word om die argumente aan beide kante te evalueer. Die gevolgtrekking word toegepas op die situasie van die Afrika-Baptistekerk en wel die periode vanaf 1975 tot huidig en hoe Afrika teoloë onderrig moet word in hulle seining van genade.

Sleuteltermes:

Calvinisme. Arminianisme, heersende genade, vrye wil, Afrika- Baptistekerk, redding.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and problem statement

A church's teaching is never fully comprehended unless it is comprehended as the original proponent claimed in their historical context, it is impossible to grasp and interpret the teachings accurately. The writings produced under the conditions of time, location and situation will inevitably be coloured by the places, time, circumstances and prevalent world and life views (Muller, 2017:103). The contemporary understanding of Calvin's and Arminius' doctrine of grace requires a fundamental assessment. To have a better understanding of their various backgrounds of their respective doctrines of grace from their historical perspective, the researcher should follow them from of the authors themselves. The historical form of the Arminian doctrine of grace would give readers the knowledge of where contemporary argumentation came from. It would familiarise them with original historical data available and with the help of historical hypotheses and the context in which the publications in question were penned. It would ground them in the historical intellectualistic perspective of the theologians' understanding and approach to the doctrine of grace (Trueman, 2017:23).

Arminianism and Calvinism disagree precisely where grace is irresistible in the salvation process. For Arminius, God bestows a prevenient grace which, in its first stage, is irresistible to enable the human's faculties to cooperate. In the second stage, however, humans are empowered to cooperate; they can accept or resist this subsequent grace (synergism) (Picirilli, 2002:154).

Not so for Calvin. Special, saving grace is always irresistible, because God works monergistically not just to call but also to regenerate the sinner totally in one instantaneous act (Barrett, 2013:223). Because humans are spiritually dead, the first movement toward salvation cannot come from them; it can only come from within itself. Regeneration is a sovereign gift of God, bestowed generously on those whom God has chosen and it is only through God's immense re-creative process that this may happen (Picirilli, 2002:142-143). The Holy Spirit never fails to call, regenerate and save those who the Father has chosen, and Christ has redeemed through irresistible grace. It is impregnable; it will accomplish what it sets out to do (Beeke, 2008:103). Calvin combines the doctrines of effective calling with irresistible grace in his teachings. However, there must be some clarification as to what "irresistible" means. When correctly understood, Calvin's word "irresistible grace" means that when God decides to call an elect sinner to himself, God will be successful. The regenerative work of the Spirit is "infallible,

victorious, irresistible, or always efficacious,” since it removes all impediments, overcomes all oppositions, and infallibly produces the intended consequence (Barrett, 2013:121).

1.1.1 Problem statement

Arminius is one of a selected few individuals in church history who have given their names to a prominent theological school. Furthermore, neither side has even been devoid of speakers in the discussion between Arminianism and Calvinism. Despite his well-known name, Arminius’ thought is usually misconstrued, at the very least misrepresented by many (Aloisi, 2016:183). The misconception that traditional Arminianism is not a theology of grace is widely circulated and it can be found in most of Calvinists’ works that discuss Arminianism. A common misunderstanding is that Arminian theology emphasises free will at the expense of grace and that its soteriology revolves around human’s choice of God rather than God’s rescuing love and power (Olson, 2006:158). Calvinists have a habit of using the term to refer to anything that isn’t exactly what John Calvin taught. Unfortunately, the terms “Arminian” and “Arminianism” are frequently misused and tossed around indiscriminately. This, according to the study, is because few individuals are familiar with what Arminius taught (cf Grudem, 1994:676).

Olson (2006:161) claims that anyone reading Arminius’ theology with an open mind will notice his ardent dedication to God’s grace. He never credited human goodness or even willpower with any causal efficacy for salvation. Without grace, he taught that, fallen human beings would never come to God of their own accord. He also felt that without grace, individuals are weak and prone to disobeying God (Aloisi, 2016:203).

1.1.1.1 Relevancy of the study

It would be equally important to emphasise the significance of this research. Today, there is a Reformed revival taking place across the English-speaking globe. Australia, North America, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Zambia, and other places in the world have experienced a comeback. Not only in the old-line Calvinist denominations, but also in Baptist churches, where there are conferences where Calvinism and Arminianism are discussed. The notion of salvation by grace has entered the bloodstream of a new generation (Duncan III, 2009:227). This is a modern interpretation that necessitates a careful and sympathetic reading of Calvin and Arminius. As a result, modern debate would be grounded in the historical intellectualistic perspective of both Calvin’s and Arminius’ original historical material, as well as historical hypothesis about the setting in which particular writings under review were written (Olson, 2011:9).

Although many of the personal and institutional animosities that once existed between Calvinists and Arminians have faded in recent years, the divisions remain. The concerns are alive because they deal with issues that are crucial to the Christian faith. It has been often stated that the most important criterion in expounding God's word is to maintain the balance of truth. The balance of truth has been lost due to a disproportionate emphasis on one side over the other and a refusal to investigate both Calvin's and Arminius' original texts. This study takes a thoughtful approach to assiduously correcting misunderstanding by exposing historical text and God's word, which will contribute to a healthy historical intellectualistic approach and biblical exposition of the doctrine of grace, assisting the African Baptist Church in adopting a proper history and dogma exposition.

In the following pages, an attempt is made to re-examine and cultivate some of the most fundamental questions that can engage the human mind in light of God's word. Others have wisely dealt with similar issues in the past and present, and this study would benefit from their efforts. The writings of such people are meticulously researched. Even though this study does not agree with their entire conclusions, the researcher gratefully acknowledges the gratitude of their efforts. However, the researcher wishes for the readers' faith to be based on God's might rather than on human wisdom. As a result, grammatical, lexical, contextual, and exegetical principles would underpin the notion of grace in salvation.

There is no shortage of material on Calvin's and Arminius' viewpoints on grace, as well as those who are held by other individuals, churches, researchers, theologians, and orthodoxies. Multiple arguments for and against the definitions of grace, as well as the interpretation of various biblical verses addressing the notion of grace, can be found in close proximity to the same volume. As a result, while dealing with the scholarly animadversions that exist in our time and age, the historical-grammatical approach of interpretation of scripture texts is required.

Both Calvin and Arminius, according to the research, had a strong belief in God's grace. Their methodological approach to the doctrine of grace in salvation is frequently the source of disagreement. The question for Arminius was not whether salvation is entirely by grace, but whether grace can be resisted (Olson, 2006:162). From a biblical perspective, believers must interpret grace in a way that places God at the centre of salvation. In this dispensation, it is the church's responsibility to approach God's sovereign grace with theological soundness (Hiestand, 2007:130). For each new age, especially postmodern humanity, the study of the theology of grace must be explained again and again.

The Research problem can be stated as follows: "To ensure that its doctrine of grace is biblically sound and relevant, the African Baptist Church has to examine it. A historical view on

grace in salvation, such as that of Calvin and Arminius, can make a substantial and helpful contribution to equipping the African Baptist Church with the proper perspective.”

In addressing this problem, the study pays attention to the following issues:

- Both Arminius and Calvin were fervent believers in God’s grace. They did, however, take various approaches to the theology of grace in salvation in terms of methodology. What were their differences and how should we evaluate their differences in redefining the doctrine for the postmodern church?
- It is vital to characterise and analyse the contemporary argument and discourse on grace in salvation within the African Baptist Church in order to understand the importance of Calvin and Arminius in their distinct views on the doctrine of grace.
- The next task would be to evaluate the doctrine of grace in the light of scripture.
- Lastly, it is necessary to show to what extent the historical perspective on grace in Calvin and Arminius provides the best perspective for the African Baptist Church in the contemporary discourse.

1.1.1.1.1 Preliminary literature study

1.1.1.1.2 Arminius’ position on grace in salvation

Arminius, contrary to popular belief and scholarly opinion, did not believe in the intrinsic moral potential of humans after Adam’s fall. He was a firm believer in absolute depravity, which included the enslavement of the will to sin. He was a strong believer in original sin, which he defined as an innate taint that affects every aspect of human nature and personality and renders humans incapable of doing anything good until they are graced by God (Picirilli, 2002:42). He stated that the fall resulted in “total depravity,” or a human’s inability to respond freely to God’s gracious offer of a covenant relationship. He understood that sin had a profound impact on humans and that they are unable to reach out to God. Human beings are unable to do anything to please God in their fallen and sinful state, according to Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:189). As a result, they must be regenerated and recreated by God in Christ by the Holy Spirit in their intellect, emotions, and will in order to be able to express and execute what is genuinely good.

It’s possible that Arminius’ assertion of spiritual weakness is shocking to many Calvinists. Despite major deviations, many Arminians who followed Arminius would agree that total depravity and the requirement of God’s grace to come before human volition are both true (Barrett, 2013:207). The issue “why then does such a divide exist between Calvin and Arminius

if both agree on a belief as crucial as human depravity bondage to sin” would be equally fundamental.

The answer, according to Arminius, comes in the idea of prevenient grace, for it is here that human beings’ power to collaborate with or oppose subsequent grace is restored. He claims that God frees everyone to respond to God, repent of their sins, and come to salvation because of God’s prevenient grace. God knows who will do it, and this is what it means in the Bible when it says that God elects particular people. People can choose to reject God’s gracious offer of redemption, which is extended to everybody regardless of merit, because they have free choice (Kunhiyop, 2012:87). Total depravity has been countered by prevenient grace, which promotes a faith that is only conceivable since prevenient grace overcomes the entire human race’s inability and guilt because of Adam’s fall (Hankins, 2011:92). The Synod of Dort (1618-1619; 1993:312) writes:

In regeneration of man, God does not use those powers of his omnipotence by which he mightily and infallibly bends man’s will to faith and conversion; but after all the operations of grace that God uses in man’s conversion have employed, man can still resist God and the Spirit, intending and willing to regenerate him, and in fact often do so, to the point of completely hindering his own regeneration, and as a result, it remains in his own hands

Evangelicals of the Arminian school believe that repentance, like faith, is a gift from God, however, that it is also resistible because it involves the repented sinner’s participation. God call, convicts, enlightens, and enables the sinner to repent and believe through his prevenient grace. The sinner must respond to the Spirit’s work by allowing it to change his or her life, which takes the form of repentance and faith (Olson, 2006:161).

This prevenient grace is Arminianism’s most prominent characteristic which forms this doctrine. At least four dimensions or elements of prevenient grace are involved: calling, enlightening, and enabling. Without the miraculous assistance of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end, no one can repent, believe, and be saved. The only thing the person does is to cooperate by not resisting (Barrett, 2013:223). Even if one disagrees with the Arminian position, he should always state it as an Arminian would, which emphasises prevenient grace. Is grace resistible for the Arminian? The answer is both, depending on which stage of grace is being discussed. Grace is appealing at its first appearance or entrance as “prevenient”. God bestows prevenient grace on sinners regardless of their desire for it. However, after God has supplied (Williams, 2004:24), he never credited human goodness or willpower with any causal efficacy for salvation. Arminius theology is characterised by a strong emphasis on grace. He was adamant that grace is free

since it is acquired via God's redemption in Christ, rather than through human effort (Sandage, Jankowski, Crabtree & Scheer-Collin, 2017:21). Arminius went to great lengths to exalt grace as the sole effective source of salvation and even the initial act of a good will towards God, which included the desire to receive the good news and respond positively. He asserts that without a particular interior, grace-renovation action, no one can even seek God (Olson, 2006:163).

1.1.1.1.3 Calvin's position on grace in salvation

Calvin reading on God's grace in salvation can be linked to his doctrine of hamartiology chronologically. Calvin felt that sin had rendered humans completely unable to save themselves. It is regarded as biblical teaching, which is the first and most important step in the healing process (Curley, 2015:29). Because of the fall, Calvin asserted, human beings are unable to believe or receive the gospel of salvation in themselves. Human beings are deafeningly, dead, and blind. Their wills are not their own; they are enslaved by an evil nature. As a result, humans are unable to choose good over evil (Steele, Thomas & Quinn, 2004:23). "The element of the soul's dignity and excellence that is most visible has not only been injured but has become so perverted that ordinary healing is insufficient" (Calvin, 1536-1559; 2008:153). Calvin acknowledged the consequences of sin and the impossibility of human beings undertaking meritorious or salvific deeds in their sinful state (Muller, 2017:189).

Original sin according to Calvin afflicted the entire race and pervaded the entire person. Original sin has turned the entire human being upside down, not just the flesh and mind of an individual (Aloisi, 2016:195). "When Paul argues that corruption does not dwell in one part exclusively, but that no portion is exempt from its fatal taint, there is no space for dispute. For example, it claims that knowledge is blinded, and the heart is depraved" (Calvin, 1559; 2008:153).

The fact that humans are incapable of saving themselves necessitates the application of the doctrine of grace in salvation. Only God can save us. Calvin believed that a fallen human being, condition is such that if left to their own devices, they would stay in their state of insubordination and reject the gift of salvation (Barrett, 2017:453). As a result, irresistible grace mitigates the repercussion of sin in their lives. Irresistible grace indicates that the Holy Spirit never fails to call, regenerate, and save those who have been called by the father and redeemed by Christ. it is infallible, and it will always achieve its goal (Beeke, 2008:103). Calvin openly admitted that grace is the source of redemption. Grace draws the sinners into the company of the redeemed, which is the sole reason anyone believes the gospel and enters into a saving relationship with Jesus. God affects the entire process of redemption, not just the beginning (Williams, 2004:30). The Synod of Dort (1618-1619; 1993:299) writes:

When God initiates salvation in the elect or brings true conversion, he does not only provide general calling through the gospel proclamation so that their minds are illuminated by the Holy Spirit to develop a right understanding and judge what comes from the Spirit of God; however, he also perspicuously and efficaciously penetrates the innermost parts of human beings, opens their hearts, infuses new qualities in their will and makes them alive.

This openly admits that grace is the source of redemption. Grace draws the sinner into the company of the redeemed, which is the sole reason anyone believes the gospel and enters into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. God affects the entire process of redemption, not just the beginning (William, 2004:30).

To summarise, there are two main grounds of disagreement between Arminius and Calvin's ideas on grace in salvation, namely prevenient grace, and the phase of the irresistibility of grace, as indicated in the comparison of Arminius and Calvin. True Arminians believe that salvation is solely due to God's grace. No good can come from human beings since they have no inherent good and their will is enslaved to sin; it is all by grace. In terms of grace, Arminius has two unique teachings. First and foremost, he is a believer in prevenient grace. Essentially, this is the action of God's mercy upon sinners before they are converted, which frees their wills to believe and receive the gospel through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Even humanity's ability to accept God's grace is the manifestation of God's grace (Hankins, 2011:92). Secondly, Arminius believes God's grace is resistible. He is a synergist, but he restricts human participation to God's grace as non-resistant. Human cooperation has nothing to do with merit, and all glory goes to God alone. Prevenient grace is irresistible, according to the historical intellectualistic understanding of grace in salvation based on Arminius' methodological approach. Nonetheless, the second stage of grace (saving grace) is resistible (Smith, 2011:209-210).

Calvin's basic concept of saving grace is that it is always irresistible and occurs in one act. God's works are synergistic in that they not only call but also completely regenerate the sinner. Calvin, at the time, did not speak of stages of grace, but of irresistible grace, in which the Holy Spirit works to overcome every sin-induced opposition and disobedience, to unlock blind eyes and invigorate stony hearts so that the sinner may grasp and accept the gospel of redemption through trust in Jesus Christ (Barrett, 2013:121).

1.1.1.1.4 Grace in the Baptist Church from 1975 to contemporary times

Theological concerns, as well as the desire to re-establish biblical confessional borders, led to the formation of the Baptists. For centuries Baptists prided themselves on returning to the Bible rather than Luther and Calvin. They claimed to be believers in the Bible. For Baptists, Biblicism has typically meant buttressing a theological argument with lengthy scriptural citations and depending on the other's texts for support or understanding only secondarily. Traditionally, Baptist theology has centred on sola Scriptura or at the very least the authoritative primacy of scripture. The Baptist Church acknowledges universal human sinfulness, as well as all people's moral and spiritual depravity (Lemke, 2008:18-19). By being present within Adam, mankind participates in Adam's sin, according to the Baptist Church. This signifies that all sinned as a result of Adam's deed. This means that all humans are born with a tainted nature and are considered sinners alongside Adam (Beach, 2001:55). All people are sinners, according to the Bible. Humans are in a terrible position because of sin, unable to change the cause of their rebellion against God, discharge their debt of sin against him, or make their way back to him despite their greatest efforts. Considering these facts, evangelical theology is relatively uncontroversial. The issue at hand is what it means to be a sinner when it comes to responding to God's gift of salvation (Hankins, 2011:93).

The notion of grace is made necessary by the doctrine of sin, which states that humans are spiritually incapable of saving themselves. God's grace is what brings sinners to him for his glory (Beach, 2001:71). Salvation is a planned, loving setting apart for himself before the creation of all people whom he chooses to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, not dependent on God's prior knowledge of who will believe in him (Kunhiyop, 2012:89). The Calvinistic theology of grace in salvation resonates with the African Reformed Baptist Church. By original and actual corruption, all humans have fallen and become completely dead in sin and are subject to God's eternal vengeance. They are redeemed, quickened, not by their own efforts, nor by their deeds, lest any human boast but entirely and only by God's grace and mercy through trust in Christ (Lemke, 2015:228).

Humanity urgently requires divine grace, to which nothing can be added. On the other hand, it is the obligation of everyone to accept the offer of grace (Culver, 2005:280). Acceptance is the prominent motif in the concept of illumination; at the time, a person is passive. Some African Baptists believe in the universality of grace, which does not mean that only the elect are reconciled (Ticciati, 2011:420). They favoured a compatibilist interpretation of determinism and free will in salvation, according to them. Individuals choose God by faith and God chooses them unconditionally. Unfortunately, compatibilism necessitates a deterministic understanding of both God and free choice, which would make those same Baptists uneasy. These Baptists want to

imply that a determinist view of God and a libertarian conception of free choice are compatible, yet this is theoretically impossible (Hankins, 2011:90-91). They affirm and acknowledge that individuals can do nothing to save themselves; nonetheless, salvation cannot happen against their wills nor without a faith response that is unique to them. While everyone is fundamentally wicked and incapable of salvation, their ability to choose characterises human existence, including the option to respond to the gospel in faith or reject it in rebellion (Reynolds, 2012:55). The process is started by God. He imbues it with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. When people respond in faith God fulfils his promises and forever seals the bond. The assurance of salvation is found in absolute confidence that God maintains all his promises in Christ Jesus, not in a sense that believers are chosen or in their perseverance in living a holy life (Lewis, 2005:177).

1.1.1.1.5 Aim and objective

This study aims to show the necessity of comparing Calvin and Arminius to get a balanced view of the doctrine that can serve the African Baptist Church in revisiting and reviewing the doctrine.

The specific objectives of this study are:

To look at and evaluate the reason behind the differences between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius and to describe these differences comparatively in a comprehensive way;

To look at and evaluate the contemporary arguments on the doctrine of grace in salvation in the African Baptist Church during the past forty years;

To examine and evaluate the doctrine of grace in light of scripture;

To formulate and bridge a gap on how leaders and theologians of the African Baptist Church could develop a right perspective on the different methodological approaches on grace in salvation between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius.

1.1.1.1.6 The central theoretical argument

The core theoretical thesis of this research is that Calvin and Arminius were both deeply committed to God's grace. Their methodological approaches to the doctrine of grace in salvation, however, diverge. By contrasting their diverse ideas, the African Baptist Church can benefit in its evaluation of the doctrine of grace in salvation.

1.1.1.1.7 Methodology

This study is approached from the Reformed paradigm. In answering the different research questions, the following methods are used:

To examine and assess the causes of the differences in methodological approaches to the theology of grace between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius; a comparative analysis of literature is conducted to discover and evaluate historical ideas. As a result, the actual works of Calvin and Arminius were used. The research consults books and scholarly publications about the topic at hand. This requires selecting recently completed work that is relevant to the topic to be included.

To look at and evaluate the contemporary arguments in the African Baptist Church on grace in salvation, an analysis of literature produced by and in the Church is done to determine and assess opinions in the present. The researcher looks at recent important work that has been done on this topic. A biblical-historical technique for studying the general perspective of grace is used to dispute a historical overview within the theology of grace, as this method is essential for understanding the historical background or context of the research subject.

To examine and evaluate the doctrine of grace in light of scripture, the applicable passages are discovered, and exegesis is performed. The exegesis is carried out using the grammatical-historical methodologies. The term “grammatical-historical method” refers to the study of scripture in light of the historical events that have left their imprint on the various books of the Bible. The reason for this is that this method teaches about grace in a way that is consistent with the Bible. During this phase of inquiry, various commentaries and lexicons were used. This may familiarise the reader with the meanings that the terms have gained over time, as well as the context in which the biblical authors employed them. In general, this gives both the original and derived meanings of words, as well as indicating how they are used in a passage (Van Rensburg *et al.*, 2015:20). Furthermore, the Reformed concept of grace is explored and evaluated considering this Reformed theological foundation.

To formulate and bridge the gap on how African theologians can develop the right historical perspectives of both Calvin and Arminius in their approach to contemporary argumentation, the data is selected and categorised through analyses, interpretation and application in the connection between the past and the present.

1.1.1.1.8 Limitation of the study and definition of terms

The study is limited to the African Baptist Church and how its perspective might be evaluated by examining the variations in methodological approaches to the doctrine of grace between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius. Some of the beliefs of these churches explain that Arminian theology is a theology of free will. The study aims to give the African Baptist Church a competitive understanding of the relationship between Calvin's and Arminius' viewpoints on grace, so that they might understand the theology of grace as it is presented by the original proponents (Fee, 2002:96).

The key terms in the study include:

- **Calvinism**
 - It is a theological teaching based on the work of John Calvin (1509-1564), one of the best theologians and biblical scholars of the Reformation.
- **Arminianism**
 - A theological teaching based on the ideas of Jacob Arminius (1560-1609). A theological teaching that strives to maintain that prevenient grace frees the human will to respond or not response to saving grace.
- **Prevenient grace**
 - In Arminianism- which argues that mankind is thus enslaved to sin, God bestows grace on unbelievers, restoring their free will and allowing them to cooperate with or oppose subsequent effusions of God.
- **Irresistible grace**
 - The concept alludes to the fact that God both efficaciously calls people and regenerates them, ensuring that they will respond in saving faith.
- **Freed will**
 - It is a God-granted ability through prevenient grace to resist or not resist accepting the gift of salvation.

1.1.1.1.9 Ethical considerations

Because the research would contain modern and historical disputes on the theology of grace in salvation, the knowledge would be presented from a learning perspective, which will be

presented from a learning perspective, which would be both informative and transforming. It would be regarded from the Reformation viewpoint. Other people's perspectives are treated with honesty, accountability, and professionalism. The study did not misinterpret source, produce erroneous results, or caricature opposing opinions because sources were read ethnically. Alternative points of view, such as reservations and objections are recognised in order to provide more incredible information, as well as better and sounder beliefs (Booth, Colomb & Williams, 1995:274-276).

1.1.1.1.10 Provisional classification of headings

1. Introduction.
2. Differences between Calvin and Arminius on grace in salvation.
3. The contemporary arguments on the doctrine of grace in salvation in the African Baptist Church.
4. The grace of God in salvation in light of scripture.
5. The application of the theological development of the doctrine of grace in salvation in terms of soteriology to the African Baptist Church.
6. Summary and conclusion.

1.1.1.1.11 Schematic presentation of research procedures

<u>Research title:</u> The historical perspective on grace in salvation according to Calvin and Arminius: Revisiting the doctrine of grace in the African Baptist Church		
<u>Research questions</u>	<u>Aims and objectives</u>	<u>Research method</u>
Both Arminius and Calvin had a passionate commitment to the grace of God; however, they had different methodological	To look at and evaluate the reason behind the differences between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius and to describe these differences comparatively in a comprehensive way.	To examine and assess the causes of the differences in methodological approaches to the theology of grace between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius; a comparative analysis of literature is conducted to discover and

approaches to the doctrine of grace. How and in what did they differ and how should we evaluate their differences in redefining the doctrine for the postmodern church?		evaluate historical ideas. As a result, the actual works of Calvin and Arminius were used. The research consults books and scholarly publications about the topic at hand. This requires selecting recently completed work that is relevant to the topic to be included.
To explain the relevance of Calvin and Arminius in their respective discussions of the doctrine of grace, it is necessary to describe and evaluate the contemporary debate and discourse of the African Baptist Church on grace in salvation.	To look at and evaluate the contemporary arguments on the doctrine of grace in salvation in the African Baptist Church during the past forty years.	To look at and evaluate the contemporary arguments in the African Baptist Church on grace in salvation, an analysis of literature produced by and in the Church is done to determine and assess opinions in the present. The research looks at recent important work that has been done on this topic. A biblical-historical technique for studying the general perspective of grace is used to dispute a historical overview within the theology of grace, as this method is essential for understanding the historical background or context of the research subject.

The next task would be to evaluate the doctrine of grace in the light of scripture.	To examine and evaluate the doctrine of grace in light of scripture.	To examine and evaluate the doctrine of grace in light of scripture, the applicable passages are discovered, and exegesis is performed. The exegesis is carried out using the grammatical-historical methodologies. The term “grammatical-historical method” refers to the study of scripture in light of the historical events that have left their imprint on the various books of the Bible. The reason for this is that this method teaches about grace in a way that is consistent with the Bible. During this phase of inquiry, various commentaries and lexicons were used. This may familiarise the reader with the meanings that the terms have gained over time, as well as the context in which the biblical authors employed them. In general, this gives both the original and derived meanings of words, as well as indicating how they are used in a passage (Van Rensburg <i>et al.</i> , 2015:20). Furthermore, the Reformed concept of grace is explored

		and evaluated considering this Reformed theological foundation.
Lastly, it is necessary to show to what extent the historical perspective on grace in Calvin and Arminius provides the best perspective for the African Baptist Church in the contemporary discourse.	To formulate and bridge a gap on how leaders and theologians of the Baptist Church could develop a right perspective on the different methodological approaches on grace in salvation between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius.	To formulate and bridge the gap on how African theologians can develop the right historical perspective of both Calvin and Arminius in their approach to contemporary argumentation, the data are selected and categorised through analysis, interpretation and application in the connection between the past and the present.

CHAPTER 2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CALVIN AND ARMINIUS ON GRACE IN SALVATION

2.1 Introduction

Following the Synod of Dort, Arminianism became the major Calvinist confrontation in what is now the most divisive dispute within Protestantism. The human condition is the starting point for this battle; understanding all of humanity's inherent conditions leads to the idea of an individual's ability or inability to repent for salvation, as well as how grace is applied to it (Shelton, 2014:104). As a result, a basic examination of Calvin's and Arminius' doctrines of grace is required today. The investigation should trace the background of the distinct doctrines of grace from their historical perspective, starting with the writers' work. The concept of irresistible grace is at the heart of Calvinistic soteriology, and it is even more firmly rooted in the theology than the commonly held belief in predestination (Barrett, 2013:18).

The doctrine of salvation, which distinguishes classic Arminianism from Calvinism, focuses on the nature of grace by which believers are saved. Although there are other significant differences, factors like grace lie at the heart of the conflict between these two mutually irreconcilable views of sinners' salvation. Calvinism differs from Arminianism in that it considers saving grace to be imparted to some and argues that it is irresistible. The latter contends that prevenient grace is bestowed on everyone and that it can be resisted (Combs, 2005:3-4).

Therefore, the researcher recognises that Arminius' thesis of prevenient grace and Calvin's doctrine of efficacious or irresistible grace serve as important foundations within their respective soteriological models. Arminius thinks that God restores all humanity's free will regarding salvation through prevenient grace and that each individual can either embrace the gospel call through faith or resist it through contumacious behaviour. Calvin believes that God's grace enables the elect to receive salvation and irresistibly leads to it (Yates, 2018:5-6).

Imaginations have been captured with some of the loftiest truths possible while contemplating God's grace that saves condemned and perishing sinners. Because believers examine how the infinitely wise, good, and omnipotent God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, created and assured the plan of salvation's perfect fulfilment in every detail (Russell, 2012:83). *Charis* is the Greek word for grace in the New Testament. It appears at least 125 times, with different translations such as "thank you," "liberality," "favour," and so on. All references in the New Testament have a wide range of interpretations in mainstream Greek literature of ancient times and non-salvation. Grace, too, has a modern English equivalent (elegant living, pleasing decorative pieces, pleasing motions, etc.) Grace, on the other hand, has always had a narrow technical

connotation in terms of God's unmerited favour when it comes to Christian salvation. This reflects a godly manner of interacting with human beings that Adam passed down to all until now (Culver, 2005:657).

The argument between Calvinism¹ and Arminianism² is about much more than a difference in vocabulary. All of this revolves around God's grace and how we interpret it. Misunderstandings claim that Arminian Christians are denying God's grace in salvation on purpose. Most Arminians who hold to classic Arminianism are adamant in their defence of the fundamental role of God's grace in salvation and would never intentionally cultivate a viewpoint that weakens it (Storms, 2007:77).

Calvinists and Arminians agree on numerous aspects in their different soteriologies. They all believe that salvation is by grace through faith, justification through faith alone, adoption and unity with Christ, sanctification and connection with Christ and full and final salvation, a glorification of all who sincerely believe. Believers are evangelical allies in the shared views (Schreiner & Ware, 2000:204-205).

In some areas, there is a lot of debate. The divine election teaching and God's grace based calling of sinners to a saving faith are the two most significant contrasts between Arminian and Calvinist soteriologies. Calvin and Arminius had a strong belief in God's grace in redemption and had distinct methodological approaches to the doctrine of grace in salvation (Trueman, 2017:17).

The chapter examines and evaluates the reasons for the differences between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius, as well as comparing and contrasting these discrepancies. It examines Calvin and Arminius' historical intellectualistic viewpoint on the doctrine of grace in salvation, and then

¹ Calvinism is a theology that encompasses a wide range of beliefs related to the Protestant Reformer John Calvin's teaching (1509-64). Calvinism on the other hand, is frequently identified by the five points of Calvinism, which are traditionally abbreviated as TULIP. The letter T denotes total depravity, implying that humanity is enslaved to sin. The letter U stands for unconditional election, which means that God chooses people for salvation regardless of their actions. The letter L stands for limited atonement, implying that Christ's death was only for the elect. The letter I stands for irresistible grace, which means that God irresistibly invites chosen sinners to salvation. The letter P stands for perseverance of the saints, implying that the elect will undoubtedly continue in their salvation till the end (Christensen, 2016:9).

² Arminianism is a theology related to Jacob Arminius' beliefs (1560-1609). The five essential ideas of Arminianism are taught. To begin with, God predetermined those who will exercise faith in Christ to be saved. Second, regardless of who believes in faith for salvation, Christ's death was atonement for all mankind. Third, humans do not have free will or the capacity for saving faith in their natural states, but God has given all humans prevenient grace so that they can regain free will and exercise saving faith. They have the option of cooperating with God's rescuing grace or resisting it because of this prevenient grace. Fifth, God's grace is available to the believers throughout their lives, yet it is easy to overlook this grace. As a result, the believers may suffer a loss of salvation (Christensen, 2016:8-9).

provides a clear understanding of the theory in its original form. As a result, a comparative analysis of the literature is carried out to determine and assess previous opinions. Calvin and Arminius original works are consulted. The research team consults books and scholarly publications on the subject at hand. This requires selecting recent completed work that is relevant to the topic to be included.

It is necessary to lay a brief biographical foundation for both Calvin and Arminius before evaluating their theologies. Only the most basic summary of their life is presented here because the objective of this chapter is to provide an overview of their thoughts. Understanding the context of their theology, however, necessitates knowledge with their lives, writings, and influences. This paper looks at Calvin's and Arminius methodological methods to understanding grace in salvation. Readers would look at Calvin and Arminius' grasp of hamartiology to comprehend the miraculous quality of God's grace. Calvin and Arminius' methodological approaches are compared. The goal of this study is to show the gap between Jacob Arminius and John Calvin's understanding of the saving nature at this juncture.

2.1.1 Jacob Arminius

The Calvinistic idea of sin and grace was met with fierce hostility in the Netherlands at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which culminated in the great Arminian conflict Jacob Arminius (1559-1609), a Calvinist scholar, concluded that Calvinism needed to be changed for biblical and polemical reasons in order to adequately respond to the attacks on the Christian faith (which stemmed from tradition or reason with scripture and demanded a re-examination of every human theological formulation in of the bible) (Hannah, 2001:231). He was born in the Dutch province of the same name. His father perished in the battle against Spain while he was a child, leaving the family impoverished. For the entirety of his education, he was reliant on the generosity of several generous individuals. He was one of the first students at the new Leiden University (Godfrey, 2019:10-11).

He then went to Geneva Academy to study under Beza, Calvin's epigone and successor (Barrett, 2013:23). Even though Beza's supralapsarian theory (which held that the election of specific persons for eternal salvation logically predated this decree) never appealed to Arminius. Theodore Beza had a good working relationship with the exceptionally bright young man. The young scholar, on the other hand, did not grasp the scholastic procedures given to him in Geneva. Arminius would employ medieval scholasticism to build a synergistic concept of conditional divine decrees of predestination (Williams, 2004:16).

According to Godfrey (2019:11) Arminius was ordained into the ministry and served as a pastor in Amsterdam from 1588 to 1603. He went on to become a theology professor at Leiden University, where he stayed until his death in 1609. His troubles came to a head in 1608 when he was called to submit his ideas to get to a government investigation after rumour had it that he was undermining orthodoxy surfaced. In other words, if any collaboration is ascribed to human will as a prerequisite of salvation, this human contribution is seen as a step back towards the Roman Catholic view of justification and Pelagianism that it implies (Stanglin & McCall, 2012:33).

He wrote his Declaration of Sentiments and presented it to the government on October 30, 1608. On October 30, 1608, he opened his Declaration of Sentiments and handed it to the authorities. This document, which was also never published during his lifetime, began with a historical portion that reviewed his understanding of previous deviation from Calvinist orthodoxy in Dutch churches. The second piece was a theological section in which he passionately criticised supralapsarianism, the Calvinists' interpretation of election. Predestination defined as 'the eternal decree of God, by which he was extensively and justly resolved, within himself, to administer those measures required and adequate to establish saving faith in Christ' (Boer, 2011:73). According to Arminius (1631, 2015:73), it is "the everlasting counsel of God's eternal by which he extensively and justifiably determined to administer in himself those means which are necessary and sufficient to establish saving faith in Christ," so that the hearts of sinful humans conform to mercy and severity of God, the glory of his name and the salvation of believers.

Arminius recognised that the bible taught predestination and provided his perspective on the subject. Unlike Calvin, who saw predestination as a God choosing people for salvation, Arminius sees predestination as God choosing qualifications for salvation that people must meet through the supplied means (prevenient grace) (Godfrey, 2019:16). Arminius disagreed with his Dutch colleague, Franciscus, who was Calvin's epigone at the University of Leiden and maintained that election is not guaranteed. Predestination refers to God's foreknowledge of who would willingly accept his proffer of salvation through Christ. He founded human potential to freely accept in Christ, repent and be saved on the concept of God's prevenient grace (Olson, 2016:310). As a result, predestination is based on God's foreknowledge, in which he knew those who would believe by prevenient grace and then persevere through his subsequent grace from the beginning of time. This doctrine was in direct opposition to any Calvinist interpretation of grace (Arminius, 1629; 2015: 185).

Arminius' death in 1609 did not put an end to the feud. His teachings were taken up by churches in Amsterdam, and by 1610 there were a large number of Arminian pastors. As a

result of being accused of heresy, 46 Arminians led by Johannes Uyttenbogaert (1557-1644) created a remonstrance (public protest and petition) that included five canons defending their convictions. The confession is in line with Arminius' work which teaches that God's election of sinners is conditional on predicted faith, that Christ's atonement is universal, and that grace is resistible (Barrett, 2011:227). Arminius passed a negative judgement on them because the Reformed depiction of this subject of doctrine, in his opinion, does not appear to be consistent with God's word. He claimed that God made four decrees: a general decree appointing Christ as a mediator; second decree to save those who would repent and believe; a third decree to establish the conditions and means of this salvation (preaching and sacraments); and a fourth decree to damn those God foreknew would repent and believe and persevere through his prevenient grace (Arminius, 1629; 2015:185). This doctrine was in direct opposition to any Calvinist interpretation of election. The subject of his allegiance to the Dutch Church's confessional standard was at the heart of the debates. Arminius, on the other hand, meant to adapt, rectify, and modify Reformed theology, not to deviate from his basically broad Reformed identity (Muller, 2008:19-21).

Six delegates from each side gathered in Hague in 1611, convened by Calvinist Prince Maurine of Orange, to examine their disagreements, but the meeting did not provide the desired result. By 1618, the Calvinist in Dordrecht, led by Johannes Bogerman (1576-1637), had written a counter-Remonstrance that tried not only to rectify the Remonstrants'³ views as well as that Calvinist position's adherences, but also to set forth what they viewed as the "biblical" view. Dort (1618-1619) was a deliberate synod, with representatives from all around Europe gathering to debate and decisively deny the Remonstrant doctrinal document (Godfrey, 2019:13). The Canons of Dort concentrate on the primary difference the two parties in salvation⁴: conditionality *versus* unconditionality. According to Calvinists, humans are spiritually depraved and unable to choose God; yet, God's election of certain people to salvation is unconditional (God's choice of specific people to salvation is not contingent on any foreseen virtue or faith on their behalf). The Spirit's grace in calling and regenerating the elect is effective and irresistible, and God always preserves his elect unto glory. It is apparent that no component of God's eternal choosing is dependent on the efficacy or success of human free will (Barrett, 2011:228-229).

The five points are frequently connected with the synod of Dort (1618-1619) and the early seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed Church's rejection of Arminianism. However, the practice

³ Remonstrants are a politico-religious party in Holland (followers of Jacob Arminius) that petitioned for a redefining of national Calvinism in the seventeenth century. Remonstrants believed that Calvinism had overstated the depravity of humanity, denying the freedom of the will and making humans too passive for salvation (Hannah, 2001:373).

⁴ Salvation is the divine act that frees people from the power and curse of sin and then restores them to the relationship with God for which they were created (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:936).

of dividing disagreements between Jacob Arminius' and John Calvin's followers into five points of Calvinism was already established before Dort. The irony is that the five points evolved within Arminian circles, not among Calvinists. Even though that Arminianism emerged as a reaction to Calvinism, it was the Arminians who established the argument's concern and boundaries, even to the point of creating a language around which the debate would unfold (Williams, 2004:11).

2.1.1.1 Arminius' view on sin

With the biographical background in mind, the researcher now moves to his viewpoint on the concept of hamartiology in this evaluation of his life. The purpose is to establish his grasp of the repercussions of sin to fully explain his doctrine of prevenient grace. It is correspondingly essential to be accomplished in his view of sin and ability. The purpose of this section is to examine Arminius' works as well as subsequent scholarly publications and articles to ensure that his statement of this head of theology is accurate.

According to Olson (2006:142) Arminius did not believe that after Adam's fall, humans can undertake good actions to win redemption. He was a firm believer in absolute depravity, which included the enslavement of the will to sin. He was a firm believer in original sin, which he defined as a hereditary taint that infects every part of human nature and personality, rendering people incapable of doing anything good without the aid of divine grace. He based everything good in human life on prevenient grace, which restores free, including the ability to respond to the gospel with faith. A human's free will is more correctly referred to as freed will in Arminius theology and basic Arminianism. Grace liberates the will from its enslavement to sin and evil, allowing it to collaborate with saving grace by refusing to reject it (Picirilli, 2002:42). Arminius (1629; 2015:189) in his work, Arminius writes:

This is my take on human's free will: when they emerged from their creator's hands in their primitive state, they were bestowed with such a portion of knowledge, purity and power that permitted them to comprehend, esteem, ponder and choose the true good in accordance with the commandment given to them. None of these feats, on the other hand, would be possible without supernatural assistance. Humans, on the other hand, are incapable of thinking, willing or acting on their own in their fallen and sinful state: they must be regenerated and recreated in their intellect, affections and will, as well as in all powers, given to them by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, in order to be properly qualified to comprehend, value, ponder, will and execute what is truly good. Because they have been cleansed of sin, I believe they are called to think, willing and to what is right when they are made partakers of the

regeneration or renovation, but only with the continued continual help of divine grace.

Arminius appropriates grace and divides it into two divisions. Prevenient, preceding, or operative grace, which operates completely from God outside of human beings in a monergistic fashion, is grouped into one category. The second sort of grace is called cooperative grace which is resistible, whereas prevenient grace is irresistible. One of Arminius' most distinctive and contentious teachings is that people do not remain in the state of absolute spiritual weakness or depravity, but that its effects are eventually lessened by God's enabling love.

Arminius believes that God's gift of prevenient grace restores human beings who were previously unable to participate in any way to their salvation, and who were corrupted by and enslaved by sin, to the point where they can choose for or against Christ's works. Grace cancels out the consequences of the fall on a moral, emotional, and intellectual level (Williams, 2004:30). The third divine decree is that by which God decreed that the means necessary for repentance and faith be administered in a sufficient and effective manner; and that such administration be instituted according to divine wisdom, by which God knows what is fitting and proper both to mercy and severity, and according to divine justice, by which he is ready to accept and carry out whatever his wisdom prescribes (Arminius, 1629; 2015:185). Despite his belief in the negative effects of the fall on human intellect, heart, and body, Arminius is prepared to acknowledge a person's ability to perform meritorious works and earn salvation through God's regeneration power (Sandage *et al.*, 2017:21). Arminius (1629; 2005:156) writes concerning total depravity:

The totality of this sin, however, is not exclusive to the forefather and mothers, but is shared by the entire race and all of their decedents, who were in their loins at the times of the transgression and have subsequently descended from them through natural means, according to the ancient blessing. Because "all have sinned" in Adam (Rom 5:12), as a result, all human beings "are by nature the offspring of wrath," (Eph 2:3) odious to condemnation, temporal as well as everlasting death; they are lacking in holiness; and they would be oppressed forever if not for these faults. Unless they were set free by Christ; to whom be the glory forever.

Original sin, according to Arminius, is a punishment for Adam's initial transgression. Because of Adam's transgression, God's wrath was aroused against Adam, and he was punished. The penalty is applied to the entire human race (Aloisi, 2016:189-190). He believes that, since Adam and Eve's fall, from their forefathers, all humans have inherited a sinful nature; therefore, they

are just as prone to wickedness as Adam and Eve after the fall. As a result of this condition, a person is no longer naturally free to choose God unless the Holy Spirit intervenes miraculously (Picirilli, 2002:149). Even though humans are incapacitated to believe on their own, Arminius believes that none of them are truly alone. Rather, because God offers every human being prevenient (preparing) grace, no one is incapable of believe (Peterson, 2007:128). This is a forceful declaration of the natural person's pervasive depravity; the sinner's mind, heart, and will are enslaved to sin to the degree that salvation must originate from somewhere outside of the sinner. God must start the process of redemption. Adam's fall has subjected both himself and his descendants to the reign of sin and death (Forlines, 2011:22).

He claims that grace liberates the will from the bonds of sin and evil, allowing it to collaborate with subsequent grace by refusing to fight (Olson, 2006:142). The link between divine and human agency is one of cooperative support, despite the fact that the will is regarded to be incapable of obeying without the help of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is more of a work of God assisting and increasing the power of natural faculties to respond to God, rather than God assisting and expanding the power of natural faculties to react to God (Hannah, 2001:232).

According to this line of reasoning, Arminius asserted that sin incapacitates mankind, and there is scholarship in his writings that support his claim. The argument that Arminius did not believe in total depravity, including the enslavement of the will to sin, is based primarily on scholarly and popular opinion, and would not be fair reflection of the historical assessment of what he proclaimed. He believed that the first form of grace is given to everyone (prevenient grace, which is irresistible) had caused this inability to please God. The will was freed to reject or embrace saving grace as a result of prevenient grace.

2.1.1.1.1 Arminius' position on grace in salvation

The problem is that Arminianism had become such a broad term that various individuals interpret in differently. This emphasises how critical it is to return to Arminius. Those who have read his writings attentively will notice that he did not make saving faith a work, and that he asserted that God's mercy is wholly responsible for anyone's salvation from beginning to end. Arminius taught and believed in redemption through grace alone, faith alone, and in Christ alone. Arminius' perspective on the essence of grace in salvation would show where he diverged from Calvin.

According to Olson (2006:161-162) anyone who examines Arminius' theology honestly and with an open mind would notice his fervent dedication to God's grace. He never linked salvation's efficacy to human morality or even willpower. At the moment, he was debating whether saving

grace is irresistible or not. Grace, according to Arminius, grace is not efficacious as in the Augustinian and Calvinist sense that by God's power, 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). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:190) writes:

I attribute to grace the beginning, continuation, and completion of all good, and I carry its influence to such an extent that a man, while already regenerate, cannot imagine, will not perform any good not resist temptation, without this preventing and exciting, this partnering grace. It will appear from this remark that I am in no way harming or being unjust to grace by attributing too much to man's free will, as has been stated of me: for the entire argument boils down to the answer to the question, "Is God's grace a definite irresistible force?" That is, the controversy is not about the actions or operations that can be attributed to grace (for I recognise and inculcate as many of these actions or operations as any man), but only about the nature of operation, whether it is irresistible or not: in relation to that, many people resist the Holy Spirit and therefore, reject the grace that is offered according to the Scriptures.

The idea that Arminius believed in free will is not consistent with a historical intellectualistic interpretation of his teachings. Arminius' stance should be regarded as allowing for libertarianism⁵ only by prevenient grace. Hence Arminianism's soteriology does not link works as the foundation of essential aspects of salvation. Olson's (2006:158) assessment of Arminius's assumption on grace demonstrates that classical Arminian theology has always ascribed all of the glory for salvation to God alone, with none reserved for humanity. It has always been the conviction that righteousness does not come through good works and that redemption comes entirely by grace through faith alone

Grace according to Arminians, can be resisted by the obstinate human will. Grace is not effectual in the Calvinist sense of word, in which God's grace impacts its aim, namely, the redemption of sinners, such that their salvation is owed completely to the power and action of the triune God. As a result, grace is persuasive rather than causal. Arminius' libertarianism

⁵ Libertarianism is the view that divine determinism (i.e., God's precise decreeing of all things) compromises human freedom and moral responsibility. God's sovereignty has been expanded to the point that human actions are no longer causally determined by him. Extensive circumstances, one's motivation, desires, character, and nature, as well as God himself, all have an impact on one's freedom of choice. If preceding effects have a decisive influence on choices, the freedom and responsibility of those choices are jeopardised (Christensen, 2016:10).

necessitates such a conclusion. God can't make you believe something if you don't want to (Williams, 2004:230). Olson (2006:161) is correct in claiming that Arminius went out of his way to elevate grace as the sole effective source of salvation, even though it was the initial act of a good will toward God, which included the desire to receive the good news and respond positively to it. His focus was on internal grace as an inward calling rather than external, common, or general grace. Without a specific interior regenerating the activity of grace, no one can even seek God. The Canons of Dort (1618-1619; 2019:386) writes in relationship with the Remonstrants concerning the third and fourth articles in relation to the grace of God and redemption of humans:

Human beings do not have saving faith in themselves or in the powers of their will since, in the state of sin; they are unable to reason, will, or to perform meritorious works for themselves. It is consequently required that they be produced and renewed in intellect, emotions, will, and of their capabilities by God in Christ through his Holy Spirit in order for them to comprehend, think on, will, and carry out the good things that relate to salvation

This issue demonstrates that the Arminians hold a Protestant perspective on the seriousness of sin in comparison to the Reformed. Again, a clear assertion is made, denying fallen humanity's free will and claiming that fallen humanity can accomplish nothing truly good. God must intervene to save these lost individuals who are unable to save themselves. This fact clearly demonstrates the absolute necessity of grace in the salvation of fallen human beings (Godfrey, 2019:17).

The theological requirement of hopelessly depraved sinners is met with by the concept of prevenient grace. It implies that the Holy Spirit removes that impediment through a direct work on the heart, work sufficient to enable those who are yet unregenerate to understand the gospel, desire God and exercise faith (Picirilli, 2002:154). All who are externally invited by the gospel invitation are also called inwardly by the Spirit, who will do everything in his power to lead unregenerated individual to redemption. Humans, on the other hand, can successfully resist the call of the Spirit because they are free. The sinner cannot be regenerate until he believes; faith (which is understood as a human contribution) precedes and facilitates the salvation (Steele *et al.*, 2004:7). God will not force this grace on mankind, Williams (2004:24) continues. Grace does not coerce a person's freedom of choice. Grace sets a sinner free from the enslaving and binding effects of sin's manacle, allowing mankind to respond to the invitation to believe the gospel. As a result, the sinner is free to accept the gospel. While grace provides the ability to believe, redemption is contingent on the sinner's free will, which is aided by prior grace. According to Aloisi (2016:204) Arminius believes that God bestows enabling grace to

everyone. This grace, however, is not always effective. Although God's justice allows people to receive his grace, they have the free will to reject it.

2.1.1.1.2 Prevenient grace

Prevenient grace is the basic premise on which Arminians base their beliefs. They work tirelessly to show that they do not make free will the cause of salvation, but they do it using a different methodological technique. Arminius' writings will be examined to determine his soteriological framework. The goal at this point is to get a clear understanding of how Arminius describes prevenient grace in his writings in order to deepen the reader's understanding of the nature of grace in salvation. Within their soteriological model, prevenient grace is the central pillar. The investigation will not focus on the actual application of this nature of grace in its different ramifications. The purpose of this part is to determine how Jacob Arminius' approach to the nature of grace differed from John Calvin's.

Classical Arminianism adherents do not deny the notion of depravity, nor the enslavement of the human will to sin. However, by introducing the doctrine of prevenient grace, God restores libertarian free choice to all believers, the practical power of depravity appears to be lessened (Christensen, 2016:143-144). Jacob Arminius' theology was an important theological addition in the modern period, following the breakthroughs in Reformed theology. It deftly elucidates its position on the nature of grace by introducing "prevenient grace," which is active in the conversion of sinful people and is derived from the Latin word *praevenire*, meaning "to precede" or "to go before." This grace makes it possible for all people everywhere to respond positively to God's work of salvation, overcoming the horrible effects of original sin (Allison, 2011:489-490). The notion of prevenient grace describes how the Christian God in many ways foreshadows his benevolent, early operations of salvation. This grace according to its proponents, does not save by itself, does not lead to repentance, and does not negate the need to understand the gospel, it is however, divinely used to aid and lead to salvation (Shelton, 2014:1-2). Arminian theologian Roger Olson (2006:163) gives a detailed description of prevenient grace as follows:

Prevenient grace is not just persuasive; it also renews the individual in God and liberates the will, allowing them to exercise a good will toward God in repentance and faith for the first time. It even imparts the gift of repentance and faith to the person, who must only accept and not resist them ... the natural person, is incapable of faith, because faith is not within the power of a natural, carnal, sensual, and sinful human, and this could not be accomplished by mankind without the assistance of God's grace.

This according to Olson does not lessen the intensity of depravity. He affirms that this enabling grace is life itself, a gift like special spectacles for a blind person to improve his vision or hearing aids for a deaf person to improve their hearing. When a person's free will is restored, he or she is able to cooperate with further effusions of God's grace (in this case, saving grace) whenever the gospel message is presented. It makes it possible for someone to have a good intent toward God. Free individuals, on the other hand, will be able to resist further grace advancements (Christensen, 2016:144). Arminians acknowledge the negative repercussions of Adam's sin on humanity to some extent and provide a simple solution. Their response is that God provided prevenient or enabling grace so that anyone who hears the proclamation of the gospel can respond freely (Badger, 2004:25). Prevenient grace is the grace that comes before saving faith, according to Arminians. It is also known as "enabling grace," because it allows spiritual dead individuals to accomplish things, they wouldn't be able to do otherwise. Arminians also think that God bestows this kind of divine grace on everyone to overcome the effects of sin, but that it is resisted. That is, because everyone has free will, not everyone uses this God-given potential, and some refuse to respond to the universal call to salvation (Aaron, 2019:160).

This is the belief that God gives everyone the first sort of grace, which diminishes depravity and allows people to reject or collaborate with God. He stated that Adam had free choice prior to his fall, but that after the sin, he lost the ability to choose anything that is genuinely good (Wills, 2010:11). Arminius passionately believes in total depravity and the need for God's grace to come before a human's volition. Why is there such a divide between Calvin and Arminius if they both agree on the notion of a human being's absolute depravity and enslavement to sin? The concept of prevenient grace is used by Arminius to explain human free will. The answer, according to Arminius, comes from the concept of prevenient grace, because it is here that mankind reclaims its free will capacity to work together with or resist saving grace (Barrett, 2013:208). Prevenient grace according to Arminius is a blessing resulting from Christ's atoning death on the cross that neutralises human sinfulness and restores the ability to pre-Christians everywhere to respond to God's universal invitation to salvation. The gospel is a true invitation sent to all individuals, and all can embrace it because of prevenient grace. The summons is an invitation rather than an inexorable demand that must be obeyed (Storms, 2007:28). Arminius (1825; 2011:312-113) writes:

Because faith is claimed to "be foreseen by God in those who are to be saved," those factors are amended rather than imposed, without which faith could not exist, among these are: I regard God's prevenient grace, accompanying (concurrent), and succeeding (subsequent) grace to the most

important: those individuals will be saved or have been predestined and elected who, God foreknew, will believe with the help of his prevenient grace.

The gracious invitation is required for the enlightenment of the intellect of the fallen human enslaved to sin, because free will is incapable of beginning or perfecting any true spiritual good without grace (Stanglin & McCall, 2012:152). The misunderstandings are easily instilled in the term “prevenient grace,” because it implies that something or someone is prevented. However, it should be acknowledged that Arminius used the term to describe a grace that occurs before salvation (Allison, 2011:489).

The word “prevent” is comes from the Latin *venio*, which means “to come”. The word “pre” is a prefix that means “before”. It is the grace that “comes before” redemption is known as “Prevenient grace” (*prevenire*). Prevenient grace according to Olson (2016:302) is God’s “calling, convicting, enabling and aiding grace that overcomes the will’s bound to sin and allows a person to respond freely to Christ and the Holy Spirit.” This grace is offered to all people and allows them to respond with trust. God’s previous grace “going before, accompanies, and follows excites and aids” the sinner, thereby removing the servitude brought about by the fall so that the sinner might repent and turn to Christ (Williams, 2004:24). Arminius (1603-1609; 2015:189-190) in his *Declaration of Sentiments* writes:

About Divine Grace, I believe, 1. It is a gracious affection by which God kindly affected toward a miserable sinner, and according to which he first gives the sinner the right to be his child, “that whosoever believes in him might have eternal life,” and then justifies him in Christ and for his sake and adopts him into the right hand of his son, unto salvation. 2. It is the infusion (both into human cognition and into the will and affections) of all the Holy Spirit’s gift that pertain to man’s regeneration and renewal, such faith, hope, charity, and so on, because man is incapable of thinking, willing or doing anything good without these gracious gifts. 3. It is the Holy Spirit’s continued assistance, according to which he acts on and excites to good the man who has already been renewed by infusing salutary cogitations and inspiring him with good desires, so that he may actually will whatever is good, and according to which God may then will and work cooperate with man, so that man may accomplish whatever he desires.

Arminius recognises, as much as sin has harmed the intellect, will, and affections, grace must be infused into and positively touch every aspect of human nature to produce salvation (Stanglin & McCall, 2012:152). As a result, there must have been a work of illumination within

them prior to a correct thought of God that encourages them to pursue it. To make this work more successful, God must first do something behind the scenes. These efforts are too worthless unless God empowers them (Combs, 2005:5). In redemption, Arminius affirms and proclaims both divine grace and human agency. He believes that internal regeneration from the corruption of inherited sinfulness toward the restoration of God's image is wholly a work of God's grace while also a human act and process (Olson, 2016:301-302). Prevenient grace, according to Arminius, comes before redemption. Grace takes the initiative before we are first awakened to God's mercy and sanctity. Grace works ahead of time to lead people to faith and begin the work of faith in them. As a result of prevenient grace, the will is restored, allowing God and mankind to work together in sacrificial love (Williams, 2004:174-175). This grace comes before saving grace and is a divine aiding grace that frees the human will from the bonds of sin and allows it to accept or reject salvation. All of God's grace is required for salvation, yet the individual must freely accept it. Nonetheless, grace makes it able to embrace God's grace (Olson, 2016:310).

From beginning to end, Arminius put the initiative in salvation firmly on God's side. He was a firm believer in prevenient grace, which he defined as the calling, convicting, enabling, and aiding of God. It is considered that repentance and faith are authentically free responses of people whose disordered wills have been freed by God's prevenient grace through the preaching of the word of God; they are not gifts of God efficaciously delivered to elect individuals. This suggests that such human freedom and responsibility are presupposed throughout scripture, and that this is a God who arranged both sin and salvation, rescuing just certain people when he could sovereignly save everyone, may be great but not truly good (Olson, 2016:310).

According to Arminius, prevenient grace is the trinity's essential grace, given to all people before salvation, which restores free will and permits sinners to join God in salvation if they choose to believe. For Arminius and Arminianism, the concept of prevenient grace is extremely important. It is the glue that keeps systematic theology together, and thus their formulation of free will. This grace is freely given to all people and enables them to react positively to the gospel's offer. God's calling, according to Arminius, is both external and internal. The internal call on the other hand, is not exclusive to the elect; it is delivered to both the elect and nonelected without distinction. He believes that through prevenient grace people may accept and reject the saving grace. He believed that people could accept or reject the saving grace through prevenient grace. He claimed that grace is not an unstoppable force since they could have used their free will to reject the gospel of grace. As a result, prevenient grace permits them to believe in Christ but does not obligate them to do so (Bavinck, 2008:20).

Human beings are not seen as being able to initiate or aid in their own salvation in traditional Arminian theology. Humans are dead in trespasses and sins until God's prevenient grace awakens and anoints them to repentance and trust. In traditional Arminian theology, even while repentance and faith are God's gift, they must be accepted by making the simple decision not to fight them. Prevenient grace is the central premise of Arminian theology (Aaron, 2019:160). It is believed that individuals are saved because God established the relationship and made it possible that they respond freely with repentance and trust. At least four dimensions or elements of prevenient grace are involved: calling, convicting, illuminating, and enabling. Without the miraculous assistance of the Holy Spirit from the beginning to the end one cannot repent, neither believes nor be saved. The only thing the individuals do to participate is by not rejecting God's grace (Olson, 2006:160).

Since the fall, humanity has been spiritually bound, unable to approach God unless God grants them the grace to do so. Enabling grace is also known as "calling", "conviction", "drawing", or "opening the heart", but it all refers to God merciful giving enough grace for humanity to hear and grasp the good news, as well as to choose to receive God's word for redemption and exercise faith unto salvation by God-given grace, or to choose to remain in sin (Rogers, 2012:60). This emphasises the simple point that the initiative in salvation, is placed squarely on God's shoulders in Arminian theology. God's grace is the effective cause of salvation, but a person's faith as a response to prevenient grace is the indispensable cause of salvation (Olson, 2011:170).

It would be equally important to ponder whether grace is resistible or irresistible for Arminius. The answer is both, depending on which stage of grace is being discussed. Grace is appealing in its initial appearance as "prevenient." God lavishes prevenient grace on sinners regardless of their desire for it. However, once God has given prevenient grace later or collaborating grace can be resisted. This distinction is critical to fully comprehending Arminius's viewpoint (Barrett, 2013:223). From Arminius to the present, every Arminian had made explicit the real reason for rejecting the notion of irresistible grace: to preserve God's good and loving character. The essential point of the argument is that if the only way for individuals to be redeemed, there would be no basic problem believing in God if he overwhelmed them and forced them to accept his goodness if he did it for every individual. Regrettably, there is a second option: prevenient grace. And, because universal salvation cannot be adequately qualified or distinguished, that is the alternative to monergism that retains God's complete love revealed in Jesus Christ (Olson, 2011:171).

Prevenient grace, according to Arminians and other synergists, restores life to the individual who is spiritual dead and could not perform meritorious works. It does not, however, compel

them to accept God's kindness in order to be saved, which necessitates spontaneous repentance and trust. As a result, regeneration does not precede conversion in Arminian theology, however, it is not an issue of good actions, and it is just a question of not resisting. When people choose to be saved by God's grace, they repent and put their faith in Christ completely (Olson, 2011:171). Any notion that salvation is a collaborative effort and process in which God is the superior partner and humans who are being rescued are the inferior but vital partners is known as synergism. Humans do not believe in self-sacrifice. It is the notion that redemption is solely through grace. It does, however, necessitate unrestricted reception and no human opposition (Olson, 2016:306-307). The Canons of Dort (1618-1619; 2019:386) writes:

Though God so influences the will through the word and the internal action of his Spirit that he both confers the strength to believe or supernatural abilities and compels man to believe, man might scorn that grace and not believe, and thus perish through his fault.

This point demonstrates how fallen humanity can oppose and reject grace. Another attempt is made to place the emphasis on the centrality and pervasiveness of grace in all aspects of salvation. All of a person's excellent qualities must be attributed only to grace. That grace, though, can be denied. Saving grace can be rejected by a sinful person's will (Godfrey, 2019:17). God's grace comes before a sinful human's reaction, according to Reformed theology. The problem is that the Remonstrants affirmed a resistible grace as a manner of operation in other words, God's grace come before the whole work of conversion and specifically regeneration, as well as the good acts of those who have been converted and regenerated, but it is only effective when the sinner's free will cooperates with it, if a person rejects it, it will not function (Hyde, 2019:218). Depravity pervades every aspect of human existence. As a result, since human free will has been tainted, the entire human race has been tainted. As a result, without God's grace, one cannot even begin to accomplish what is agreeable to God, much less full fulfill it. The argument's primacy is founded on the notion that medicine comes first for the corrupted will to be cured, restored and prepared in Christ (Calvin, 1543; 1996:107).

The third article of the Remonstrance of 1610 was orthodox in Reformed theology on its own. The Arminians appeared to have accurately arrived at the notion of total depravity. Only when the Arminians got to the fourth article, where they teach the resistibility of grace, did it become evident that they didn't always stick to what they claimed in the third. Only irresistible grace, according to Calvinists, can overcome actual total depravity. The synod united its responses to the third and fourth articles as the third and fourth heads of doctrine to make this apparent (Godfrey, 2019:81). The reliance on prevenient grace, according to Hyde (2019:218) is brought

into contact with the synergism of the first two points in the fourth article of the Remonstrant article. Remember that the Remonstrance stated that God predestines humans to salvation based on foreseen faith (article 1), and Jesus died to initiate redemption for all in the same way, but that the application of its benefits was left to free will, and so only a few receive it (article 2). The human will was emphasised. Article 3 denies that faith derives from the power of human choice, although this must be viewed considering article 4's stress on predestination. Arminius contended that salvation is God's initiative, which salvation is a response to God's prior grace, and that salvation is by grace alone by and faith alone. However, it is human beings who possess the faith that saves rightly. Between God's universal love for the world and the application of salvation to specific individuals sits the sinner's active faith as the essential determining cause of redemption (Williams, 2004:25).

It is possible to see Arminianism's two pillars, prevenient grace, and libertarian freedom. Prevenient grace is defined as grace that is offered to everyone, regardless of whether they desire it or not. It is, in a sense, irresistible. The regeneration process has been united by prevenient grace, but whether or not it will be completed relies on human libertarian freedom to cooperate with following grace. Because of libertarian freedom, later grace is resistible but prevenient grace is irresistible (Barrett, 2013:273). Scripture is thought to confirm that faith comes before and is a requirement for regeneration. Faith is not a gift bestowed on a chosen group of individuals in an unconditional election or regeneration process. The Bible makes it clear that God is seeking to provide all people with a genuine opportunity to trust him for salvation (John 16:8-11). All who need forgiveness are offered salvation as a gift through (grace enabled) faith. Scripture constantly asserts that God provides every human being with the grace necessary to exercise trust in Christ for salvation and eternal life, or to deny the genuine gift of redemption for eternal damnation (Rogers, 2012:59).

As shown in texts, Arminius' methodological approach to grace in salvation differs from Calvin's. Individualistic views of libertarian freedom should be based on the foundational assessment of prevenient grace, therefore, the theology of "freed will" rather than free will. In this line of logic, there is significant ground that offers the first type of grace, "prevenient grace," to alleviate or counteract the inability caused by sin (Olson, 2011:169). Although this form of grace is irresistible, human beings can refuse subsequent or saving grace once God has granted prevenient grace. This would not imply a belief in autonomous work-righteousness, which is associated with the heresy of Pelagianism⁶. The reason for this is because God's prevenient

⁶ Pelagianism is a belief system based on the teachings of Pelagius, a British monk (354-415 Century). Pelagius argued that humanity could accomplish salvation without the assistance of divine grace. Therefore, humans are born morally neutral and have the ability to choose between wicked and

grace, which makes morally decent choices conceivable in the first place, precedes the restoration of this ability. According to Arminius' theology of grace, God gives everyone the ability to think they are saved through Christ's work rather than their own (Shelton, 2014:120). Therefore, Arminianism has always maintained that God's prevenient grace take the initiative in redemption. Pelagianism denies that humans may accomplish good without the aid of divine grace while Arminians are vehemently opposed to this view (Christensen, 2016:145).

2.1.1.1.3 John Calvin

On July 10, 1509, John Calvin was born at Noyon, France, in a Catholic cathedral town northwest of Paris. He died in Geneva, which was once an autonomous republic before becoming part of Switzerland. Calvin reigned as "chief pastor" in a sense. The Geneva Academy was founded by the French Protestant Reformers, to which Protestants from across Europe flocked. When he was fourteen, his father sent him to the University of Paris to study theology, which was unaffected by the Reformation at the time and was steeped in mediaeval theology. Five years later, his father had a disagreement with the church and advised his son to abandon theology and pursue a career in law, which he pursued for the next three years in Orleans and Bourges (Olson, 1999:408).

Calvin completed his law study while mastering Greek and becoming immersed in the ideas of Duns Scotus, William Occam, and Gabriel Biel. Calvin was twenty-one years old when his father died in May of 1531. Calvin felt free to stop studying law and return to his first love for scholarship and literature in religious studies. At the age of twenty-three, he published his first work, *Commentary on Seneca*. However, sometime during these years, he became acquainted with the Reformation's message and spirit, and by 1533, something momentous occurred in his life (Piper, 2018:98).

Nicolas Cop, Calvin's friend, taught at the start of the winter term at the University of Paris in November 1533, and was held to account by the Parliament for his Lutheran-like teachings. He departed the city, and persecution against what King Francis I referred to as "the cursed Lutheran sect" erupted. Calvin was one among those that managed to flee. Some speculated that Calvin drafted the message that Cop gave because their relationship was so close. Calvin had thus crossed the line by 1533. He was now devoted to Christ and the Reformation's cause. Calvin had already felt the majesty of God in scripture at this point. God and God's message were both so strongly and unmistakably verified to his soul at that instant that he became the devoted servant of God and his work for the rest of his life (Piper, 2018:99).

virtuous activities with their free will. Both Calvinists and Arminians see Pelagianism as heretical (Christensen, 2016:150).

He rose to prominence in the international Reformation church and theology. One recognises the intelligent, self –taught individual in his dealings with theological concepts and distinctions, who felt free to assess freely based on his comprehension of scripture while being familiar with customary exegetical and systematic terminology (Velde, 2011:59). Calvin according to Boer (2011:75) was a credible authority, a remarkable man who had contributed significantly to the church's reformation and was thus deserving of high regard. God's sovereignty was one of John Calvin's life as well as scriptural exegesis and theology Beeke (2010:79) adds Calvin did teach a soteriological theology of election in the city of Geneva and others he affected. He believed that God has complete sovereignty over his action and can behave in accordance with his nature and as he wishes. God's acts are not influenced by anything other than his own self-interest. God has no duties to anyone or anything other than himself. No one or anything imposes constraints on him or his actions aside from his own will and abilities (Picirilli, 2002:21).

Calvin abandoned natural theology in favour of the Bible as the most reliable source of knowledge about God, elevating Scripture as the greatest authority for Christian faith and practise, inspired and enlightened by the Holy Spirit (Calvin, 1559; 2008:42). Calvin believed that all that happens and is done is inextricably linked to God's will. He connects God's will and sovereignty. If God wills everything that exists, then he also knows everything. His understanding is inextricably linked to the actuality of what he desires. Because everything is essential and God knows and acts in a necessary manner, everything is also necessary (Vos, 2011:34). Unregenerated sinners are unable to obey scripture unless God displays his presence in them and instils reverence in them. Only then can scripture provide knowledge of God that is founded on the Holy Spirit's internal persuasion (Calvin, 1559; 2008:42).

The Church was dethroned as the authority that accredited the scriptures to the saints as a result of this experience and conviction. This work required only the majesty of God himself in the written word. Scripture and the "inward persuasion of the Holy Spirit" came together for Calvin to offer him "saving knowledge." Neither is sufficient in and of itself to save. He claimed that the Holy Spirit raises us from the dead, allowing us to see and taste the divine reality of God's message confirming its authenticity as God's word (Piper, 2018:100).

2.1.1.1.4 Calvin on the doctrine of sin and depravity of humankind

The way one views the doctrine of hamartiology and its consequences on the human nature will affect one's perspective on redemption to a considerable extent. It's hardly surprising, then, that the first article dealt with the biblical idea of utter inability or absolute depravity in the Calvinistic worldview. The natural human being is unable to accomplish anything spiritually good because of this inborn depravity, which is why Calvinists refer to humanity's total absolute inability. This

word implies a spiritual incompetence, implying that the sinner is spiritual bankrupt and unable to effect salvation. When judged by human standards many unsaved persons possess wonderful qualities. In the spiritual sphere, however, the unsaved sinner is incapable of good as judged by God's standards. The natural human being is chained to sin, is Satan's child, is disobedient to God, blind to the truth, perverted, and incapable of saving or earning salvation (Steele, Thomas & Quinn, 2004:18-19). Godfrey (2019:85) goes on to say that there are various places to start theologically when tackling the enormous question of grace in salvation. One could begin considering God's designs or degrees in eternity, in God's thoughts. However, the human problem of sin would be profoundly important to begin with. The notion of grace in redemption can be justified by acknowledging the fallen human situation. Everyone is a sinner because of Adam, and everyone deserves to die as a result of their sin.

Total depravity is the same as total inability. It is regarded as biblical instruction, which is the first and most import step in the process of salvation (Curley, 2015:29). It demonstrates that people are unable to accept the gospel as their means of salvation as the result of the fall. Human beings are lifeless, hearing-impaired, and blind to the things of God. Because evil forces have subdued them, while having cruel and morally evil hearts, they are powerless to employ their free will. People are therefore unable to distinguish between right and wrong (Steele, 2004:23). The region of the soul where the soul's dignity and perfection are most visible has not only been harmed but has also become so distorted that regular mending is ineffective (Calvin, 1559; 2008:153). Calvin understands the consequences of sin and the challenges people face when trying to do good or be saved while they are still sinners (Muller, 2017:189). Original sin according to Calvin permeates the entire individual and affects every human race. Original sin has flipped the entire human being upside down and it is not restricted to a person's flesh or intellect (Aloisi, 2016:195). Calvin (1559; 2008:153) says

When Paul emphasises that corruption does not reside on one portion exclusively, but that no component is immune to its deadly taint, there is no space for dispute. For when he speaks of corrupt nature, he not only condemns the excessive character of the desires, but also states that understanding is blinded, and the heart is depraved (Eph 4:17, 18). The third chapter of the Epistle is devoted entirely to the discussion of original sin. The same phenomenon may be seen more explicitly in the renovation phase. Grace refers to not only grace by which the sensuous or weaker portion of the soul is corrected but also a complete reformation of all elements of human beings for the spirit, who is opposed to the old man and the flesh.

Calvin begins by outlining how a human's corruption and depravity are all-pervasive. Every component of mankind has been tainted by sin, including the will, mind, and affections. Every human being is a slave to sin as a result of the fall, and this enslavement is wilful because a human's will is fundamentally inclined toward evil. The blemish that humanity acquired from Adam as a result of the fall is the cause of the depravity that permeates the world. Because of this, human beings are unable to will what is necessary to inherit eternal life and are therefore in a great need of the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration. Such a work of God, including the elect, brings sinners from death to life and is unstoppable, effective, and always successful (Barrett, 2013:240). Readers must be careful not to make a mistake when Calvin speaks about the scope of this great moral ailment of humanity known to sin. Sin is a disease that affects every aspect of people's moral structure as well every mental faculty. Understanding, affections, reasoning powers, and willpower are all infected in some way. Even the conscience is so misled that it cannot be trusted as a reliable guide and is just as prone to lead people astray as it is to lead them to righteousness unless it is illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

Calvin did not limit original sin to the destruction of original righteousness as a result. According to him, it involves a complete corruption of the person as a whole. Everyone is guilty before God from the time they are born due to original sin, which is a corruption and depravity (Aloisi, 2016:196). He holds that salvation is solely dependent on God and that people have no business determining whether someone chooses Christ as their Saviour (Loke, 2013:29). According to Macarthur and Mayhue (2017:467), the Bible describes the corruption and filth of sin passed down to Adam as having reached ultimate (or ubiquitous) depravity. Total depravity which emphasises the devastating effects of sin on the individual is comprised of three related ideas: the contamination and corruption of a person's complete inability to please God; and the universality, according to which everyone is born a sinner. The Synod of Dort (1618-1619; 1993:294) was a pivotal figure in the battle between Calvinism and Arminianism, and it wrote of total depravity:

Therefore, all human beings are conceived in sin and born under the wrath of God, opposed to all saving good, inclined to evil, dead in sins and slaves of sin, and without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit, they would be unable to turn to God, correct their depraved nature, or dispose themselves to the correction of it.

Calvin's assentation emphasises the vanity, disobedience, and unbelief, all of which lead to ingratitude, were the substance of Adam's sin, which was recreated in various degree in all his posterity. Total depravity draws attention to the dehumanising effects of sin on individual as well as the complete inability of a person to please God and the universality of sin, as all people are

formed and born as sinners (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467). Sinfulness is a familial sickness that all children inherit from their original parents, Adam and Eve. The parents, who were originally pure and virtuous and made in God's likeness, lost their innocence and turned evil and corrupt. All people are now born with a wicked and dispositional nature that is a direct result of Adam's sin.

Inability is the most important characteristic of original contamination. Inability is viewed differently in Arminianism and Calvinism. Arminianism maintains that, while sinners are unable to believe on their own, none of them is truly alone. Rather, God bestows prevenient favour on every human being, giving them the option to accept or reject the saving mercy. In contrast Calvinists, believe that inability is not hypothetical but genuine (Peterson, 2007:128). Spiritual death characterises each human being in his or her natural state. A person is a corpse by nature, completely resistant to the spiritual truth revealed in the exterior appeal of the gospel. As a result, a natural person will constantly reject the gospel, because the things of God's Spirit "are foolishness to him, and he is unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor 2:14) (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:576). No one who is morally dead can do good deeds that please God, just as a dead person cannot rise and move. A sinful nature is not something that one acquires over their existence. It is present from conception (Frame, 2013:860).

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, involved both moral corruption with a 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 the original sin in the garden (Ellis, 2002:29). They conceal the truth while ultimately offering false explanations of reality that is in opposition to the God of the Bible because common grace does not ultimately free unbelievers from the control of sin over their thoughts (Baird, 2015:95). Fallen humans can only produce fallen progeny. This is what the theory of original sin entails. Adam's initial sin is handed down to all of his descendants. The passing on of Adam's guilt to his progeny was under God's just judgment. Therefore, in Adam, all humans are born guilty and corrupt (Godfrey, 2019:1290).

Adam's profound and sad fall has left him with an inner depravity that is absolute. This may indicate that sin is mankind's natural enslavement. Sin has an impact on every element of a person's life, including every thought, speech, and deed. According to Romans 6:16, mankind is under the enslavement of sin by birth: "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?" Take a time to think about this literally. A slave was considered the owner's property. As a slave, he had no access to his own money, property, or time. Humans are spiritually helpless, unable, and unwilling to save themselves by nature. They are unable to understand the Christian faith and cannot progress toward convergence (Beeke, 2008:55).

Calvin made a distinction between freedom of choice in matters of daily living or civic duty and freedom of choice in matters of salvation. His vehemently necessitarian denials of free will are reinforced by the discussion of sin, grace, salvation (Muller, 2017:189). Calvin (1559; 2008:153) claims that since the sin of the first parents, people have become so vitiated and warped in every aspect of their nature that they are justly condemned and guilty before God because of this corruption, because vile ungodliness has infiltrated their thinking and pride has infiltrated their very being. Therefore, mankind could not perform anything meritorious and pleasing to God.

This section defines total depravity and elaborates on the meaning and effects of original sin. All humans are born into sin, incapable of rescuing themselves, and spend their whole lives living in and for sin. They are powerless to help themselves. They are so lost that they are unable to turn to God and, maybe, more importantly, do not want to turn to God or be changed at all. The only chance for these completely destitute individuals is that God would take the initiative and intervene. For the lost sinners to be saved, God must regenerate them by his grace (Godfrey, 2019:130). The Bible teaches "total (or pervasive) depravity" to characterise the corruption and filth brought about by Adam's sin. The horrible effect of sin on the individual is confirmed by Calvin, who also examines three related ideas: the universality, which holds that everyone is born a sinner, the dirt and degradation of all the parts of a person, and the full capacity of a person to satisfy God, together, they highlight the dreadful state of an unredeemed humanity that is unable and unwilling to honour God (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467).

The concept of total depravity is frequently misinterpreted. It does not imply, as understood in Reformation theology, that every person has committed every kind of sin imaginable or that everyone is equally harmed in terms of outward behaviour. What it does mean is that no aspect of anyone's life is flawless or available to God's forgiveness and that everyone is equally guilty and condemned. Death commands not only their bodies and cravings, but also their intellect, heart, and will. The "total" in total depravity alludes to an extent rather than intensity, .i.e., the all-encompassing breadth of their collapsed. It does not mean that individuals are as bad as they can be; rather, it implies that everyone is so evil and corrupt that there is no hope for them to get up, dust themselves off, and fight (with the help of grace) to overcome God's wrath and their sinfulness (Horton, 2011:41). Total depravity does not suggest that the entire human race

is equally horrible or that those who have fallen below the standards of civility are unable to rise to even the barest minimum of decency. It simply suggests that after the fall, humanity has lost all spiritual health and is dependent on God's mercy for Spiritual success (Olson, 2016:308).

Calvin, like Paul in Romans 5, starts with Adam's first sin and draws a line from him to the entire human race (Beeke, 2008:53). Adam's sin captured and engulfed his progeny in the same catastrophe. He stresses that original sin is a complete depravation of human essence rather than just depravation. The punishment is the removal of the ornaments of wisdom, goodness, justice, truth and holiness and their replacement with blindness. His offspring are also cast into same wretchedness (Calvin, 1559; 2008:150).

Calvin noted that this corruption finds its seat in both the higher and lower faculties of the soul and that is operated by positive will, whereas Augustine found this corruption only in the sensual appetites (Barrett, 2013:15). Since Adam created a sinful and filthy human race, God has the right to condemn everyone. He contends that this predicament is unaffected by practice of baptism and that without a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, humanity is lost (Hannah, 2001:230). He defined original sin in his Institutes as a "hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, spreading to all parts of the soul, which first makes us repulsive to God's wrath and then creates in us deeds which in Scripture are dubbed works of the flesh" (Calvin, 1559; 2008:152).

According to Vos (2011:32) Calvin held that since sin weakens the will, it is only the will's servitude to sin that counts. In the sense that it is never forced and is always self-determined, willing of itself, of its own will, and wilful, he is prepared to argue that the will is free. Will decisions can be either wilful or voluntary. The need that results from this perversion of the will, or the "yoke of sin," is nothing more than the will's servitude. Sin has rendered humans so blind that they are unable to comprehend the true nature of God (Olson, 1999:410). According to Calvin (1559; 2008:150), because of all this, all people are born from unclean seeds and are born with transmissible sin. Before birth, God sees humans as contaminated and soiled.

Calvin was adamant that the fall fully ruined human beings, rendering them incapable of performing any spiritual good, and that they were therefore unable to make even the smallest strides toward their restoration. The will cannot even begin to advance in the direction of righteousness when it is under the control of sin; much less continue to do so. Such actions are the first step toward conversion, which the Bible attributes totally to divine grace. The will persists and accelerates with a strong aversion to sin (Calvin, 1559; 2008:180-181). Human nature has been perverted to the point where individuals are unable to execute the two major commandments that sum up all of God's law, namely, "You shall love the LORD your God with

all your heart, soul, and mind... and... you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matt 22:37-39).

Humans have a total inability to fully follow God's rule, and this spiritual state of being unresponsive to God and his word is nothing short of being spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1, 5). (Russell, 2012:30). Depravity indicates that humans are unable to gain merit in God's eyes and hence are denied or unable to achieve the Lord's holy standard. Total depravity impacts all persons and all aspects of a person. It is also complete in the sense that there is nothing in unregenerated persons that may deserve favour in the sight of the Lord (Curley, 2015:176). He maintains the idea of absolute depravity, but he also thinks that even those who have not undergone regeneration can engage in civil righteousness, which God approves of in mankind's social conventions (Barrett, 2013:15-16). Examples of it include sinners who have not received regeneration through God's grace. They have no hope of being spiritually virtuous; they can only sin. But they nevertheless retain their fundamental right to free will and decision-making. Although they are forced to sin, they do it voluntarily and on purpose (Van Asselt, 2006:36).

Calvin's doctrine can be broken down into three parts. To begin with, while Adam's sin depraved the entire human race, the sinfulness was passed down to the grandchildren by the children, who had been tainted by their parents. To put it another way, the corruption that started with Adam has been passed down through the centuries, from those who came before them and those who will come after them (Calvin, 1559; 2008:152). Adam's sin is also the sin of humanity. Calvin's confessional borders hold that Adam is not only the ancestor of humanity, but also, as it were the root of human nature. Calvin was unafraid to apply the ramifications of this concept to new-borns. He affirmed that infants are not guilty of another's fault but their own since they carry with them the "seed of sin" even though the fruit of their sin has not yet matured (George, 2013:222). Secondly, in terms of how this sin was passed down from generation to generation, Calvin rejected the traducianist⁷ notion that Adam's tainted soul is passed down biologically from father to child. "It is apparently that nature then referred to is not nature as God created it but vitiated in Adam; for it would have been mostly absurd to proclaim God the source death," Calvin explained in response to Jesus' statement "that which is born of flesh is fleshy" (John 3:6). As a result, when Adam become corrupted, he spread the disease to all his descendants, for a heavenly judge, even the Saviour himself, proclaims that everyone is born cruel and depraved (Calvin, 1559; 2008:151).

⁷ Traducianist is the belief that, in addition to the human body, the human soul is also passed down from parents to children rather than being created by God *ex nihilo* (creationism) for that particular human body (Grenz, Guretzki & Nordling, 1999:115).

Thirdly, Calvin refused to confine the extent of original sin to one aspect of the human being, instead of seeing it as infecting the entire existence. There is no portion of the mind, emotions, or volition that has not been corrupted by sin. Moral and spiritual depravity is rightly described as entire, not in degree but totality (George, 2013:223). This reveals that after the fall, there is no longer any spiritual good in human beings, and that people are born dependent on God's undeserved favour for any spiritual achievement (Olson, 2016:308).

Because of his grasp of the implications of sin, Calvin has a necessitarian account of all occurrences in the universe, including human activities. The readings that can be classified as conventional, standard, or orthodoxy begin with the presentation of his hamartiological standpoint. The analysis of the repercussions of sin resulted in a clear distinction: he did not talk of grace in phases, but as something that is given once and cannot be refused.

2.1.1.1.5 Calvin's position on grace in salvation

The natural correlate of the idea of total depravity according to Minkema (2011:245), Calvin was concerned with maintaining the absolute sovereignty of God and the absolute dependence of humans to God's favour. He asserts that everything happens because God designed it to be that way. He essentially makes a connection between this and the theories of election and perseverance (Shellrude, 2011:69). Thus, for Calvin, the objective of elucidating the teaching is to underpin the gracious nature of salvation rather than to foster speculation on the subject. God is the source of salvation, and that is a crucial fact to remember (Trueman, 2017:140).

Because of humanity's wretched state, Calvin believes that salvation must be accomplished solely by God. For the simple reason that it would not be grace but reward and merit if God was influenced by anything other than himself, it must be solely based on God's undeserved favour because it comes from God (Picirilli, 2002:23). The biblical doctrine of salvation can be expressed simply by grace. In the process of salvation, grace teaches ultimate human passivity (Brink, 2011:236). If it is the case that some people have been unconditionally selected by God to be saved, then the Holy Spirit must work irresistibly in order to prevent the elect from rejecting Christ due to their total depravity and preventing anyone from believing and being saved. The certainty of election suggests that the Spirit is active and carries out God's will. There could be no foreordination or election without God's overwhelming favour (Badger, 2004:29).

Calvin's expansive theology of salvation is known as TULIP, implying total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints (Badger, 2003:17). Furthermore, just as the Father's election did not prevent mankind from falling into sin, the Son's atoning work did not change humanity's fallen nature. As a result, the

Son had no choice but to send the Holy Spirit to spiritually refresh those whom the Father had chosen and whom the Son had died. It took a supernatural helper to modify their bad nature and ultimately present them completely before the triune God in heaven, just as it took a divine substitute to take away the guilt and penalty of their sin. This gets readers to the central theme of Calvin's teaching: irresistible grace (Russell, 2012:84).

2.1.1.1.6 Irresistible grace

The essential cornerstone of Calvinist soteriological formulation is irresistible grace (or an effectual call). Those who have been chosen will be summoned one by one over time. This call is quite effective. It can't help but lead to salvation. Humans did nothing to deserve salvation; it is a gift from God. The practical application of this character of grace in its different ramifications will be briefly discussed in this section. The purpose of this section is to show how John Calvin differs from Jacob Arminius in his approach to the theology of grace

According to Allison (2011:474), the church has long recognised that the proclamation of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection (the gospel) is the only message by which sinful human beings might be saved. This gospel call is the first step and foundational truth for those who will become Christians to apply salvation in their lives. Theologians distinguish between an external call or invitation and an inward call (Frame, 2013:939). This should be separated from the natural light described in Psalm 19:1-6 and the first two chapters of Romans, for example. This general revelation contains no promise or grace. Only those who study the gospel through some form of external proclamation are eligible for the general call (Russell, 2012:84-85). God's external call to salvation is addressed to everyone who listens, whether or not they are among the elect. The invitation is sent to a large group of people. Even if God's Spirit strives with human people, this call can be successfully denied and fatally rejected, as in the parable of the marrow feast (Matt 22:16) (Culver, 2005:684).

The gospel's invitation or external call to all humans is to repent of sin, turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. It is announced to a group of people and elicits one of two responses. The truth has a way of capturing people and saving them. Some, on the other hand, reject the same gospel message. What is the underlying cause of these various responses to the gospel? In the past, the church has recognised two elements that determine these responses. To begin with there is a freedom of human will, which allows a person to accept or reject the gospel. Secondly, those who are genuinely Calvinistic in their theology would validate the interpretation of the responses pointing to irresistible grace (Barrett, 2013:72). Due to the shortcomings of the external appeal, sinners need a call that is supremely effective, fundamentally strong to override the consequences of depravity and bring them to repentance and saving faith (MacArthur &

Mayhue, 2017:576). While the general call leads many to confess Christ, only the efficacious call leads to real possession of Christ for a few. These have been elected in Christ, and faith and repentance have been conferred on them, and they have been saved from the kingdom of darkness, and finally translated into his Son's kingdom. Only the heart's door may be opened by the proclamation of the gospel. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can unlock, enter, and grace with salvation (Hyde, 2019:258).

Irresistible grace is the belief that the chosen, individuals whom Calvin believed were unconditionally elected to eternal life, are powerless to oppose God's grace and heaven's resolve to rescue them (Calvin, 1559:2008:350). He maintains that the gospel can only be heard and believed by someone who is dead in sin by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (Horton, 2011:105). For sinners to be converted, the Lord must appear to them directly and miraculously by the Holy Spirit. Additionally, since sinners were chosen to live before the world was created, they must submit to God's favour as it is manifested to them through the Spirit (Johnson, 2013:115-116).

According to the theology of irresistible grace, the Holy Spirit is always successful in converting his own to faith. This step is an inescapable by-product of the preceding three steps. Total depravity demands it, unconditional election serves as its pillar, and limited atonement serves as its complementary reality because, if redeeming grace were resisted, Christ would have died in vain (Beeke, 2008:102). Furthermore, this is revealed by the nature of calling, which comes not through a broad calling in gospel proclamation but from the illumination of the Spirit. God shines the light of the word on sinners, providing enough evidence of his goodness. The goodness is presented here, but not to generate salvation, for only the internal calling is infallible and a guarantee of salvation (Calvin, 1559; 2008:642).

Calvin clearly expresses monergism or irresistible grace. God makes the elected sinner's ear to hear and eyes to see the gospel, and he withdraws that efficient working (irresistible grace) from the reprobates (Olson, 2011:158). He believes that if left to their devices, fallen people would not change from their condition of rebellion, and they will turn away from the gospel. Therefore, Christ's death would have been pointless. Christ's death would have been pointless as a result (Barrett, 2017:453). The outcomes of the sacrifice, however, have not been dependent on the capricious and wicked whims of human beings because it was stated in Isaiah 53:11 that he would see the anguish of his soul and be glad. Instead, God's work of redemption has been made effective by the activity of the Holy Spirit, who influences God's elect to believe and repent, making those heirs of eternal life (Steele et al., 2004:53). Miracles in creation are physical manifestations of God's unparalleled providence. In the same manner, regeneration signifies an amazing spiritual act of God in human people that commences their salvation. God

causes the natures of people he selects to go through this regeneration process (Christensen, 2016:184).

Irresistible grace, according to Beeke (2008:103), is when the individual whom the father has preselected and whom Christ has redeemed are always saved and regenerate by the power of the Holy Spirit. It will accomplish its goal and is faultless. It is an act of God, which enters the darkness and death of the human spirit lovingly and forcefully, bringing new life and allowing that person to react affirmatively in faith. A person is born again not because he accepts Christ, but because the Holy Spirit has revived his soul and given him the gift of faith. God resurrects the spiritually dead will, heals the mortally wounded will, and restores that which was distorted so that it is now directed outward toward God rather than inward into itself (Hyde, 2019:274). Calvin (1559; 2008:350) writes:

When it comes to the mandate and complete regeneration of humans' salvation, it is fundamental to note the titles that the Bible bestows on the Spirit. First, he is known as the "Spirit of Adoption," because he bears witness to the free favour with which God the Father embraced us in his well-loved and only begotten Son, to become the Father, and gives humans the boldness of access to him, no, he dictates the very same words, so that they can boldly cry out "Abba, Father." For this reason, Christ is said to have "sealed believers, and given the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts," because, as pilgrims in the world and people in a sense dead, they are "sealed and given the earnest of the Spirit in their heart." He invigorates believers from on high, assuring them that their salvation is secured in the hands of the faithful God.

Readers are informed by grace that the triune God alone is responsible for salvation of underserving sinners. Each of the Trinity's three members participated in and contributed to it. The Father chose those who would be saved before the world was created. The Son was subsequently given his own people (conditional election/predestination). The Son came into the world at the right time and purchased their redemption with his blood (definite atonement) (Beeke, 2008:103). The two primary acts of election and redemption, however, are insufficient to complete the process of salvation. God's plan of saving lost sinners includes the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, which is applied to the elect. It is a characteristic of redemption that could be characterised as effective or irresistible (Dally, 2009:4). Since people are spiritually dead in this situation, they can only create their own existence as the first step toward salvation. Only God is capable of this immense re-creative activity, regeneration is a gift that God freely bestows on those who he has predetermined (Picirilli, 2002:142-143). Calvin (1559; 2008:350) confirms this:

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit is revealed to us as a fountain from which all heavenly blessings flow to human beings or as the hand by which God extends his power, because by this divine inspiration he efficaciously calls humans to divine life, that humans are no longer acted upon themselves, but ruled by this infallible inward calling of the Holy Spirit so that everything in them is the fruit of his grace. Indeed, it has been plainly demonstrated that until humans' minds are focused on the Spirit, Christ is essentially unemployed, because they see him coldly outside them, and therefore at a distance from them.

Calvin admits that grace is the source of redemption. Grace draws the sinner into the company of the redeemed, which is the sole reason anybody believes the gospel and enters into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. God does not only commence redemption; he completes it (Williams, 2004:30). God generates a yearning for himself in mankind via regeneration. However, once they have that desire planted in them, they will continue to function as they have always functioned, choosing decisions based on the greatest drive at the time. If God instils in them a longing for Christ, they will act on that desire. They become spiritually alive when God makes them spiritually alive. God creates more than just the potential of being spiritually alive. He instils spiritual life in humanity. When he summons anything into being, it manifests. Humans talk of God's interior summons. God's interior call is as strong and effective as his call to create the world. The world did not come into being because of God's invitation (Sproul, 1986:95).

This reminds us that God works for the elect by providing them the gospel to proclaim. God also works inside to open the eyes of people who have been blinded by sin. The Holy Spirit's illumination work helps the elect's minds to see and discern realities they previously did not see or accept. The Spirit also works within us to renew our wills, which had previously been corrupted and self-centred (Godfrey, 2019:137). Grace is embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is one of the greatest exponents of grace in the history of Theology. Grace is God's response to sin in Christ, as well as the Holy Spirit's application of Christ to the individual. A person who believes in salvation by grace alone, as the Bible teaches, will make certain that Christ is at the centre of whatever they say (Trueman, 2017:236). The Holy Spirit then renews the rescued sinner, giving him a fresh will. This conversion is a gift from God (Gamble, 2017:30). The Synod of Dort (1618-1619; 1993:299) stated:

However, when God efficaciously and infallibly calls humans to salvation, He does not end with a general call of the gospel. But inwardly calls them and that their minds should be powerfully illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and judge what are the things of the Spirit of God. He also

by the power of the same regenerating Spirit penetrates the innermost recesses of humans and makes them alive.

This article applies Jesus' words to the issue of a person's sinful will and conversion to God as a life changing event, but once God has accomplished his good pleasure in the works of conversion, it goes on to discuss how sinners are changed, describing the effects of the grace of regeneration. He not only preached the gospel to them externally, but he also utilised his Holy Spirit to forcefully illuminate their minds so that they might correctly grasp and perceive the things of the Spirit of God. It's worth noting that the canon states that conversion requires more than just outward preaching. It incorporates that, but it's also more. It also contains the Holy Spirit's great activity of illuminating people's blind minds (Hyde, 2019:263-264). Many times, throughout these lessons, readers have had the opportunity to notice that humans are cut off from God's life and dead in sin. As a result, if a person is to be rescued, God must act first. The first step is to make an effective call, which is frequently referred to as "illumination." The reason for this call has nothing to do with human power willpower and faith works, whether foreseen or not. It is a sacred calling due to God's grace and purpose in Christ, which he bestowed before the age began rather than founded upon humans' own efforts (Culver, 2005:685).

Calvin believes that humanity does not contribute anything to redemption, not even a slight measure of free will participation. Only God can effectively call and regenerate the dead and depraved sinner, bringing life death. Therefore, a believer has no right to look down on an unbeliever out of pride (Barrett, 2011:242). He works with the concept of compatibilism freedom which states that individuals always choose what God wants them to do. A distinctly biblical kind of compatibilism asserts that every human decision has a dual explanation. God determines the choices of every person; however, every person freely makes choices. Thus divine sovereignty is compatible with human freedom and responsibility (Shellrude, 2011:70).

Sinners "come" to Christ for two reasons. They are a result of both God's decreative (sovereign) and perceptive (instructive) wills. God does not choose anyone for salvation unless they also use their willpower to accept God's command to act in faith and repentance. They are effectively called to salvation by God. Furthermore, no one can have faith or repentance over what they don't understand. As a result, compatibilism has significant consequences for both the doctrine of grace in salvation and evangelisation (Christensen, 2016:103). To distinguish it from the broad gospel invitation which is extended to all people but rejected by some, this tremendous act of God is often referred to as an effective calling. This is when the Holy Spirit's work in people's hearts makes the gospel call so powerful that they respond. It's a mystery what happens during regeneration. Humans recognise that they were spiritually dead and have been

brought back to life by God, and that they have been “born again” in a sense. However, they have no idea how this occurs or what God accomplishes in them in this new spiritual existence (Grudem, 1994:701).

Calvin owes all in salvation to God, with no room for free human involvement with grace. This is based on the doctrines of total depravity and unconditional election, which he defends. Nothing less than the amazing life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever inspire a person who is dead in sin to act in a spiritually upright manner. Regeneration must therefore come before conversion. God graciously gives the gift of new spiritual birth to those whom he predestined. It entails a deep transformation of character, resulting on a desire for repentance, belief, and service on the part of the regenerate. He avers that this notion of irresistible grace is the only way people would come to repentance and ascribes all the work of salvation to God (Olson, 2011:158). This formulation demonstrates that God does not aid those who have a weak will. Rather, he wakes them up from their apathy. He doesn't wield enough authority to sway people's free will to accept or reject his redemption offer. Rather, he provides the willingness itself, which was previously lacking. *Ex nihilo*, God's efficacious summons produces in the sinner an efficacious willing that is sudden and freely exercised (Christensen, 2016:185).

Calvin's assertions are largely based on conclusions drawn from his understanding of total inability and would chronologically lead one to his distinguishable methodology from Arminius. Historical intellectualistic perspective reveals that Calvin never compartmentalised grace as Arminius did but substantiated that grace in salvation is given once and could not be resisted. Calvin's approach belongs to a particular scholastic perspective, which has argued from underlying necessitarianism tradition including what Reformed churches carried out as a framework of thought into the greater part of contemporary Reformed findings.

2.1.1.1.7 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to assess the reasons for the differences between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius, as well as to compare and contrast these discrepancies. Arminius doctrine of sin is addressed to show that he believed in human incapacity after Adams fall, and his writings backed up this belief. Following that, the idea of prevenient grace, on which Arminius based his soteriological model, is addressed to show where Arminius differed from Calvin in his understanding of the practical application of the nature of grace. Calvin's theology of sin and absolute depravity is also explored in relation to his notion of man's total incapacity to merit salvation. Following that, the irresistible grace on which Calvin's soteriological model is based is addressed to determine where Calvin differed from Arminius in his understanding of the nature of grace in salvation.

The researcher's assessment of Calvin and Arminius' historical perspectives on grace in salvation, considering historical intellectualism, led to the conclusion that both Calvin and Arminius founded their salvation on God's grace, but with different methodological approaches. Much of what we witness in recent debates about Calvinism and Arminianism lacks an early fundamental assessment of Arminius' arguments and methodological approach to salvation grace. The distinction would have to be made based on history rather than dogma. The historical material on Arminius and Calvin helps to create an understanding of the origins of modern reasoning. It familiarises the reader with the original writings based on historical evidence and hypotheses, as well as the atmosphere in which the writings in question were created. Doctrine can never be fully understood unless the proponent understands it as originally presented. Without historical context it is impossible to understand authors and properly interpret their writings. The literature produced under such times, places, and situations, as well as the prevailing perspective on the world and life in general, will unavoidably be influenced by those times, places, and circumstance-related conditions.

Two unmistakable assertions are made by biblical Christianity, although they are without passionate debate. Firstly, everything that occurs in time, space, and history, including the course of human lives, has some influence from God. Secondly, because they possess the choice to decide how to spend their lives, humans are morally responsible actors. What distinguishes humans from other animals is their ability to make significant decisions that have an impact on history as it unfolds.

Calvin and Arminius both made an effort to separate and evaluate the notion of sin in their respective doctrines of God's grace in redemption, especially the theory of total depravity, which is based on biblical principles. Without a biblical perspective on total depravity, it is impossible to comprehend the perspicuousness of the notion of grace in salvation completely, meticulously, and deterministically. They believed that after Adam's fall, all people have inherited a corrupt nature from their first parents, making them just as susceptible to evil as Adam and Eve were before rebelling toward God. The divine wrath of their transgression washed across all creation. The good world that God created is now under condemnation as a result of Adam and Eve's sin. The punishment is imposed not just on the creation, but also on all of humanity. In Adam, all of humanity perishes. The scope of this judgement encompasses every small detail of the world. Because of their transgression and their existence via Adam, all of humanity is guilty before God. As a result of this conditionality, human will is unable to choose God without the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Arminius' doctrine of grace came as a recommendation to countermand the results of total depravity. He had a different methodological approach from Calvin to the doctrine of grace. He

totally attributes God's initiative in salvation to his prevenient grace. Repentance and faith are thought to be genuine free responses of people who being depraved will have been set free by prevenient grace through the preaching of the word, rather than being gifts of God efficaciously conveyed to those who have chosen. Prevenient grace restores life to the person dead in trespasses and sin.

Prevenient grace and libertarian will are the two cornerstones of Arminius' theology. This first level of grace is irresistible, but it just begins the regeneration process; the process is completed by the recommendation of human libertarian freedom to participate with later grace (which is resistible). As a result, while prevenient grace is irresistible, later grace is resistible because of libertarian freedom.

Biblical anthropology and hamartiology, according to Calvin, necessitates biblical soteriology, which is entirely based on divine grace. His notion of grace was shaped by his theology of man's fall and its long-term consequences. He grasped total depravity in all its ramifications and intensity, .i.e., the entire scope of human depravity. He begins with the premise that all of humanity sinned in Adam and that all humans are without excuse.

The notion of total inability, which claims that people are spiritual dead in sin, does not imply that everyone is equally evil or that people are as evil as they could be, nor does it suggest that people are completely devoid of virtue, nor does it suggest that people's nature is inherently evil, nor does it suggest that the spirit is dormant, nor does it suggest that the body is dead. It means that since the fall all people have been under the curse of sin, that they are guided by erroneous ideals, and that they are totally incapable of loving God or acting in a way that deserves of salvation. In this sense, mankind has been fully indisposed, crippled, and created opposed to all good and completely inclined to all evil since the start.

As a result, the inability under which humans toil is the inability to be willing to execute holy volitions, not inability to exercise volitions. Calvin's objective was to retain absolute divine sovereignty and human dependency, which is the natural correlation of the notion of total inability. He asserts that there is no other basis for salvation except God's free grace and that mankind must not search elsewhere for the rationale for God's salvation decisions. It is not in the nature of mankind to be satisfied with his pure will, purpose, and unchangeable decree.

It would be as important to recognise that, in the face of total incompetence, only irresistible grace could foster human necessity, utility, and merit. Nothing short of the amazing life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever inspire individual to act in a way that is spiritually beneficial

since they are spiritually dead in sin. Human people cannot initiate the first movement toward salvation since they are spiritually dead, and it can only come from within.

Calvin's formulation demonstrates that God does not aid to those who have a weak will. Rather, he wakes them up from their apathy. He doesn't wield enough authority to sway people's free will to accept or reject his redemption offer. Rather, he provides the willingness itself, which was previously lacking. *Ex nihilo*, God's efficacious summons produces in the sinner an efficacious willing that is sudden and freely exercised

Despite fundamental methodological differences in their approaches to the notion of grace in salvation, both John Calvin and Jacob Arminius credited salvation to grace alone. As previously stated, the notion that Arminius believed in a type of free will to salvation would prevent him from cultivating the realisation of what his writings show.

CHAPTER 3. THE CONTEMPORARY ARGUMENTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE IN SALVATION IN THE AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

3.1 Introduction

Baptists arose from theological concerns, a desire to re-establish biblical confessional bounds. They have boldly asserted for centuries that they have returned to the Bible rather than Luther or Calvin. They professed to be Biblicists. For Baptists, Biblicism traditionally meant bolstering a theological argument with lengthy biblical citations and then depending on the works of others for support or comprehension. Baptist theology has usually revolved around *Sola Scriptura* or at least the authoritative primacy of scripture. Between 1800 and 1910, when the British expanded their dominion from the Cape to the entire territory that is now known as South Africa, substantial immigration resulted in the planting of nearly all denominations that existed in Britain at the time. One of them was the Baptist Church (Roy, 2017:2).

In many respects, Baptists' agency quandary is not uncommon in the Christian world. Throughout the years, theologians have demonstrated the issues and attempted to make sense of the conundrum of divine and human action with which Baptists have battled. Their perspectives on this quandary are far from standard, but they can provide Baptists with a better grasp of a possible answer as well as a potential mistake to avoid (Hatch, 2011:28). The contemporary Reformed conceptions of the divine will and human free will are a continuation of the debate and discussion regarding freedom, necessity, and contingency that began in the Middle Ages and continued into the patristic period. Early Reformation arguments and definitions of human freedom focused on the issue of human incapacity in the sinful state of mankind after the fall as a result of these rigorous discussions during the Reformation over the issues of grace, free choice and election (Venema, 2017:277). Human inability states that humans are sin-dead. This does not imply that all humans are equally awful as they may be, that humans are completely devoid of virtue, that human nature is wicked in and of itself, that the human soul is dormant, or that the body is dead. What it does entail is that humans have been cursed by sin since the fall, that they are governed by flawed principles, and that they are unable to love God or achieve anything worthy of salvation (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467-468).

Human beings who are fallen or unregenerate are unable to freely choose virtuous deeds that might merit salvation. As a result, free will is denied as being incompatible with the message of grace, as well as the rejection of divine election. Instead of the more general anthropological or philosophical question of what constitutes free choice in daily, civil, or even ethical matters, the

focus of doctrinal explication placed its primary emphasis on the fundamental soteriological question of the origin or basis of salvation (Muller, 2017:181). The premise is salvation by grace alone, and God's initiative is to provide salvation solely through Christ's work. The notion of grace in salvation indicates God's determination to grant salvation to fallen sinners in Christ, none of whom is capable of turning to God or responding favourably to the gospel's appeal (Venema, 2017:178).

This chapter's focus is on soteriology in the African Baptist Church. The researcher believes that until the second decade of the twentieth century, Calvinism, also known as the concept of grace, triumphed in the most prominent and durable areas of the Baptist denominational activity. A substantial shift in the fundamental understanding of the theology of grace in salvation has occurred over the last four decades. The Baptist grasp of and devotion to those truths which Baptists previously held dear has been harmed by both carelessness and rejection.

The chapter looks at and evaluates the contemporary arguments on the doctrine of grace in salvation in the African Baptist Church during the past forty years. Before examining the theology of the African Baptist Church, it would be correspondingly fundamental to somewhat briefly look at the history of the African Baptist Church and especially the understanding of the doctrine of hamartiology within the church. At this point, the purpose of this research would be brought into perspective, which demonstrates the shift that more recent works on the Baptist scholasticism have drawn a rather different picture on the doctrine of grace in salvation. This would be concluded by a brief survey of the Sola5 association of churches.

3.1.1 The history of the African Baptist Church in Africa

The purpose of this section is to provide a broad overview of the beginnings and evolution of the Baptist movement, focusing in particular on how the missionaries who established the Baptist Church perceived the theology of grace in salvation. The goal is to give some historical context for the research, not to be exhaustive. Because of this, the history of Baptist denominationalism will be restricted to English Baptists, due to their historical dominance.

There is little doubt that African Christianity owes a debt to her rich legacy, which includes the role played and continues to be played by Western Christianity. The Western church has made and continues to make significant contributions and sacrifices to the creation and expansion of Christianity among African people throughout history. Many African Christians, however, criticise the Western missionary activity for its colonial agenda (Kunhiyop, 2011:64). Protestantism arrived in South Africa in the 18th century thanks to the efforts of European missionaries. Its arrival is understandable given that British missionaries were among those who

lead the anti-slavery fight. The primary goal of traveling to Africa was to eradicate the slave trade from its source by spreading the gospel message (Kame, 2013:94).

Among the 1820 settlers were the first Baptists to arrive in Southern Africa. From the beginning English-speaking Baptists were divided into two groups: the 'Particulars' (because their view of atonement is that Christ died specifically for the elect; they were more Calvinistic in their theology than generals) and the 'Generals' (because their view of atonement is that Christ died specifically for those who chose to receive it; they were more orthodox in their theology). It was precisely these tensions that led to the rift in Grahamstown's first Baptist church, a division that took place, many years to heal and undoubtedly impeded the Baptist church's early growth in South Africa (Roy, 2017:62).

Puritanism, the late sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century movement that attempted to reform the Church of England but failed, splintered into English Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Particular Calvinistic and General (Arminian) Baptist churches. The Puritans were largely men and women who were intensely concerned about the piety and Christian experience, whatever else they were, be it social, political, and ecclesiastical Reformers (Haykin, 2010:38). In response to the challenges of Arminianism (the claim that the good acts of the will have no dependence on God's providence as it is acting, or on his grace as it is good), Socinianism⁸ and a reinvigorated Roman Catholicism, produced sermons, catechism, confessions of faith, and prolific theological treatises. Many experts regard a substantial number of Puritans as faithful and rightful successors of Calvin and the early Reformation (Brown, 2010:142).

By accepting the Bible as the final authority on faith and conduct, they sought to cleanse the Anglican Church. Because of this objective, they were given the name Puritans around 1560. Up until 1570, the Church's continued use of ritual and adornments that they perceived as papal was the main target of their criticism. They objected to the celebration of the saint's day, clerical absolution, the cross, the custom of having godparents present at baptisms, kneeling during communion, and the wearing of surplices by ministers. They did, however, see God's sovereignty in Christ's loving redemption under the new covenant, and they encouraged people to meditate on the authoritative, inspired Bible (Cairns, 1996:328).

As the result, during the Protestant Reformation in Europe in the sixteenth century, mainline Reformation traditions emerged, which began to influence and shape ministry in Africa through

⁸ Socinianism was a heretical teaching which spread auto-soterism on the mistaken presumption that Jesus was not divine but rather was to be followed as an example by people. Through the course of the seventeenth century, Socinianism became an increasingly serious issues, it started to gain traction in the 1630s and started to speak more in the 1640s. By the end of the 1640s, English divines were very concerned about the Socinian menace (Wright, 2016:27).

missionary activity (Kame, 2013:13). There have been writings regarding Baptist identity for as long as there have been Baptists. Since the formation of the first Baptist congregations in the seventeenth century, Baptists have been arguing and refining their identity. Baptists have long prepared confessions of faith to set themselves apart from other religious movements (Finn, 2017:29).

In the early to mid-seventeenth century, the Baptist movement arose from the womb of British Puritanism. The Puritans, on the other hand, were descendants of the sixteenth-century Reformation, which aimed to rid the church of the doctrinal errors, superstition, and idolatry that characterised Medieval Christianity. Baptists and their religious relatives in the Reformation Church of England share a common doctrinal history. Their soteriological presuppositions are Calvinistic; they believe in redemption by grace alone (Yarnell, 2017:52). In England, there was a split between Arminian and Calvinistic Baptists, which led to the formation of the Baptist movement. They emerged from the Calvinistic Puritanism and Separatism streams. The General Baptists were the first Baptist denomination to form, and they were so named because they believed that Christ died for all people. A firm devotion to Arminian theology tethered to this conviction (Nettles, 1986:55). Because the General Baptist vigour waned in the eighteenth century, modern-day Baptists can only trace their ancestors to a second Baptist sect, the Particular Baptist. The Particular Baptist did not arise until the late 1630s, since they defended the Calvinistic view that Christ's death was entirely for the elect. By the mid-1640s, London had at least seven Calvinistic Baptist congregations, all of which were in the city (Haykin, 2000:75-76).

Now the Baptist Church in South Africa is descended from Puritanism, and the family ties between the two can be demonstrated nowhere more strongly than in the Baptist piety thinking. It's worth noting that the African Baptist Church's beginnings and roots are Calvinistic. The church has made the reformational principle of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone a membership requirement (Finn, 2017:32). It is more crucial than ever to reread the Church's formative soteriological assumption, which shows a key element of the Particular Baptist's soteriological thinking of the age (Haykin, 2005:58). The general, historical, and theological context in which the church was established during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, concurrent with the development of the African Baptist Church, as the Calvinistic foundation of African Baptist theology. While Calvinistic Baptists taught and ordained the first generation of African Baptist preachers in the broader framework, the Reformed and Baptist faiths were confessed by the white Calvinistic Baptist organisation (Washington, 2012:73).

It would be equally essential to recognise that all these missionaries had a firm conviction about human depravity and helplessness aside from God's grace, as well as the elect's predestination

to salvation and glory in Christ according to God's sovereign will and authority (Roy, 2017:8). Aucamp (2020:58) writes:

This effectual calling is of God's free and special grace alone, not anything at all foreseen in human beings, nor from any power or agency in the creature, being wholly passive therein, being dead in sins and trespasses, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, human beings are unable to answer the call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it, and that by no less power than that which raised up Christ from the dead.

The doctrine of regeneration as the start of a new life, which may now be viewed as a separate operation of the Holy Spirit from a specific or effective calling, was not to be developed by missionaries. Early in the seventeenth century, Puritan writings in Europe introduced the idea of regeneration as the start of spiritual life (Stewart, 2011:50). The London Baptist Missionary Society dispatched these pioneer missionaries to Africa. As a result, their religion would be heavily influenced by that of the sending agency. They base their effectual calling on the foundation of unconditional grace, which does not look to foreseen faith or foreseen works as a ground for grace in salvation, but rather on God's grace (Kame, 2013:100).

In 1792, a group of Baptists in the British Baptist Church created the Baptist Missionary effort, which would go on to play a key part in beginning the nineteenth-century Protestant missionary movement. South African Baptists gathered for their annual Assembly exactly one hundred years later. In the previous century, the spiritual needs of the indigenous people of Southern African pressed heavily on their Baptist forefathers. The South African Baptist Missionary Society was founded at this meeting (Roy & Hudson-Reed, 2001:24).

3.1.1.1 The Baptist Union

The goal is not to be thorough in this section, but rather to highlight major events pertinent to this researcher to offer context for the investigation of the structure and function of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, as well as how it operates. The purpose is not to examine the Baptist Union's soteriological presuppositions, but rather to notice and provide a brief explanation of the Union's structure, function, and operation.

The Baptist Union of Southern Africa was founded on July 11, 1877, by a small group of English and German churches. A short constitution was written and approved. As a national body of the Baptist Church, the Baptist Union, which consisted of several organisations, was formed. The early Baptists dispersed throughout a huge area with few resources and manpower, took advantage of any opportunity to gather. The union was proposed to promote unity and brotherly

love among the members, as well as the evangelisation of the country, the dissemination of Baptist ideas, and the planting and assistance of churches that had adopted such ideals (Hudson-Reed, 1983:361). The Baptist Union of Southern Africa is run by an annual meeting. Up to three delegates may be sent by each local church. Delegates are chosen to speak for and make decisions for their respective local churches. The Executive of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa is also present during the Assembly. The Baptist Union of Southern African's officers, as well as representatives from the associations and board, make up the Executive (Aucamp, 2011:180).

In the relationship between the English and German Baptist churches, the founding of the Union was the combining element. The Churches Union was mostly made up of white churches reaching out to other ethnic groups. There were two requirements for Union membership. To begin with, only autonomous churches with their own constitutions were allowed to join. This was important so that the Union would not be able to manage the local churches' operations. Secondly, only financially "viable" congregations were permitted to join. All churches that were unable to pay their membership dues were excluded from consideration. As a result, the Union was predominantly "White" from the start, apart from two black churches, Klerksdorp Baptist Church, and Ungeni Road Baptist Church both of which were led by Rev. William Duma in Durban (Mkandawire, 2009:40-41). It has also included those groups through ethnic associations, and in its centennial year, it was working hard to achieve its core of a multi-racial union of churches that included all sections of people. Despite substantial disagreement on social and political issues, the English-speaking and Afrikaans Baptist congregations have remained united thanks to a shared commitment to the Baptist Union of Southern Africa. The union has confessions to which all members are required to subscribe to (Aucamp, 2011:51).

The South African Baptist Missionary Society, which was essentially a Sub-Committee of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, was founded in 1892 (Roy, 2017:33). One of the mission's primary responsibilities was to establish a new church. One of the main goals of the Baptist Union's Society, which was established "help and create indigenous and other churches,". With the passage of time, it became clear that the Missionary Society in the field was being supported by the Union churches. The Union churches were at work through the Missionary Society, which was not an independent organisation (Roy & Hudson, 2001:30). The Baptist Union's functions include, among other things, coordinating and combining the activities of local churches in the areas of mission and evangelism, theological education, and charitable services (Aucamp, 2011:180).

3.1.1.1.1 African Baptist Churches

This section aims to describe the structure and the function of the African Baptist Church and how it works. The intention is not to evaluate the Church's soteriological presuppositions at this stage but rather to note and somewhat briefly give a description of the Church's structure, the function and how it works.

The founding of the African Baptist Church was considered as a significant step forward at the time since it created a sense of unity among the indigenous churches and a move toward self-government. To honour this great accomplishment in the work of the South African Baptist Missionary Society, a representative assembly unlike any other in the history of the Baptist movement in South Africa was organised. It was made up of the joint Executives of the Union and Missionary Society, as well as about 75 indigenous preachers and evangelicals (Roy & Hudson-Red, 2001:32).

The first Baptist Union College for pastors, the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa, opened its doors in 1951. As the Baptist missionary vision of reaching out to South Africa's indigenous people began to produce fruit in an increasing number of African congregations, the necessity for educating black pastors and evangelists became more pressing (Roy & Hudson-Reed, 2001:43).

The South African Baptist Society met with African pastors in 1966 and advocated the development of a national organisation. Because it was considered inferior, the African Baptist Church did not achieve complete autonomy and independence. Through the Society, it was under the supervision and authority of the Union. The African Baptist Churches' ministers and churches were accepted by the Union's Executive. The African Baptist Church's decisions were subject to the Baptist Union Executive's veto, though it's unclear if the veto was ever employed. The veto's goal was to prevent theological deviations, which could occur if a preacher was untrained (Roy & Hudson-Reed, 2001:37). The tense relationship between the Baptist Union of Southern Africa and the African Baptist Church was exacerbated by the divisive topic of race. The Baptist Union of Southern Africa was influenced by white supremacist ideology and hence dominated church affairs (Mkandawire, 2009:41).

The African Baptist Church Convention was created in 1966 after the consultation with African leaders. The Convention has self-government powers in the acceptance, discipline, and ordination of people, as well as the administration of its business, something the prior constitution, did not allow. The South African Baptist Missionary Society Executive had the authority to veto in the prior system. At best, the Assembly served as a consultative body. As a

result, the Convention, together with its associations and committees, continued to operate within the South African Baptist Missionary Society framework (Hudson-Reed, 1983:302). According to Mangayi (2019:1), the Baptist Union of Southern African exercised indirect control over the African component of the church through the then South African Baptist Missionary Society.

The founding of the Convention resulted in a union of churches that were truly more indigenous, more autonomous, and less dependent on the Society. It also brought greater maturity to the churches, a greater sense of financial responsibility and a greater realisation of their commitment with regarding evangelism (Roy & Hudson-Reed, 2001, 37-39).

Among the native pastors there were no trained preachers. This meant that laypeople had an important role to play in the life of the church and the lack of theological training and disputes over leadership often resulted in disagreements that could not be adjudicated (Hudson-Reed, 1983:351). Mkonwana (2015:27) points out that the type of theological education the African Baptist ministers would receive shows a “dependency syndrome.” This type of education contributed toward black ministers seeing themselves as not being as capable and as gifted as white ministers.

By the Holy Spirit, everyone who receives the Lord Jesus by faith is born again and thus become children of God, according to the African Baptist Church. The church teaches that salvation is entirely grace, with no guarantees given to faith, works, or merit. As a result, the church believes that salvation is completely gracious. Thus, no cause, condition, or reason existed in human beings that influenced God’s decision to choose this path over another. Instead, salvation is contingent on God’s sole good pleasure (Hudson-Reed, 1983:358).

The researcher acknowledged at the outset that British missionaries and Reformed theologians throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century shared the notion of grace as it would be pursued within Calvinism. It should be remembered and carefully noted that the majority of British missionaries had Calvinistic soteriological presupposition when the history is read objectively. The theology of regeneration as its inception was thoroughly studied then rather than in the century that followed.

There is always a context as to how Christian denominations began. This section mostly focused on how these mainstream Protestant traditions entered South Africa through missionaries and how this shaped the contemporary theological stance of the African Baptists. It becomes more apparent from looking at a broad overview of Protestant missions in South Africa and the role that indigenous theological development played in the missionary agenda primarily

of the pioneer missionaries to South Africa and that these missionaries had a Calvinistic understanding of the doctrine of grace in salvation.

3.1.1.1.2 Baptist view on the doctrine of sin and depravity of humankind

There are various places to start theologically when examining the enormous topic of grace in salvation. The Baptist church's application of the theology of grace, on the other hand, is rooted in the human problem of sin. All deviations from orthodox Protestantism began with a rejection of the notion of absolute depravity. This is an issue that impacts all the key doctrines of God's grace in salvation and is a crucial factor in putting the doctrine of grace into practise. Starting with the human need for salvation and the doctrine of grace in salvation, any point of departure would lead to hypotheses and debates (Culver, 2005:380). The sinner's repentance and faith are always elicited by the visible and existential revelation of God's electing grace. The analysis of this phenomenon must consider two realities: humanity's depravity and the Holy Spirit's effectual calling or irresistible grace. When it comes to the redeemed, they are so inextricably interwoven in biblical soteriology that they are hardly treated separately. Only one is understood about the other (Nettles, 1986:285).

God's order was disobeyed by Adam and Eve. They aspired to be like God, as evidenced by biblical scripture. Their arrogance rendered the creation useless. The divine wrath fell on all creatures because of their disobedience. Because of Adam and Eve's sin, the good world that God created was now condemned. This punishment is imposed not just on creation, but also on all of humanity (Mohler, 2019:170). Humankind, according to Emedi (200:135), is the source of sin. It was brought about by humanity's rebellion, as described in Genesis 3. From that point forward, the entire human race becomes corrupted, and sin is passed down from generation to generation. From there, you can also see the beginning of the redemptive process, which is a plan to save humanity from eternal torment. Sin is, at its core, a violation of God's rule; it is stepping beyond of God's allotted boundaries (Romans 5:12).

According to Hankins (2011:93-94), the Bible declares that everyone is a sinner. Because of sin, humans are in a terrible position; they are powerless to stop their rebellion against God, pay their debt to him for their sins or find a means to return to him on their own. They are ultimately liable for this predicament that they have brought about. The Baptists hold that because of the fall, humanity is completely incapable of freely accepting God's merciful invitation of becoming covenant partners.

According to Baptist belief, the whole of humankind becomes sinful as a result of the sin of one man and one woman (Kunhiyop, 2012:73). In theological words, the fall can be described as total, thorough, and universal. The traducian theory⁹ is the explanation that best matches the scriptural data. It asserts that God created the entire human species as body, soul, and spirit in Adam. God no longer makes people directly; instead, he does so through the procreative process of humans. What theologians refer to as “total depravity” describes how sin has damaged every part of their life. They are not implying that humans have lost their virtue or their ability to choose. Even if they have been tainted by sin, they are still capable of good deeds. Humans, on the other hand, could not fundamentally demonstrate any spiritual good in order to turn to God. Adam’s most internal tendencies lead to total depravity and most terrible fall, which means that they are bound by nature to sin. Sin has an impact on every thought, word, action, and aspect of life (Ngobeni, 2019:59). The idea that Adam’s sin is somehow transferred to each other, making each person guilty of Adam’s sin, is entwined in the teaching of total depravity (Romans 3:23).

In one of the most revealing commentaries on the ramifications of sin, Frame (2013:855) asserts that, the fall of Adam and Eve did not end sin, was only the beginning of sin, despite these demonstrations of God’s mercy and human faith. Their progeny, and indeed all subsequent generations of humans, have sinned after the fall. Adam’s sin is shared by all humans. The situational perspective is the curse that the first sin had brought into creation and humanity (Kirkpatrick, 2019:540).

For Baptists, absolute depravity means that every component of humanity, the entire being, is corrupted and incapable of accomplishing any good that would please God. Some prefer the words total inability, to emphasise the notion that humans are incapable of helping themselves, even though that they are not as horrible as utter depravity implies. It is, however, merely a matter of personal preference. The biblical truth is that mankind is in desperate need of help (McClayrty, 2007:23). Total depravity is a term that is frequently misunderstood, necessitating careful interpretation. It implies that aspects of human nature, including all of the soul’s and body’s abilities and capacities, are inherently corrupt, and that a sinner has no spiritual good that is acceptable to God, but now perversity exists (Berkhof, 1996:246-247).

It all started in the garden of Eden Following Adam and Eve’s disobedience, mankind’s nature resembled that of their father Adam, which was perverted and sinful. Every one of Adam’s descendants inherited that shift in character and nature. This new state isn’t just a blip on the

⁹ Traducian theory is a belief that the soul, also known as the spirit or the soul, is the immaterial part of human beings that passes naturally together with the body, which is their material aspect (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:938).

radar, but a complete makeover of humanity's fundamental makeup. Sin strikes at the very foundation of people's personalities and character. They must understand that human sin begins from within, not from the outside. It isn't the result of a lack of early training. It isn't replete with bad company and bad examples. It is a genetic sickness that all humans inherit from their forefathers, Adam and Eve, and with which they are born (Ryle, 2012:18). As a result of Adam's sin, everyone is under God's curse and will die in eternity, because of Adam's fall, his descendants are no longer free to choose and was forced into an inevitable state of absolute incapacitation (Christensen, 2016:142-143).

When it is said that mankind is totally depraved, it means that sin has infiltrated every part and faculty of humanity's being. Total depravity means that mankind is a slave to sin and a prisoner of the evil in spirit, soul, and body. Humans are unable to realise their dreams and put their ideas into action. They are paralysed by a moral inadequacy (Pink, 2009:108). Aucamp (2020:54) in the exposition of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith writes:

Human beings by their fall into a state of sin, has absolutely lost all the ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying to salvation; therefore, in their natural state being altogether averse from that good and dead to sin, they are not capacitated by their power to transform themselves or prepared themselves for conversion.

Sin is an illness that affects every aspect of a person's moral structure as well as every mental faculty. Understandings, affections, reasoning power, and willpower are all influenced (Culver, 2005:416). Even the conscience is so clouded that it cannot be trusted as a reliable guide until the Holy Spirit illuminates it. In short, there is no soundness in people from the sole to the crown. The sickness may be hidden beneath a thin veneer of civility, politeness, good manners, and outward decorum, but it is deeply embedded in the body (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467).

People should recognise that humans still possess many grand and noble faculties, and that they display enormous capacity in the arts, sciences, and literature. However, they are spiritually dead. Their best qualities are so intertwined and entwined with corruption that the contrast only serves to highlight the truth and scope of the fall (Ryle, 2012:19). As a result, the inability under which humans toil is an inability to be willing to execute holy volitions, not an inability to exercise volitions. In terms of salvation, unregenerate people are unable to freely choose between good and evil, but merely between larger and smaller evil, which is not true free will. Unregenerate sinners are unable to perform any act, no matter how small, that can please God and satisfy the requirement of God's holy law. They are also unable to change or

even approach such a shift from their ingrained inclinations to sin and themselves to love God (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467)

The impact of the original sin on Adam's descendants' moral nature is one of its consequences. Spiritually, humans are dead; a dead person cannot rise and wander around. As a result, a morally dead person cannot perform actions that will please God. We do not develop a sinful nature throughout our lives. It belongs to humans from the moment they are born, even before they are conceived. It is necessary to witness sin at its worst to fully understand God's grace in salvation (Frame, 2013:860). As a result, humans have a heart that is primarily dishonest and broken, they are born with a will that is not in a state of moral equilibrium (force balance), giving them a leaning toward evil. The will of humanity is enslaved because it is enslaved to and serves a corrupt heart (Pick, 2009:107).

Finally, the anthropological presumption is that humans cannot redeem themselves, but that any person can be rescued, which differs significantly from the Calvinistic theological interpretation of predestination. No one ever takes the first step in the direction of God. Humanity's history is shattered, and its fate is death; its context is darkness; and its context is resistance. This sin has thrown everyone out of God's grace and condemned them to an eternity of isolation (Hankins, 2011:100). Humanity's fall has rendered them completely indisposed, crippled, and opposed to any good, to the point that humanity no longer has any spiritual good or willpower, to warrant redemption. Humanity is unable to reach out to God. The hope is realised by efficacious grace, which is grace that is bestowed by the same force that raised Christ from the dead (Nettles, 1986:61).

Sinners not only lack any inherent spiritual virtue, but they cannot also come to God in their strength. They are enslaved to sin and are in a state of servitude. Sinners do not have freedom in the most significant sense of the word because they are unable to use self-command to return to God and escape the underlying rebellion against God's desire for sin (Grudem, 1994:497-498). The term "complete incapacity" refers to the fact that an unredeemed sinner is unable to perform any deed of righteousness that fits God's standard in the kingdom of God. The Spirit of God must be the driving force behind any reform attempt (Culver, 2005:416).

Finally, the teaching of total depravity says that every human being is a slave of sin from the moment of conception, as a result of humanity's fall into sin. In this sense, "complete" refers to sin influencing all aspect of a person's life, not that everyone is the worst possible evil. It is based on the premise that people are not predisposed to reject God's dominion and to love him with all their heart, mind, and strength, but rather to put their own interests above those of

others. All people are therefore morally unable to choose to obey God and be saved since they are unable to do so because it goes against their nature. They are Reformed Baptists, and they think that utter depravity is a biblical doctrine. They believe that all people are born dead in their sins and transgressions. A person's spiritual condition makes them incapable and unwilling to react to God in trust and obedience. As a result, God must make a spiritually dead soul alive and transfer them from the realm of darkness to the kingdom of his light by his unlimited love in Christ.

The anthropological premise is that no one can rescue themselves, but that everyone can be saved. No person ever initiates contact with God. Because of their sin, humans are no longer in relationship with God and are sentenced to an eternity of punishment. God supplied the proximate fundamental foundation for salvation, to which anyone might respond in faith, through the person and work of Christ. The anthropological presupposition and the doctrine of grace dominate the development of the doctrine of soteriology. By placing faith at the centre of Baptist soteriology a significant shift in how grace is understood in term of salvation occurred. Yet it is certainly just as valid that this is a fundamental transformational process in the maturing of the teaching on grace. The historic argument involves an assumption that differs from this conclusion. It points to the irresistibility of grace as a remedy for the anthropological presupposition of sin. Having a clear understanding of this fundamental and necessary annotation on the doctrinal development, the researcher is now in a position to analyse the church's position on grace in salvation.

3.1.1.1.3 Baptist's position on grace in salvation

The goal of this section is to discuss a biblical and theological concept of grace in salvation. The scriptures present a comprehensive concept of salvation, which demonstrates that salvation is God's initiative, which response to human needs in the context of their lives. Considering the harm caused by sin, God's answer is seen in the doctrine of grace in salvation. Sin is seen as a state because it affects the whole person. The understanding of sin and its effects lead to the greatest truth of this most delightful doctrine of grace in salvation with the African Baptist Church (Buthelezi, 2011:67-68).

The African Baptist Church's Protestant theological presuppositions were built based on British missionaries. The African Baptist Church, on the other hand, was based on existing differences that first expressed themselves in different and distinct roots of the General and Particular Baptist in England. The various approaches to coping with the divine and the human relationship when dealing with the doctrine of salvation (Garrett, 2010:72). On the doctrine of redemption, it was decidedly Calvinistic, emphasising original sin, eternal and personal election,

and the perseverance of the believers (Young, 1989:8). Renihan (2013:91) concerning the doctrine of effectual calling states:

Others, who are not elected, though they have received a general call through the proclamation of the gospel and may have certain common Spirit operations, will not and cannot truly come to Christ and hence cannot be saved unless they are efficaciously drawn by God. They were unable to do any worthwhile work in order to realise their salvation.

The popularity and widespread influence of the 1689 Baptist confession of Faith is the primary reason for focusing entirely on it. It is also a critical point of reference in this research in determining what the Baptist affirmed. It is true to claim that it represents Particular Baptist in terms of their soteriological affirmation because it is Calvinistic (Aucamp, 2008:12). Humans are sinful by nature and unable to come to faith on their own. As a result, God has determined an eternal estate separate from the expected faith or work in a sovereign and unilateral manner. An examination of causation is beneficial to soteriology. The efficient cause (the source or agent that causes the change) and the instrumental cause, requires special attention (the impact is produced by secondary cause that is dependent on the primary cause for its effectiveness) (Kirkpatrick, 2019:48).

Faith is thus the primary scriptural foundation for a Baptist soteriology. The doctrine of God should include the concept of "election". The New Testament's intrinsically relational aspect of soteriology is captured by faith. Justification by faith, which is central to Protestant soteriological identity, refers to God's initial and continuing activity in bringing a person into the right relationship with himself, as well as the need for the human responsible for the realisation of God's justifying effort in life (Hankins, 2011:99).

While rejecting those who proclaimed their devotion to the feasibility and security of salvation in faith in God's covenant promises, Baptists expressly present a perspective of the primary line of development with distinct stresses within Calvinism and Arminianism (Lemke, 2011:1). The unrestricted free offer of an eternal, transformative covenant with the Father through the Son by the Spirit to all sinners by the sole free exercise of personal faith has been the fundamental tenet of Baptist soteriology thought and practice. This foundation is straightforward, non-speculative and unbreakable. Baptist soteriology (the concept of God's sovereignty, chosen intentions, the sinfulness of all people, the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, redemption by grace alone through faith and the security of Christians are particularly important) is not in danger and does not call for Calvinism or Arminianism to be reinforced. It can be

taught, maintained and guarded without using either symbiotic or antagonistic methods (Hankins, 2011:95-96).

3.1.1.1.4 Irresistible grace and the Spirit

By putting faith at the centre of Baptist soteriology, this section demonstrates a profound shift in the fundamental notion of grace in salvation. The researcher would like to mention any notable shifts that are pertinent to this study to provide context for the investigation of the African Baptist's soteriological assumption.

Today many people are unaware that the Reformation made a significant gain in the field of applying salvation. It is only logical to ponder how salvation is done considering Jesus's accomplishment of redemption. Only to respond to the question it is correct to state that an individual shares in Christ's salvation by faith nonetheless, this presents similar questions: what is the source of this faith? Where does sin awareness and repentance, which are essential for genuine faith in Christ, come from? Why does the acceptance of the gospel offer happen in one week, month, or a particular stage of life but not another? Reformed theology is concerned with such issues and to some extent; it deepens the comprehension of the role played by the Holy Spirit in the application of salvation (Stewart, 2011:43).

The point is made clear: God does not save people unless they choose to be saved and grace does not negate the ability to resist. The African Baptist Church holds that when someone answers to the gospel in faith, God promises to carry out on the work of salvation in the believer for all of eternity. Humans retain the decision and ability to resist when God wants to justify, when he offers saving grace. (Stanglin, 2014:25). Faith would not be individualistically viewed as a gift from God but rather as something that people must work at. If unbelieving people must have faith in Christ, then it follows that every sinner, regardless of their character, is fully justified in doing so for their own salvation (Caner, 2014:58).

The presuppositions of the African Baptist Church would centre on the biblical concept of faith, the philosophical premise of God's plan for human free will, the theological principle of the covenant in Christ alone, and the anthropological principle of sinfulness and salvation for all. The church teaches that trust in Christ is a personal and individual response to salvation. It is seen as a pathway into God's holy and loving, eternal purpose via the person and work of Christ alone, and it is open to anybody who will acknowledge their extreme sinfulness and ability to be saved by none other than Christ (Hankins, 2011:99). Kirkpatrick (2019:51) agrees with many Calvinists that election involves unconditional elements in one of the most telling interpretations. God saves humans not because of predetermined actions, but because of his eternal freedom,

mercy, and love. However, when humans put their faith in Christ for salvation, such salvation occurs over time. The church promotes a contemporaneous view of election which considers election timing. Even though God sovereignly chose to elect separate from responsibility, the actualisation of grace in salvation requires mankind to put their faith in Christ. Since Calvinism's height in the late twentieth century, Baptists have questioned, rejected, or revised much of the Calvinistic teaching as their faith evolved. They desired and demanded a basic faith based on the expectation of revival. Even though humans are redeemed totally (monergistically) by grace alone, they could resist it (Caner, 2014:64).

While all humans are fundamentally wicked and incapable of salvation, their power to make choices characterises their existence as human beings, with the capacity to sincerely embrace or reject the gospel. God initiates the procedure and gives it his Spirit's power. When people respond in faith, God keeps his promise to sever that connection for all time. He does this by joining the believer's will to his own and releasing them through his sovereign grace (Hankins, 2011:96). It is affirmed that this gift of salvation is received by faith, obedience, and trust in Christ as God's provision for salvation. This means that the person is mature enough to rely in Christ's work for salvation (Young, 1989:4). Therefore, the Church believes that the Bible plainly teaches that humans can decide for themselves and are not constrained by God's will. Humans aren't machines; they are free-willed, free-thinking beings. The Church's teaching continues by asserting that people are completely free and that they may decide whether to obey God or not. Humans have the option of embracing or rejecting God's gift of salvation (Rushing, 2013:6).

God will not elect anyone who does not demonstrate faith. The activity of faith, which is a personal action, is a requirement for the election of individuals to take place. While God may be the efficient cause of salvation, the impact of salvation must be actualised by human activity of faith (Kirkpatrick, 2019:52). Humans will not come to God until they are persuaded and drawn to him by the Holy Spirit. They will also not be rescued through meritoriousness but rather through the mercy of God through faith. If predestination is viewed as this study suggests, the African Baptist Church will recognise that conversion is wholly dependent on God, however, how well it applies to individuals totally depends on their attempts to respond in faith. The Holy Spirit facilitates this work. Thus, the African Baptist Church will only celebrate the conversion of one soul if that individual repented in faith after being mercifully convicted and converted by the Holy Spirit (Kame, 2013:196). Only faith, according to Trueman (2015:62), can acknowledge the truth by grasping the message. The crucifixion transforms into God's means of salvation as a result of faith's interpretation of the message. This is a significant shift because the Calvinistic doctrine of grace in salvation asserts that God's redemptive grace is effectively applied to those whom he has predestined to be saved and overcomes their resistance as well as their response to the

gospel invitation, leading them to saving faith in God's timing. This proves that if God, who is sovereign, wants to save someone, they will unquestionably be saved. According to this teaching, the Holy Spirit kindly influences the chosen sinner to engage, believe, repent, and come to Christ freely and joyfully (Kame, 2013:48-49).

A conclusion about the Baptist's thought on salvation that goes beyond the descriptive is difficult to reach. The Calvinistic perspective on the doctrine of salvation dominated Baptist theology in the eighteenth century. However, there was a transition to the free will viewpoint in the nineteenth century that has continued into the twentieth. Because of efficacy I ultimately dependant on faith, the African Baptist Church slightly modifies the recognition inward call with the irresistible call. The preceding investigation could fundamentally cultivate a pathway that faith is the condition for the efficaciousness of the call. By inference, bringing faith into the conversation would create a conflict. One can only wonder if this argumentation is entirely syntactic, with no implications for how such an argumentation could be applied to concerns of human abilities.

What is instantly apparent from the African Baptist Church's doctrinal viewpoint is that the discussion's terrain had shifted dramatically. Whereas the classical form of the debate over divine and human agency reveals that one's salvation in Christ cannot be sourced or based on anything done by an individual, because then salvation would not be solely based on God's grace but also on humans' actions, that would make anthropogenic activities meritorious for salvation. They assert that salvation based on an individual's action would make faith a work to achieve a result. Faith is a receptive tool through which God provides his generous salvation to unworthy sinners; it is not causative.

3.1.1.1.5 Survey: Sola 5

The Sola 5 church group has issued a Reformational appeal. This would help keep the focus on the reformed faith's continuous expansion among African Baptist churches. The African Baptist Church has recognised the efficacy of a call that is based on faith rather than on faith alone. Most of them have joined the Sola5 Baptist Church Association, which now has around 36 churches. In October 2005, Sola5 was formally founded. It arose from the Southern African Reformed Baptist Association and the Spurgeon Fraternal Meeting. The Spurgeon Fraternal was founded in 1998 and meets twice a year for fellowship and encouragement. Concern was expressed during the July 2004 meeting about the weakness and fragmentation that could be seen among Reformed congregations. The suggestion of forming a new organisation of churches was met with enthusiasm at the next meeting in October 2004. The Reformation's five-point creed of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ alone), *Sola Gratia*

(by grace alone), *Sola Fide* (by faith alone) and *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone) inspired the Sola 5 (Aucamp, 2011:217).

Sola 5 founded in 2005 and consists of 36 congregations from across Southern Africa (countries include Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Namibia). They founded the Sovereign Grace Theological Seminary, which is approved by the University of Africa and administered by the Zambia Department of Education. This group follows a strong Reformed tradition, as the name suggests. Many of the congregations follow the Baptist Confession of Faith, which is Calvinistic. The focus of this study would be on their understanding of the doctrine of grace in salvation (Aucamp, 2011:4). Sola 5 (2005:6) writes:

But first, a little explanation of the name: Sola 5 words lose their meaning as time goes on and become different. The term “evangelical” is one such phrase that has become meaningless in the postmodern era. In keeping with the Cambridge Declaration of 1996, the sola five associations of churches want to reaffirm the fundamental ideas of the authority of Scripture; Christ-centred faith, the gospel of grace, justification, and God-centred life in order to express the commitment to historic confessional Christianity.

Sola 5 (2005:6) indicates that the fivefold Reformation creed of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ alone), *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone), *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone) and *Soli Deo Gloria* (Glory to God alone) summaries the urgent need of the time, and the church must once more be led by these convictions. All these convictions are necessary to faithfully follow what God has revealed. This quotation’s main purpose is to show that Sola 5 supports the unavoidable imperative to deliberately foster the reformation within the Baptists and other like-minded churches. The urgent necessity of the hours is what is meant by this. The goals of Sola 5 is to unite churches and individuals who are committed to serving God and the Bible, so that they can support one another in addressing this need across the entirety of Southern Africa. True churches and believers who have been discouraged and dismayed by the current status of the church should not feel alone any longer (Mbewe, 2006:19)

3.1.1.1.6 Sola 5 on grace in salvation

Sola gratia, which means “only grace” or “grace alone”, was one of the great doctrines that the Reformers asserted and upheld. This expression emphasises the fact that redemption is solely through grace. It indicates that God saves sinners regardless of their expected human achievements. He helps them because it makes him happy. The goal of this section is to examine how Sola 5 views the notion of grace in salvation (Arp, 1997:27). Although humans

became dead in sin and unable to rescue themselves, because of Adam's fall, God was happy to offer salvation only via the Lord Jesus Christ. To be born into eternal life, a person must be pulled out of Adam and linked with Christ through the sovereign action of God. Christ is the only one who can save individuals. God's task of redemption is entirely dependent on his grace. In the most fundamental sense, God takes the initiative in salvation and only God deserves credit for salvation (Sola 5, 2005:10).

Sola 5 (2005:12 & 14) worked tirelessly to demonstrate Holy Spirit's irresistible call by stating:

The Holy Spirit infallibly and efficaciously calls each of the elect through regeneration at the appointed time, allowing people to accept Christ as their Saviour and become associated with his repentance and saving faith resulting from the Spirit's initial work of enlightenment and regeneration. God guarantees his children of sonship and eternal life by the gift of the spirit. This frees people from the bondage of sin and allows them to live in accordance with the word of God.

Human beings are alienated from God's life and dead in sin, according to Sola 5. As a result, God must make the first move if he wants to preserve humanity. The effective call, often known as "illumination," is the first move. The latter word alludes to the Holy Spirit's role in lightening human souls and resulting in saving faith. The change of the soul is a divine accomplishment brought about by heavenly power (Culver, 2005:684). The Holy Spirit's grace enters people's lives largely through the proclamation of the word. The appeal awakens them to the absolute impossibility of human contributions in any way toward recovery from this dreadful state and it removes any hope from fleshly assistance. It is a summons to Christ and a description of him as the Saviour in his suitability and capacity. This is a holy calling and is effective to produce the exercise of holiness in the heart (Nettles, 1986:295). In a unique sense, the Holy Spirit might be thought of as the crop of the New Testament, which is made up of the chosen from among all of humankind. His job primarily focuses on their calling and eternal preservation, and it is carried out through presenting Christ to his people (Sola 5, 2005:14).

Humans do not obtain salvation themselves; rather, God gives it to them as a gift. The term "gift" emphasises salvation's generosity. It could not be the consequence of the deeds because God gives mankind salvation as a gift. To put it another way, salvation could not be a gift if it was earned through good deeds. Salvation can't be both a grace-based gift and a merit-based gift (Arp, 1997:34). Humans are powerless to save themselves and must rely on God's intervention at the right time to bring rebirth. They are not involved or stake in the new birth, which is solely God the Spirit's doing. The notion that the one who is born is the result of any

effort or work is completely dismissed. The new birth is accomplished through the Spirit's sovereign work (Chapa, 2016:138). Regeneration is the first phase in the Spirit's application of salvation. The facts of spiritual death and life are essential to comprehending regeneration. Every person who has ever lived has experienced spiritual death. The question is will they survive, and if so, how? Whoever has been dead in sin is given new life by the Triune God. This gracious act of God is addressed by regeneration. Humans are called to come freely, without coercion and gladly because the call restores the natural desire to love God and sets them free from the bonds of sin (Macarthur & Mayhue, 2017:349).

The author of the profound transformation in human nature could not possibly be people, but rather God alone, the creator of life including eternal life. Humans are completely passive during regeneration. The only active participant in the creative mystery of the new birth is God. Regeneration is essentially God's gift of eternal spiritual life to the spiritually blind sinner (Macarthur & Mayhue, 2017:580). This internal call does not consist of a deduction or introduction based on the premises or pieces of evidence, nor is it merely the result of hearing the truth, but rather a change of heart. The unique call not only invites a sinner, but also leads them to salvation (Culver, 2005:685). This demonstrates a significant shift in both external and internal calls. The call comes from either external revelation alone, which is ineffective or both internal and outward revelation, which is effective for salvation (Van de Belt, 2012:548-549).

3.1.1.1.7 Conclusion

This chapter aimed at evaluating the contemporary arguments on the doctrine of grace in salvation in the African Baptist Church during the past forty years. The African Baptist Church's doctrine of sin is discussed to accomplish what the church believes about human inability after the fall of Adam and the writing from the church substantiates this position. Subsequently, the history of the African Baptist Church is discussed to provide a broad overview of the Baptist movement's beginnings and progress, as well as to address important concerns related to the denomination. The examination of the historical development of the theology of grace with the Baptist Church considering their theological background has led to the conclusion that the Baptist Church was Calvinistic (proving that God irresistibly leads chosen sinners to redemption) on their soteriological presupposition. Therefore, the doctrine of grace within the African Baptist Church is discussed and their soteriological presupposition is founded upon the core principle of faith. From a theological standpoint, the investigation has revealed that the soteriological formulation of the African Baptist Church is conditioned on faith. The Sola 5 association of churches demonstrates that there is the continued growth of the Reformed faith among the African Baptist Churches. Due to the examination of the historical intellectualistic perspective

approaches to the soteriological presupposition of the African Baptist Church a few connected conclusions have been reached in light of their religious foundations.

Perhaps most importantly, the study has demonstrated that historical intellectualistic perspective of western missionaries in the eighteenth century was taken from a more radical branch of the Reformation. They had strong convictions about the elect's predestination to salvation and the glory of Christ in accordance with God's sovereign and perfect will, as well as human depravity and helplessness aside from God's grace. The historical intellectualistic perspective of the Baptist Church in Africa would particularly point to a Calvinistic soteriological presupposition, which came into Africa through missionary activities.

Secondly, contemporary views have been influenced by early modern Reformed arguments on the anthropological presupposition. The church acknowledges universal human sinfulness, as well as humanity's moral and spiritual depravity. This implies that everyone sinned as a result of Adam's action (Romans 5:12). This means that everyone is born with a corrupt nature and is a sinner. As a result, the African Baptist Church argues that the fall produced in absolute depravity, made people incapable of voluntarily responding to God's gracious gift and covenant.

Thirdly, the African Baptist Church's soteriology of faith as a requirement for the actualisation of salvation has been amended from the early modern Reformed argumentation on soteriological presupposition from unqualified grace in salvation to the core biblical presupposition. The African Baptist Church's central doctrine of justification by faith speaks of God's initial and continuing activity in bringing a person into a proper connection with himself, as well as the requirement of the person's responsibility for God's justification work to be actualised. This is not possible without faith. Faith is an act of the will performed by a person. No one ever takes the initial step toward God, as their anthropological presupposition shows. Humanity's past is shattered, its future is death, its environment is dark, and its reality is distorted.

As a result of their sin, people have fallen out of communion with God and are facing eternal separation. However, in the person and actions of Christ, which are made known via the gospel, God offers a basis for salvation to which anyone can respond in faith. Some African Baptist Churches believe in the universality of grace, but not in the elect's reconciliation. They support what they see as a compatibilist understanding of predestination and free will. Although hardly devoid of content, this distinction provides a strong foundation for arguments and does not bias results in favour of any one religious presupposition distinguishable from the Calvinistic approach of the founding missionaries of the Baptist church. The distinct character of African Baptists and the feature that set the distinction significantly shifts from Calvinistic soteriological

presupposition which would be more based on the efficaciousness (irresistibility) about the Holy Spirit's inward call with no reference to humanistic meritoriousness.

Finally, it is critical to emphasise that there is a Reformed revival taking place across the English speaking globe. The African Baptist Church was one of the first to notice the revival. Despite the African Baptist Church's affirmation of the efficacy of the internal call to salvation through faith, there is a rebirth of Calvinism, which was exemplified by the formation of the Sola 5 association of congregations in 2005. The fivefold Reformation creed of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone), *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone), *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone) and *Sola Deo Gloria* (Glory to God alone) has been understood as summarising the "urgent need of the hour" fundamentally highlighting that the church must be motivated by these principles once more. In Reformed orthodoxy, the Sola 5 symbolises the completion of the process informed by Reformation confessional presuppositions and commitments. They are committed to Calvinism's soteriological doctrine. Because salvation is clearly a supernatural event, all people in whose hearts God works in this wonderful way will be regenerated and believed.

CHAPTER 4. THE GRACE OF GOD IN LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

4.1 Introduction

The topic of God's grace in redemption invariably leads to historical and practical difficulties; most importantly, it leads to scripture, which is suitable. The topic is treated from the perspective of the Protestant Reformation, and it applies not only to the concept of grace alone but also to scripture alone. As a result, any theology must be directed or normed by scripture's teaching. The historical Reformers were driven by a desire to comprehend and preach what God has revealed concerning grace in scripture. Therefore, it is critical to begin this study by addressing the Bible's teaching on grace (Trueman, 2017:23). Christian theology according to Venema (2017:142), must be informed by a correct understanding of scripture's teaching. Church doctrinal pronouncements must be reviewed against scripture on a regular basis, and any deviations from biblical truth must be corrected. When people go beyond scripture's statements, the doctrinal formulation becomes unmeasurable and falls apart. So let it be the Church's conventions to demand anything other than what the Bible says concerning the concept of grace in salvation. Any dogmatic statements should be supported by God's word, which provide mankind with the necessary guidance (Calvin, 1559; 2008:608). Calvin's main conviction is that scripture is infallible. In this sense, infallibility is characterised positively as meaning the accuracy and dependability of all topics addressed by scripture (Sproul, 2005:149).

Calvinists believe that since the Fall, humans have been in state of self-destructiveness that they continue to reject any offers. If this were so then Christ's death would have been for vain. The consequences of the sacrifice, however, have not been reversed in the changing and sinful will of mankind. Rather, the Holy Spirit's mission has made God's work of salvation effective, bringing the chosen people to repentance and faith and thereby making them heirs of eternal life.

Humans would not be able to know God in a true, objective way unless God took the initiative to speak in an authoritative, reliable, and sufficient manner. God has shown himself in creation, which reflects his plan (general revelation), but people require a specific word/revelation to comprehend God's plan, purposes and will, which acts as their final and ultimate authority. They require a word that is first order, so that individual and collective interpretations can be rectified solely based on scripture. This isn't to say that historical theology, tradition and confessions are not useful in the understanding and applying the Bible. Confessions or rules of faith, on the other hand must be secondary standards that must accord to scripture; otherwise, they are not true and credible (Wellum, 2015:7). According to scripture's teachings force the researcher to

conclude that humans in their natural states are terribly corrupt and that they can never become holy and joyful through their own efforts. They are spiritually dead and need Christ to save them.

This chapter investigates and assesses the concept of grace considering scripture; pertinent scripture texts are identified, and exegesis is undertaken. This exegesis employs the grammatical-historical method. The terms "historical" and "grammatical" are used interchangeably here. "Historical" refers to examining a biblical text in the context of the events that shaped the various books of the Bible, whereas "grammatical" refers to a special law of grammar by which the sacred writing employed the language (Berkhof, 1994:113).

The entire soteriology is based on two primary beliefs: human beings' absolute and total depravity after the Fall, and God's absolute and total omnipotence and sovereignty. The study will identify the section of scripture that exposes mankind's pervasive depravity in order to grasp the message of scripture on God's grace in salvation. The concept of grace in salvation is demonstrated through interpretation of scripture passages on grace from both the Old and New Testament. The goal of the study would be clarified at this stage, which is to provide general biblical instruction on grace in salvation.

4.1.1 The necessity of the doctrine of grace in salvation: total depravity

This section aims to investigate and cultivate some of the most fundamental questions that could re-engage human thought in the context of scripture. Others have faced similar challenges in the past. Although such people's words are recognised, the intention is for readers to place their reliance in God's might rather than human comprehension. Therefore, the concept of grace in salvation is built on grammatical, lexical, contextual, and exegetical grounds. The researcher looks through both the Old and New Testaments for passages that portray that humans are utterly morally depraved, and this moral decay has led to the enslavement of the will, necessitating the concept of grace in salvation.

4.1.1.1 Total depravity in the Old Testament

The narrative of the Old Testament teaches us that humans are enslaved to sin and are condemned to failure by the standards of the Bible. Paul (guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit), connects Adam and Christ as the two greatest representatives of mankind before God (Rom 5; 1 Cor 15) and employs the language of death to allude to the effects of human sin on human nature, provides theological foundation for this idea in the New Testament, making it even more clear (Trueman, 2017:40). Some of the chapters educate about humanity's persistent sinfulness. However, the two texts presented (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 14:1-3) may not

exhaust all biblical support for this, but they do provide important teaching on the idea that sin causes human beings to have being spiritual poor.

4.1.1.1.1 Genesis 6:5

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually.

God's assessment of creation is dramatised in the Genesis story, "And God saw that it was good" (1:9, 18, 21, and 25), the passage concludes "it was very excellent" (v. 31). Now consider this: "The LORD saw that man's wickedness was great in the world and that every purpose of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continuously" (6:5). The authority over sin has been transferred from angels to Adam and Eve. As parents, they have passed it on to their children. Genesis 3 records Cain's murder of Abel. As we go deeper into the Bible, it becomes evident how sin spreads in terms of breath, depth, scope and intensity. The study refers to Genesis 6:5's description of human depravity. When humanity was forced to seek their own good after the fall, God "saw" the wickedness in the universe and realised that every propensity of mankind's thinking was only evil. They have been so deeply impacted by sin that they couldn't return to God (Genderen & Velema, 2008:402).

Accordingly, Hughes (2004:128) points out that it is difficult to imagine a more emphatic statement of the wickedness of the human heart. The words "every ... only ... continually" leave nothing out. The term (רע רק מחשבה יצר כל) "every intention of the thoughts of the heart was only evil" is literally "very formative," which comes from the metaphorical meaning of the verb describing a potter in the act of moulding and shaping a vessel (Isaiah 29:16). It implies that even dream reflection, rising and spontaneously created willed activities are "constantly wicked." Their depravity wasn't a passing trend. There were no apologies, regrets, or hesitations. Lust was their medium, and violence was their means. This was complete and total depravity. The Bible makes it clear that the problem that precipitated the deluge was simply human heartfelt sinfulness and the ensuing behaviour. "Every aim of the thoughts of the heart was only evil perpetually," is the only way to characterise total depravity. Genesis 6:11-13, elaborates on this, mentioning "corrupt" and "violence" specifically. God's agony is channelled into a judgment that will wipe out all life on the planet. This is the language of total annihilation (Keeider, 2014:424).

This chapter uses the word "corrupt" שחת *"shâchath"*¹⁰ in numerous different meanings God stated in 6:11, God that "all flesh had corrupted their way on earth" (v. 12). And that as a result,

¹⁰ *shâchath* has the implication of bodily decay (Job 17:14), blamelessness that rendered an animal unfit for sacrifice (Lev 22:25) and the demoralisation of heart and life through sin (Gen 6:12) all of which

he has determined to “destroy” them (v. 13). He then specifies that he will “destroy” every flesh beneath heaven with floodwater (v. 17). This use of the word שָׁחַת (“*shâchath*”) implies that sin had progressed to its pinnacle, pervading every aspect of civilisation (Walton, 2001:307-308).

Here, first and foremost, is what God observed (v. 5), followed by how he felt (v. 6), and last, what he means to do (v. 7). What God saw was the extent of sin as well as the intensity of sin. Geographically, the issue is infected soil. The earth is referenced eight times in 6:5-13. As a result, the description appears to be of a global rather than a local nature. The predicament is made worse by the fact that such depravity governs not just mankind's behaviour but also its ideas. The mind, too, has been warped, as stated again in (8:21). The scheme, Hebrew יָצַר¹¹ “*yêtser*” (or “imagination, desire”), is a common term (2:7; 19) used to describe how human and other animals emerged from the soil. The whole image, the Hebrew word “*yêtser*” signifies not only the imagination but also the purpose and desire (Sailhamer, 1990:80). Humans’ ability to accomplish good has been severely harmed by sin. There was God, creating into potter, moulding their thoughts into beautiful things; what mankind creates is repulsive (Hamilton, 1990:273).

4.1.1.1.2 Psalm 14:1-3

They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; none does good, not even one.

In looking at verses 1-2, Van Gemeren (1991:143) says that the term נָבִיל (*nâbâl*) “fool” does not refer to someone who is uninformed or an atheist. The word fool has a negative connotation. It mirrors the wisdom’s tradition, in which the idiot deliberately and forcefully disregards God’s precepts (Deu 32:5-6). According to Lioy (2013:222), the underlying Hebrew term refers to a specific category of people who are ignorant, godless, and malevolent, rather than those who are mentally ill. These people have scorn God’s name and ways.

culminates in the wicked habits and behaviours that contaminate and ruin human beings (Unger, 2005:258). As a result, Davidson (2017:710) affirms it to be tainted or spoiled by decaying (Jer 13:7), as well as morally perverted (Gen 6:11-12)

¹¹ *yêtser* (imagination) is the mental faculty that creates images by duplicating and recombining previous thoughts and experiences. It demonstrates and illustrates a person’s speech and writings by giving new perspectives, truths, and thoughts. As a result, the predicative normative is employed both positively and negatively to describe a person’s thought pattern, position, or propensity, which directs one’s path (Deu. 31:21). Positively, a person who disciplines his or her propensity to trust in Yahweh will find total tranquillity. (Isa 26:3). On the other hand, the normative appears in the construction chain with evil as its predicative normative, implying that every proclivity of human ideas was to do profoundly immoral acts (Gen 6:5; 8:21) (VanGemeren, 1996:506).

Accordingly (Harris, Archer & Waltke, 1980:396) affirms that its most frequent usage of latter sense refers to that which is formed in the mind, for instance, plans and purposes (Gen 6:5; 8:21).

They are corrupt and their rejection of God leads to self-serving and morally reprehensible behaviour. They are influenced by the wicked's depravity. "Corrupt" שחת (*"shâchath"*) is the Hebrew term that implies "spoil or ruin (something); acts ruinously; abhorrent, detestable endeavours (Wilson, 2002:287). The origins of this pervasive immorality can be traced back to the first people who sinned against God. The horrible effects of their transgression were carried on to all their biological offspring and afflicted them at the core of their being (Rom 5:12). Genesis 6:1 states that as the human population increases, so did the prevalence of sin in people's minds. Verse 5 emphasises how the progeny of the first people pursued wickedness with a single-mindedness and eagerness, and verse 11 adds that they were corrupt and responsible for terrible actions (Lioy, 2013:224).

Verse 2 depicts the universe sovereign Creator staring down from the celestial home as witnessing and judging mankind to see if they are any people who understood. The word "understanding" is derived from the Hebrew verb שכל (*śâkal*) that refers to people who possess wisdom, insight, and discernment. To be more precise, these are those who reverently fear the Lord (Prov 1:7). Individuals who fear the Lord, especially according to Proverbs 1:7. Biblical wisdom is distinguished from all other forms of wisdom by its reverence for Yahweh. The Old Testament sapiential literature reiterates the previous fundamental point. (Job 28:28; Psalms 11:1). Morally upright individuals have existed from the beginning of time. However, scripture comes to the conclusion that no individual can make the claim that they are always virtuous, always acts morally and never sins (Psalms 143:2). Psalm 14:3 contends that all human beings have disobeyed God as a result straying away from the path of righteousness, whether intentionally or unconsciously. Furthermore, all people are morally corrupt from the Lord's holy and perfect perspective (Lioy, 2013:225).

Every individual is judged by God, according to Romans 3:10-12, which quotes Psalm 14:1-3. The question of whether the religious are better off than the impious is asked in verse 9. The straight response is, "Not at all!" or "By no means!" no matter one's race, nationality, or gender, they were all under the rule of sin and deserved to be banished from the presence of God. The biblical text asserts unequivocally that: no one is righteous (Rom 3:10); no one understands or seeks God (v. 11); all have turned away (v. 12a); no one does good (v. 12b); they are deceitful (v. 13); their hearts are full of cursing and bitterness (v. 14); they are quick to shed blood (v. 15); ruin and misery mark their ways (v. 16); they do not know the way (v. 18). These passages demonstrate how ubiquitous sin is.

These vices can be seen in descendants of the first people who ever lived in varied degrees. The biblical text bolsters its thesis by listing specific human bodily components. For sin affects

every faculty and function of the human body, including the mind, emotions, sexuality, and conscience and will (Stott, 1994:100). This is done to highlight the negative effects of sin on people as a whole, which includes the neck, tongue, and lips (3:13), the mouth (v. 14), the feet (v. 15), and the eyes (v. 18). In a nutshell, the entire individual is metaphysically afflicted; no aspect of human nature is unaffected by sin. These verses describe the notion of total depravity by employing this imagery. This does not imply that every human being is as evil as they can be rather, it implies that sin has tainted every facet of human life (Lioy, 2013:226).

4.1.1.1.3 Total depravity in the New Testament

This section looks upon New Testament scriptural texts that are thought to back up the concept of ultimate depravity. There is insufficient space to analyse all New Testament scripture verses that hint at the concept of total depravity. However, these two scriptures (Ephesians 2:1-3 & Romans 5:12) do not exhaust all the biblical support for this, but they provide significant guidance on the concept of total depravity.

4.1.1.1.4 Ephesians 2:1-3

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 the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

What does it imply when we declare that humans have "fallen"? Are they now utterly incapable of comprehending any spiritual truth? Theologians have discussed and reached varied conclusions on these questions for centuries. One of the most often referenced verses in the New Testament on the issue is Ephesians 2.

The letter begins with a passage emphasising the role of divine intervention in salvation. Paul speaks of Christians spiritual blessings in Christ and then continues to highlight that God has chosen Christians before the earth was created (1:4). However, their salvation did not come because they deserved it. After all, God orchestrated it, a truth that is represented in the term predestination, which is tied to God's will and pleasure (1:5) as well as purpose (1:11). This importance of this divine intervention is further emphasised by the constant mention of grace (Carson & Moo, 2005:494). The second chapter reminds them of their depravity and their salvation by grace to good actions (2:1-10). Although the conventional word for justification is not employed in Ephesians, it is inconsistent with the rest of Paul's writings. The teaching in Ephesians 2:1-10 summarises Paul's idea of grace-based salvation. This salvation is not

dependent on works but simply on God's grace through faith. The Ephesian believers were told that they previously had no relationship with God (Eph. 2:1-3). Therefore, salvation is defined as a rescue or deliverance from one's previous situation (Hoehner, 2002:110).

To God, the previous state is described as death (2:1-3) - (*Καί ὑμεῖς οὐσα νεκροὶ παράπτωμα καὶ ἁμαρτία*), "And you being dead in the trespasses and the sin." Except for the pronouns (*ὑμεῖς*) the first six words of verse 1 and 5 are identical. Paul does not finish verse 1, but in verse 2-, he explains humanity's previous state. The apostle essentially chooses to unveil God's grace until he clearly demonstrates human beings' desperate need.

Is Paul referring to spiritual and moral weakness when he says, "being dead" (*οὐσα νεκροί*), in Chapter 2? Does the fact that the lost world is unable to turn to God through the will means that it is cut off from him? The apostle Paul is describing the truth that humans are given to sin in this dead state because they lack the ability to turn to God (Couch, 2005:231). The apostle uses the figurative term "dead" to denote a condition of loss or being in the grip of death. Spiritual death is a term used to describe a condition of estrangement from God. Humans' transgressions and sins have brought them to this pitiful and guilty state. Simultaneously, the term describes the prior existence outside of Christ as spiritual death (O'Brien, 1999:156-157). Thielman (2010:121) points out that in Greek literature philosophy, the word *νεκρός* (meaning "dead") was occasionally used metaphorically to refer to persons who were "morally or spiritual defective". Therefore, readers of this letter will be familiar with the concept of spiritual death because the same language was employed in Greek philosophy. Jesus could use the term to allude to individuals who refused to follow him (Matt. 8:22; Luke 9:60) and to describe the transition from death to life. Being dead demonstrates that conditionality of human beings prior to God's intervention.

Hoehner, (2002:301) observes that in verses 5-6, the verb "to be" which is a participle, refers to the activity that took place before the main verb "representing the imperfect," and this demonstrates their perpetual state of being dead prior to God's kind act of reviving them. The adjective *νεκρός* "dead" in the following two verses show that they were still very much alive physically, so this must undoubtedly depict their spiritual state.

Trespasses are described by the Greek word *παράπτωμα*, which also means to lay next to (*para*) a corpse (*ptōma*). The present participle (*ὑμεῖς οὐσα νεκροί*) "you were dead" reflects the situation of the lost prior to conversion, when the person is physically alive but spiritual dead (Couch, 2005:231).

(Παράπτωμα) “Trespases” is defined as slipping, falling, stumbling, deviating, or going down the wrong path. ἁμαρτία (sins) is defined as missing the mark, associated with hunting with a bow and arrow. The term thus evolved to mean falling short of a goal, norm, or aim. It refers to missing and falling short of God’s holy standard in the spiritual realm. Paul does not use the phrases to distinguish between distinct types of sinning; rather, he uses them to emphasise the breath of depravity that arises from spiritual death (MacArthur, 1986:54). According to O'Brien (1999:157), the plural trespasses emphasise the distinct acts of sins, but the inclusion of the word sins aids in the development of a single notion that encompasses all forms of human evil. It provides the notion of the readers’ sinful past’s breath and variety. As a result, they were without hope, separated from God (2:12) and excluded from his life (4:18).

Having stated the spiritual condition, Paul will provide further specifics to back up his assertion. The spiritual state is defined in three ways.

1. The preposition (έν) emphasises the walk’s domain - (έν ποτέ περιπατέω κατά τό αἰών τούτου κόσμος), “in which a person formerly walked according to the age of this world.” Even though the participle is present tense, the condition pertains to the past as the enclitic participle (ποτέ), “formerly, once, in time past” substantiates. As the result, they used to live in the situation daily (Hoehner, 2002:309). Paul points out that previously the readers (περιπατέω) “walked” in their transgressions. I walk (Περιπατέω) according to the Torah, in an ethnical action, I conduct my life, I live. Colossians (1:10; 2:6; 3:7; 4:5) and Ephesians (2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15) commonly use this word, which is a classic Pauline expression meaning in a particular way. In Pauline’s work, the term is nearly always followed by a prepositional phrase, an adverbial phrase or a word in the dative case that more precisely identifies the way of living to which the word refers (Thielman, 2010:122-123). We walked in sin, we lived among sinners the relative clauses in verse 2-3 establish a balance arrangement. The first line of Ephesians 2, the case for humanity’s depravity and need for salvation is expressed brilliantly and succinctly (Wallace, 1996:336).
2. The second prepositional phrase begins with (κατά) describes the walk before conversion - (Κατά τό ἄρχων τό ἐξουσία τό ἀήρ τό πνεῦμα νῦν ἐνεργέω έν τό υἱός ἀπειθεία), “according to the ruler of the authority of the air the spirit now working in the sons of disobedience.” Not only does the unregenerate’s standard follow the world’s temporal values, but also follows or is controlled by the ruler air’s governing authority. The term (ἄρχων) refers to a ruler, governor, leader, or leading man, among Jews, it refers to a recognised member (an executive member) (Hoehner, 2002:311). Outside of Christ, those who are enslaved by the present wicked age’s extensive bondage are

likewise inspired and empowered by demonic forces. The second hostile influence is depicted by Paul as a strong supernatural being who oversees this army of evil spirits (O'Brien, 1999:159).

3. The human's sad predicament, according to Paul, covered the full person: mind and flesh, ideas and deeds - (ἀναστρέφω ποτέ ἐν τῷ ἐπιθυμίας σὰρξ ποιέω τὸ θέλημα τὸ σὰρξ καὶ τὸ διάνοια), "conducted ourselves then in the lust of the flesh of us, doing the things willed of the flesh and the understandings." Before believing the gospel, Paul and his readers were enslaved to their body fulfilling their desires. They also performed the desires of their thoughts (Thielman, 2010:125).

The sphere of their walk is seen in the preposition (ἐν) "in". Since the inception, the term (θέλημα) has been used to denote "desire," both positive and negative, such as a desire for water or a desire to steal. Therefore, the moral characteristics of the desires are bad, and the plural may point to a feeling of comprehensiveness: all our intentions are evil (Hoehner, 2002:318). (Πιθυμία) "Lusts" encompasses all strong inclinations and urges, not just sexual passion. (Θέλημα) "Desires" emphasises a strong desire for and pursuit of something with zeal. Lust and desire, like trespasses and sins are offered to demonstrate their commonality rather than their uniqueness. They are used interchangeably to portray fallen humans acting selfishly. Humans are compelled by nature to satisfy their physical and mental urges. The evaporation of life that occurs when one is left to do whatever feels good is referred to as 'the flesh'. The thoughts represent purposeful choices that go against the will of God (MacArthur, 1986:57).

Most likely, the plural participle (ποιέω) is a participle of the verb modify (ἀναστρέφω ποτέ) "were living or formerly lived" by illuminating how the lusts of the flesh were being satisfied. An action that frequently happens is shown in the present tense. This is consistent with verse 1, which claims that sinners died as a result of their transgressions and sins (Hoehner, 2002:320-321).

"And by nature children of wrath also like the rest," (Καὶ φύσις τέκνον ὀργῇ καὶ ὡς λοιποῖ) this is taken to suggest that humans were born with a nature that rendered them subject to God's wrath even before they sinned; they would thus have a concept of original sin as well as original guilt or transmitted guilt in the passage (Foulkes, 1989:79). In addition to being a result of what those without God do death's position and practise also serves as evidence of these individuals. People are living in accordance with their nature, rather than disobedience separate from God. They inherit Adam's fallen nature, which causes them to be spiritually separated from God and subject to the world's passions and manner of life (Chapell, 2009:80).

Therefore, before Paul and the readers accepted the gospel of salvation (1:13), they were doomed to see God's wrath pour on the disobedient. Furthermore, their fate was predetermined (*φύσις*) "by nature". The phrase alludes to a person's natal circumstance, and the dative singular of the word, which Paul uses here, was widely used to allude to birth. Even though unbelieving people are to blame for their evil cravings, wants and ideas (vv.1-3a), Paul used this phrase to emphasise that they were compelled to follow this course because of the environment they were born into (Rom 5:12) (Thielman, 2010:127).

The analysis of verses 1-3 demonstrates how sin and trespass make people lifeless. This is explained in three parts. Firstly, they did what everyone else did: they walked under the times of this sinful world. Secondly, they performed what the devil desired, walking in the manner of the lord of the kingdom of the air. Thirdly, they had fun because they did what delighted their bodies and minds. As a result, the temporal values people possessed before conversion matched not just the patterns of the world and satanic powers, but also the patterns of their desires. They performed what came easily to them since it fits into the pattern of the external and internal behaviour. Without the benevolent influence of the Holy Spirit in the soul, a live corpse would be unable to think, desire, or act in a holy manner. Dead humans are unable to speak and have no ability to resurrect themselves. The force of God directed toward them is what gives them life. Throughout this text, Paul emphasises that God's sovereign initiative work is the source of redemption, not of human work or merit. Sovereignty is a manner of expressing God's dominion in a form that is not subject to external influence. God would not be genuinely sovereign (in charge of the cosmos) if he was subject to human decisions or influenced by their acts. This indicates, among other things, that rather than being the outcome of human efforts, redemption is a gift from God as Paul describes in verses 4-10 (Chapell, 2009:78).

4.1.1.1.5 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.

Everyone familiar with theology or exegesis understands the significance of the text in the issue. It has surpassed all others in terms of displaying the conditionality of the fallen human race and the link to total depravity and guilt with the fall of the first human pair. A considerable section of evangelical theologians sees the present chapter as the most abundant and robust foundation for the theory of original sin or hereditary sin. Thus, Romans 5:12-21 is a synopsis in which Paul makes clear the crucial connection between the history of humankind's current condition, which he has been addressing and the positional significance of Christ's deed. Paul's lack of theoretical footing and establishment of the reason for human depravity is notable (Rom 1:13).

The wording in Romans 1:18 and 3:23 is comparable to Genesis 1-3 at times, although Paul does not provide any clear thesis until 5:12 (Porter, 1990:19).

As a result, Gomes (2003:557-558) contends that the notion of "inherited sin" is one of the most prevalent beliefs in systematic theology. There has been a considerable lot of conjecture about the source, transmission/imputation, and consequences of inherited sin. The following passages provide the biblical support for this crucial and hotly contested claim: "... Death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" Romans 5:12; "through one man's trespass many are dead" (5:25); "the judgement following one trespass brought condemnation" (5:12); "by one man's trespass, death reigned through the one man" (5:17); "as one trespass led to condemnation for all men" (5:18); "by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (5:19). Paul's foundational exposition in Romans 5:12-19 explains that all humanity was subjected to death as a result of a single sin, Adam and all his descendants were responsible for committing this sin (Rapinchuk, 2017:35-37). The doctrine of "inherited sin" said that because of Adam's fall, sin had crept throughout humankind. Everyone inherits a faulty and wicked nature from Adam, according to the concept of inherited sinful nature. The offspring of Adam are born with a sinful nature. This viewpoint establishes a clear connection between Adam and the spread of wickedness. Adam gave human race a corrupt nature (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:462).

"Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world." (*Διά ὥσπερ διά εἰς ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτία εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὸ κόσμος*) (*Διά*) "Therefore" is linked to verses 1-11 which discusses the consequences of Christ's justification. This passage 5:12-21 then brings the reader to the start of the present era with Adam's fall, explaining that the previous existence was the result of the first man's disobedience. At the same time, people are told that their current predicament is rooted in another Adam's insubordination in bringing out a new creature. The evil Adam unleashed into the world has been defeated because of the reconciliation Christ brought about. There would have been no need or place for reconciliation if the first father's pervasive evil had not been introduced in the earth (Morris, 1988:228).

Paul begins his argument by claiming that Adam was the source of sin into the world - (*εἰς ἄνθρωπος ἁμαρτία εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὸ κόσμος*), "through one man sin entered in the world." He does not refer to sin in the plural, but to sin in the singular. Sin is not a specific wrongful act, but rather an innate proclivity to be wicked. It is not the numerous subsequent immoral acts that Adam eventually committed that passed down to his descendants, but the indwelling sinful nature that he acquired because of his first transgression. He also left them his spiritual essence, which was not controlled and characterised by sin (MacArthur, 1991:292-293). So, in

this case, the sin that comes into the world is greater than just a single act of sin; it is the beginning of sin's emergence as a universal human condition (Moo, 1996:319).

Observe the order which Paul keeps here, sin preceded and then from sin death followed - (*Καί θάνατος διὰ ἁμαρτία*) "And death came through sin." Paul asserts that sin extends to all who experience its penalty, and from this point on, he completely elaborates when he provides a reason why all Adam's descendants are bound by the law of mortality, and even this "since we have all sinned" (Calvin, 1536-1559; 2007:170). Anyone familiar with the Old Testament or Jewish history would have recognised according to Paul, that "sin entered the world via one man." Neither would make a different claim in this text: "and by sin, death entered the earth." The unbroken link between sin and death, as revealed in Genesis 2-3, was a cornerstone of the Jewish religion (Moo, 1996:320).

Schreiner (2011:82) asserts unequivocally that the result and consequence of sin was death, both spiritually and bodily. Adam was warned by God that he would die if he disobeyed and consumed the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:17). The moment Adam and Eve ate the fruit, their relationship with God was severed, and they both died spiritually. Finally, they experienced physical death, as evidenced by the repeated refrain in Genesis 5's genealogical record (Vickers, 2006:285). Every person is born into a world of sin and death as a result of Adam's transgression. Death which Paul would equate with condemnation in this phrase is a continuing assumption for all mankind after Adam, even while sin still results in death and human beings will be punished for their trespasses. Adam and Eve's human nature shifted in purity to sin, losing its original righteousness and developing a warped morality as a result (Gomes, 2003:562).

"And so death spread to all because all have sinned" - (*Καί οὕτω θάνατος διέρχεται εἰς πᾶς ἄνθρωπος ἐπὶ ὃς πᾶς ἁμαρτάνω*). Sinned is a Greek aorist tense that indicates that all humans have sinned in some instance or another. That was, of course, the first time Adam sinned. Because all of mankind was in his loins, sin became all of mankind's sin. Human depravity is the cause, not the outcome of mankind's wicked actions (MacArthur, 1991:296). Gomes (2003:559) points out that the word (*ἁμαρτάνω hamartanō*) has active significance, implying that it does not refer to everyone's transgression after being born and when no longer present with Adam, but rather Adam and Eve's transgression as well as their posterity. The following factors indicate this: there is only one sin specified as the basis for the death penalty. This is said five times in a row in 5:15-19. 5:12 hamartia refers to the same sin mentioned in 5:15-19.

This alludes to human sin because they became sinners as the outcome of Adam's transgression. In other words, Adam's transgression was committed on behalf of his race, who is likewise held accountable for his initial transgression (Porter, 1990:25) Genderen and Velema

(2008:408) observe that the continuation of this passage makes plain that it is not a matter of Adam's descendants' bad acts, or the sinful character passed down to them. They were all complicit in Adam's evil act. This is how Adam and his descendant have brought death on themselves.

The interpretation of verse 12's structure is intended to essentially highlight that since death is common to all people, sin is as well: "all sinned." The latter portion of verse 12 is what the readers are looking at here, which states that "death spread to everyone since all have sinned." Readers have previously seen the way that Adam's presence brought sin and death into the world. In the final portion of verse 12, Paul verifies this. "As a result, death spread to all mankind," he says. Thus, Adam's death was not limited to Adam as a person but spread throughout the globe for all individuals throughout all time (Moo, 1996:323). Under the remainder of the narrative, the phrase "all sinned" in verse 12 must refer to Adam's sin, which was committed by all humans. The statement should serve as a reminder to people that they do not suffer the blame for someone else's sin. Because Adam's transgression was, in some ways, their sin, God had the authority to condemn them for it (Frame, 2013:857).

Because of Adam's sin, every person who is ever born is now "in Adam." Firstborn and ancestor of humans, he is the source of death and sin because of his disobedience. According to Ephesians 2, due to their relationship with Adam, everyone enters the world impure and guilty of sin (Schreiner, 2011:82). Calvin (1536-1559; 2007:170) claims that because the first parents disobeyed God, they were corrupted, vitiated, depraved, and wrecked, and hence could not have produced seed that was distinct from them. Therefore, everyone has committed a sin because people are naturally corrupted, sinful, and wicked.

These statements provide a very dismal picture of sin. Because it is based on depravity, this results in absolute incapacity. As a result, it is critical to ground entire incapacity in total depravity. Human beings who have not been regenerated are incapable of doing anything good to gain salvation. They may be able to do fewer evil actions than others, but they will never be able to accomplish anything that pleases God (Frame, 2013:866). MacArthur (1991:293) elucidates that mankind is a unified unit, constituting divinely intended solidarity. Adam represents the whole human species descended from him, regardless of how many subgroupings exist. As a result, when Adam sinned, all people sinned, and because his first sin changed his inner essence, that now corrupted nature was also passed on to his descendants. Because he became spiritually tainted, all his children would be similarly contaminated.

Hankins (2011:93) indicates that all humans are sinners, according to the scripture. Humans are in a terrible position because of sin, despite their best efforts, they are unable to alter the course of their insubordination against God, atone for their transgressions against him or find a way to return to him. According to the idea of complete depravity, since people are so hopelessly

depraved, they can accomplish nothing good on their own, and all efforts to do so end up being bad in and of themselves. Human beings' universal depravity is apparent and undeniable. Sin pervades every part of their lives. It influences people both personally and as a society. It is profoundly ingrained in them and is constantly exhibited. The first human, Adam, is blamed in the Bible for sin and death in the world (Rom. 5:12) (Boer, 2011:222-223).

Therefore, the Bible teaches absolute (or pervasive) depravity to explain the corruption and filth brought about by Adam's sin. Depravity now emphasises the devastating effects of sin on the individual and includes three interrelated ideas: universality, which holds that all people are born as sinners; the filth and corruption of all aspects of a person; and their complete incapacity to please God. Therefore, the notion of mankind's entire depravity proves God's unlimited sovereignty in redemption. Nothing can be done by humanity. All must be accomplished by God as a gift of sovereign grace (MacArthur & Mayhue, 2017:467-468). Godfrey (2019:130) is correct in his observation that fallen humanity can only produce fallen progeny. The original sin of the first parents is handed down to all subsequent generations. Every human being is born dead in sin, incapable of doing any good; they live their lives in and for sin. They are powerless to stop themselves. They are so lost that they are unable to turn to God, and perhaps even worse, they do not want to be changed at all. God must take the initiative and act to save these completely lost people.

In conclusion, while the guilt of original sin and hereditary corruption will be evaluated further, it appears natural, rational, and scriptural to declare that people are completely ruined. As a result of Adam's sin and the subsequent corruption of his inherited fallen nature with propensity to fall short of God's requirements of righteous character, it follows that everyone with a prehistoric connection to Adam is guilty in the moment. The need for a Saviour and the plan of salvation in Christ are spiritual matters that people will not accept unless the Holy Spirit performs his inner work of regeneration. They are dead, not half-dead! There is no such thing as a midway point. The incapacity to comprehend spiritual concerns is complete, not just partial.

4.1.1.1.6 The doctrine of grace in salvation; saving grace

In the previous section, it was demonstrated that in scripture, humans are represented as being uniformly wicked and their wickedness has led to the will's bondage. According to the Bible, humans are not only diseased with trespasses and sins. They are not in such a debilitated state that they require heavenly assistance, yet they are sinners and trespassers who have died (Ephesians 2:1-2). They are unable to save themselves; therefore, God intervenes lovingly and sovereignly through the new birth. As a result, sinners are completely reliant on God's miraculous act for salvation. Such an act is not general, prevenient grace; rather, it is unique to the elect and effectual (Barrett, 2013:69).

4.1.1.1.7 Saving grace in the Old Testament

The section focuses on Old Testament scripture verses that are thought to be demonstrations of the notion of grace. There is inadequate room to consider all Old Testament scripture verses that pertain to the doctrine of grace in salvation. However, the two texts (Deuteronomy 30:6 & Ezekiel 36:25-27) give ample teaching on the notion of God's grace in redemption in the Old Testament, but they do not run through all the textual evidence in this regard.

4.1.1.1.8 Deuteronomy

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

The renewal of the Mosaic covenant with a fresh generation of national Israel is recorded in Deuteronomy. The generation that had received the covenant at Mt. Sinai thirty-eight years before had mostly gone away, and a new group of Israelites had reached adulthood (1:3-5; 2:14-15). Sensing his impending mortality and a change in leadership, Moses reviewed and applied the Sinai covenant for the new generation, who were now encamped in Moab and looking forward to crossing the Jordan and entering the land of Canaan (1:5; 29:1; 31:1-30).

The fundamental theme of Deuteronomy is Yahweh's glory. Through the judgement of their adversaries, Yahweh had saved Israel (Deut 1-3). Yahweh's compelling existence eventually serves to urge after Israel heard his voice amid the flames on the mountaintop (Deut 5) they were to obey (Deut. 4) the commandment he had revealed to them. Yahweh must give Israel the heart they need (Deut 30:6) for them to love (Deut 6-11) and serve him (Deut 12-28) (Hamilton, 2014:31).

Deuteronomy 30:6 asks the new generation to devote themselves to the covenant in the chapters 29:2-3-20. Moses begins this part by recounting the Lord's benevolent dealings with the Israelites during the Exodus, wilderness wandering and Transjordan conquest (29:2-8). The call for a national commitment to the covenant that the Lord was renewing with them that day follows (vv. 9-15). Moses then warned the people about idolatry and outlined the covenant penalties that would befall them if they failed to keep the covenant. Moses portrayed these curses in terms of the devastation of the land and banishment of the population, prophesying that a future generation would descend in idolatry (vv. 16-29). Regardless of future rebellion and judgement, Moses vowed that the Lord would establish his bond with his people and bring them back to their country in covenant faithfulness and blessing one day. Moses closes this section by urging the new generation to choose life over death, or covenant faithfulness over covenant insubordination (vv. 11-20) (Compton, 2018:38).

It would be as important to inquire, “Can sinful people return to God and change their ways? That is what verse 6 says “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live,” says verse 6. Circumcision was outward evidence of their status as God’s people. Without an interior embrace of God as their Lord, they would be circumcised physically. By circumcising their hearts, God transforms them into sincere followers (Fernando, 2012:619).

In verse 6 Moses addresses the core issues: Israel’s ruptured relationship with Yahweh. Moses reintroduces a concept already used in (10:16), when he commanded the Israelites to “circumcise” their hearts. Individual love and obedience are the outcome of eradicating every obstacle that stands in the way of a real adoration to Yahweh. While a favourable attitude toward God is required for restoration, Moses recognised that neither appealing to the people to make amends with Yahweh nor just returning to the country will result in permanent and comprehensive covenant commitment. National infidelity, on the other hand, appears to be not only unavoidable, but also a constant threat to this generation.

Verse 6 brings the mysteries of divine providence and grace to a close. Yahweh will achieve lasting and absolute loyalty by circumcising the hearts of those he returns from exile and their offspring, Moses declares. The surgery’s outcome is “so that you will love the Lord your God,” with love manifested in deeds that benefit and please one’s covenant partner. This may be implemented through legislation: but would necessitate a revolutionary new deed, the surgical removal of reminders of the previous fondness (Block, 2012:698). According to Stewart (2013:537) the verse implies that God would enable the Israelites to accomplish what they thought was impossible. God would grant them the ability to return to the Lord, their God, after admitting their sins. God would enable them to seek his mercy and find salvation.

The most significant result of Israel’s ultimate restoration to Yahweh will be that he will circumcise their hearts. The Israelites were instructed in Deuteronomy 10:16 to circumcise their hearts, but the emphasis in this context is completely different; the deed is divine activity on the heart. Circumcision is a consecration ceremony, but it is useless without an internal rebirth, which Yahweh will provide for his returning people (Currid, 2006:468). This is regarded as an act of God, and so foreshadows the new covenant, in which God will deal with humanity’s fundamental spiritual condition by his grace. People would be able to love the Lord and live if God acted on their hearts (Craigie, 1976:364).

The fruit of having the heart circumcised and loving God, according to Moses, is “... that you may live” (30:6). God establishes a loving relationship in both the Old and New Testaments, at the heart of life (Fernando, 2012:620). Merrill (1994:384) demonstrates Israel’s capacity to love the Lord “with all your heart and with all your soul” would be the outcome of the miraculous, entire regenerative nature of the circumcision of the heart (Deut 30:6). This obviously alludes to

the request made of the Israelites the *שנא*(*shâma*) (Deut 6:4-5), whose fulfilment was at the heart of covenant obligation. Moses on the other hand, had not commanded nor even persuaded that audience to obey. He implied that it would come naturally as a by-product of the renewal. That actualisation of love is attainable if the heart has undergone a fundamental conversion in God's direction. When that happens, obedience and life are both possible. More than just physical line on the land is on display here. There is a glimpse of life that never ends, life that is born by the supernatural operation of grace, which is sufficient to account for all of Israel's future restoration.

It is critical to recognise that the pneumatological work of salvation is a notion found in the Old Testament. When Jeremiah 31:33 and Ezekiel 36:26-27 are connected, the hypothesis that God's law is inscribed on the hearts of his people by the Holy Spirit develops. Jeremiah 31:33 found within a pericope that defines the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34), which is contained within a great oracle that talks of God's plan to restore the fortunes of his people, Israel (Jer 30:1-31:40). According to Jeremiah 31:33, later, God would inscribe his law on the hearts of the Israelites and deposit it within them. This heart transformation effected by the Spirit is the comparable to the circumcision of the heart brought about by the God that is foretold in Deuteronomy 30:6, which is found in the middle of Deuteronomy 30:1-14, which is an incredibly significant restoration oracle from the time of Moses (Coxhead, 2017:78-79).

Israel, on the other hand, is stiff-necked apart from grace, as their history shows from the Exodus to Christ's rejection. Despite being commanded to do so, the Israelites are unable to circumcise their hearts. They rely on God's divine grace to regenerate their hearts. Yahweh also accepts the additional obligation of giving national Israel a new heart. The elect cannot be regenerated by the law (Waltke, 2007:501-502). Humans are enabled to tend to holiness rather than sin through the pneumatological work in salvation. The Holy Spirit regenerates the sinful and self-enslaved will, enabling it to choose or incline toward God as the greatest good and ultimate goal. The biblical representation the belief that God's Spirit has the power to create a desire for purity in the human will. David often prays to God to use this ability: "Lead me in the path of your commandments" (Psalm 119:35); "incline my heart to your testimonies" (Psalm 119:36) and "create in me a clean heart, O God (Psalm 51:10) (Gomes, 2003:766).

4.1.1.1.9 Ezekiel 36:25-27

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you the heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey your rules.

The context of Ezekiel 36:26-27 is Ezekiel 36:1-37:2, which explains Israel's impending restoration. Ezekiel focuses on the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration to explain how this upcoming restoration will be accomplished in Ezekiel 36:26-27, which is written within the context of the new covenant. In 36:25-26, two facets of the Spirit's work of renewal are highlighted: purification and transformation. Both components focus on the role of the Holy Spirit in restoration. In addition, verse 27 ties the work of the Spirit to dwelling. This indicates that the Spirit's regeneration in verse 25-26 and verse 27 are intimately intertwined and that the Spirit's indwelling work always results in obedient behaviour (McCabe, 2004:250).

Israel's history, according to Ezekiel, is a record of persistent disobedience to God's will. Only because of Yahweh's reverence for the honour of his name is salvation possible. The spiritual regeneration has been predicted since the time recorded in Ezekiel 11:14-21. A much broader depiction of the rejuvenation can be found in Ezekiel 36 where Yahweh would assemble his people from all around the world (Ezk 36:24). They will be cleaned with water because they are spiritually unclean (Ezk 36:25). The people of Israel must be pure in both a cultic and moral sense for Yahweh's glory to return to the new sanctuary (Vries, 2015:330). God would cleanse them of their sin, particularly their idolatry, which had polluted the land. Sprinkling clean water on them to take away their impurities symbolised cleansing and forgiveness (Ps 51:7), while the emphasis was to the ceremonial cleansing necessary to re-establish worship (Num 19:13), it's crucial to realise that this was an exterior process that also necessitated interior repentance (Cooper, 1994:316).

The terms heart (*lêb*) and spirit (*rûach*) according to Wright (2001:296) characterise the interior human person. The heart is the seat of the mind in Hebrew terminology, not simply emotions. A person's heart is where he or she thinks, decides, and wills. The spirit expresses a person's feelings and ambitions, not just in terms of emotions, but also in terms of attitude, disposition, and motivation while making decisions and taking actions. In verse 26, God promised to regenerate the people spiritually by giving them a new spirit and heart. They would not be characterised by foolish reasoning and disregard for God anymore (Cooper, 1994:316-317).

The new covenant offered would enable the transition from "stone" to "flesh" (Jer 31:31-34). The people would be led to the Messiah, the new shepherd, by the new internalised covenant, which would also replace their contumaciousness with a new heart open to God's purpose. A "new spirit" within them would offer the enabling ability to do so. God referred to this "new spirit" as "my Spirit" (v 27), referring to Yahweh's Holy Spirit (11:19-20; 18:31), who would enable people to keep God's commandments. Interior renovation is continual, as Ezekiel depicts in the symbol of acquiring a new heart and spirit by the internal operation of the Holy Spirit (36:26-27) (Duguid, 1999:421). Cooper (1994:317) claims that the Holy Spirit will "move" them to obey

(“walk-in”) his command (v. 27). The apostle Paul expressed his main concern as being unable to keep the law. He complained about his efforts and inability to uphold the law on his own (Rom 7:13-25) and then offered a remedy in Rom. 8:1-39. He found the solution to his issue by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to live.

According to Vries (2015:330), the people of Israel will be given a new heart and a new spirit. Giving a new heart and a new spirit are inextricably linked, nonetheless, there is a distinction. While Yahweh tells Israel that he would give them a new heart, he also promises that he will instil a new spirit in them. In verse 27, Jesus expressly informs them that he will live inside them by his Spirit. Readers now understand that the (*rûach*) referenced in verse 26 is the (*rûach*) of Yahweh himself. The verbal phrase in Ezekiel 36:27 does not begin with the verb as is customary, but with the object (my Spirit). This phrase emphasises “my Spirit.” It ought to be translated as: “And my Spirit I will live within you.” After this statement, is read, the result of the gift of the Spirit of Yahweh becomes evident. As a result, the Israelites will follow Yahweh’s laws and walk in his commandments. Yahweh will cause his people to be obedient to himself (Block, 1998:356).

According to Fredrickson (2010:112-113) the apparent conclusion of the new covenant’s inner, personal transformation, which is perfect obedience to God’s law, rather than the inner transformation itself, is distinct from the customary explanations supplied by others. He substantiates this point with Old Testament verses that could be secondary, allusive new covenant passages. Passages such as Jeremiah 31, indicate “a new possibility created by God himself, of realising the will of God in human life”.

Yahweh’s Spirit is this means by which he purifies and renews his people. Only the infusion of Yahweh’s Spirit will empower and motivate the Israelites serve Yahweh. The gift of the Spirit of Yahweh makes the call to repentance for the people of Israel a reality. Early revelations like Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6 demonstrates this spiritual development. Jesus also expresses that this spiritual metamorphosis is absolutely necessary, according to John 3:5 “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” As “the ruler of the Jews” (v. 1) and “the teacher of Israel” (v. 10), in this situation, Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for failing to understand the relationship between his teachings on the monergistic nature of regeneration and its Old Testament roots in Ezekiel 36:25-27. Ezekiel’s words are another reminder that the solution to society’s ills and the problem is not education or economics or even morality. Sin calls for a divine heart transplant, one in which only God can provide spiritual life (McCabe, 2004:252).

4.1.1.1.10 Saving grace in the New Testament

The section deals specifically with scriptural passages that are considered to be proof of the doctrine of grace in salvation. However, these scriptures are interpreted with various outcomes.. There is insufficient space to consider every verse in the Bible that refers to the doctrine of grace in salvation. There are more references in the New Testament than the Old Testament. This reflects the fundamental progression of God's revelation. According to the New Testament, grace in salvation should be understood as grace in Christ (Eph. 1:4), the Old Testament does not present it this way. Therefore, some scripture passages teach about the grace of God in salvation with perspicuity. The three passages used are John 6:35-40, 44; Romans 9:10-18 & Ephesians 1:4-6, and while they do not exhaust all scriptural evidence in this regard, they do sufficiently explain the notion of God's mercy expressed in salvation.

Those who believe in an Augustinian/Calvinistic perspective emphasise the strength of God's transcendent power in attracting people to Jesus. This type of reasoning has persisted in discussions about the Reformed concept of grace. Those who adhere to an Arminian view emphasise that God's pulling force is focused on specific people, and those people must believe (Borchert, 1996:268).

4.1.1.1.11 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 do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, and whoever comes to me I 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 on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day...no one comes to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him the last day."

The reading of John 6:44 according to Arminianism: Klein (2015:116) an Arminian theologian suggests that before looking at John 6:44, it is necessary to look at how the word (ἐλκύω) "drawing" is used in John 12:32. This line appears in a pericope where Jesus is preparing his disciples for his approaching death. Jesus comforted them by explaining that his glory was approaching, but it would necessitate his death (12:23-24). The hour has come that his entire life has been building up to (12:27). He predicted that his death would bring judgement on Satan and his followers as well as open the way of salvation for all people. Jesus declared "And I

when I am lifted from the earth, will draw (ἐλκύω) all people to myself” (32). The objective ground for redemption becomes available to all individuals because of Jesus’s death. The cross extends the potential of redemption to everyone, not just a privileged few. God makes redemption available to everyone, but each person must accept it by faith, for a drawing toward God does not trump human will, for all are drawn, but not all are saved.

Klein (2015:114) claims that in John 6:44-45 Jesus explains to the obstinate Jews the way to eternal life, they must come through Jesus. However, in their opinion, Jesus is unfit for the role of Saviour (6:41-42). In response to their scepticism, Jesus clarifies that only the Father draws individuals to him. The Greek word “draw” (ἐλκω) is used eight times in the New Testament to mean dragging, drawing, or attracting. Examples of the various meanings of ‘drawing’ are the following, Peter drew his sword and severed Malchus’ ear off (John 18:10). The disciples could not draw the net full of fish ashore (John 21:6), or Peter dragged the net ashore with difficulty (John 21:11). Paul and Silas were dragged into the marketplace (Acts 16:19) and Paul was dragged from the temple (Acts 21:30). They are used to emphasise the physical element of the meaning of the verb. However, the draw can also be “in the direction of values for the inner life, draw and attract”.

Forlines (2011:159-160) an Arminian theologian, considers that the concept of drawing in John 6:44, which is a forceful drawing, is not problematic. The difficulty arises when speaking of it as a “forceful attraction.” When it comes to physical relationships, a literal phrase can have a causal effect. When the word is interpreted metaphorically to refer to a relationship between influence and response, the reader cannot expect it to have the same fundamental weight. John 6:44 refers to a link between personal effect and response. To advance the cause of unconditional salvation, John 6:44 must be interpreted in terms of cause and effect. The verse makes it abundantly apparent that only the Father can draw someone to Christ; nevertheless, there is nothing in the word (ἐλκύω) that requires it to be constructed in this way. By inviting everyone who hears and learns from God to come to Jesus in John 6:45, Jesus clarifies the “drawing” of 6:44. Here God’s drawing is neither selective nor irresistible. The “drawing” stands right in their midst; in effect, Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). The attraction, the reasons, arguments, and features are all there for these Jews to observe and act upon (Klein, 2015:115).

Therefore, it’s crucial to keep in mind that God and people have a personal relationship; the word (ἐλκύω) “draw” in this verse is best defined in terms of influences and responses. In the Arminians’ conception of prevenient grace, the sentences in John 6:44 appears practically everywhere. It describes the Holy Spirit’s unique work. It is frequently referenced in relation to sinners’ inability to accept the gift of salvation and the necessity of being drawn in by grace and

the action of the Holy Spirit. This verse emphasises the dependence of God's prevenient and transforming grace on human receptivity to the evangelical gospel (Hernandez, 2017:172-173).

John 6:44 illustrates how divine love is both the catalyst for redemption and how humans will recognise it. John's theological juxtaposition of "whoever believes" with "drawing" acknowledges the existence of a divinely bestowed opportunity as well as a heavenly call. Through heavenly illumination (a prevention act) and the depiction of human reaction to the divine impulse, John follows Christ's potential for salvation (redemption act) (Shelton, 2014:40).

According to Stanglin and McCall (2012:157, the Calvinistic approach had harmed saving grace by turning it into a persuasive, irresistible force. Grace, rather than being coercive, is a necessary, convincing cause that leads to salvation. God's grace is available to everyone, regardless of their choice; but irresistible saving grace, which is only available to a select few clashes with God's love and human nature's freedom. As a result, the Arminian reading of this passage is reasonable: everyone must be drawn to Jesus by God's prevenient grace, which beckons and enables but does not compel. Arminianism has always maintained that God is the one who initiates salvation; that is known as "prevenient grace," and it is enabling yet resistible. The effective cause of salvation is the grace of God; however, in a humans' response to prevenient grace, their faith is the primary factor in their salvation (Olson, 2011:164-170).

Olson (2016:310) defines predestination as God knowing in advance who will voluntarily embrace his offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. God's prevenient grace is the basis for one's capacity to accept Christ as Saviour, turn from sin and be saved. The drawing was present and available to anyone willing to listen and learn. Those who were willing to listen and respond with faith were saved. The concept of universal "drawing" or "attracting" is a proof that Jesus does not want to limit salvation to a limited group. This illustration depicts a profound inner action on the human heart. And "all people" has a broad universalism to it. John emphasises that Jesus makes his saving message available to everyone; it is up to them to listen to him, learn from him, and believe in him. The focus of God's drawing is on Jesus. No one is disqualified since God has provided this foundation for redemption. Only rejection and disbelief can keep someone from being saved (Klein, 2015:118).

According to Calvinism's interpretation of John 6:35-40, the present verses mark a gap in Jesus's talk of the living "bread." He addressed the Jews' continued unbelief before moving on to this topic. The audience had been told by Jesus to believe (6:29), yet they demanded another sign. They essentially desired a repeat of the miraculous feeding they had just witnessed, as evidence by their statement: "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' Rather than worshipping Jesus as Messiah and Saviour, they desired that he consistently gives them heavenly bread to physically eat, rather than food for their spirit, as Moses had done in the wilderness for forty years by providing manna for the

entire nation. This was what contemporary Jews anticipated the Messiah to do when he arrived (MacArthur, 2006:243). The Jews had not witnessed another indication of Jesus' authority (6:30), but they had seen him, and they still did not believe that the Father bringing people to Jesus is a constant theme in Gospel (6:39; 19:29; 17:2, 6; 18:19). By his oratory or miraculous ability, Jesus claims no responsibility for drawing people to himself. He welcomes those who approach him because of the Father's work in them since he is the Father's sent Son (Kostenberger, 2004:211).

Jesus now speaks simply since his opponents misunderstood his claim to be the bread of God (vv. 34-35) - (ἐγὼ εἰμί τὸ ἄρτος ζωῆς) "I am the bread of life." The Old Testament context for this verse's parallelism could be found in Isaiah 55:1 (concerning the eschatological salvation accomplished by the written word of God) and in Proverbs 8:5 (concerning wisdom). Although Isaiah is the most frequently quoted Old Testament book in the Fourth Gospel, the link with Isaiah 55:1 is more likely because Isaiah clearly discusses the advent of eschatological salvation, of a new and everlasting covenant, in the context of the word that truly come from God's mouth (Carson, 1991:289).

Borchert (1996:264-265) observes that, just as physical eating and drinking did not ensure life, so bodily viewing of Jesus did not guarantee belief. One of John's primary theological notions is the interaction of the principles of seeing and believing. In the Thomas narrative, this subject, which emphasises human reaction, is ended (20:29). However, the emphasis on Jesus' human nature must not be fundamentally divorced from the divine aspects of salvation, which is emphasised on the affirmation of the Father's role in salvation (6:37). The passage describes the disciples' landing at Jesus' feet as a gift from the Father. This gospel is clearly theocentric despite its Christological emphasis.

"All that the Father gives me will come to me" (v. 37a) - (πᾶς ἢ πατήρ δίδωμι μοί ἢ κω πρός ἐμέ). "All" (πᾶς) is neuter and singular (literally, "everything"), refers to all Christians collectively, and the participle ("the person who comes") is masculine singular concentrating on all individuals who might "come to Jesus" in the sense of professing their loyalty to him. They come to Jesus as a gift from God, proving their allegiance to God by doing so (Michaels, 2010:376-377). Jesus exudes confidence as he discusses the success of his labour and the completion of his mission. The Capernaum crowd's astonishment and rejection of religious goals would not deter Jesus. He is unconcerned because the Father, who is at work in him, determines the efficacy of his effort. Indeed, Jesus' entire mission was to live according to the Father's plan (6:38). God had summoned people to come to him in (37, 44) in a sovereign way by sending him and going before him. (Burge, 2000:199). This fundamental truth reveals that everyone who is saved is the Father's gift of love to the Son. Human volition is not required for salvation. The redeemed are people "born, not of man's will, but God" (John 1:13). (MacArthur, 2006:246-247).

“And whoever comes to me I will never cast out” (v. 37b) - (*Καί ἔρχομαι πρὸς οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλλω ἔξω*), the verb (*ἐκβάλλω*) “cast out” is frequently used to describe something that is already in (2:15; 9:35). As a result, the impression is that Jesus is detaining those whom the Father has entrusted to his care, rather than welcoming them. This is about Jesus’s ability to protect and nurture. John 6:39 corroborates the interpretation: Jesus will not abandon any of the people who have come to him (10:1-18) (Burge, 2000:200).

“No one can come to me unless the Father having sent me should draw him...” (v. 44) - (*οὐδεὶς δύναται ἔρχομαι πρὸς μέ ἐὰν μὴ ἡ πατήρ πέμπω μέ ἐλκύω/ ἔλκω αὐτός*), the root of the discussion lies in the claim of the (*ἐλκύω*) “drawing” power of God introduced here (6:44). Theological debates raged concerning the significant drawing power of God in the verse (Borchert, 1996:268). According to Kostenberger (2004:213), Jesus continues to emphasise the human inability to achieve redemption without supernatural assistance. People can rely on the Father’s drawing action (probably through the Holy Spirit), through whom God brings a person to trust in Christ, rather than on human believing.

MacArthur (2006:253) argues that verses 44 and 37 reveal that God’s drawing cannot apply to all unregenerate individuals, as proponents of prevenient grace argue, because verse 37 confines it to the redeemed whom God has given to Christ. Christ draws people in a powerful and irresistible way, but only those who God chose for redemption before the world even existed (Eph. 1:4-5, 11). The grammatical language of John 6:44 supports an irresistible, effectual drawing. The Greek word (*ἔλκω*)¹²¹³ translated “draw” means to compel by irresistible superiority. The word linguistically and lexicographically means “to compel.” Jesus therefore cannot be implying that the Father’s drawing is merely wooing or persuasion that can be resisted. In contrast, this drawing is a call that is indestructible, invincible, unconquerable, indomitable, insurmountable, and impenetrable (Barrett, 2013:110).

According to Carson (1991:293) verses 37 and 44 together show that the Father’s “drawing” activity cannot be reduced to what theologians occasionally call “prevenient grace” that is given to each person, as this drawing is either selected or as the negative note explained in verse 44 which has significance. The statements in verse 37 and verse 44 have a negative connotation, “All that the Father provides to me will be given to me,” and 39, “that I lose nothing of all that he has given me...” In verses 37 and 39, the “person” who gets anything “from heaven” (that is,

¹³ *ἔλκω* the verb draw (Louw and Nida, 1988:208) is defined as “to pull or drag, needing force, “according to the domain of linear movement and its subdomains, “pull,” “draw,” and “drag,” with Acts 14:19 as a point of reference “they stoned Paul and dragged him out of town”; With his tail he dragged a third of the stars out of the sky Revelations 12:4; Simon Peter had a sword and drew it” John 18:10. The usage of the verb has a less violent significance, usually present, however, they cited John 6:44 when they use the verb *ἔλκω*, metaphorically to denote “drawing by inner force or heavenly drive (Vine, Unger & White, 1996:183).

from the Father) was Jesus, however, in this verse, everyone comes to Jesus for salvation. According to Jesus, those who “come to me,” do so only at the direction of his heavenly Father. Both Jesus and those who come are God’s gifts to one another (Michaels, 2010:385).

“And I will raise him on the last day” (v. 44b) - (*Καί ἐγὼ ἀνίστημι ἢ ἔσχατος ἡμέρα*), that Father’s drawing will result in final salvation, the resurrection on the last day, as the last part of verse 44 demonstrates. Jesus cannot be speaking to a compelling universal appeal; otherwise, he would be promising to raise everyone on the last day, a promise that has not yet been fulfilled because so many people pass away during that stage of belief. Jesus is speaking exclusively to those whom the Father has given him and to whom he will provide eternal life and the resurrection to glory. It may be seen again as leading to ultimate salvation. As a result, the rendering of Jesus’ meaning must be effective (Barrett, 2013:111).

Jesus then goes on to describe what type of “pulling” the Father does. It is accomplished via an insight, instruction, and enlightenment implanted inside a person, in fulfilment of the Old Testament promise, “All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be your children’s peace” (Isaiah 54:13). This Isaiah verse is intended for the prophet’s foreseen restored city of Jerusalem. The messianic community and the depiction of the saving reign of God are employed as typological fulfilments of Jerusalem’s return from the Babylonian captivity in the New Testament. This need for personal enlightenment is prevalent in both Testaments. Jeremiah looks forward to a new covenant in which God will implant his law in the minds and hearts of his people (Jer. 31:31-34). In Ezekiel 36:24-25, God makes a promise of a new spirit and heart (Carson, 1991:293).

4.1.1.1.12 Romans 9:10-18

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- so 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 and Esau I hated.” What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then he has mercy on whoever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

Paul starts his examination of the factors preventing Israel from accepting the gospel and benefiting from it at this segment. He holds that God's message has not failed because of Israel's failing. God chooses who He will extend mercy based on His sovereign will. However, this does not imply that he has done anything wrong. He has the right, as Creator, to do anything he wants with what he has created. Paul's purpose in writing this section is to address the problems with his message that were brought to light by the fact most Jews in his day rejected the gospel. If the gospel represents God's message to Israel, then it would seem that God's message was ineffective. Paul responds by informing the churches in Rome that the fact that some Jews had a negative reaction was consistent with the way God had always exercised his sovereign choosing. Paul emphasises his point in this verse by referring to Abraham, Isaac, and Ishmael, as well as Jacob and Esau (Kruse, 2012:374-375).

This verse, Romans 9:10-18, is frequently interpreted by Arminianism to suggest that Jewish scepticism and Gentile openness to the gospel were predetermined or predestined by God. The obstacles are acknowledged to be immense, and a Calvinist reading of this chapter necessitates paradoxical and historical readings of hundreds of texts and many other types of resources. Shellrude (2009:318) finds features in chapters 9-11 that throw this approach into doubt. He then suggests that Paul intends to refute the argument that God was obligated to guarantee that Israel recognises the moment of fulfilment. According to Paul, God has the right to define his people depending on who responds to his gracious initiative.

The scope of Romans 9 is the same as the epistle, according to McCall & Stanglin (2012:132), "the gospel, not the law is the power of God to salvation, not to those who work, but to those who believe," says the message "for the righteousness of God, by which salvation is received by faith in Christ." They argue that the ninth chapter of Romans defends this fundamental message against the Jews' objections, who were striving to overthrow it with all their might.

The main issue is the endeavour to gain salvation via deeds of the law rather than accepting redemption through trust in Christ. The chapter's scope is the same as the letter's, "that the gospel, not the law, is the power of God to salvation, not to him who works, but to him who believes." While it might have appeared that God's promise to the Jews had been broken because they were rejecting the gospel, the truth is that he has always preferred the promise's children to the flesh's offspring (Taylor, 2013:33). According to Arminius (1825; 2011:114-115), salvation may only be realised by trust in Christ, not by obeying the law. Esau and Jacob should be understood in terms of typology. They should not be viewed in and of themselves, but rather as a kind. Esau represents people who seek salvation through the law. Jacob, on the other hand, stands in for the inheritors of the promise who respond in faith to God's offer of forgiveness through Jesus. This typology indicates that God's purpose is based on election, and hence the purpose is dependent on him who calls rather than on deeds. God loves those who

seek righteousness and salvation by faith in Christ, but He despises those who seek the same via works of the law.

Arminius discovers division among Abraham's bodily descendants. Those children sprung from Ishmael are promising. He uses an example to show how people with faith are the promised offspring. God said that he would consider only those who strive for righteousness and redemption by faith to be his offspring, while those who seek the same through the law would be considered aliens (Clarke, 1997:141-142). Arminianism prioritises verses addressing personal responsibility and free will and analyses the other text in accordance. God is sovereign; thus, he is free to set the requirements for salvation, including that salvation comes through faith rather than by keeping the law. God chooses Jacob over Esau because he is confident in Jacob's capacity for trust (Wakefield, 2003:71). According to Loke (2013:34), verses 15-16 confirm that God's desire to provide compassion is not based on meritorious acts or readiness to conduct meritorious actions. This does not rule out the idea that individuals on whom God will have compassion are those whom he anticipated would respond favourably to his merciful influence.

Klein (2015:146) points out that Paul believed that Jacob was chosen over Esau because of "God's purpose in the election." As God has named or counted Abraham's seed via Isaac (9:7), the line would now go through Jacob rather than Esau. This decision to keep Israel's lineage was a sovereign divine act, not prompted by the twins' individual actions or answers. The researcher emphasises that the problem here is not Jacob or Esau's redemption but rather God's sovereign choice. As a result, God picked a corporate entity: Jacob and his descendants, rather than Esau and his descendants to be his people

Furthermore, Paul's exposition of God's sovereignty is only on part of his argument; God's ultimate goal is to show mercy to everyone who respond in faith. As a result, God chooses to offer humans the freedom and duty to choose whether or not to respond in faith. God may have chosen to require faith as a condition of redemption while rejecting the law's works, just as he did with Isaac and Jacob while rejecting Ishmael and Esau (Henry, 1991:348). Therefore, God sovereignly chose to elect apart from any responsibility; but, for election to be realised, faith is a necessary component. Individuals who put their faith in Christ can be counted among the elect. This would imply that believe in Christ is prerequisite for salvation (Kirkpatrick, 2019:51).

Arminius is intrigued by the context around Romans 9. The chapter's scope is the same as the letter's: "that the gospel, not the law is the power of God to salvation, not to him that works, but to him, that believes." Although it might seem that God's promise to the Jews has been broken given their widespread rejection of the gospel, Arminius maintains that God has always preferred the children of the promise to the children of the flesh. Those who seek righteousness by faith are the children of the promise. The example of Isaac, Jacob, and Moses offered in

Romans 9 are types leading to the gospel of Christ. Paul is claiming that God has chosen faith above works and genetic descent as a result, and this is unquestionable (Taylor, 2013:33-34).

According to the reasoning, the words must be viewed in the context of Paul's entire Romans 9-11 argument. Paul addresses two criticisms: that it would be fair for God to let Gentiles be the main beneficiaries of the promise to Israel, which was fulfilled in Jesus, and that the covenant people should have recognised and responded to this truth. Paul argues in Romans 9:6-23 that God is free to judge the Jews who rejected his grace as he is not required to increase the intensity of his irresistible grace in order to elicit a reaction from Israel. God is free to extend mercy to those who are not the primary recipients of biblical promises, such as Gentiles (Shellrude, 2011:80). Paul supports his claim that God preferred Jacob to Esau in this passage by citing Malachi 1:2-3 to do so, according to Klein (2015:147). The juxtaposition of "love" and "hate" is unquestionably elective. But is this referring to Jacob's decision to accept salvation? Malachi's message concerns God's preference for Israel over Edom rather than salvation.

As a result, "faith" produced by prevenient grace is the essential theological premise of Arminianism's soteriological formulation. Faith which is central to Arminianism's soteriology identity refers to God's initiating and maintaining activity in establishing connection with a person, as well as the requirement of personal accountability for God to carry out his justifying work in the life of an unbeliever (Hankins, 2011:99).

Arminians think that justification requires faith. They would argue that faith is not a virtuous act that merits redemption. They would argue that God's gracious act would be to treat in Christ as if it were absolute righteousness to the believer's account is the basis for salvation in the traditional Arminianism. Justification requires faith in Jesus. Faith is not considered as a form of merit, even though it is a little component of the foundation of justification. The penal death of Christ and the only thing that justifies him before God is his life of complete obedience to the Father (Forlines, 2011:267-268).

Paul highlights in these clarifying paragraphs that being a part of God's people is based on God's grace and initiative rather than any obligation on God's part to all of Abraham's descendants. In verse 8, the divide is discussed in terms of ethnicity and fleshly attachment to God. One element stands out clearly from this quick examination of these essential verses. Paul focuses on God's choice of Israel and its historic function, not on specific individuals for eternal salvation, but on their role in God's historic plan for his people (Klein, 2015:149).

Calvinism's reading of Romans 9:10-18: in verses 10-13, by shifting to one patriarchal generation, Paul expounds on the divide between an ethnic and spiritual Israel. He demonstrates that the fact that God preferred Jacob to Esau emphasises the idea of grace rather than race, which is explored in verse 7-9. Paul's argument that covenant membership is dependent on God's call is supported by three details from the biblical account of God's

selection of Jacob and Esau sharing a father and mother. Secondly, God's promise that Jacob would be dominant before the twins was born, meaning that their fates were chosen solely by the will of God, not by natural ability, religious dedication, or faith. Thirdly, the fact that Jacob was the younger of the two brothers emphasises the fact that human preferences had no bearing on God's decision (Moo, 1996:578).

"And not only so" (v. 10) - (Δέ οὐ μόνον) adds to the argument's strength. Paul mentioned disparities in Israel in verse 6 and Abraham's offspring in verse 7 and now mentions differences in Israel's descendants. Nothing can separate God from humanity. One could argue that choosing Isaac over Ishmael was justified because Isaac was Abraham's wife's son and Ishmael was the slave girl's son. Jacob and Esau, on the other hand, shared the same father and mother and were born within the same pregnancy. The only difference was that Esau was older than Jacob, which would give him a certain priority according to human measurement whereas God on the other hand chose Jacob (Morris, 1988:355). Paul advances the argument in verse 7-9 according to Moo (2000:301), by bringing the argument down to one generation, where two children born of the same parents simultaneously. He reminds the audience that Jacob and Esau were conceived via the same act. This gives the argument in verse 7-9 the necessary boost. The only thing that distinguishes Jacob and Esau from Ishmael and Isaac is that they shared a mother and father and were born at the same time.

As a result, Boice (1993:1055) uses past customary practices to argue that Jacob's decision over Esau were contrary to the norms of primogeniture, which states that the elder should have received the greater blessing. The boys were indeed twins. But Esau was the first to emerge from Rebekah's womb, though Jacob was the chosen one. There is no basic explanation for this other than God's sovereign right to dispose of human beings' destinies as he pleases, regardless of any rights they may believe they have owing to age or other considerations.

Paul demonstrates that God's intervention could not have been based on works that had not yet been completed. "Although they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad" (v. 11) - (Γάρ μήπω γεννάω μηδέ πράσσω τίς ἀγαθός ἢ κακός). God, in his sovereignty, decreed that this would be the case. This confirms the divine purpose that election is based on God's calling rather than what humans may do. God's unfettered freedom in assigning priority has nothing to do with country heritage or human quality (Mounce, 1995:198).

It's worth noting that God chose Jacob over Esau to carry out his plan before they were born and before they "had done anything good or bad." It was not determined, "not by works but him who calls," Paul emphasises. Nothing in the argument could be more conclusive than what is written here. The concept of foreseen works as a basis for election is completely dismissed. God's sovereign will is explicitly credited with the choice. The exclusivistic appropriation of God's favour by individuals is being castigated (Kruse, 2012:379).

“So that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls” (v. 11) - (ἵνα τὸ πρόθεσις θεός κατὰ ἐκλογή μένω οὐ ἐξ ἔργον ἀλλὰ ἐξ καλέω), Paul emphasises the purpose and election, which emphasises the divine act sufficiently. Jacob does not appear to be deserving of selection in any way. God has a plan; he actualised in his own time. Paul asserts that God’s actions were taken to accomplish his election goal (Morris, 1988:356). God chooses those who will inherit his promise infallibly and completely, displaying the animadversion of human virtue. He chose them without consideration for what they could do in their lifetime, but solely so that the elections objective could be fulfilled without concern for human merit. The entire stability of salvation is then included in God’s sole purpose (MacArthur, 1994:26).

The phrase “not because of works” - (οὐ ἐξ ἔργον) emphasises the divine impulse even more. Works are broad enough to encompass all forms of human activity; they are not limited in any way, as “law work” is. The fact that God’s purpose is independent of human actions is implied in their prior argument, but it is made plain here. What matter is God’s call (Morris, 1988:356).

“As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (v 13) - (Καθὼς γράφω Ἰακώβ ἀγαπάω δὲ Ἡσαῦ μισέω), Paul asserts with strong evidence just how important it was to Rebekah’s receiving the divine response, namely, that the spiritual position of both was indicated by Jacob’s dominance and Esau’s service, and that Jacob acquired this favour through God’s love, not through his merit. This line from Malachi 1:2-3 has become a lightning rod in the theological controversy surrounding this chapter. The definition of the word “hate” is the first issue to resolve (Calvin, 2007:305).

Malachi 1:2-3, Paul quotes, with one of his well-known introductions “just as it is written,” he restates and builds on verse 12 by demonstrating that God not only foresaw but also caused the contrasted destinies of Jacob and Esau. God loved Jacob and gave him power, while God hated Esau and gave him servitude. What Paul intends by this is determined by the name’s referents “Jacob” and “Esau,” which are used in the Old Testament to indicate the people or countries descended from each of them, in addition to specific humans. Jacob can refer to the Israelite nation. Similarly, Esau gave his name to the Edomites, who are his descendants (Moo, 1996:584).

Malachi 1:2-3 contains a famous and challenging passage. Malachi demonstrates that the prophet is not referring to Jacob and Esau as individuals. He is talking about the countries that these people built, Israel and Edom, respectively. The words that come immediately before the text that Paul quotes in Romans 9:12 from Genesis, 25:23 moves in the same direction: “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.” Many scholars think that Paul is

referring to this Old Testament context throughout this chapter as he discusses God's calling of the nations and their role in his plan of salvation (Morris, 1988:357).

Paul's quotes from the Old Testament invite readers to question whether Paul's aim is corporate rather than individual. Many aspects of Romans 9 are difficult to reconcile with a corporate interpretation: the emphasis being on God's children's identity (9:7-9, 29); the contrast between wrath and glory (9:22-23); and the entire point of the discussion, which demonstrate which people from within the single nation of Israel are chosen by God. Paul is most likely using an Old Testament passage about the sovereign and gracious election to convey the idea about individual salvation that is at the heart of Romans 9 (Moo, 2002:57-58).

However, despite its strengths, the historical reading of verses 10-13 ultimately falls short of the text's evidence. In verses 10b-11a, Paul uses terminology that is not easily applied to nations to show that when he describes Jacob and Esau's conception, birth, and works, he is considering them as distinct people. Paul uses numerous terms and phrases in this passage that are frequently used to refer to redemption elsewhere, and they will also have this sense in texts that are quite like this one: "election" (Rom 11:5, 7); "call" (Rom. 8:28) and "not of works" (Rom 4:2-8 and 11:60). Paul does not think God chooses and calls people or nations, even Israel, for redemption independently of their efforts, thus it's challenging to apply these words to nations or people (Moo, 1996:585).

What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! (v.14) - (*Τίς ἐπέω οὐν? Μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ θεός? Γίνομαι μή!*), The flesh cannot hear God's wisdom without being immediately upset by a slew of questions and without striving to hold God accountable. As a result, Paul writes this letter as an experienced educator. He anticipates or raises questions that people will have concerning this instruction to avoid misunderstandings. He understands that his teaching on God's election sovereignty will elicit concern and objections. The questions are simple to predict. Was God not guilty of injustice if he chose with sovereign freedom? (Moo, 2000:309).

This rejection is accompanied by an emphatic "By no means!" It is inconceivable to believe that God is unjust. Therefore, Paul's initial response to the question is "By no means!" He employs this term many times in Romans (3:6, 31; 6:2) and other letters (Gal 2:17) to show forceful denial, as he does here. In the verses that follow, he substantiates his denial by appealing to God's word to Moses and Pharaoh (Kruse, 2012:381). Before continuing, readers should be aware that this very objection demonstrates that the reason God chooses some people and rejects others cannot be explained by anything other than his purposes. Paul would not have raised these issues regarding God's righteousness if the difference were based on works, and there would have been no reason to suspect that God treated everyone equally if he had done so (Calvin, 1536-1559; 2007:307).

“For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion” (v. 15) - (Γάρ λέγω Μωσῆς ἐλεέω ὃς ἂν ἐλεέω καί οἰκτείρω ὃς ἂν οἰκτείρω). “For” (Γάρ) will give grounds for Paul’s strong “By no means!” (Γίνομαι μή!) he then goes on to mention another pertinent text from the Bible (Exod 33:19). The quotation does not refer to justice, but rather to God’s desire to show mercy. He chooses when and how to show mercy and compassion. Mercy and compassion have similar meanings, but the combination highlighted the fact that God is both compassionate and merciful, and that he does so freely towards whoever he chooses (Morris, 1998:359).

Paul’s explanation of why the rejection is justified in the verse’s preface shows that he is not content to just deny the claim that God is unjust. The first section of Paul’s justification makes use of scripture to show that God’s free decision to favour Jacob over Esau was not a singular occurrence but rather reflected God’s very nature (vv. 15 and 17). Moses asks the Lord to show him glory in the Exodus context. The Lord responds by promising to bring all good things in front of Moses and to declare his name, (the Yahweh) to him. Paul correctly perceives a revelation of one of the fundamental characteristics of God in scripture: his freedom to bestow kindness on anyone he chooses (Moo, 1996:592).

“So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (v. 16) - (ἀρα οὖν οὐ τό ἐθέλω οὐδέ τό τρέχω ἀλλά τό ἐλεέω θεός). The conclusion is drawn from the truth of verse 15, which is an Old Testament quotation in which God discloses to Moses a key part of his nature: he has the freedom to show mercy to anybody he chooses (Moo, 2000:310). If this is the case, the conclusion is that if God is merciful to whomever he pleases and compassionate to whomever he pleases, then salvation belongs to God, not to mankind. This is preferable since the main theme of verse 16 is the absence of any human contribution in salvation. It is stated that salvation does not come from mankind’s desire or effort, not from mankind’s will or personal accomplishment but from God (Boice, 1993:1084-1085).

The points according to Mounce (1995:199) are that God’s favour is not determined by anybody or anything other than himself. The basis for God’s election purpose is divine kindness, not human will (*thelō* in verse 16, might reflect desire or purpose) or effort (a participle from *trechō*, “run”). God, not human actions, nor ambitions, is the originator mercy for the sinner. Salvation is never earned through ardent human efforts or human choice. It all starts with God’s sovereign, gracious and everlasting will (MacArthur, 1994:32-33).

“For the scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this purpose, I have raised you, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth” (v. 17) - (Λέγω γάρ τό γραφή τό Φαραώ ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἐγώ αὐται ἐξεγείρω ἐγώ ὅπως ἐνδείκνυμι ἐν τό δύνاميς ἐγώ καί ὅπως διαγγέλλω τό ἐν πᾶς ἡ γῆ) it’s worth noting here that Paul links what scripture says with what God says. The scripture phrase is derived from Exodus 9:16, which is the conclusion of

God's message to Moses. The Lord told Pharaoh that he had been spared on this occasion because he had raised him to demonstrate his might in dealing with him so that God's name could be spread throughout the globe. Paul argues that, just as God hardened Pharaoh's heart during the exodus, God's sovereign choice to extend mercy to some while hardening others explains the failure of kinsfolk to receive the gospel blessings (Kruse, 2012:382). The second quotation according to Moo (2000:310), confirms God's freedom to act as he desires, albeit from a negative perspective. The central theme of the Bible's narrative is God freeing his people from Egyptian slavery. God's message of mercy was first sent to Moses, the man God chose to deliver his people.

The term "Raised" (ἐξεγείρω) refers to the bringing or elevation of historical people to positions of prominence. The central argument is that God placed Pharaoh on the historical scene for his own purposes, namely, to demonstrate his (δύναμις) "power" and publicise his name (MacArthur, 1994:33). The phrase "for this very purpose" (ἐγὼ αὐταί) makes it clear that Pharaoh's actions were furthering God's plan. Indeed, God states, "I raised you," rather than the customary language, which emphasises divine work. What God did with the plagues before the Exodus and later in taking his people out of Egypt demonstrated his strength and was greatly discussed. Pharaoh's intentions were not revealed but those of God. Paul clearly wants his readers to understand that what will emerge from the current circumstances will not be the triumph of his Jewish opponents' willpower, but the glory of God (Morris, 1988:361).

The argument is summarised in verse 18, "So then he has mercy on whomever he wills and hardens whomever he wills" (v. 18) - (ἄρα οὖν ὃς θέλω / ἐθέλω ἐλεέω ὃς δὲ ὃς θέλω σκληρύνω). It establishes the divine active concept upon which the subsequent events were founded. God chooses when to demonstrate mercy and when to harden people's hearts. In whatever he does, he is sovereign (Mounce, 1995:200). Paul concludes discussing God's choosing of people, events, and situations in verse 16 as follows: "so then it depends not on human will or exertion but on God, who has mercy". And as a corollary to God's mercy, Paul recalls in 9:17 the words of God given by Moses to Pharaoh after the plague of boils had covered the land of Egypt: "For this purpose, I have raised you, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." And he draws the following conclusion from God's words: "so then he has mercy on whomever he wills and hardens whomever he wills" (9:18) (Longenecker, 2016:818).

"Therefore" (ἄρα) introduces a statement of the principle on which the preceding is based. God's will is significant. It is important for readers to remember that this is an occasional writer, and that Paul is dealing with a special Jewish style of opposition. Readers should not believe he is fully focused on the question. But what matters for those considering the impact of Israel's predicament on the truth of justification by faith is that God does whatever he wants. He will

show mercy, and it is on this that the focus is placed. The word mercy appears throughout the dialogue (Morris, 1988:361).

The word “harden” (σκληρύνω) appears 14 times in Exodus 4-14 and it means “to make spiritually insensitive.” This word has a figurative meaning of making someone tenacious and obstinate. As a result, God’s hardening is a process that renders a person insensitive to God and his word, which if left unchecked, results in eternal damnation. Some people or nations lack the understanding necessary to advance God’s plan of salvation through his deeds and word; as a result, there are no consequences for a person’s ultimate destiny (MacArthur, 1994:35). Verse 18 is strongly related to verses 22-23, where “vessels of mercy, destined for glory” are contrasted with “vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction,” according to structural and linguistic factors. God’s kindness produces glory, but God’s hardening produces anger and destruction. Scripture regularly used the word “harden” to refer to a spiritual condition in which one is unreceptive and disobedient to his truth (Moo, 1996:596).

This was the case with Israel and Pharaoh during the Exodus and Paul implies that it was still the case with the Jewish people in his day. God gives mercy to some, causing them to receive the message, while hardening others, causing them to reject it. Nothing is unfair with God. He has the right to be merciful to anybody he chooses, and to become hardened against whoever he chooses in order to accomplish his goal (Kruse, 2012:383).

4.1.1.1.13 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 to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he blessed us in the Beloved.

This passage shows how important it is to understand what (ἐκλέγομαι) “he chose,” the subsequent parallel idea (προορίζω) “having predestined,” the referent (ἡμᾶς) “us”, the frequently repeated (ἐν αὐτῷ) “in him” or “in Christ” formula and the phrase (πρό καταβολή κόσμος) “before the foundation of the world” means. Paul also refers to the accurate understanding of the concept of holiness and blamelessness in this passage.

Some characteristics of Ephesus’ religious environment aids in understanding the discipleship challenges that these new believers encountered, as well as why Paul covers certain topics and emphasises others in this letter. Ephesus’ prominence was not only political and commercial; it was also the pagan goddess of goodness and Artemis’ shrine (Diana). It was also a hotspot for occult (magic) practices. Religious life was predominated by emperor worship, idolatry, and the occult and Spiritism black arts (Elwell & Yarbrough, 2005:308).

People in Ephesus and western Asia Minor were always terrified of astral spirits who governed fate. The exquisite cult statue of Ephesian Artemis represents the goodness as a Queen of Heaven wearing the signs of the zodiac as a necklace, implying that she had the power of the shackles of the fate as a Queen of Heaven. In the Roman period, some Jewish works express concern for the fate and soul of the sun, moon, planets, and stars. For these believers in Asia, where Paul spent his time ministering, Paul's teaching provides pertinent and astonishing truth concerning the ultimate reality. Contrary to popular belief, the real, all-powerful God who made the sun and stars decided their fate rather than the other way around. Before creating the heavens and the earth, God predetermined their membership in Christ (Arnold, 2002:302-307).

The passage's immediate context is a cohesive chain of thinking articulated in one sentence that spans chapter three through fourteen. The word (εὐλογητός) "blessed" declares how God expressed the pericope's main points. This signifies that God has blessed Christians with numerous spiritual blessings. The articular aorist participle refers to Christ's entire redemptive purpose, which is centred on death, resurrection, and ascension (Gromacki, 2015:12).

Arminianism's interpretation of Ephesians 1:4-6: In two different ways, Arminians have responded to passages like Ephesians 1:4-6 that appear to support a pre-temporal election. First, classic Arminianism believed that God pretemporally elects or chooses believers based on his foreknowledge of their repentance and faith choices. This perspective sees God as having a passive understanding of the future. On the other hand, several Arminians have adopted a different perspective, contending that Ephesians 1:4-6 refers to the election of corporate body of Christians. Instead of being an election of people, it is a choosing of a body that anybody who will place their faith in Jesus for salvation can be a part of. In this perspective, Christ is seen as the foundation of the Church's election (Ratliff, 2009:5).

An Arminian scholar Olson (2011:125) claims that Ephesians 1, which contains much about election, is not about individuals and their internal destinies, but about people of God. The plural "you" is used throughout the chapter to refer to God's chosen people, the church. Election is a call to action, a summons to work with God in fulfilment of his elective plan. That purpose and goal are centred on Jesus Christ as God's mission to rescue the world. The election to salvation should be viewed corporately, according to this examination of New Testament sources. The Synoptic Gospels, John, Peter, James, and Paul show that God has elected a people or a community. Plural language is prevalent in election texts (Peterman, 2010:201-202).

God "chose" (Greek verb ἐκλέγομαι) Paul says that Christians in Christ were holy and spotless in his sight before the world was created and therefore chosen by God. The phrase "chosen ones" refers to the corporate group to which Paul is writing. God elected Paul and all Christians; therefore, they are included. The content of "us" is under doubt here. Is Paul emphasising God's

choosing of individual Christians, or is he referring to God's choice of the church as a whole? (Klein, 2015:153).

According to Abasciano (2006:356) Paul's explicit language of election to salvation is always corporate. Although it is possible to argue that the idea of election still exists and can be applied to people even in the absence of explicit language, this view still favours a corporate understanding of election, and it is difficult to locate instances of the language of election unto salvation about a specific person. Paul mentions "God elects" (Rom 8:33) and the church as being chosen in Christ (Eph 1:4, but never with specific language. It is crucial to understand that neither the corporate term in Ephesians nor the multiple pronouns in verses 3-4 suggests that the passage should be interpreted as supporting corporate election. It's worth noting that humans' election, as well as the spiritual rewards that come with it, is Christocentric. To put it another way, it is realised and centred in Christ (Ratliff, 2009:6).

According to Forlines & Pinson (2011:182-183), Ephesians 1:4 is crucial in the contextualisation and application of the doctrine of grace in salvation. It demonstrates that Christ followers were not specifically chosen before the world was created. It places the election in the past. The "us" appears to be a group of individuals who were chosen based on the context of scripture, Paul says in Ephesians 1:4 "he has chosen us in him," implying that believers are chosen in Christ. He makes mention of their being chosen to be in Christ. God cannot love a sinner to salvation until the sinner is reconciled to himself through Christ. As a result, there is no place for predestination except in Christ (Arminius, 1825; 2011:100).

Klein (2015:154) claims that the proponents of individual elections ignore the large context in which Paul makes this argument. In this epistle to the Ephesians, Paul focuses on the identity of the chosen body, the church, rather than on the individual. Paul asserts that rather than choosing specific people to be in Christ, God chose "us," the church "in Christ". Paul eventually concluded that the church was God's chosen people and the successors to Israel's selection as the chosen one. It's important to note that Ephesians consistently uses plural pronouns when describing the concept of being "in Christ." Paul emphasises in his letter to the Ephesians that the church is one body headed by Christ. When looking at Ephesians 2:11-22, where the church is defined as "a holy temple in the Lord" that is "being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" the emphasis is amplified (verses 21-22) (Ratliff, 2009:6-7).

Arminius (1631; 2015:72) goes on to make a very insightful statement. The meritorious cause of those blessings that have been destined to believe by that decree is Christ, who is positioned as the cornerstone of this predestination. Because the love with which God loves humanity unconditionally to salvation and with which he wishes to bestow eternal life on them, exists only in Christ. Their feeling of God's loving choice of them was intricately linked with their sense of

belonging to Christ, as indicated by the prepositional phrase “in him.” In and through Christ, God’s plan for them to be his people had been fulfilled (Klein, 2015:154).

It was not within the purview of sovereign grace to enter into a personal relationship with a person without first applying Christ’s death and righteousness to his account. If that is the case sovereign grace does not have the efficacy and affectivity to know or elect people apart from foreknowing that the person is found to be in Christ in eternity past (Forlines & Pinson, 2011:184). The necessity of the redemptive work should be sufficient to comprehend that individual salvation and election happens in time as one puts their faith in Christ, not beforehand (Ratliff, 2009:10).

Paul declares that those whom he (*προορίζω*) “predestined” to be adopted as his children through Christ (Eph 1:4), he “actualises” this predestination in accordance with his purpose. God’s pleasure wills, according to Paul, is the driving force behind the future advantages God planned for his people. He demonstrates that God has marked out and predetermined the most desirable of all gifts for those elected in Christ: adoption into the family as his offspring. It’s important to note that predestination isn’t the factor that determines who gets these benefits. Predestination does not mean that God has decided who will be his children; rather, it refers to God’s predetermined objective or consequences for his people (Klein, 2015:162). The Greek word (*προορίζω*) “predestined” hasn’t decided whether election is good or bad. It hasn’t harmed the chances of a conditional election. Those who believe in conditional election have the same claim to the term predestination as those who believe in unconditional election. This is the distinct interpretation of the point at which predestination ends and faith begins. When it comes to believers, however, they consider predestination as having the same ends as Calvinists (Forlines & Pinson, 2011:173).

On the fourth decree of his sentiments on predestination Arminius (1629; 2015:185) says that this decree is founded on God’s foreknowledge, in which he knew from the beginning who would believe and endure via his prevenient grace, and who would not believe and preserve through subsequent grace. The clearest point of departure from his Reformed colleagues can be noticed here. The edict is founded on God subsequent will to save those humans who would accept his grace, as revealed by divine intermediate knowledge. Individuals are elected on the condition of being in Christ through faith, as demonstrated in a succinct and clear form in Arminius’ teaching of conditional election. Faith is a requirement for eligibility for the same reason that it is a prerequisite of justification. Those who believe in Christ are predestined for salvation; their faith comes before predestination in a logical sense (Stanglin & McCall, 2012:135-136).

Paul claims that election is found in the church’s collective option “in Christ.” God chose those who are in Christ as the basis of the world. The purpose of this election, according to Paul, is for

the chosen one to become holy and blameless. God chooses people to generate holy people, not for the sake of privilege. This serves as a reminder to humans of why God chose Israel to be his people (Klein, 2015:155). There would be a contradiction in Pauline theology, according to Ratliff (2009:11-12), if Ephesians 1:3-6 affirms individual election rather than corporate election. It would be meaningless to say that one person is “in Christ” before another in Romans 16:7. If it is understood that conversion, not God’s pre-temporal decree, is when one becomes “in Christ,” then Paul’s statement makes perfect sense. The idea of personal election in Christ in Ephesians 1:3-4 should therefore be securely rejected by humans.

Ephesians 1:4-6 as read by Calvinism Paul declares that God is blessed, establishing the nature of God and then goes on to explain how God manifested this blessing in salvation. Throughout doxology, God is the active agent, and the beneficiaries of his action are people. It is God “who has blessed (v. 3), chosen (v. 4), “predestined”, freely bestowed” (v. 5), “lavished redemption and forgiveness” (vv. 7-8), “made known” and “purposed” (verse 9), receiving an “inheritance”, everything being done “in accordance with his will” (v. 11), being “sealed” (v. 13) and receiving the “Holy Spirit” (v. 14). As a result, praise will be directed at his glory (vv. 6, 12 and 14) (Crawford, 2000:77).

“Even as he chose us” (v.4), (*Καθώς ἐκλέγομαι*¹⁴ ἡμᾶς) the adverbial conjunction (*καθώς*), “even as” is usually translated as “just as,” “even as,” or “according to as” and it is used in 4:17, 21, 32; 5:2, 25, 29. It implies that God blesses believers through the Trinity’s three persons. The spiritual rewards include the Father’s election, the Son’s atonement, and the Holy Spirit’s seal (Hoehner, 2002:175). The “even as” language of verse 4 and the verses that follow now emphasise the expansive blessing of verse 3, which is attributed to Christ, according to O’Brien (1999:98). People have been lavishly blessed by God because he chose them in Christ, predestined them for adoption and so on. As the result, Paul employs the term *καθώς* to connect his opening blessings from God with a description of how God has blessed those who bless him (Thielman, 2010:47).

The middle voice verb “chose” (*ἐκλέγομαι*) could mean that God chose in his best interests. As a result, redemption, including election must be understood from a theocentric rather than anthropocentric perspective (Gromacki, 2015:17). (*ἐκλέγομαι*) is the word from the group, which

¹⁴ *ἐκλέγομαι* (Louw & Nida, 1988:361) under domain to 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”. They referenced Acts 1:2 “he gave instruction by the power of the Holy Spirit to the men whom he had chosen as his apostles”. In a number of languages, the choice of terms or expressions for “choosing” or “selecting” often depends upon either what is chosen or selected or the purpose for such a choice for example, personal pleasure, rational evaluation or outright prejudice.

Being chosen comes from God’s grace, not from human volition (Ephesians 1:4; Romans 9:11; 11:5). As a result of Christ’s death, they are offered to him by God the Father, who has foreseen and known about them all John 17:6 and Rom 8:29 (Vine, Unger & White, 1996:196).

means “to gather” and by extension “to speak.” The Greek meaning of (ἐκλέγομαι) “chose” (middle voice) is “to choose, to pick out,” and while it might apply to a thing (Luke 10:42), it mostly refers to people in the New Testament, as it does here. The middle voice implies that the verb’s action is related to the subject who is doing the rendering. Every time the middle voice is used in the New Testament, it emphasises the connection between the person chosen and the specific purpose of the one who makes the choice (Crawford, 2000:78).

God “chose us,” (ἐκλέγομαι ἡμᾶς) Paul says as he begins his exposition of God’s blessings. Chose is the only verb in verses 3-14 that is grammatically independent of other clauses (Hoehner, 2002:175). Even though syntactical precedence does not necessarily indicate conceptual priority, in this instance it most certainly does. Paul views God’s free choosing of his people to be the clearest sign of the abundant character of grace, as the topic of God’s gracious initiative in benefiting his people is repeated frequently throughout the book (vv. 5, 9, 11) (Thielman, 2010:48). Paul is referring to salvational election when he uses the present tense. “No one comes to me,” Jesus said, “unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). “Draws” (ἐλκύω) is an irresistible power that was employed in Ancient Greek literature to describe a desperate hungry person being pulled to food and a demonic force being drawn to animals when they were unable to possess human beings (MacArthur, 1986:10-11).

In his analysis of the verb “to choose,” Hoehner (2002:175-175) offers numerous discoveries. First and foremost, God is the topic in most cases in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, as it is here. Secondly, the subject did not decide in a vacuum, but considering all available possibilities. God picked a few people from the entire human population. Thirdly, there is no evidence of disdain for those who were not chosen. It is not a dismissive dismissal. The selection of Levi for the priesthood implies nothing bad about the other tribes. Fourthly, it is in the middle voice, as is generally often the case, demonstrating personal interest in the chosen one. Hence, rather than a random impersonal choice, God chose with deep personal involvement. Fifthly, the chosen person has no legal claim on the chooser. The Bible makes it quite apparent that humans fall short of God’s glory and do not even seek him (Romans 3:10-11). Nobody was selected by God on merit and hence had a legal right to be chosen. On the other hand, everyone is a sinner who deserves to be rejected. God was under no need to pick anybody, yet he freely chose some as a sign of his love. This is to say that if God had not initiated salvation, no one would have received his everlasting presence and existence. Therefore, the aorist tense and the middle voice indicate God’s independent choice. It gives the reflexive signifying that God not only chose by himself but for himself. The primary purpose of electing the church was the praise of his glory (MacArthur, 1986:11).

In the Old Testament, God choose Abraham, and through him, blessed him and all the nations of the world (Gen 12:1-3). Then the Lord made Israel his prized possession among the peoples.

Israel's selection was entirely the result of God's gracious choosing; it has nothing to do with Israel's decision (Deut 7:6-8; 14:2). The Lord elected her to himself because he loves her and maintained the covenant he made to her forefathers. The object of God's choice in Ephesians is "us" (O'Brien, 1999:98-99). The object of election according to Hoehner (2002:176) is "us". This is a reference to Paul and the letter's addressee (v. 1). It is impossible to argue that this refers to a communal election because of the plural "us". Paul would not have used the singular pronoun because he is writing to the entire church, not an individual. In this situation, this simple pronoun (ἡμεῖς) easily translated as "us," describes the target of divine action (Crawford, 2000:82).

With the adverbial prepositional phrase: (ἐν αὐτῷ) "in him," Paul highlights the completely underserved situation for the reader, a generous aspect of God's choosing of Christians to be his people. The phrase "in him" most likely does not allude to Christ's pre-existence, in whom the elect were made believers before the world's foundation, but rather describes how God's choosing became effective for believers in the same way that the phrase (διὰ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός) "through Jesus Christ" does in the next clause (v. 5) (Thielman, 2010:48). Furthermore, the prepositional phrase in verse 2 makes a reference to "in Christ," meaning that God chose "us" in relation to Christ. It does not imply that God elected "us" because of our trust in Christ, as that would be inconsistent with God's prerogative of choice. If so, Christians would have a legal claim that God must have chosen them as a result of their faith (Hoehner, 2002:176).

One of Paul's favourite expressions in this epistle is (ἐν αὐτῷ) "in him" or "in Christ," which appears at least thirty-four times. This section (1:3-14) alone has ten references, with two in this verse. Although there is much controversy and difficulty defining the exact meaning, it is essential to understanding election and predestination. The preposition can denote either a location or an instrumentality; nevertheless, Paul emphasises the latter meaning when using it in Ephesians along with Christ (Crawford, 2000:83). In this century, Paul's usage of the phrase "in Christ" or "in the Lord" has gotten a lot of attention. He commonly uses the formula. It has soteriological consequence in the way he utilises it. In terms of instrumentality, it describes Christ as the source or focus of believers' advantages. Because of what he has done, believers enjoy specific blessings. For example, the passage's concern reveals that Christians in Christ have adoption, grace, redemption, forgiveness, inheritance, hope and sealing (Colijn, 1991:10). Paul emphasises the supernatural cause throughout this paragraph; God chose us "in Christ," not because of anything believers do. It was his decision to unite believers with Christ. The Bible declares that God chose believers before the creation of the world; the human initiative appears to be purposefully undermined. God chose believers in love before they could do anything to deserve it (Chapell, 2009:26).

“Before the foundation of the world” - (*Πρό καταβολή κόσμος*), this phrase emphasises God’s graciousness, stating that it happened before believers could do anything to influence it and thus it is a gift, therefore, it comes as a gift (Thielman, 2010:48). Hoehner (2002:177) syntactically explains that the noun (*καταβολή*) is a compound of (*κατα*), “down” and (*βολή*) “throw” and hence the idea of “throwing down.” The noun is rarer and later than the verb (*καταβολή*) with the same basic meaning “to throw down.” The verb is used to describe the act of “throwing down” seed in the earth, or the act of “throwing down” seed in a female (conception), or the act of giving birth to a new thought. It speaks of setting of stones for a structure’s foundation or launching point. It implies that something has been going on since the beginning of time. With the preposition (*πρό*), it is possible to demonstrate that an activity occurred prior to the world’s formation or foundation. As a result, before the planet was even created, God predetermined the believer in eternity past. God preferred Jacob to Esau before they were even born or had done anything to earn his favour (Rom 9:11).

It is evident from the phrase “before the foundation of the world” that the decision of salvation in Christ was made in eternity, prior to time and creation. The Pauline letters use the language of election before the foundation of the world multiple times, not least in the context of thankfulness (1 Thes 1:4; 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9). God’s choice was made based on his grace and love, not on temporal circumstances or human goodness, as stated in the declaration that his election occurred before creation. The depths of his compassionate, sovereign personal character drove his election (O’Brien, 1999:100).

According to MacArthur (1986:11), God selected mankind in him “in Christ” from eternity, before the creation of the universe, and therefore utterly away from any merit or worthiness that any individual may have (v. 3). Before the creation of the world, God’s sovereign choice placed those who are saved in eternal oneness with Christ. The current experience of believers in the gifts delivered by God is the temporal fulfilment of God’s plan of grace for them envisaged in eternity. As the fulfilment is realised “in Christ,” so the purpose is created in him (Bruce, 1984:254).

Therefore, this demonstrates that the everlasting salvation of certain persons is the result of God’s pure sovereignty and absolute determination of His counsel. Such election is both “unconditional” and “unconditioned” and is dependent on God’s favour. This shows us that God has selected a path of action that will result in the everlasting redemption of his children from the beginning of time (Yates, 2018:5)

“That we should be holy and blameless before him” - (*ἡμεῖς εἶναι ἅγιος καί ἄμωμος κατενώπιον αὐτός*) the present infinitive of the verb “to be” (*εἶναι*) expresses the purpose of election and (*ἡμεῖς*) “we” is the accusative subject of the infinitive (Hoehner, 2002:178). Christians are holy because God credits them with Christ’s righteousness the minute they accept in Jesus as their

Saviour. The word “blameless” or “without blame” (*ἄμωμος*) means without fault, morally blameless. The Septuagint uses the term to denote perfect sacrificial animals that may be presented to God as sacrifices (Lev 1:3). It is used to describe Jesus as the Lamb “without blemish and spot” (1 Pet 1:19) (Gromacki, 2015:23-24).

Chapell’s (2009:22) observation that Paul’s phrasing shows God’s intention is spot on. Humans were chosen by God to be “holy and blameless in his sight.” The benefits of their connection with Christ in terms of sanctification before God are described in this dual description. Something has been removed and something has been applied to them. Election comes with benefits, but it also comes with responsibilities. The purpose of election is to realise God’s original plan for humanity, which is to create a people who are perfectly moulded to the image of his Son for himself (Rom 8:29-30). Again, God’s election was entirely the result of his grace since, if he had planned for people to be blameless and holy in his eyes, then, at the time of his choice, they would have been blameworthy and unholy, making them deserve of condemnation rather than adoption (O’Brien, 1999:100). Believers must understand that their faith is based entirely on God’s work, not on the shaky foundation of anything in themselves. It is fully the Lord’s work and is carried out according to his design, which dated from “before the foundation of the world.” As a result, there is no boasting (Foulkes, 1989:55)

“... he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons” (v.5) - (*Προορίζω*¹⁵ ἡμᾶς εἰς υἰοθεσία). After that, Paul describes God’s decision in more detail by using the aorist participle (*προορίζω*) “having predestined.” In the same as the preposition “before” (*πρό*) in 1:4 which indicated God’s choice of his people before the creation of the world, Paul prefixed this preposition to designate a people for God himself historically before the world began (Thielman, 2010:51). The Greek word (*προορίζω*) “having predestined” literally means “to decide upon beforehand; predetermine.” In the New Testament, the verb predestined appears six times (Acts 4:18; Rom 8:29-30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11) Peter used the phrase on the day of Pentecost to claim that the crucifixion was pre-planned by God. Jesus was “delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified and put to death” (Acts 2:23) (Gromacki, 2015:24-25).

The prefix (*πρό*) denotes that the edict is in effect prior to the achievement of its goal. It does not imply before others, but before the fulfilment, which isn’t technically a time referent, but it’s

¹⁵ *Προορίζω* (Louw & Nida, 1988:360) is under domain think and subdomain to decide beforehand, which could also means 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 humans to himself as his sons (Eph 1:5). It appears in the New Testament in Romans 8:29 “those whom he decided upon ahead of time, these he called”.

MacArthur & Mayhue (2017:935) define it broadly as God’s unchanging, everlasting decision regarding everything; particularly, as God’s unchanging, eternal decision regarding who will be saved and who will be rejected and punished for their sin.

obvious from the immediate context that this action also encompasses before creation. “Having predestined” (*προορίζω*) appears as a participle qualifying the main verb “chose”, (*ἐκλέγομαι*) which is previously mentioned in verse 4 and describes God’s action in eternity in which he had predetermined the fate of specific people. The Greek word (*υἱοθεσία*) translated “adoption as sons” describes God’s decision to adopt the elect into his household. As though they were natural sons, the elect receives a family name and inheritance (Crawford, 2000:81-82).

According to Arnold (2010:81), the verb (*προορίζω*) “having predestined” expands on the idea of God choosing believers syntactically. He says it with an aorist participle derived from the aorist verb (*ἐκλέγομαι*). This should be understood as temporal, with the participle occurring at the same moment in time as the main verb. That is, the actions of choosing and predestining happen simultaneously and in no apparent order. Paul now shifts his perspective on God’s plan for deciding who his people would be. Though Paul stated in verse 4 that God’s aim in electing his people as for them to be holy and blameless before him in love, he now described God’s purpose in predetermining his people as their “adoptive sonship” (Thielman, 2010:51).

In this context (*Διὰ Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*) “Through Jesus Christ.”, Paul’s declaration that God predetermined believers’ adoption as sons should be interpreted in its entirety. Adoption as God’s children is “through Jesus Christ,” since Jesus shares his divine sonship with them through their relationship with him (Thielman, 2010:52). God’s grace is his unfailing good will, which received definitive expression in the course of history via the work of Christ’s rescue. God is praised for this redemptive effort and its impact on believers’ lives; his grace is shown to be deserving of high praise (Bruce, 1984:258).

The compound phrase (*εἰς αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὸ εὐδοκία αὐτοῦ θέλημα*) “according to the purpose of his will”, explains God’s work in foreordaining the saved to be his children. This is one of the many interchangeable expressions resulting in tension in Ephesians (O’Brien, 1999:103). The noun (*εὐδοκία*) “good pleasure” indicates that God’s decision to predestine adopted children into his family was not unfavourable but rather an expression of his good pleasure. The genitive source of (*Θέλημα*) “will” implies that the good pleasure is due to his will. God’s delight is expressed freely from his own will in Ephesians 1:5&9, and it is unaffected by anything a person does. As a result, God took the initiative to predetermine people’s future as God’s adopted offspring. He has accomplished this by bringing them to God through his Son, Jesus Christ. All of this was done at his leisure and according to his own desires (Hoehner, 2002:199).

The doctrine of grace in salvation is intended to bring glory to God’s grace, (*εἰς ἑπαινος δόξα αὐτοῦ χάρις ἐν χαριτώ ἡμᾶς ἐν ἡ ἀγαπᾶω*) “To the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.” The doctrine exalts God’s grace because sinful humans do not deserve divine action (Gromacki, 2015:27). One of the New Testament works, Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, inspires Christians to reflect on God’s majesty considering his benevolent action

in their lives which is God's calling, 1:3-6; the Son's atoning work 1:7-12; the Holy Spirit sealing 1:13-14. Throughout the eulogy section, Paul repeats the theme (εἰς ἔπαινος δόξα χάριν) "to the praise of his glorious grace" to emphasise the believer's adoration for the Father, who is the glory of the Father. Paul employs the genitive case three times in verses 6, 12, 14, to attribute this trait to God. Verse 6 usage has a distinct substantive from other uses (ἡ χάριν) "the grace" after (δόξα) "glory". Paul focuses on one facet of God's grandeur, which is his grace, making God's grace the target of praise. People are saved because of God's merciful act on their behalf (1:3-6) (Slusser, 2018:154).

To the glory of God's grace people are saved and adopted as children. God predetermined the body before the world was created so that humans would not boast or gain glory, but rather, all glory would be given to him. Salvation is totally of God, not partially divine and half human. To ensure this, every provision and detail of salvation was completed prior to the birth of any human or the formation of the planet on which mankind could be born (MacArthur, 1986:15-16). The idea that all of God's blessings are bestowed upon people through Christ is supported by (ἐν ἡ ἀγαπάω) "In the beloved". In Colossians 1:3, the term "beloved" highlights Christ as the supreme object of the Father's love, referring to him as "the Son of his love." Jews may view this title as having a messianic connotation in the first century (O'Brien, 1999:104). The preposition (ἐν) indicates a close personal relationship, and the use of the participle in the article individualises it to mean that close relationships with loved ones are among the favours that God has given to people (Hoehner, 2002:203)

In view of their theological background, both Calvinistic and Arminianistic interpretations of scripture have led to a Calvinistic conclusion. Perhaps most importantly, the research has demonstrated that God choose those who will be saved based on his own will, not anything else, such as works or faith, whether foreseen or not in those humans' beings so chosen. From the beginning of time, all blessings have been received in unity with Christ. As a result, grace in salvation must be perceived first and foremost in Christ from the beginning. Foreordination is based on the Father's love (Eph 1:4-5); election is a personal decision made by the loving Father to give them his Son through the Spirit's work. The Bible credits election to God, affirming that it was a pre-creation decision made in eternity and that it is in Christ (Letham, 2019:416). As a result, the phrase "before the foundation of the world" denotes the election's deepest base and origin. The everlasting and eternally decreeing God is the source of this election. God, not people makes the decision about people's salvation (Genderen & Velema, 2008:215). One point is made in this verse alone, Paul's meaning is unavoidable, even if it is difficult to accept. Before the creation of the world, God chose believers in Jesus Christ (Phillips, 2004:45).

Predestination is based on God's knowledge; it is not merely the identification of a person to whom God in his sovereign mercy had determined to offer repentance and faith since "faith is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8), rather than a foreknowledge that a particular person will believe and repent. For "the purpose of God according to election to stand not of works but of him who calls," God makes decisions in accordance with the good pleasure of his will (Eph 1:5), not any good action on part of the creature (Gomes, 2003:326).

Those who "were appointed to eternal life" came to faith, according to Acts 13:48. Being called to salvation is frequently used to describe being destined to eternal life. All Gentiles to whom God's plan of redemption was proclaimed came to faith. God chooses who will be given eternal life and leads them to faith. God's electing purpose is mentioned in Romans 9:11. This is clear statement, which is based on God's call rather than efforts performed by humans. The first and final word belongs to God's grace. As a result, when Paul describes Jacob and Esau's conception, birth and works in Romans 9 verse 10-11, he implies that he is thinking of them as individuals rather than nations. Secondly, the terms and phrases Paul uses to refer to redemption in this text are ones he commonly uses elsewhere, and they are used in this manner in a text substantially like this one: "election" (11:5, 7); "call" (8:28) and "works" (Rom 4:2-8 & 11:6). Therefore, applying these labels to nations or a group of people is problematic. Paul does not believe that God chooses or calls people or countries, including Israel, for redemption based on their works (Moo, 1996:585).

These explanations lead us to believe that Paul is seeing Jacob and Esau as persons rather than as nations. It is also critical to recognise that this refers to their relationship with God's promise instead of their involvement in the accomplishment of God's plan.

4.1.1.1.14 Conclusion

This chapter locates the pertinent scripture passages and conducts exegesis in order to study and assess the doctrine of grace in the context of Scripture. The grammatical-historical technique is used to conduct the exegesis. The term "grammatical-historical approach" describes the study of scripture both grammatically and considering the historical events that have had an impact on the various books of the Bible. Considering scripture and theological backgrounds, an analysis of both the theory of utter depravity and the notion of grace in salvation has led to a set of interconnected conclusions:

Perhaps most importantly, the study revealed that human beings are born with depravity. According to Paul in Romans 5:12, human beings do not enter the world in a state of neutrality nor with a little proclivity toward evil. They are contaminated by Adam's sin and come into the world as sinners, condemned to death. The sinner's nature is tainted by the corruption acquired

from Adam (it is total in its extensiveness). Total depravity says that humans are captives to sin and cannot achieve anything spiritually beneficial toward God.

The notion of absolute depravity is affirmed throughout the Bible. Following Adam's fall, the pervasiveness of human wickedness becomes apparent in the Old Testament. On earth, Adam's offspring (Gen 5) multiplies and these statements are found in Genesis 5:6, "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thought of the heart was only evil continually." The extent and intensity of sin were both visible to the Lord in human beings. The situation is made worse by the fact that such depravity governs not just human acts but also human ideas. Because of this, sin does not end with the fall of Adam and Eve, despite the evidence of grace and human faith. Their descendants, as well as later human generations, are sinners because of the fall. Cain's murder of his sibling Abel (Gen 4:1-16) is boasted about by Lamech several generations later (Gen 4:23-24). The world is eventually destroyed by a flood as a result of sin becoming so pervasive and profound (Gen 6-9).

Paul draws parallel between Adam and all humans in the New Testament (Rom 5). The pervasive degradation of human nature is the outcome which descended from Adam's unclean seed and being born into sin. Adam's descendants are born with a sinful propensity. This perspective establishes a direct link between Adam and the transmission of wickedness. Adam passed on the human race's corrupt nature. The emphasis is on the destructive effects of sin on the individual, as well as the individual's incapacity to please God.

Humans are born dead in sin, incapacitated to perform meritorious works and they spend their lives living in and for sin. As a result, they are under God's wrath. They are powerless to stop themselves. They are so lost that they are unable to return to God and possibly even worse, they refuse to turn to God or be changed at all. God must take the initiative and act on behalf of these completely lost people. To be saved, God must regenerate the lost by his grace.

A second conclusion shows that, because of Arminianism, there are two ways to cope with passages like Romans 9:10-18 and Ephesians 1:4-6m which appear to be so perspicacious in their search for pre-temporal election. By basing election on God's foreknowledge of individuals' option to repent and believe, classic Arminianism has obliterated the argument. Others on the other hand, have chosen a different path, concluding that elections should not be evaluated individually but collectively. This viewpoint is based on the use of word "us" throughout Ephesians 1 to refer to God's chosen people. The chosen purpose and goal are centred on Jesus as God's mission to rescue the world. As the result, Christ is positioned as the foundation of this predestination as well as the worthy cause of the rewards planned for those who believe. Christians should be able to understand that individual salvation and election do not take place pre-temporarily but rather when one puts their belief in Jesus Christ that the redeeming work of Christ is sufficient to show that this is the case.

A third conclusion reveals that, if nothing else, the verse used provide biblical data on divine salvation, electing and predestining, which requires people to pay careful attention to the topic. Both the Old and New Testaments refer to the doctrine of grace “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,” says in Deuteronomy 30:6. This verse puts the reader on the verge of understanding the secrets of divine providence and grace. Moses declares that circumcising the hearts of those Yahweh returns from exile and their descendants will ensure permanent and absolute dedication. God would enable the Israelites to accomplish what they thought was impossible. God would grant them the ability to turn their sons back to the Lord their God

The Spirit of Yahweh is depicted as the instrument being used to purify and renew his people Ezekiel 36:25-27. The people of Israel will only be enabled and willing to serve Yahweh if the Spirit of Yahweh is infused into them. The Israelites’ summons to repentance is fulfilled via the gift of the Spirit of Yahweh. God’s activity in the sinner through the Holy Spirit is the only hope and source of salvation. To change a sinner, divine power is required.

The restricted technical meaning of grace in terms of Christian’s salvation is “unmerited favour.” It can already be observed in the New Testament scriptural texts (Rom 9:10-18; John 6:35-40, 44; & Eph 1:4-6) that are regarded as evidence for the theology of grace in salvation. In John 6:44, the word (ἐλκύω) “draws” which has a less harsh connotation, refers to drawing by inside power, or a heavenly urge. The significance of God’s role in salvation is clearly defined in this phrase. Salvation is made possible by Christ’s formulation of the Father’s drawing in John 6:4, which cannot be understood without interpreting the call as the realisation of God’s plan of salvation.

God’s electing purpose is discussed in Romans 9:10-18. The declaration makes this clear: not based on performance, but rather on God’s call. The first and final word belongs to God’s grace. The contrast between Jacob and Esau exemplifies this “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.” The former cannot be associated with loving Esau or passing him by, while the latter cannot be equated with inclination or preference for Jacob. Those who only consider a nation’s transient and historical location do not credit to the extremely significant topic to which the apostle alludes to here, namely whether or not to participate in Christ’s salvation. Verses 11 & 12 are incompatible with faith or works-based insight. It treats twins who do nothing good or bad by which they may be distinguished from each other.

The examination of the book of Ephesians 1:4-6 perspicuously reveals that a thorough comprehension of the meaning of (ἐκλέγομαι) “he chose,” and the subsequent parallel concept (προορίζω) “having predestined,” the phrase (πρό καταβολή κόσμος) “before the foundation of

the world,” the referent (ἡμεῖς) “us,” and the often-repeated (ἐν Χριστῷ) “in him/in Christ” formula is critical in the comprehension of the saving grace doctrine.

(ἐκλέγομαι) “He chose” in his interest and the source of being chosen is grace of God, not people’s merit, according to the verb which is in the middle voice. As a result, redemption, including election, must be understood from a theocentric rather than anthropocentric perspective. God’s eternal choosing of those who will be saved is accomplished through predestination. The main verb (ἐκλέγομαι) carries the primary focus, and the participle adds another dimension to the meaning. To maintain the importance of both predestination and election while maintaining the priority of election, it is preferable to think of God’s election as being embodied in the elect’s predestination. Therefore, the participle is a modal verb, and the two ideas are concurrent actions of God, occurring outside of time.

It is also crucial to understand the significance of the phrase “in Christ,” which excludes any type of merit. The election of believers in Christ suggests that it is only founded on God’s unadulterated love and grace. The words “before the foundation of the world” reinforce this, indicating the doctrine of God’s grace in salvation’s deepest basis and origin. Paul dismisses every thought of a person’s true worth, when he asserts that they were predestined for in Christ before the creation of the world. Their salvation comes from the all-powerful, all-knowing God. This is also applied by the words with which the apostolic doxology continues: “he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will” (Eph 1:5). This election exists before the world was made; it exists before people arrived on the scene. It cannot possibly be based on the qualifications of their own merit. The grounds for their salvation lie altogether beyond them.

CHAPTER 5. THE APPLICATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE IN SALVATION IN TERMS OF SOTERIOLOGY TO THE AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

5.1 Introduction

There has been tremendous discussion on this topic as long there has been a doctrine of grace in salvation. It is hardly surprising that the doctrine of grace in salvation is a cause of continual debate. According to this theology, salvation is decided by God, not by humanity. Because they have been incapacitated by sin, therefore, humans are unable to claim salvation (Genderen & Velema, 2008:208-209). Since the 16th century, Protestants have been divided on how they define salvation. Christians are drawn into a sea without a shore when they have doubts about the role of grace in salvation and are confronted with the mysticism of God. It is not surprising that the evolution of theology has concluded with the history of the idea of redemption (Duffy, 2000:434).

Within the broadly Reformed tradition, most of the current writing on calling and regeneration is published with a polemic goal. Efficacious calling and regeneration are discussed in conversations about soteriological “Calvinism” and the “I” (irresistible grace) in the acronym TULIP. The re-enactment of the Dort debates between the Remonstrants and the Reformed has modern ecclesial importance for groups like the African Baptist Churches, where both the Remonstrants and the Reformed perspectives are represented (Hoglund, 2015:20). One’s confessional presuppositions and commitments have an unexpected impact on how one interprets these disputes and their outcomes. It is important to realise that the most popular-level perspectives, as well as a few scholarly ones, have not progressed beyond a rudimentary, one-sided picture of the situation. While holding a dogmatic viewpoint on the soteriological debate may be unavoidable, this does not rule out the possibility of achieving some level of objectivity (Stanglin, 2019:325-326).

The conditionality and unconditionality of salvation are major issues in the idea of grace in salvation. The first would be to pursue Arminianism, which claims that God’s eternal and unchanging plan in Christ to save is dependent on individuals whom God foreknew would have faith and persist in receiving salvation. What makes the decree of election unconditional, according to Calvinism, is that there is nothing in mankind that caused or required God to work toward their salvation, he performed it gracefully. The election establishes all aspects of the elect’s salvation, including faith, perseverance, and final glory. This is still a problem (Hyde, 2019:47).

It would be equally essential to recognise that the doctrine of grace in salvation is associated with the classic Reformation emphasis on justification by grace alone (*Sola gratia*) in Christ alone (*Solus Christus*). If spiritually dead humans cannot achieve salvation for themselves, and faith is a gracious work of Christ, then the notion of grace in salvation should provide a theological explanation of Christ's divine providence as the mediator of his atoning effort for his people's sin (Barrett, 2017:277). Velema (2017:279) contends that the doctrine of grace in salvation precludes any interpretation in which God's people's salvation is based solely on God's generosity in Christ. Therefore, the doctrine of grace in salvation is unconditional. It is certain that it depends on God's sovereign pleasure, not on foreseen faith or acts of human persons, because God actualises the decree, in this case, through direct effectiveness. He wants the people who were chosen to believe him and remain faithful to him until the end of time and he accomplishes this by immediately working in their lives (Shedd, 2003:331).

The current chapter considers, somewhat briefly, the practical application of the great truth to the Church, as outlined in prior chapters in its different implications. This tries to construct and bridge a gap in how African Baptist Church leaders and theologians might build a correct biblical perspective on the many methodological approaches to the doctrine of grace in salvation. It would provide a basis that would allow Calvin and Arminius to build the correct historical intellectualistic viewpoints in their approach to the modern debate. Data would be chosen and classified through analysis and interpretation, and it would be used to connect the past and the present. The emphasis would be on the African Baptist Church's perspective on the doctrine of grace in salvation, as well as summaries of Arminianism and Calvinism before formulating the biblical model for the Church and the basis of the doctrine of grace.

Before delving into these texts to apply them to the African Baptist Church in South Africa, it is important to explore the present disputes, or lack thereof, in these churches over the idea of grace. A modest but considerable discussion about the theology of grace within the framework of their soteriological presuppositions persists within a part of the Baptist Church community. Although there is a much longer history, the current discussion is a continuation of a long-running dispute on different critiques of Calvinism and Arminianism.

5.1.1 The view of the African Baptist Church on grace in salvation

The section that follows will attempt to explore and evaluate the problem made by the African Baptist Churches on the particularisation of "faith" as the centralisation of their soteriological presupposition in contrast to the Calvinistic soteriological presupposition. This would represent a dramatic shift in the historiographical appraisal of the African Baptist Church's uniqueness. As a

result, whether the transformation in the African Baptist Church leads to an indeterminist or libertarian perspective of God's relationship with human free choices is contested.

The role and operation of divine grace in salvation has been a source of contention among Baptist theologians from the denomination's founding. Debates had not yielded an agreement on whom, gracious God or the responsive human individual is the determining factor in personal appropriation of salvation. There appears to be an unresolvable conflict among the evangelical community after the decades of debate (Tiessen, 2007:71). The fundamental distinctions between Baptists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were Calvinistic-Arminian conflicts, or more specifically, the disagreements between the Reformed Synod of Dort (1618-1619) and Jacob Arminius's supporters, who drafted the five Remonstrants Articles (1610) (Garrett, 2010:72).

Calvinism and Arminianism, according to a Baptist theologian Hankins (2011:87), are still at odds. Both systems have well-documented benefits and weaknesses, and their proponents adamantly argue that their systems are mutually exclusive. Grounded on the fact that these two theological presuppositions have had numerous opportunities to outperform one another but have not succeeded in doing so. Therefore, it is now necessary to look beyond that for a soteriological presupposition that more adequately explains the biblical and theological evidence. The Baptists have learned that a true biblical soteriology can be taught, sustained, and defended without leading one to Calvinism as a result. This soteriological argument gave credence to the idea that every individual must be saved by making a voluntary and independent choice to respond to the gospel by putting their faith in Christ alone as Saviour and Lord (Allen *et al.*, 2016:17).

The Baptist movement arose from the Protestants Reformation. English-speaking Baptists have been separated into groups since their inception. This particular Baptist group, which adhered to the more Calvinistic soteriological presuppositions of English Puritanism, and the General group was more Arminianistic in their soteriological presuppositions (Roy, 2017:620). Most of the original Baptists were Calvinists. They were called Particular Baptists. By its nomenclature, the Baptists Church was referring to its view of limited atonement. Their soteriological assumption is particularistic. Concerning the atonement, Particular Baptists held that Jesus's atoning death was particularised to certain people. The Calvinistic Baptists, who first appeared in the 1630s, maintained that regeneration was preceded by repentance and faith, which was made possible by the infusion of grace into the hearts of fully depraved but elected people. God had predetermined these people to be rescued; therefore, they would be saved (Leonard, 2003:252).

The General Baptists, in contrast, held the view that atonement was made for all people throughout history. However, this universal atonement was only available to those who would place their faith in Jesus. General Baptists, who were the on scene in 1608/9, were Arminians who believed that everyone was potentially elected to salvation and that this election might be realised by repentance and faith. The early Baptist movement was founded on these two perspectives. Prevenient grace allowed sinners to accept God's saving grace by exercising free will. The major distinction between Particular Baptists and other Baptists was their understanding of God's sovereignty and its relevance to soteriology (Verser, 2020:11). The early Baptists agreed on regenerate church membership but disagreed on the morphology (process) for salvation or the constituency for salvation. Their original communions, today known as General and Particular Baptists, occupied distinct ends of the doctrinal spectrum in terms of grace, free will, election and predestination. They had different ideas about who could be saved and how salvation could be obtained (Leonard, 2003:252).

The theology of the African Baptist Churches is Calvinistic, established on the general, historical, and theological backdrop of settlers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, coinciding with the birth of both Particular and General Baptists (Washington, 2012:73). The Baptist Church's Regenerate Church Membership stated that official identification with the body of Christ is for those who have embraced Christ's Lordship over their life through faith. This is founded on the reformational ideas of "grace alone through faith in Christ alone," and it makes their criteria for membership (Finn, 2017:32).

According to Roy (2017:62), the first Baptists to arrive in Southern Africa were among the 1820 migrants. They were few and far between without a minister. In the Albany district, the first Baptist service on South African land was performed under a tree. The Baptist faith was successfully planted, and it continues to flourish and spread throughout South Africa. Baptists, on the other hand, lagged behind Methodists and Anglicans in terms of numbers, and remained one of the minor Protestant denominations in southern Africa (Mkandawire, 2009:40). It seems that Baptists disagree on the role of free choice in salvation. The problem, or better yet mystery, is one that frequently arises in the fields of philosophy and theology. Technically speaking, God is the source of all being and action and is the fundamental cause of everything, whereas beings are secondary causes that receive the freedom to act freely from God. God's actions in the world do not occur independently of secondary causes, in conjunction with them, but rather in tandem with them, each adding specific parts to the other (Duffy, 2000:441).

Among Baptists, the Calvinistic doctrine of soteriology is a source of heated controversy and discussion. These views have a long history in the Baptist traditions, and they have been the majority viewpoint in the Baptist activity at various times and places. Although there is a rebirth

of Calvinism among Baptist Churches, a new study reveals that there are only few among many who are “five-points Calvinists.” While these Calvinistic beliefs are not currently held by the majority of African Baptists, they are obviously part of the Baptist theological spectrum. Some people believe in the Calvinistic soteriological premise, whereas others don’t (Lemke, 2006:17-18). The African Baptist Church, in accord with the idea of saving faith, believed God gives people faith as a gift, something that sinful human beings can never possess intrinsically. This faith must come from without, according to this theory of total depravity, because all human beings are dead in their sins, rendering them incapable of exercising a spiritual grace such as faith in the gospel. God’s gift of faith is limited to Christ; it trusts in Jesus Christ’s person and activity on behalf of sinners (Washington, 2012:87).

Baptists have traditionally strived to harmonise the supernatural and human components of Christianity. They have tried to put faith’s character as both a gift and a response in a correct perspective. It has long been assumed that an imbalance of one element over the other must eventually lead to an unbiblical viewpoint. The “grace of faith” according to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith (1742), is a means by which the elect is given the capacity to believe in the soul’s salvation. Faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart brought about through the ministry of the word (Finn, 2017:42). The confession also refers to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper and baptism, as well as prayer and other activities commanded by God. In these states, the affirmations are focussed on the divine components of faith or God’s initiative. Over the last four decades, the majority of the African Baptist Churches have become more self-sufficient. The church began to place emphasis on the Reformed roots from which they arose. With the passage of time, this flight from Reformed thought became more and more obvious (Verser, 2020:22).

Recent work in the African Baptist Church has painted a much different picture. The Calvinistic Baptist community is divided about the gospel’s free offer. Most African Baptist Churches struggle to reconcile the lofty Calvinistic theology of grace in salvation with scripture’s exhortations to regenerate sinners to believe. They declare that to be saved, all humans should turn away from their sins and put their faith in Christ, and that this creates the ground for the offer of grace in preaching (Green, 2015:143).

The African Baptist Church’s theological assumption, in short, a grasp of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Reformed soteriological perspective about grace alone, has been questioned, claiming that salvation occurs when people put their faith in Christ (which places faith as the conditionality). The church claims that God would not compel any individual to believe; however, he rejects mankind’s ability to believe and as a result, condemns the person’s refusal to believe. It could be concluded from this argument that God is ultimately the creator of

evil. It further states that sinners are not like orphans trapped in a burning building. They are not helpless victims who, while want to be redeemed in Christ, are unable to follow through (Kirkpatrick, 2019:54). Humans are given the power to respond willingly by God. The Calvinistic theory of irresistible/effectual calling has never been proven to be equal to the concept of God's giving or enabling. A basic understanding of the terms demonstrates that God enabling human beings to repent is not the same as God forcing them to repent (Flowers, 2017:33).

It's also important to note that recent debates about the nature and characteristics of Protestant soteriology, most recently regarding the historical context and mode of presentation of the doctrine of irresistible grace among African Baptists, have raised questions about the proper relationship between divine initiative and grace. The grace concerns raised by these arguments have significant ramifications for the Reformed theology's future as well as for the boarder question of how to comprehend human freedom philosophically and theologically in general. The African Baptist Church sees a workable mixture of these components and looks for the right mix that result in salvation (activation). Christians have made assertions about God that have been all over the theological map throughout the church history. Various options have been deemed heretical, while others have created influential theological traditions with drastically divergent viewpoints that coexist in the church's mainstream activity. (Callen, 2010:28-29).

Baptists have felt free to embrace some of Calvinism's and Arminianism's central tenets while rejecting those that conflict with their commitment to biblical contextualisation, the possibility of salvation for all people, and the security of that salvation based solely on faith in God's covenant promise. The free gift of eternal life, a covenant with the Father via the Son through the Spirit to all sinners by free exercise of personal faith alone, has been the fundamental tenet of Baptist soteriology theory and practice. It is a straightforward, non-speculative, but unbreakable tenet (Hankins, 2011:95-96). As a result, "faith" is the basic scriptural assumption for Baptist soteriology (Eph 2:8-9). The doctrine of God should include the concept of "election." The church claims that "faith encapsulates the New Testament's soteriology's underlying relational aspect. "Justification by faith," which is central to Protestant soteriological identity, describes God's initiating and continuing activity in bringing a person into right relationship with himself, as well as the need for personal accountability for the realisation of God's justifying work in each person's life (Hankins, 2011:99).

These formal considerations resulted in a study designed to demonstrate that humans have a free will and are responsible for activating their salvation by accepting the underserved divine gift of redemption through heartfelt repentance of sins. The available salvation comes from God's entirely unmerited grace, but it nonetheless is activated by repentant humans who work willingly responding to the loving work of God's Spirit within them (Callen, 2010:26). God does

not choose individuals for salvation based on his covert decisions or his knowledge of their future faith; rather, he chooses people based on how they responded in faith to the gospel's gracious, free offer. Individuals who are rescued by faith rather than election make up the elect. Therefore, it is no longer necessary to engage in the theological gymnastics necessary to justify God's selection of individuals regardless of their answer (which eliminates the biblical idea or the choice of all its means) (Hankins, 2011:89). According to the doctrine of concurrence in the election, no one can be saved apart from God's electing, commencing, and monitoring, as his election sovereignty extends to each individual believer. However, it also implies that human's free responses to God's electing action are genuine and necessary for salvation (Allen *et al.*, 2016:97).

Based on the foregoing discussion, the researcher can conclude that the African Baptists value careful conceptualisation and argumentation, consciously placing faith as the central aspect of soteriological presupposition following their methodological approach to salvation, resulting in the difference in their soteriological doctrinal formulation that is correspondingly fundamental. It is critical to recognise that relational notions, distinctions, and arguments cannot entirely address the issues surrounding the doctrine of grace in salvation. This revisionist work has resulted in a dogmatic appraisal and associated assumption of a decisive split with the first and second generation of the Reformers' theological perspectives.

The argument's significance stems from the fact that it takes a novel approach to the notion of grace in salvation by emphasising faith as the prerequisite of actualisation. In the African Baptist Church, there has been a dramatic shift in the Calvinistic backdrop of the Reformed Protestantism and a fall towards a sort of libertarianism. The soteriological assumption of the African Baptist Church has likewise been the subject of historical debate. This is best illustrated by the appraisal in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In contrast, the complete analysis of the logical articulated language of faith conditionality might be associated with the particularisation of divine and human causality, as well as the inclusion of contingent factors has been missing from the discussion.

5.1.1.1 Arminianism on grace in salvation

This section aims to briefly describe the Arminians' methodological approach to the doctrine of grace in salvation. Classic Arminians have a passionate commitment to the doctrine of grace in salvation. They build upon prevenient grace as the primary foundation of their opinions. They indefatigably labour to prove that they do not make free will the cause of salvation but have a different methodological approach. It has been proved that prevenient grace is the fundamental pillar within their soteriology. Their difference to Calvinism is commonly found in their

methodological approach to the doctrine of grace. This appropriation has an impact on the whole soteriological presupposition of Arminianism. Soteriologically speaking, Reformed Protestant is congruent with Arminians. Of course, where things divide is in how grace can be resisted. When grace is asserted to be resistible, it is meant to imply that God's gift of salvation is never irrevocable in this life; nevertheless, when it is acknowledged that God has provided enough grace for redemption, it is meant to imply that there is real assurance of salvation.

In contrast to Calvinism, Arminianism takes a somewhat different approach in the essential feature of the theory of prevenient grace. Although it is not a biblical phrase, it is a biblical notion that is implied throughout scripture. In John 6:44, Jesus confirms God's powerful but irresistible drawing. According to Arminians, salvation happens because God created the relationship and gave the individual the freedom to respond in repentance and faith. The four parts of this prevenient grace are calling, condemning, educating, and enabling. Without the divine help of the Holy Spirit throughout, no human creature can believe, repent, or be saved (Olson, 2006:159-160).

The one is given the choice to believe in and accept Christ as Lord and Saviour through a libertarian understanding of the role of prevenient grace in enabling free will. Before the desired outcome is realised, most, if not all, components of salvation need a person to exercise faith provided by prevenient grace. The human act of faith, according to this school of thinking, is the instrumental cause of salvation. According to this viewpoint, God's call provides every human being with the prospect of salvation (salvation potential). Sufficient grace becomes effective only when the sinner cooperates with it and improves it. As one cooperates, the potential of redemption is actualised and becomes a reality for that individual. The grace of God may be legitimately provided to individuals, but it has no saving impact until it is met with faith (Kirkpatrick, 2021:170).

The doctrine of prevenient grace explains how the Christian God in many ways foreshadows his benevolent, early operations of salvation. It is also critical to recognise that this grace cannot save anyone by itself, cannot bring about repentance, and cannot replace the need to grasp the gospel. It is, nevertheless, used by God to assist and lead to salvation. It enables the element of freedom that is required for belief (Shelton, 2014:1-2).

In classical Arminian view, God uses the influence and response paradigm to elicit a faith response from the individual. Between Classic Calvinists and Classic Arminians, this disagreement in understanding of the nature of the divine role in leading a person to saving faith is a major continental split (Forlines, 2011:173-174). The teaching questioned divine cooperation and opposed the doctrine of grace, which can be impacted with such power that no

creature could resist it. Not only does Arminianism deny irresistible grace but it also confesses salvation as a pure gift of grace. It denotes beginning cooperation between a resistible grace and human free will, or what is known as proper initial grace use. These are viewed in light of the well-stated concept that the basis for election is divine foreknowledge of faith and perseverance (Muller, 2018:21).

Arminian theologians, according to Olson (211:155), do not believe that people redeem themselves through their good deeds or that they contribute something meritorious to their salvation, but rather that salvation is entirely by grace and has nothing to do with meritorious acts. The fundamental problem in the debates is whether grace is resistible or irresistible. The nature of saving faith has also been discussed. They argued forcefully against irresistible grace, pointing out that Arminianism never made works the means of salvation, just grace. Close analysis reveals that this is the difficulty at the heart of the claim that Arminianism is “work-righteousness.” Arminianism’s idea of conditional salvation is presented here in the concise and understandable manner. A person is saved on the condition of being in Christ’s grace through faith “according to the foreknowledge of God” (Rom 8:29). The idea that Arminianism believes in a form of free choice to salvation would not nurture a true historiographical intellectualistic perspective in a conscientious and prudent manner (Stanglin & McCall, 2012:136).

Arminians believe that resisting and refusing to accept are appropriate acts of the will. The prevenient grace is made possible by human free choice through opposition and disobedience. Salvation is predicated on God’s knowledge of all potential outcomes based on current conditions, namely whether a person accepts or rejects divine grace based on free will decisions. Therefore, human opposition to grace upholds human autonomy in salvation and solidifies predestination as a humanistic and conditional foundation (Park, 2016:167). According to Arminians, God does not employ all his divine might to accomplish his purpose in conversion. Rather, even after God has done everything he can to prepare people for conversion, they still could resist and reject God’s rescuing love. Human beings could become regenerate or to resist regeneration through prevenient grace (Godfrey, 2019:151).

Arminians accept original sin and the deadness of the hearts of human beings toward God and holiness. They varied from Calvinists in that they claimed that prevenient grace has restored the moral centre to the point that, without additional supernatural assistance, every human being can repent and turn to God. God’s action is referred to as a calling in Arminian tradition; they distinguish it from the effectual call with additional modifying phrases to reject that God’s work is irresistible (Hoglund, 2015:02).

In summary, despite major differences between Arminius and Calvin on their methodological approaches and application of grace and their distinctive explanation of grace in salvation both ascribe salvation to God's grace. However, the widely differing interpretation of Arminius about grace in salvation and human freedom found in his account belongs to much larger discussion about his theological position. Their differences are more on the hermeneutical methodology and their conceptualisation of grace than grace and free will. Arminius centralised prevenient grace in his soteriological presupposition whereas Calvin centralised irresistible or effectual calling. Arminius' philosophy can be summarised as permitting libertarianism only because of prevenient grace. Calvin's undivided focus on the question of sin and the impossibility of people producing meritorious or salvific good in their sinful condition complicates the situation significantly.

5.1.1.1.1 Calvin on grace in salvation

The purpose of this section is to provide a quick overview of Calvinism's methodological approach to the doctrine of grace in salvation. As the primary underpinning of their soteriological assumption, Calvinists rely on irresistible grace (or an effective call). This presentation shall briefly consider the doctrine of irresistible grace to illustrate how John Calvin differs from Jacob Arminius. Since the Reformation, the idea of irresistible grace has been one of the most contentious in the church. As popular debates over this doctrine continue in the African Baptist Churches, attention has been devoted to the question of whether grace irresistibly affects human salvation and conversion.

Human beings have been shown to be alienated from God's life and dead in sin on several occasions in these studies. As a result, if people are to be rescued, God must take the initiative. The initial step is the effectual call, which is frequently referred to as illumination (Culver, 2005:684). The effectiveness of biblical calling is undeniable. It is a summons that achieves response whenever the New Testament affirms the effective calling. Humans are given faith by the Holy Spirit. The calling is efficacious and unchanging because it is the work of the Holy Spirit, it is high, holy, and heavenly, and it has its objective communion with God's Son and oneness with Christ (Letham, 2019:657-658).

Irresistible grace, contrasts with prevenient grace, expresses God's unmerited compassion, which humans are powerless to resist. The marvels of interior change accomplished by God's merciful power among his people are the subject of this belief. This is not a transformation that the world will see. Rather, the Holy Spirit acts as an agent in the lives of believers, beckoning them to be reconciled to the Lord. This is the authoritative call, supported by an eternal design and ensured by an unending love. It claims that when God calls, his people will without a doubt

and enthusiastically answer, drawn by his all-pervasive might and unchangeable command (McCarty, 2007:91). Irresistible grace is a name given to a teaching that depicts God's rescuing work from the perspective of humans, reminding them that they would have opposed Christ and his gospel if not for the sovereign inward operation of the Holy Spirit inside them. Human beings are natural resisters of God, and they would have rejected his grace if God had not made it irresistible (Williams, 2019:45).

A major premise of the Calvinistic soteriological assumption is that God selects and secures believers' salvation independently of their worthiness. Calvinism maintains that God fulfils the salvation need since sinful humanity could not fulfil its requirement on its own. The call to salvation must be answered by humans. This voluntary vow, however, is made possible by the Spirit. Because it believes that salvation is entirely a gift from God, distinct from human performance, Calvinistic soteriology implies the notion of unconditional salvation. Calvinism proposes a theory of grace in the face of human corruption and depravity, which limits the full extent of their consequences (Billings, 2005:92).

The historical and contemporary reasons conclusively demonstrate that God acts alone, efficaciously calling and monergistically brings the dead sinner back to life. As a result, in the sequence of salvation, effective calling and regeneration causally precedes conversion, ensuring that all praise in salvation goes to God and not to humans. According to Calvinistic soteriological presuppositions, if the lost are incapable of responding positively to the gospel before conversion, God must act at that point in a unilateral operation of grace that overcomes the consequences of depravity and provides the desire and ability to respond. The divine grace, as claimed here, is the initial enlightening action of God's Spirit (Compton, 2018:295).

As a result, it would be crucial to explicitly state the resistibility of the gospel invitation, because opponents frequently presume Calvinists deny grace's resistibility. However, it is important to take into consideration the affirmation that God's grace in the gospel invitation can be refused. Such a calling cannot be finally resisted when God chooses to efficaciously call the elect for his purpose of saving them; such a call must come to fruition (Barrett, 2013:84). While the broad call of the gospel leads many to proclaim Christ, only the efficacious call enables some to truly possess Christ, according to Hyde (2019:258). Just the Holy Spirit has the key to open, enter and grace with salvation; the general call only knocks at the door of the heart. The only hope for redemption is God working in the sinner through the Holy Spirit. To change the sinner, divine power is required (Godfrey, 2019:132).

Effectual calling according to Sinnema (2011:99) is a special call given to believers only. The preached message dwells in their hearts because of the Spirit's internal light. As a result, he

makes his secret election known through effectual calling. He bestows faith on them as a gift. Calvinism emphasises that God does not affect human will in such a way that it is a choice to obey or resist, to accept or refuse, but rather that he efficaciously calls human beings to redemption under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The hearts of individuals who have been saved are so successfully ruled by God that they are steadfast in their commitment to him. The emphasis is on divine grace as efficacious rather than irresistible in conversion, the affirmation places more accents on the creation of the heart and will. Whatever the conceptualisation and argumentation of soteriological presupposition, which is narrowly defined as the beginning of new life within a person who is to be saved, it is evident from examining the writings of the sixteenth-century Reformed Protestant that they have a very clear conceptualised secret working of the Holy associated with soteriological presupposition, which result in a person being drawn to trust in Christ (Stewart, 2011:46).

Salvation is free of charge. It is determined by God's sovereign pleasure, not by the individual's expected faith or efforts. God has summoned people, not based on their efforts, but based on or following his purpose (Shedd, 2003:332). The source of redemption, according to Calvinism, cannot be found in the sinner; otherwise, such salvation would not be totally by grace. Salvation is obtained through faith, but not as a result of it; it is entirely due to grace. Faith is a receptive instrument through which God works some parts of redemption; it is a vital component, but it does not create salvation (if it did, salvation would be through works) (Kirkpatrick, 2021:171).

The centralisation of irresistible grace can be found in Calvinism's soteriological presupposition. Calvinists argue that salvation is monergistic, meaning that it is solely God's work. The lost sinners are spiritual dead and unable to respond to the gospel in a redemptive way because of human depravity. By regenerating the lost and preparing them to react in saving faith, the Spirit grants spiritual life at salvation, it is claimed that this must come from the Lord's mercy. Calvinism embraces a predestinarian theology of grace, claiming that this grace is given to some individuals through the Spirit's effective and vital power, which links them to Christ and therefore takes them into a perfect union with Christ (Haykin, 2009:75).

In conclusion, it is found that the idea of total depravity is accurate and that all people are born with a wicked nature, incapable of making a repentant choice that would compel God to save them. It is acknowledged that the pollution of sin has interfered with mankind's capacity to understand spiritual truth, and that the grace of God is the only remedy for this issue. Therefore, if anyone is to be saved, it must be God who intervenes on their behalf rather than dead, helpless and sinful human beings lifting themselves to God. A closer look into Calvinism reveals its special focus on salvation as a process of the Holy Spirit working during the sinner's lifetime and its use of the term "new birth" to characterise the defining quality of the truly saved.

It is logical and cognitively impossible to avoid the conclusion that those who have been saved are effectively or irresistibly called by the Holy Spirit, drawing them to the Father and inspiring them to put their trust in the Son. God's might, which illuminated the cosmos, likewise illuminates the souls of sinners who have lost their way, enabling them to experience new life. God's force cannot be defeated, ignored, or rejected. This suggests that, in God's estimation, humans are not capable to saving themselves. This is a theological caricature of the human being's basic contingency, in which there is no quality or force apart from God. As noted, there are two significant grounds of differences between Arminius and Calvin in their view of grace, prevenient and irresistible grace.

5.1.1.1.2 The biblical model for the church

These African Baptist Church criticisms and observations will be compared to the biblical support for the doctrine of grace in salvation in this section with the goal of creating a framework that churches can use to make sure the doctrine receives the attention it deserves given its prominence in theological endeavours.

Given the characteristics of saving faith, it's imperative to have an accurate understanding of what unsaved individuals are capable of. The inquiry becomes, "Are human beings in their fallen condition capable of practicing saving faith?" This query refers to a further central idea of scripture, namely absolute depravity, which is another fundamental principle of scripture, to put it another way "how can the doctrine of total depravity be maintained if mankind is capable of exercising saving faith and fulfilling the condition of salvation on the human side of the equation?" (Lewis, 2005:170).

5.1.1.1.3 Deuteronomy 30:6

And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

In essence, the Solemn Oath Ceremony mimics the Covenant form: historical preclusion, commencement of covenant, curses, and blessings. With the warning to the people to choose life, Chapter 30 ends by outlining the curses, benefits and potential future blessings that will emerge from a circumcised heart. Since individuals are still creating covenants, these chapters focus on covenant fidelity. With the use of heart circumcision as a response to anticipated covenant betrayal (29:16-28), Deuteronomy 30:6 parallels its use in 10:16 as the principal cure for covenant unfaithfulness (9:1-10:11). Due to the way both sections in chapters 4:45-11:32 and 29:1-30:20, reconcile covenant infidelity and exile as a result, the theme of heart

circumcision recurs frequently in the book (Meade, 2014:75). This story takes place during the second iteration of Yahweh's Mosaic covenant with Israel. The eschatological restoration of Israel at the Second Advent is the subject of this text. The verse should be considered a conditional part of the covenant. However, the passage is written in such a way that it should be taken seriously (Snoeberger, 2002:70).

As a result, the New Covenant is introduced by the statement "the LORD your God will circumcise your heart." The New Covenant was a transformation that God would bring about in human beings rather than one that humans would bring about on their own. As a result, Moses' final sermon to the nation foretold a day when Israel would return to a covenant relationship with God, and God would alter their destiny (Baylis, 1990:21). Verse 6 takes believers closer to understanding the divine providence and grace mysteries. Moses declares that circumcising the hearts of those he brings back from exile, as well as their offspring will ensure lasting and absolute commitment to Yahweh. With a simply infinite sentence, he conveys the objective of this surgery: "to love the LORD your God" (Block, 2012:698).

Outward affiliation with the Lord and the covenant community was symbolised by circumcision of the flesh. Circumcision was outward evidence of their membership as God's people. They could be circumcised physically yet not accept God as their Lord on the inside. The circumcision of the heart, or regeneration, is the term used in Christian theology to refer to internal identification with Jesus (Hughes, 2012:619). In the Epistle to Romans, Paul associated heart circumcision with spiritual rebirth. He claims that circumcision has value for a law-abiding Jew, but only as an external bodily symbol; it has no significance for the law-abiding Jew (Rom 2:25-27). He asserts that the heart and spirit must be circumcised internally. The capacity of Israel to adore the Lord "with all your heart and all your soul" would demonstrate the covenant circumcision of the heart's miraculous, completely renewing nature. People can only love God with their hearts after their hearts have been transformed into a Godward disposition (Merrill, 1994:388-389).

The heart circumcision precedes and results in the recipient loving the Lord, according to the grammatical sequencing in verse 6. Loving the Lord may be the pinnacle of salvation faith. This could imply that faith comes before regeneration, being the circumcision of the heart and the loving the Lord. This sign of divine intervention is the heart. Circumcision is a consecration rite, yet it is meaningless without an inner rebirth (Compton, 2018:41).

As a result, it is the quality, rather than their absence, that is theologically noteworthy. Moses declares as a proper ramification of rebirth in verse 6 as "loving Yahweh your God with all, your heart and soul," Another sequence in this phrase, faith produces life, is equally essential to the

fact that regeneration produces saving faith (Snoeberger, 2002:74). Israel's insubordination to God's instruction exemplified how sin renders humans incapable of responding to salvation. Moses told the Israelites that God would do the impossible for them. They would be able to seek God's mercy and salvation if he would let it (Stewart, 2012:537). God will carry out Israel's internal rejuvenation (heart circumcision) so that Israel will be renewed. He will re-establish Israel by his generous actions. Repentance will not be enough. Perhaps, in fact, divine action is the source of repentance itself. The source of Yahweh's heart-love is, in fact, Yahweh himself (Thompson, 1974:311).

5.1.1.1.4 John 1:12-13

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but God.

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" - (Δέ ὅσος λαμβάνω αὐτός, αὐτός δίδωμι ἐξουσία γίνομαι τέκνον θεός πιστεύω εἰς αὐτός ὄνομα). The conjunction "but" acts as a little fulcrum, signalling a significant shift, it is in no way overruled by the world's rejection of Jesus Christ and hatred of God. It defies God's purpose, for he makes even human beings praise him. Those whom God chose for redemption before the world was created will receive Christ in faith. (λαμβάνω) which means "Received" "to take hold of," "obtain," or "grasp". Receiving Christ entails more than just intellectual acceptance of his truths. Salvation is a sovereign operation of God on the dead and blind sinner, even though humans cannot be saved unless they accept Jesus Christ (MacArthur, 2006:34-35). According to Michaels (2010:68) account in terms of the grammatical affirmation, there is a phrase in between "getting" and "believing" that denotes a gift and a donor. As a result, the main verb is "gave," with "them" serving as the indirect object. John, on the other hand, has put the beneficiaries front and centre in the relative clause, rather than the provider. But that's not all, the receivers are given "the right to become God's offspring" and are labelled as "believers."

"Who were born, not of blood or the will of the flesh nor the will of man, but God" - (ἢ γεννάω οὐ ἐξ αἵμα οὐδέ ἐξ θέλημα σὰρξ οὐδέ ἐξ θέλημα ἀνὴρ ἀλλὰ ἐξ θεός) Three unfavourable claims state that children of God are not the result of human flesh or natural bloodline connections. Being begotten of God or having a flesh origin from God is the consequence of the gift of God to humans who have received the Messiah, and it does not come because of human relationship, accomplishment, or determination (Borchert, 1996:118). It should be noted that in order to receive the Messiah as a child of God, they must be born again, that is, be the subjects of a new and spiritual birth, here expressed as born of God. The abovementioned spiritual birth is

brought to light here and stated, first in the negative, stating what it is not, and then in the affirmative, stating that it is of divine origin (MacLeod, 2003:409-410).

The verb “were born” is at the centre of the argument and two characteristics of this verb, which is used to refer to regeneration in the New Testament, show that regeneration is not a result of faith. The first is its passive voice, which indicates that this is a situation in which human beings are completely inactive, preventing any human drive to regeneration. The lexical meaning of this verb is the second feature that reveals its priority to faith. Even without the passive voice, the verb itself conveys the same message. Human beings did not choose to be born, and they had no say in the matter. In their normal birth, they were utterly inactive. So, it is with their spiritual birth (Snoeberger, 2002:80).

5.1.1.1.5 Ephesians 2:5-9

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Because of this, Ephesians 2 starts with a connective conjunction, which creates a mental and grammatical link to chapter 1. The chapter starts with a lengthy passage (2:1-9) that describes the pre-conversion state as one of death in trespasses and sins, which is dramatically reversed by divine intervention (Darko, 2015:45).

“Even when we were dead in our trespasses/transgressions” - (*καί οὖσα ἡμᾶς νεκρὸς παράπτωμα*) is a restatement of verse 1 with simply a change of a person in the pronoun from “*ὕμᾶς* “you,” to *ἡμᾶς* “we,” the conjunction (*καί*) “and” is not a simple copula since the two ideas of “because of the great love with which he loved us” in verse 4 and “we were dead in sin” are not coordinate.

O’Brien (1999:166) asserts that Paul returns to the train of thought started in verse 1 as soon as he picks up the opening words of the paragraph. He does, however, make two changes. First he drops the term “sin” from the phrase “in your transgression and sin,” which he had previously used interchangeably with trespasses to make a single notion. The omission has no effect on the meaning. The second shift from “you” to “us” is more notable. “When we were dead in our trespasses/transgressions,” it emphasises the inclusion of Jews and Gentiles among individuals who were spiritually dead in the past. The introduction “and” from verse 1 joins two participial

sentences, which together lay out the full scope of what God has accomplished. Paul is demonstrating that being dead in sin was accompanied by God's abundant kindness. As a result, one is a state of death, while the other is an act of mercy. He made human beings alive with Christ out of deep love and when they were dead in their trespasses (Hoehner, 2002:328-329). There Paul stated that the readers were incapable of responding to the gospel in a saving fashion and, as a result, of contributing in any way to their salvation (Compton, 2018:284).

"Made us alive with Christ" - (Συζωοποιέω τό Χριστός) the aorist tense verb (Συζωοποιέω) "made alive" is the first of a series of three aorist tense verbs that sum up God's conduct toward us in obtaining salvation. These are the passage's three most important verbs. The major action is best described as "made alive," with the other two actions describing how it was accomplished (Arnold, 2010:135). "Made alive" according to O'Brien (1999:166) is the key verb that governs the paragraph. It is the first of three verbs that have the preposition "with" added to them, all of which refer to the relationship between Christ and his followers. Paul argues that Christians have been made alive in Christ and speaks soteriologically of the tremendous redemption already accomplished. According to Paul, Christians have been raised alongside Christ and have been given seats next to him in the heavenly realms. God made what he did in Christ a reality for believers. God brought people spiritually alive with Christ at a time when they were spiritually dead. The term "made alive, give life to" was used in discussion of the eschatological raising from the dead as a straightforward equivalent for the word "raise" (1 Corinthians 15:22 & Romans 8:11). In classical literature, the verb (Συζωοποιέω) "made alive" is used to describe the birth of animals or the growth of vegetation. Instead of referring to a bodily resurrection, the expression "making alive with Christ" alludes to spiritual life (Hoehner, 2002:329).

Gardner (2007:50) emphasises that God's compassion and mercy are the foundations of everything that happens after that to bring those who are dead in sin to salvation. The beautiful reality that the impossible has happened remains, nonetheless, at the forefront of Paul's mind. People have been brought back to life after being killed in transgressions, and it all comes down to the incredible compassion and mercy of God.

"By grace, you have been saved" - (Χάρις ἐστὶ σωζω) is a parenthetical exclamation that will appear again in verse 8. Its purpose is to reaffirm the Christian that salvation depends solely on God's grace and that they have been made alive in Christ. God responds to the condition of the sinner in a merciful way; his love for them drives his compassion and his deeds are grounded in his grace (Hoehner, 2002:331). Paul addresses the readers in a parenthesis that precedes the extended discussion in verse 8, using soteriological language to proclaim what has been carried

out in their favour. He highlights a significant rescue that resulted from God's selfless initiative, that has already been completed in Christ, and that will have long-term effects for them: you have only been saved by grace (O'Brien, 1999:168).

As a result, grace gives a unique dimension to the words "love" and "mercy." This word expresses the belief that the recipients did not deserve what they were given. It's the word that emphasises the idea of being dead before waking up. Therefore, salvation is entirely dependent on God and not on mankind (Gardner, 2007:51). The human condition can be regarded as servitude and unavoidable entanglement in the coils of sin, as well as spiritual death. Christ brought freedom from that enslavement. As Paul repeatedly emphasises, redemption is totally due to God's grace, his underserved favour to humans (Foulkes, 1989:81). "By grace" is a powerful phrase that expresses the undeserved nature of God's blessings. It strengthens Paul's worshipful assertion that God has bestowed high grace on believers by offering redemption and forgiving their sins. This assessment would not allow for particularisation of faith as the conditionality upon which salvation is predicted, but rather as the divine gift (Arnold, 2010:136).

"You have been saved" is a word with the perfect passive participle that indicates "you have been delivered" or "you have rescued." It has been associated with rescue from wars, the sea, disease, and the gods' wrath since classical times. When God is the subject, the passive voice acts as a deity passive, God's gracious deed is rescuing sinners (Hoehner, 2002:332-333). It is worth noting that Paul never says, "We have saved ourselves." The passive "have been saved" is used instead. This is implying that God accomplished this for believers. God's grace did not make it possible for believers now to save themselves. Rather, God's grace brought redemption to them through Christ (Gardner, 2007:51).

Divine initiative originated at the beginning of punitive retaliation to alter the course of sinful humanity. Individuals who have been enslaved by the world, the devil, and the pressures of the flesh have been set free by grace. God, in his mercy and great love, took the initiative. There is no basis for a sense of neither entitlement nor competence in terms of salvation based on divine initiative and acts of kindness. All humans, without exception, could not obtain salvation through works or other means. It is a faith-based votive offering (Darko, 2015:50-51).

According to Arnold (2010:136), Paul refers to salvation as the outcome of being made alive with Christ through co-resurrection and co-seating. The three previous occasions, Paul employs the aorist tense of the verb to describe God's work on behalf of sinners (Romans 8:24; Titus 3:5; 2 Timothy 1:9), but here is the only time he uses the perfect tense. Paul utilises the perfect tense to emphasise the readers' salvation experience.

“And raised us with him” - (*Καί συνεγείρω*) is the second of the three primary verbs in verse 5 that goes with the subject “God.” Take note of the progression: believers have been raised from the spiritual deadness and then resurrected with him. The concept of believers being made alive in Christ is expanded upon in verse 6, with the process being defined more explicitly as their being risen and seated with Christ (O’Brien, 1999:170).

“And seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” - (*Καί συγκαθίζω ἐν ἐπουράνιος ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦς*), “God seated” is the third primary verb in verse 6b, expressing yet another dimension of God’s amazing grace. The verb (*συγκαθίζω*) simply means to sit next to someone (Hoehner, 2002:334). The believers’ participation in the resurrection is confirmed by Paul. By stating that believers have been enthroned with Christ in the heavenly places, he took this line of thought as a critical step forward. This claim is largely founded on the inferences made from God’s amazing grace (Arnold, 2010:136). It is one thing to accept that believers are made alive or even that they are raised with Christ, but it takes a little more work to believe that they are seated with him in the heavenly realms (Gardner, 2007:52). The apostle demonstrates that God’s initiative to save people may be tracked back to his mercy (v.4), his tremendous love (v. 4), his grace (vv. 5, 7 and 8) and the riches of his kindness toward them in Christ Jesus (v. 7). The entire sentence highlights the fact that Jesus laboured on behalf of Christians because of his own kind and merciful disposition. The fact that they were entangled in the world, the devil, and the flesh and were doomed to God’s judgement made their redemption underserving (O’Brien, 1993:138).

“So that in the coming age he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” - (*ἵνα ἐν τῷ αἰῶν ἐπέρχομαι ἐνδείκνυμι τὸ ὑπερβάλλω πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ χάρις ἐν χρηστότητι ἐπὶ ἡμᾶς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦς*) The conjunction “that” denotes the goal conveyed in verses 5-6 by the three primary verbs “made alive,” “you have been saved” and “seated.” God awakened, resurrected, and seated believers in Christ so that he could reveal his grace in the age to come (Hoehner, 2002:336-337). God wanted sinners to serve as a living example of his wonderful grace, which is why he showered them with mercy and raised them up in Christ. With the inclusion of this last purpose clause, the train of thought that started in verse 4 and 5 and focused on God’s mercy in resurrecting believers in Christ comes to an end and reaches its apex (O’Brien, 1999:172).

“For by grace you have been saved through faith,” - (*Γάρ χάρις ἐστὶ σωζω διὰ πίστις*) Paul now explains God’s gracious salvation after stating the action of God’s grace. In the explanatory sentence indicated by the word “for,” Paul will show that this salvation is a genuine act of God’s grace and does not start nor end with human effort (Hoehner, 2002:340). Paul’s main point to his readers up until this point in the text has been that even though they were already dead,

God was merciful and raised them to life in order to save them. His goal in doing so was to show off his grace. He now stresses the significance of God's grace as the cornerstone of atonement. He achieves this by restating his parenthetical comment from 2:5c "by grace, you have been saved" (Arnold, 2010:138).

According to O'Brien (1999:174) Paul is correct in focusing on God's tremendous generous grace, because it is through it that the people have been saved. The heart cries "through grace you have been saved," whatever has halted the train of thought in verse 5 is now resurrected and emphasised, particularly in regard to faith and deeds. The added work "by faith" is inextricably linked to "by grace" and two assertions are in direct opposition to any idea of what people are worth. So important is it to Paul that God's goodness receives entire credit for salvation that his explanation of this verse eliminates any personal credit for salvation (Chapell, 2009:87).

People are liberated from their desperate state of sinfulness, which separates them from God, because of grace. Grace is the objective basis or predicate of salvation "through faith" and is the subjective means by which one is saved. This is likewise crucial for the redemption secured by Christ's crucifixion, though it does not apply universally despite being provided globally. Even though Christ died for their sins, they are not automatically saved; rather, they are saved when they put their faith in God's gracious provision. As a result, Paul emphasises that this redemption was accomplished purely through faith, rather than through any type of merit (Hoehner, 2002:341).

"And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" - (*Καί τοῦτο οὐ ἐκ ὑμῶν τό δῶρον θεός*). It is clear that people's response to salvation is faith, yet faith is a gift from God, not from themselves. Faith is not something that individuals could accomplish with their own resources. First and foremost, human beings lack sufficient power and resources. Furthermore, even if things were available, God would not want mankind to rely on them, otherwise, salvation would be partially due to people's efforts, and they would have something to brag about. Paul wants to emphasise that even faith comes from God, not from people (MacArthur, 1986:60-61). The phrase "it is not your own doing" expresses the fact that redemption does not have a human origin or cause. Rather, as the first section of the passage states, its foundation is grace, and its source is God and his love, as seen in verses 4-5. Paul goes on to argue that it is a gift from God (Hoehner, 2002:343).

According to Bruce (1984:289), the lines "this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" are presumably placed as a parenthesis after the assertion that salvation is obtained "through faith ... not as a result of works." The precise meaning of "this" has been debated by interpreters. The reference of faith would be clear if the Greek pronoun was feminine and agreed in gender

with “faith”. The implication is that even the faith that has saved you is not your own; you could not have exercised it unless God had given it to you

However, Arnold (2010:139) argues that there is a line of argumentation from other interpreters who regard the demonstrative pronoun “this” as considering faith to be a gift from God, but this is not the case. Paul calls the entire sentence that comes before this one “the gift of salvation via grace.” If Paul was referring to faith, the demonstrative pronoun would have to match its antecedent’s gender and number. Paul says that believers are given salvation rather than faith as a gift of God. Salvation is a gift of God’s unending mercy and abundant grace. Nothing about human beings has influenced God’s decision to choose them. They have done absolutely nothing to merit the grace of God. It is indeed a gift, as the genitive of source “from God” expresses. This common term for grace “gift” (*δῶρον*), is not used elsewhere in the corpus of Paul; other words with comparable meanings are used to refer to God’s gift of righteousness and life in Christ (Rom 5:15-17; 6:23). “And this” is perhaps best understood as referring to salvation in its whole, not just the faith through which it is obtained (Bruce, 1984:290). Chapell (2009:87) goes on to say that commentators have debated what the “this” is for centuries. Some have claimed that “it” is grace based on their theology. Others argue “it” is faith, based on the closest antecedent. Most contemporary commentators agree that “it” refers to the full package, including grace and it is based on confidence in what he has accomplished. This includes faith as a gift, so no one may boast.

Allen (2014:42) questions the validity of the interpretation that the demonstrative pronoun “this” refers to faith, highlighting the fact that “faith” is a feminine word in Greek while “this” is neuter to show that it contains a grammatical error. This eliminates the possibility that “faith” is the antecedent of “this.” It is a gift from God, and it comes “not as a result of works.” As others have pointed out, it may be conceivable to tie religion to the first two in some way, but not with the third. Most exegetes interpret verse 8-9 by construing “this” to refer to the complete preceding clause or sentence (2:1-7).

Paul adds two counterbalancing negatives to emphasise that only God’s grace and with faith is salvation brought about: first, “and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (8), and second, “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” The first line asserts that God gives people their reaction of faith as a gift, not as a result of their efforts. This is a grammatically correct interpretation. Given that the next sentence demands that “this” relate to salvation by grace in its entirety, including faith as the methods of obtaining it (O’Brien, 1999:175). The second balancing sentence emphasises that redemption is, “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast,” and that salvation is obtained solely by grace through faith. If salvation does not come because of human initiative (8), it is also not a reward for good deeds. Therefore, there is no foundation for human boasting because there is no room for any human

worth. This reality eliminates any pride of accomplishment that a Jew or a Greek could exhibit before God (Arnold, 2010:140).

The conjunction “so that” could refer to a goal, such as “so that one brags.” It’s tough to pick between the options because when God is involved, one must understand that whatever God wills, will come to pass. As a result, bragging is prohibited because salvation cannot be acquired through some innate good action (Hoehner, 2002:345).

The claim is mostly supported by inferences made from reading Ephesians 2:5-9 on grace in salvation where this would chronologically lead one to a biblical perspective that all of humanity is inescapably trapped in the form of bondage. Paul uses the word “dead” to characterise the bondage. One who is dead has lost all ability to function, reason or sense. Paul teaches in this passage that there is nothing the dead can do to earn God’s favour and especially salvation.

5.1.1.1.6 1 John 5:1

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

The disagreement among evangelicals on the order of faith and generation should be examined biblically rather than dogmatically. This belief is founded in a great part on the conclusions made from a reading of 1 John 5:1, among other texts. Research would rely on grammatical examination of this text from various comments and articles, which would lead to the conclusion that regeneration comes before faith (Abasciano, 2012:307). When it comes to what has been observed in Ephesians 2:5, the word “when we were dead” clearly indicates the reality that dead human beings do not collaborate with grace Faith is impossible to have unless regeneration occurs first (Allen, 2014:35).

“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God” - (πᾶς πιστεύω ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶ ἡ Χριστός γεννάω ἐξ θεός) the present participle in this verse is “everyone who believes.” The perfect tense verb is “has been born again” which the perfect tense denotes a finished past action with ongoing consequences, and thus the grammatical argumentation leads to the conclusion that faith is the result of being born again. The perfect tense of the verb “born” denotes an action that occurs before the participle “everyone who believes” (Allen, 2014:40).

What John wants to emphasise is that to believe means that God has operated in a dramatic, transformative way on the believer. It means being “born of God.” He refers to “faith” as a result, and the perfect tense “has been born” refers to the believer’s current position. John’s Gospel is notable for its use of spiritual rebirth terminology (1:12-13; 3:3-8). It’s crucial to keep in mind that spiritual rebirth is a prerequisite for saving faith. This text distinguishes spiritual rebirth since

“having been born of God” appears to precede and generate faith. Those that believe do so because of heavenly intention rather than human will (Yarbrough, 2008:270).

According to MacArthur (2007:177-178) the tense of the verb exposes a basic theological truth. The term “believes” is present tense form of the verb (πιστεύω) whereas “has been born” (γεννάω) is a perfect tense form. “Faith” according to this line of grammatical arguments, is defined as submitting to a supernatural influence. John emphasises the inextricable link between believing the gospel and loving God and people as he explores and applied the test (5:1-4). The first part of 5:1 is likely the greatest support for the claim that regeneration comes before faith. This can be seen in the participle of the present tense word “everyone who believes,” which refers to the initiation of saving faith. The perfect tense verb “has been born of God” speaks to regeneration as something that happened in the past but is still happening now. As a result, John positions regeneration before the commencement of saving faith “has been born again (perfect tense) and “everyone who believes” (present participle) (Compton, 2018:170).

It is possible to arrive at a conclusion by combining the present participle “everyone who believes” with the perfect tense “having been born of God.” The perfect tense recognised grammatically and represents previous activity with ongoing consequence. This verse could be emphasising the importance of birth (past action) or current life possession (continuing results). While the primary goal of this paragraph may not be to make an unequivocal assertion about regeneration’s logical primacy, the use of the perfect tense forces this conclusion. The divine life as communicated to human beings is a function of Christian belief, which is fundamentally the spiritual perception of spiritual truth (Snoeberger, 2002:82).

A closer examination, on the other hand, immediately draws the reader’s attention to the content’s Christological focus. Faith is only as powerful as the object it is placed in. What matters in the end is that “Jesus is Christ,” not the gnomic and continuous notion of “believes” (Shah, 1999:40).

After establishing the prerequisite, John proceeds to reveal the result of believing in Jesus Christ in this portion of the verse, “And everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him” - (Καί πᾶς ἀγαπάω γεννάω ἀγαπάω γεννάω ἐξ αὐτός). It is described by (ek), which means “by” or “from,” to emphasise that God is the sole cause of “having been born.” Its outcome is the phrase “has been begotten by God,” which conveys the sense that the believer in Christ Jesus is in a state of “begottenness” (Shah, 1999:40-41). The aorist participle (γεννάω) “has been born” which is best rendered “begotten” refers to God’s act of regeneration through which one becomes his child. A person’s faith in Christ as Messiah makes them a child of God. If one loves the Father who gives life, one will undoubtedly adore his other offspring that were

born from him (West, 1999:51). The use of the present tense “believes” in conjunction with the perfect tense “has been born again or begotten” is crucial. It is obvious from this that believing results from the new birth rather than being the cause of it. The current practise of believing is the results of the new birth experience that makes people children of God and serves as evidence for that fact (Abasciano, 2012:308).

5.1.1.1.7 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to demonstrate how Calvin and Arminius extend the historical view on grace, which provides the finest perspective for the African Baptist Church in present debate. This is accomplished through extrapolating modern reasoning, in which data has been collected and categorised through analytical interpretation and is then applied in the context of the past and present. The African Baptist Church’s view on grace in salvation is discussed in order to establish the central soteriological argumentation, to demonstrate the shift from Calvinistic soteriology to the centralisation of faith in its soteriological presupposition. The centrality of prevenient grace in Arminianism and irresistible grace in Calvinism is demonstrated by drilling down both Arminianist and Calvinist soteriological presuppositions. Finally, the biblical model for the African Baptist Church is being built to put grace in the proper perspective above “faith,” which is also a gift of grace.

Several related findings emerged from the researcher’s analysis of how the African Baptist Church used the theological development of the doctrine of grace in salvation in terms of soteriology:

To begin with, the study has demonstrated that the early modern Reformed argumentation on soteriological presupposition has been modified from the centralisation of irresistible grace on salvation to the central soteriological presupposition of faith as a requirement for the establishment of salvation. As a result, “faith” is the basic scriptural assumption for the African Baptist Church’s soteriology. The phrase “election” is one that is part of the God-centred doctrine. Faith encapsulates the New Testament’s soteriology’s fundamentally relational aspect.

African Baptists offer a perspective on the main streams of thought, emphasising Calvinism and Arminianism in particular. They reject those who are inimical to their commitment to biblical soteriological contextualisation, which affirms the possibility of salvation for all, and the security of salvation based solely on faith in God’s covenant promise. The church has established its view on the doctrine of grace in salvation that is taught in churches. They pass such a negative judgement on it, and they present a soteriological interpretation that appears to be most consistent with the word of God.

Secondly, the centralisation of “prevenient grace” is found in Arminianism’s soteriological assumption which is the primary building component of their methodological approach. Calling, condemning, enabling, and aiding are all aspects of prevenient grace. According to popular belief, God does not actually provide the elect any benefit from their repentance or their faith. On the other hand, they are legitimately free responses of individuals whose corrupt will has been set free by God’s prevenient grace through the preaching of his word. The pillar of Arminianism’s soteriological assumption is prevenient grace. It is understood to be supplied to everyone, regardless of whether they want it or not; nonetheless, the process would be completely dependent on the human’s libertarian freedom to participate with later grace. As a result, Arminians base their belief on prevenient grace as the primary foundation. They work tirelessly to demonstrate that they do not consider free will to be the cause of salvation, but instead utilise a different methodological approach.

Thirdly, the centralisation of irresistible grace is evident in Calvinism’s soteriological assumption. The essential underpinning of Calvinist soteriological formulation is irresistible (or an effectual calling). It is basically certain that regeneration actualises salvation for fallen human beings infallibly and effectively. The primary point of the Calvinistic soteriological perspective is that, despite their worthlessness, God chooses and ensures the salvation of believers. To bring a dead sinner to life through regeneration, God acts alone efficaciously and monergistically. As a result, in order of salvation, effective calling and regeneration come before conversion, ensuring that all praise in salvation belongs to God and not to humans.

A fourth conclusion reveals that in the preceding pages, an endeavour was made to study and diligently cultivate some of the most profound soteriological ideas linked with the African Baptist Church in consideration of what the Bible says. This establishes, at the very least, that the passages utilised to infer data on the centralisation of grace in salvation provides sufficient teaching on the doctrine of grace in salvation. Faith should be seen as a gift of grace, according to the conclusion drawn from a reading of Deuteronomy, John, Ephesians and 1 John. This would lead to biblical intellectualistic attitudes affirming that redemption is only by grace.

The researcher attempted to demonstrate that the central argumentation of faith as the condition of salvation in the African Baptist Church’s soteriological presupposition has been challenged biblically as seen in the fact that “faith” is not meritorious but a divine gift.

CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

In pondering the grace of God that saves condemned and perishing sinners, imaginations have been captured with some of the loftiest truths imaginable. The Reformational doctrine of grace in salvation as based on scriptural teaching represents a continuation of a long-standing debate between Calvinist and Arminianist legacy. The Bible and all Christian theological traditions are replete with reference to grace; therefore, to assert that salvation is brought about solely by grace is to make the most basic of assertions. A relatively small but significant debate continues within a segment of the African Baptist Church community regarding the doctrine of grace with the structure of their soteriological presupposition.

The central theoretical argument of this study is that both Calvin and Arminius have a passionate commitment to the grace of God. However, they differ in their methodological approaches to the doctrine of grace in salvation. The African Baptist Church can benefit in its reviewing of the doctrine by comparing their respective views. This study aimed to show the necessity of comparing Calvin and Arminius to get a balanced view of the doctrine that can serve the African Baptist Church in revisiting and reviewing the doctrine. The study is approached from the Reformed paradigm.

Chapter 2 attempted to assess the reasons for the differences between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius, as well as to compare and contrast these discrepancies. Arminius doctrine of sin is addressed in order to show that he believed in human incapacity after Adams fall, and his writings backed up this belief. Following that, the idea of prevenient grace, on which Arminius based his soteriological model, is addressed to show where Arminius differed from Calvin in his understanding of the practical application of the nature of grace. Calvin's theology of sin and absolute depravity is also explored in relation to his notion of man's total incapacity to merit salvation. Following that, the irresistible grace on which Calvin's soteriological model is based and addressed to determine where Calvin differed from Arminius in his understanding of the nature of grace in salvation.

The researcher's assessment of Calvin and Arminius' historical perspectives on grace in salvation, in light of historical intellectualism, led to the conclusion that both Calvin and Arminius founded their salvation on God's grace, but with different methodological approaches. Much of what we witness in recent debates about Calvinism and Arminianism lacks an early fundamental assessment of Arminius' arguments and methodological approach to salvation grace. The distinction would have to be made based on history rather than dogma. The historical material

on Arminius and Calvin helps to create an understanding of the origins of modern reasoning. It familiarises the reader with the original writings based on historical evidence and hypotheses, as well as the atmosphere in which the writings in question were created. Doctrine can never be fully understood unless the proponent understands it as originally presented. Without historical context it is impossible to understand authors and properly interpret their writings. The literature produced under such times, places, and situations, as well as the prevailing perspective on the world and life in general, will unavoidably be influenced by those times, places, and circumstance-related conditions.

Two unmistakable assertions are made by biblical Christianity, although they are without passionate debate. Firstly, everything that occurs in time, space, and history, including the course of human lives, has some influence from God. Secondly, because they possess the choice to decide how to spend their lives, humans are morally responsible actors. What distinguishes humans from other animals is their ability to make significant decisions that have an impact on history as it unfolds.

Calvin and Arminius both try to separate and evaluate the notion of sin in their respective doctrines of God's grace in redemption, especially the theory of total depravity, which is based on biblical principles. Without a biblical perspective on total depravity, it is impossible to comprehend the perspicuousness of the notion of grace in salvation completely, meticulously, and deterministically. They believed that after Adam's fall, all people have inherited a corrupt nature from their first parents, making them just as susceptible to evil as Adam and Eve were before rebelling about God. The divine wrath of their transgression washed across all creation. The good world that God created is now under condemnation as a result of Adam and Eve's sin. The punishment is imposed not just on the creation, but also on all of humanity. In Adam, all of humanity perishes. The scope of this judgement encompasses every small detail of the world. Because of their transgression and their marriage with Adam, all of humanity is guilty before God. As a result of this conditionality, human will is unable to choose God without the supernatural intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Arminius' doctrine of grace came as a recommendation to countermand the results of total depravity. He had a different methodological approach from Calvin to the doctrine of grace. He totally attributes God's initiative in salvation to his prevenient grace. Repentance and faith are thought to be genuine free responses of people who depraved will have been set free by prevenient grace through the preaching of the word, rather than being gifts of God efficaciously conveyed to those who have chosen. Prevenient grace restores life to the person dead in trespasses and sin.

Prevenient grace and libertarian will are the two cornerstone of Arminius' theology. This first level of grace is irresistible, but it just begins the regeneration process; the process is completed by the recommendation of human libertarian freedom to participate with later grace (which is resistible). As a result, while prevenient grace is irresistible, later grace is resistible because of libertarian freedom.

Biblical anthropology and hamartiology, according to Calvin, necessitate biblical soteriology, which is entirely based on divine grace. His notion of grace was shaped by his theology of man's fall and its long-term consequences. He grasped total depravity in all its ramifications and intensity, .i.e., the entire scope of human depravity. He begins with the premise that all of humanity sinned in Adam and that all humans are without excuse.

The notion of total inability, which claims that people are spiritual dead in sin, does not imply that everyone is equally evil or that people are as evil as they could be, nor does it suggest that people are completely devoid of virtue, nor does it suggest that people's nature is inherently evil, nor does it suggest that the spirit is dormant, nor does it suggest that the body is dead. It means that since the fall all people have been under the curse of sin, that they are guided by erroneous ideals, and that they are totally incapable of loving God or acting in a way that deserves salvation. In this sense, mankind has been fully indisposed, crippled, and created opposed to all good and completely inclined to all evil since the start.

As a result, the inability under which human toil is the inability to be willing to execute holy volitions, not inability to exercise volitions. Calvin's objective was to retain absolute divine sovereignty and human dependency, which is the natural correlation of the notion of total inability. He asserts that there is no other basis for salvation except God's free grace and that mankind must not search elsewhere for the rationale for God's salvation decisions. It is not in the nature of mankind to be satisfied with his pure will, purpose, and unchangeable decree.

It would be as important to recognise that, in the face of total incompetence, only irresistible grace could foster human necessity, utility, and merit. Nothing short of the amazing life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever inspire individuals to act in a way that is spiritually beneficial since they are spiritually dead in sin. Human people cannot initiate the first movement toward salvation since they are spiritually dead, and it can only come from within.

Calvin's formulation demonstrates that God does not aid those who have a weak will. Rather, he wakes them up from their apathy. He doesn't wield enough authority to sway people's free will to accept or reject his redemption offer. Rather, he provides the willingness itself, which was

previously lacking. *Ex nihilo*, God's efficacious summons produces in the sinner an efficacious willing that is sudden and freely exercised

Despite fundamental methodological differences in their approaches to the notion of grace in salvation, both John Calvin and Jacob Arminius credited salvation to grace alone. As previously stated, the notion that Arminius believed in a type of free will to salvation would prevent him from cultivating the realisation of what his writings show.

Chapter 3 aimed at evaluating the contemporary arguments on the doctrine of grace in salvation in the African Baptist Church during the past forty years. The African Baptist Church's doctrine of sin is discussed to accomplish what the church believes about human inability after the fall of Adam and the writings from the church substantiate this position. Subsequently, the history of the African Baptist Church is discussed to provide a broad overview of the Baptist movement's beginnings and progress, as well as to address important concerns related to the denomination. The examination of the historical development of the theology of grace with the Baptist Church considering their theological background has led to the conclusion that the Baptist Church was Calvinistic (proving that God irresistibly leads chosen sinners to redemption) on their soteriological presupposition. Therefore, the doctrine of grace within the African Baptist Church is discussed and their soteriological presupposition is founded upon the core principle of faith. From a theological standpoint, the investigation has revealed that the soteriological formulation of the African Baptist Church is conditioned on faith. The Sola 5 association of churches demonstrates that there is the continued growth of the Reformed faith among the African Baptist Churches. The examination of the historical intellectualistic perspective approaches to the soteriological presupposition of the African Baptist Church reveals several connected conclusions have been reached considering their religious foundations.

Perhaps most importantly, the study has demonstrated that the historical intellectualistic perspective of western missionaries in the eighteenth century was taken from a more radical branch of the Reformation. They had strong convictions about the elect's predestination to salvation and the glory of Christ in accordance with God's sovereign and perfect will, as well as human depravity and helplessness aside from God's grace. The historical intellectualistic perspective of the Baptist Church in Africa would particularly point to a Calvinistic soteriological presupposition, which came into Africa through missionary activities.

Secondly, contemporary views have been influenced by early modern Reformed arguments on anthropological presupposition. The church acknowledges universal human sinfulness, as well as humanity's moral and spiritual depravity. This implies that everyone sinned as a result of Adam's action (Romans 5:12). This means that everyone is born with a corrupt nature and is a

sinner. As a result, the African Baptist Church argues that the fall fashioned in absolute depravity, making people incapable of voluntarily responding to God's gracious gift of covenant.

Thirdly, the African Baptist Church's soteriology of faith as a requirement for the actualisation of salvation has been amended from the early modern Reformed argumentation on soteriological presupposition from unqualified grace in salvation to the core biblical presupposition. The African Baptist Church's central doctrine of justification by talks speaks of God's initial and continuing activity in bringing a person into a proper connection with himself, as well as the requirement of the person's responsibility for God's justification work to be actualised. This is not possible without faith. Faith is an act of the will performed by a person. No one ever takes the initial step toward God, as their anthropological presupposition shows. Humanity's past is shattered, its future is death, its environment is dark, and its reality is distorted.

As a result of their sin, people have fallen out of communion with God and are facing eternal separation. However, in the person and actions of Christ, which are made known via the gospel, God offers a basis for salvation to which anyone can respond in faith. Some African Baptist Churches believe in the universality of grace, but not in the elect's reconciliation. They support what they see as a compatibilist understanding of predestination and free will. Although hardly devoid of content, this distinction provides a strong foundation for arguments and does not bias results in favour of any one religious presupposition distinguishable from the Calvinistic approach of the founding missionaries of the Baptist church. The distinct character of African Baptists and the particular feature that set the distinction significantly shifts from Calvinistic soteriological presupposition which would be based more on the efficaciousness (irresistibility) about the Holy Spirit's inward call with no reference to humanistic meritoriousness.

Finally, it is critical to emphasise that there is a Reformed revival taking place across the English-speaking globe. The African Baptist Church was one of the first to notice the revival. Despite the African Baptist Church's affirmation of the efficacy of the internal call to salvation through faith, there is a rebirth of Calvinism, which was exemplified by the formation of the Sola5 association of congregations in 2005. The fivefold Reformation creed of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone), *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone), *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone) and *Sola Deo Gloria* (Glory to God alone) has been understood as summarising the "urgent need of the hour" fundamentally highlighting that the church must be motivated by these principles once more. In Reformed orthodoxy, the Sola5 symbolises the completion of the process informed by Reformation confessional presuppositions and commitments. They are committed to Calvinism's soteriological doctrine. Because salvation is clearly a supernatural

event, all people in whose hearts God works in this wonderful way will be regenerated and believed.

Chapter 4 locates the pertinent scripture passages and conducts exegesis in order to study and assess the doctrine of grace in the context of scripture. The grammatical-historical technique is used to conduct the exegesis. The term "grammatical-historical approach" describes the study of scripture both grammatically and in light of the historical events that have had an impact on the various books of the Bible. Considering scripture and theological backgrounds, an analysis of both the theory of utter depravity and the notion of grace in salvation has led to a set of interconnected conclusions:

Perhaps most importantly, the study revealed that human beings are born with depravity. According to Paul in Romans 5:12, human beings do not enter the world in a state of neutrality nor with a little proclivity toward evil. They are contaminated by Adam's sin and come into the world as sinners, condemned to death. The sinner's nature is tainted by the corruption acquired from Adam (it is total in its extensiveness). Total depravity says that humans are captives to sin and cannot achieve anything spiritually beneficial toward God.

The notion of absolute depravity is affirmed throughout the Bible. Following Adam's fall, the pervasiveness of human wickedness becomes apparent in the Old Testament. On earth, Adam's offspring (Gen 5) multiply, and these statements are found in Genesis 5:6, "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thought of the heart was only evil continually." The extent and intensity of sin were both visible to the Lord in human beings. The situation is made worse by the fact that such depravity governs not just human acts but also human ideas. Because of this, sin does not end with the fall of Adam and Eve, despite the evidence of grace and human faith. Their descendants, as well as later human generations, are sinners because of the fall. Cain's murder of his sibling Abel (Gen 4:1-16) is boasted about by Lamech several generations later (Gen 4:23-24). The world is eventually destroyed by a flood as a result of sin becoming so pervasive and profound (Gen 6-9).

Paul draws a parallel between Adam and all humans in the New Testament (Rom 5). The pervasive degradation of human nature is the outcome of descent from Adam's unclean seed and being born contaminated with the effect of sin. Adam's descendants are born with a sinful propensity. This perspective establishes a direct link between Adam and the transmission of wickedness. Adam passed on the human race's corrupt nature. The emphasis is on the destructive effects of sin on the individual, as well as the individual's incapacity to please God.

Humans are born dead in sin, incapacitated to perform meritorious works and they spend their lives living in and for sin. As a result, they are under God's wrath. They are powerless to stop

themselves. They are so lost that they are unable to return to God and possibly even worse, they refuse to turn to God or be changed at all. God must take the initiative and act on behalf of these completely lost people. To be saved, God must regenerate the lost by his grace.

A second conclusion shows that, because of Arminianism, there are two ways to cope with passages like Romans 9:10-18 and Ephesians 1:4-6 which appear to be so perspicacious in their search for pre-temporal election. By basing election on God's foreknowledge of an individuals' option to repent and believe, classic Arminianism has obliterated the argument. Others on the other hand, have chosen a different path, concluding that elections should not be evaluated individually but collectively. This viewpoint is based on the use of word "us" throughout Ephesians 1 to refer to God's chosen people. The chosen purpose and goal are centred on Jesus as God's mission to rescue the world. The result being, Christ is positioned as the foundation of this predestination as well as the worthy cause of the rewards planned for those who believe. Christians should be able to understand that individual salvation and election do not take place pre-temporarily but rather when one puts their belief in Jesus Christ and that the redeeming work of Christ is sufficient to show that this is the case.

A third conclusion reveals that, if nothing else, the verse used provides biblical data on divine salvation, electing and predestining, which requires people to pay careful attention to the topic. Both the Old and New Testament refer to the doctrine of grace "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul," says in Deuteronomy 30:6. This verse puts the reader on the verge of understanding the secrets of divine providence and grace. Moses declares that circumcising the hearts of those Yahweh returns from exile and their descendants will ensure permanent and absolute dedication. God would enable the Israelites to accomplish what they thought was impossible. God would grant them the ability to turn their sons back to the Lord their God

The Spirit of Yahweh is depicted as the instrument being used to purify and renew his people Ezekiel 36:25-27. The people of Israel will only be enabled and willing to serve Yahweh if the Spirit of Yahweh is infused into them. The Israelites' summons to repentance is fulfilled via the gift of the Spirit of Yahweh. God's activity in the sinner through the Holy Spirit is the only hope and source of salvation. To change a sinner, divine power is required.

The restricted technical meaning of grace in terms of Christian's salvation is "unmerited favour." It can already be observed in the New Testament scriptural texts (Rom 9:10-18; John 6:35-40, 44; & Eph 1:4-6) that are regarded as evidence for the theology of grace in salvation. In John 6:44, the word (ἐλκύω) "draws" which has a less harsh connotation, refers to drawing by inside power, or heavenly urge. The significance of God's role in salvation is clearly defined in this phrase. Salvation is made possible by Christ's formulation of the Father's drawing in John 6:4,

which cannot be understood without interpreting the call as the realisation of God's plan of salvation.

God's electing purpose is discussed in Romans 9:10-18. The declaration makes this clear: not based on performance, but rather on God's call. The first and final word belongs to God's grace. The contrast between Jacob and Esau exemplifies this "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." The former cannot be associated with loving Esau or passing him by, while the latter cannot be equated with inclination or preference for Jacob. Those who only consider a nation's transient and historical location do not credit the extremely significant topic to which the apostle alludes here, namely whether or not to participate in Christ's salvation. Verses 11 & 12 are incompatible with faith or works-based insight. It treats twins who do nothing good or bad by which they may be distinguished from each other.

The examination of the book of Ephesians 1:4-6 perspicuously reveals that a thorough comprehension of the meaning of (ἐκλέγομαι) "he chose," the subsequent parallel concept (προορίζω) "having predestined," the phrase (πρό καταβολή κόσμος) "before the foundation of the world," the referent (ἡμᾶς) "us," and the often-repeated (ἐν Χριστός) "in him/in Christ" formula is critical in the comprehension of the saving grace doctrine.

"He chose" (ἐκλέγομαι) in his interest and the source of being chosen is by the grace of God, not people's merit, according to the verb which is in the middle voice. As result, redemption, including election, must be understood from a theocentric rather than anthropocentric perspective. God's eternal choosing of those who will be saved is accomplished through predestination. The main verb (ἐκλέγομαι) carries the primary focus, and the participle adds another dimension to the meaning. To maintain the importance of both predestination and election while maintaining the priority of election, it is preferable to think of God's election as being embodied in the elect's predestination. Therefore, the participle is modal, and the two ideas are concurrent actions of God, occurring outside of time.

It is also crucial to understand the significance of the phrase "in Christ," which excludes any type of merit. The election of believers in Christ suggests that it founded only on God unadulterated love and grace. The words "before the foundation of the world" reinforce this, indicating the doctrine of God's grace in salvation's deepest basis and origin. Paul dismisses every thought of a person's true worth, when he asserts that they were predestined for Christ before the creation of the world. Their salvation comes from the all-powerful, all-knowing God. This is also applied by the words with which the apostolic doxology continues: "he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will" (Eph 1:5). This election exists since before the world was made; it exists since before people arrived on the scene. It cannot possibly be based on their own qualifications. The grounds for their salvation lie altogether beyond them.

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everyone, regardless of whether they want it or not; nonetheless, the process would be completely dependent on the human's libertarian freedom to participate with later grace. As a result, Arminians base their belief on prevenient grace as the primary foundation. They work tirelessly to demonstrate that they do not consider free will to be the cause of salvation, but instead utilise a different methodological approach.

Thirdly, the centralisation of irresistible grace is evident in Calvinism's soteriological assumption. The essential underpinning of Calvinist soteriological formulation is irresistible (or an effectual calling). It is basically certain that regeneration actualises salvation for fallen human beings infallibly and effectively. The primary point of the Calvinistic soteriological perspective is that, despite their worthlessness, God chooses and ensures the salvation of believers. To bring a dead sinner to life through regeneration, God acts alone efficaciously and monergistically. As a result, in order of salvation, effective calling and regeneration come before conversion, ensuring that all praise in salvation belongs to God and not to humans.

A fourth conclusion reveals that in the preceding pages, an endeavour was made to study and diligently cultivate some of the most profound soteriological ideas linked with the African Baptist Church in consideration of what the Bible says. This establishes, at the very least, that the passages utilised to infer data on the centralisation of grace in salvation provide sufficient teaching on the doctrine of grace in salvation. Faith should be seen as a gift of grace, according to the conclusion drawn from a reading of Deuteronomy, John, Ephesians and 1 John. This would lead to biblical intellectualistic attitudes affirming that redemption is only by grace.

The researcher attempted to demonstrate that the central argumentation of faith as the condition of salvation in the African Baptist Church's soteriological presupposition has been challenged biblically as seen in the fact that "faith" is not meritorious but a divine gift.

6.1.1 Limitation

The study is limited to the African Baptist Church and how its perspective might be evaluated by examining the variations in methodological approaches to the doctrine of grace between John Calvin and Jacob Arminius. Some of the beliefs of these churches explain that Arminian theology is a theology of free will. The study aims to give the African Baptist Church a competitive understanding of the relationship between Calvin's and Arminius' viewpoints on grace, so that they might understand the theology of grace as it is presented by the original proponents.

6.1.1.1 Recommendation for further study

The first area of recommended study is to exhibit the considerations or animadversions that Arminianism and Calvinism have upon each other on the doctrine of grace in salvation. These formal considerations should help people to explain their different methodological approaches clearly and perspicuously to grace in their soteriological presuppositions.

The second area of research that could be fruitful is that there is a reformed revival taking place today that spans the English-speaking world. Australia, North America, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Zambia, and other places of the world have all experienced a comeback. Not just in old-line Calvinist denominations, but also in Baptist churches, independent churches, and charismatic churches, there are conferences where Calvinism and Arminianism are discussed. A new generation has been infected with the doctrine of soteriology and its appropriation. The balance of truth has been due to a disproportionate emphasis on one side over the other and a refusal to investigate both original writings of Calvin and Arminius. The church might benefit from investigating the underlying appraisal of historical intellectualistic ideas as deprived from the original proponents. It takes understanding any doctrine as originally presented by its proponents for it to be fully understood. Unless their remarks are considered in the context of historical events, it is difficult to judge them properly. The writings produced under specific circumstance, such as time, place, and occasion, will necessarily be influenced by those conditions.

Thirdly, it has been stated that maintaining the balance of truth is an arduous need in expounding God's word. The goal is for the readers to believe in God's might rather human wisdom. To build a biblical soteriological presupposition within the African Baptist Church, the same methodological biblical-theological and exegetical approach should be extended to many more passages in both the Old and New Testaments.

6.1.1.1.1 Application drawn

Every human-related fact found in scripture is meant to uplift believers rather than merely enlighten them. Soteriology presupposes hamartiology, according to this analysis of early Reformed perspectives on the relationship between divine and human causality considering their scriptural and theological grounds. Through Adam, humanity acquired the blame of Adam's sin and because of their complete helplessness brought on by sin; they are unable to change it for their salvation. When people talk about sinners' inability, they do not mean that they lack the ability to come to Christ even if they so desired. No! The truth is that the sinner's incapacity or

lack of influence stems from a distorted heart's lack of desire to approach Christ. It is critical that people understand the difference between natural difficulty and moral and spiritual inability. Several scriptures state that the normal human being is morally and spiritually incapable.

The conclusion drawn from a biblical-theological and exegetical reading of both the Old and New Testaments is largely responsible for the rejection of works as a basis for salvation. The authority of scripture should be used to confess one's faith. The evidence found in God's word can be viewed as the only thing that is truly conclusive in an argument. The biblical, historical, and doctrinal distinctions between Calvinism, Arminianism and the African Baptist Church would need to be determined first.

These formal considerations resulted in the conclusion that not just in this century, but many theologians appear to have gone slightly beyond the limitations of revelation in this regard. True, the technique of thinking is evident; nevertheless, when humans try to reason on this high and enigmatic subject, they quickly get befuddled and lost in the mazes of obstacles.

Scriptural verses from both the Old and New Testaments show that readers pay close attention to the issues. The notion of grace in redemption is taught in both Testaments. These words are recited in Deuteronomy 30:6 "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul." This verse explains the intricacies of divine providence and grace. The pneumatological action through which the people of Israel were enabled and made willing to serve Yahweh is described in Ezekiel 36:25-27. The gist of Yahweh's Spirit brings the Israelites' call to repentance to fruition. God's operation in the sinner through the Holy Spirit is the only hope and source of salvation

The scriptural verse in the New Testament (Romans 9:10-18; John 6:35-40, 44; & Ephesian 1:4-6) are regarded as strong evidence for the notion of grace in salvation. The term "draw" in John 6:44 refers to drawing by interior power, or by heavenly initiative. This expression expresses the significance of God's role in salvation in a unique way. Salvation is made possible by Christ's confession of the father's drawing in John 6:44, which cannot be understood by understanding the call as the fulfilment of God's plan of salvation. This is an example of God's unstoppable sovereignty, as provided by that lovely remark in John 6:44. It is proof that no one can stop his counsel from being carried out or his pleasure from being fulfilled.

It is therefore crucial to show that the passages employed extrapolate facts on the centralisation of salvation if nothing else. This claim is largely based on the conclusion reached from readings of Deuteronomy, John, Ephesians and 1 John that faith is a gift of grace, not meritorious deeds

that must precede salvation. Faith is a gift from God, yet “not all have faith” (2 Thess 3:2); implying that God does not give it to everyone. This gift is granted to individuals who have been destined to eternal life by God (Acts 13:48).

It is important for the doctrine of grace in salvation to be based on the Bible and to carry on the long-standing Reformational tradition. The Church ought to be very worried about its doctrinal position and ought to stand out in its utmost theological devotion to the gospel itself. The teaching of scripture, correctly interpreted, must serve as the standard for Christian theology. “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). The word “doctrine” is synonym for “teachings,” and it is through doctrine or teaching that the profound realities of God and mankind’s relationship to him, of Christ, the Spirit, redemption, grace and glory are made known to people by the power of the Spirit that Christians are fed and edified. Where teaching is ignored, progress in grace and effective witness for Christ always stops.

The church's theological formulation must always pass the test of scripture and be updated if it contradicts scriptural teaching. The church's doctrinal writings are to rely significantly on God's word. The African Baptist Church must understand the theology of grace in salvation, which fundamentally bases the grace and power of God central in salvation. In this age, the church has a responsibility to respond to God’s unmerited grace in a theologically sound manner.

6.1.1.1.2 Conclusion

The researcher now returns to a few final thoughts on the current theme. The theme of God's grace in salvation necessarily leads us to historical and practical considerations, but most importantly, it leads us to the scripture. This study is addressed from a Protestant Reformation standpoint, focusing not only on the notion of grace but also on scripture.

Prevenient grace and libertarian freedom are two cornerstones of Arminianism's soteriological premise. Arminianism's methodological approach to grace in salvation differs from Calvin's. Individualistically, libertarian freedom should be evaluated from the basic perspective of prevenient grace; hence, theology is assigned to “freed will” rather than “free will.” This is one important point in their argument that God supplies the first type of grace, “prevenient grace,” to lessen or counteract the incapacity caused by sin. This type of grace is irresistible; but, after God has supplied prevenient favour, future grace might be refused.

The cornerstone of Calvinism's soteriological formulation is irresistible grace (or effective call). Those who have been chosen will be called in due course. One who is dead in sin cannot hear

or believe the gospel without the help of the Holy Spirit, according to a common belief. The Lord must have direct operation in the sinner's heart by the Holy Spirit in order to solidify his conversion. According to irresistible grace theology, the Holy Spirit is always successful in drawing his own people to faith. As a result, the Father's chosen and Christ's redeemed are continually being called, regenerated and saved by the Holy Spirit. The call is impenetrable and will accomplish its goal.

The soteriological doctrine of the African Baptist Church is based on "faith" as the basic biblical assumption. Baptists are free to agree with some of the tenets of Calvinism and Arminianism, but they reject those that go against their dedication to biblical contextualisation and the idea that everyone can be saved, and that salvation is secure solely because of faith in God's covenant promises. Therefore, faith is the basic scriptural assumption for African Baptist soteriology.

The consideration of several scripture verses confirms that salvation is dependent on God's call rather than on efforts. It would be similarly crucial to underline the profound teaching of God's word in the phrase "in Christ," which prohibits any sort of merit. Salvation comes from God's perfect goodness and grace. This is corroborated by the words "before the foundation of the world" in Ephesians, which reveals the deepest basis and genesis of the theology of God's mercy in redemption. Nothing is more conclusive in this argument than what is written here. The concept of expected work as a basis for election is completely rejected. The choice is specifically attributed to God's sovereign will. Faith, rather than merit, should be considered individually within the divine framework.

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