
THE
TRUTH
OF
DIVINE
ELECTION

*A Study in the Eternal Purpose
of God in Salvation*



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A Study in the Eternal Purpose of God in Salvation
A Theological Monograph

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The Truth of Divine Election

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DEDICATION

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.”

— Ephesians 1:3–4

To the congregation of the redeemed, chosen before the foundation of the world, kept by His sovereign grace, and destined for eternal glory.

Soli Deo gloria.

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Preface

The doctrine of divine election is among the most contested and most glorious truths in the Christian Scriptures. It has been misunderstood by some, avoided by others, and distorted by those who have pressed it into the service of either a cold determinism or a thin sentimentalism. This small volume is my effort to set the doctrine on its proper biblical foundation. I do not offer it as a curiosity of Reformed theology. I offer it as the heartbeat of the Gospel itself.

I have taught this doctrine to the congregation of the faithful over many years, always with the conviction that what Scripture teaches, the Church must receive, even when it cuts against the grain of contemporary preference. The Apostle Paul writes with a pastoral urgency that is inseparable from his doctrinal precision. He does not set election against evangelism. He sets it as the ground of assurance, the source of doxology, and the foundation of the believer's unshakeable confidence before God. When he wrote to the Thessalonians, he did not apologize for the doctrine. He gave thanks for it: "we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13).

The reader will find in these pages an exposition of the three great pillars of divine election as Scripture presents them: the eternal love of the Father, the redemptive work of the Son, and the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit. Election is Trinitarian from beginning to end. It is not a bare decree issued from a distant deity. It is the overflow of a love that is as old as eternity and as particular as a name. To make the shape of the argument easy to carry in the mind and to teach to others, I have given each chapter one governing word beginning with the letter G: the Ground of salvation, the Grid of salvation, and the Guide to salvation.

I wrote this study for pastors, elders, and lay leaders, and for every believer who wishes to know not only what the Bible teaches about

election but also why it matters for worship, for prayer, and for daily obedience. Each chapter closes with three Reflection Questions, and the book ends with Personal Questions and Challenges that I hope will be used in private meditation and in small groups.

May these pages serve the reader not merely as instruction but as an occasion for worship. The God who chose us before the foundation of the world is worthy of all glory, honour, and praise.

Soli Deo gloria.

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

Introduction

Text: Romans 9:11; Romans 11:6

Divine Election is the Biblical Doctrine of Truth taught by the Spirit of God through the Apostle Paul. In Romans 9:11 he says that God's purpose of election continues "not because of works but because of him who calls," and in Romans 11:6 he adds, "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." No other doctrine has been more fiercely contested in the history of the Church, and perhaps none is more necessary for the health and humility of her worship. The question is not whether election is taught in Scripture. It plainly is, from the call of Abraham, when "the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Gen. 12:1), to the sealing of believers with the Holy Spirit in the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 1:13). The question is what the Bible means when it speaks of God's sovereign choosing.

I use the word *election* in its biblical sense: the eternal, free, and gracious act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, he chose in Christ a people to be saved to the praise of his glory. Paul states it plainly: God "chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will" (Eph. 1:4–5). Notice the order of the words. Election is not first of all a doctrine about who will be lost. It is a doctrine about the love of God that gathers a family for himself.

The diversity of interpretations that surrounds this doctrine arises, as I have observed over years of theological engagement, from an imbalance in the treatment of either the nature of God or the nature of man. Those who overemphasize the divine side collapse human responsibility into a mechanism. Those who overemphasize the human side reduce election to a divine response to foreseen human faith. Neither position does justice to the full witness of Scripture. When Paul

writes that “those whom he foreknew he also predestined” (Rom. 8:29), the knowing in view is the knowing of love and covenant, as when the LORD says to Israel, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2). It is not the bare foresight of what a sinner will decide. God’s foreknowledge (his loving, covenant knowing of a people beforehand) is the root of faith, not its fruit.

This volume follows the contours of Pauline theology, anchored in Romans 9 and 11, while drawing on the breadth of both Testaments. The exposition proceeds in three movements, each corresponding to a Person of the Holy Trinity. Chapter 1 considers the eternal love of God the Father, the Ground of salvation, through his Fatherhood and his sovereignty. Chapter 2 considers the covenant of redemption in God the Son, the Grid of salvation, through adoption and through grace and mercy. Chapter 3 considers the regenerating and sustaining work of God the Holy Spirit, the Guide to salvation, through regeneration and through repentance and faith. The Trinitarian structure is not imposed upon the text. It emerges from it.

The method throughout is expository and pastoral. Technical terms are introduced when necessary and defined on first use, and they are gathered again in the Glossary at the back of the book. My aim is not to win an argument but to build up the body of Christ in the knowledge of the God who chose it. I also write with a sense of holy limits. Moses reminded Israel that “the secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29:29). Election is a revealed truth, given to believers for their comfort and their worship, and I do not wish to speculate beyond what has been revealed.

I also want to say at the outset what this doctrine is for. Election is not given to make us curious about the destiny of others, still less to make us proud. It is given to make us humble, secure, and grateful. Jesus told his disciples, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit” (John 15:16). The same Lord who chose them sent them out. A believer who knows that he was chosen by grace will not despise those who have not yet believed, for he

knows that he was once among them and that nothing in him distinguished him from them. He will pray for them, speak to them, and wait on God for the result. That is the spirit in which I have written.

The saying that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” is, as Paul says, “trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance” (1 Tim. 1:15). Election tells us why that saving never fails. May this study lead every reader deeper into that trustworthy grace.

“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.”

— Romans 9:15–16

CHAPTER 1

The Eternal Love in God's Covenant for Divine Election: The Ground of Salvation

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you."

—Jeremiah 31:3

Every sound doctrine of salvation must begin where Scripture begins: with God. It does not begin with the sinner's choice, or the evangelist's appeal, or even the proclamation of the Gospel. It begins with the eternal purpose of the One who "is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). The doctrine of divine election, properly understood, is nothing other than the doctrine of God's love as it takes a particular, purposeful, eternal shape toward those whom he wills to save.

This is not an abstract philosophical claim. It is the beating heart of the Apostle Paul's argument in Romans 9 to 11, the passage that furnishes the primary texts for this study. Paul's concern is not speculative. He is defending the faithfulness of God in view of Israel's unbelief. His answer is that election was never based on ethnic descent but on the sovereign purpose of God. That answer throws open the doors of salvation to both Jew and Gentile while preserving the utter freedom and grace of God.

The same truth was spoken long before Paul, and it was spoken as an astonishing kindness. Moses told Israel why the LORD had chosen them: "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers" (Deut. 7:7–8). The people of God did not give God a reason to love them. They were given a reason

to worship: he loved them because he loved them, and he kept his oath because he is faithful.

Let us enter this doctrine through its two foundational pillars. The first is the Fatherhood of God, which reveals the motive of election. The second is the Sovereignty of God, which reveals its certainty. Together they make the ground on which a sinner may stand and say, with Paul, that nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39).

A. Divine Fatherhood: The Goodness of God in Salvation (John 14:6)

The Fatherhood of God is not a metaphor borrowed from human experience. It is the eternal reality from which all human fatherhood derives its name. Paul bows his knees “before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (Eph. 3:14–15), and the order of that sentence matters. Human families are named from the divine Father, not the divine Father from human families. Before the foundation of the world, before Adam drew his first breath, before the angels sang at creation, God was Father: Father to the eternal Son, in an unbroken communion of love, delight, and self-giving. It is from this eternal well that the salvation of sinners flows. I speak of the Fatherhood of God as the goodness of God in salvation because the Father is the first and final good from which every gift of grace proceeds.

1. The Father Is Both the Source and the Destination

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

— John 14:6

When Jesus declares himself to be the only way to the Father, he is not merely describing a soteriological mechanism. (Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation, the study of how God saves sinners.) He is revealing the *telos* of salvation, the Greek word for the goal and destination toward which a thing moves. The Father is not simply the

source of election. He is its destination. God elects a people not merely to save them from hell but to bring them into the fellowship of the Trinity. Jesus prays, “And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (John 17:3). Election, at its deepest, is an invitation into the eternal family.

This is why I cannot speak of election as though it were a cold sorting of persons. A decree that ended only in a courtroom would be incomplete. The decree of God ends at the Father’s table. Jesus said to his disciples, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32). The phrase to mark is “good pleasure.” The giving of the kingdom is not extracted from a reluctant Father by the pleading of the Son. It is the Father’s own delight, and the sinner who is brought home is brought home to a welcome that was prepared before he was born.

Paul tells us where the Father’s choosing finds its purpose: “In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will” (Eph. 1:5). To predestine is to appoint beforehand, and the Father’s appointment here is not a verdict but an adoption, and it is spoken “in love.” When we are told that the Father chose us, we are being told that the Father wanted us. I ask the reader to hold this thought whenever the doctrine seems severe. The severity that some perceive in election belongs to a God who is imagined without a heart. It does not belong to the God who is revealed in Christ as Father.

2. The Motive of Election Is Found Entirely in God

The goodness of God in salvation is precisely this: the One who had no need of anything outside himself freely chose to make room in his eternal love for creatures who had forfeited every claim upon his mercy. Reformed theology has always insisted, rightly, that the motive for election lies entirely within God himself and not in the foreseen faith or merit of the elect. Louis Berkhof, in his *Systematic Theology*, grounds the counsel of election in the free grace and love of God rather than in anything God saw in sinners beforehand, and I follow him gladly. Paul says the same of the Church: God “saved us and called us to a holy

calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began” (2 Tim. 1:9).

Consider what the alternative would mean. If God chose those whom he foresaw would choose him, then the ground of election would lie in something in us, and the apostle’s statement that “no one may boast” would not be true. But Paul will not allow it. “So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (Rom. 9:16). The motive of election is not a response to human worthiness. It is the free gift of a Father who delights to give, and it is precisely because the motive is in God that the believer can trust it. A motive that lay in us could be lost by us. A motive that lies in God cannot be.

3. The Love That Came Before Our Own

Consider what this means for the believing soul. You did not earn your place in the family of God. You did not attract divine favour by the quality of your repentance or the fervency of your prayer. The Father loved you before you loved him, indeed before you existed to love anything. John writes, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19), and again, “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). A propitiation is a sacrifice that turns away the righteous wrath of God and so makes peace between God and the sinner. Notice who takes the initiative. The Father sends. The Son goes. The sinner is found.

Paul sets the same order before us when he writes that “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:8). This is not a doctrine that breeds pride. It is a doctrine that kills it. And in killing pride, it opens the way for true worship. It also steadies the anxious heart. If the love of God did not begin with my worth, then it cannot be cancelled by my failure. The promise that God gave to Israel through Jeremiah, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you” (Jer. 31:3), is spoken to every believer who has found that he is held by a love older than his own sin.

B. Divine Sovereignty: The Guarantee of God in Salvation (Romans 9:4–6)

If the Fatherhood of God reveals the motive of election, the Sovereignty of God reveals its certainty. God does not merely desire the salvation of the elect. He accomplishes it. His purpose does not bend to the winds of human history, and his will is not dependent upon created causes, however real those causes may be within the realm of secondary agency. (Secondary causes are the real but dependent actions of creatures, through which God ordinarily carries out his eternal purpose.) The LORD declares himself to be the One “declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose’” (Isa. 46:10). I call the sovereignty of God in salvation the guarantee of God, for it stands behind every promise he has made.

1. The Word of God Has Not Failed

“They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed.”

— Romans 9:4–6

Paul’s argument is striking in its directness. He does not explain away Israel’s widespread unbelief by revising the doctrine of election. He clarifies it. “For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel” (Rom. 9:6). The covenant promises were never based on physical descent but on divine calling, and Paul proves it from the history of the patriarchs: “and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but ‘Through Isaac shall your offspring be named’” (Rom. 9:7).

The sovereign God who called Isaac over Ishmael, and who chose Jacob over Esau “though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad” (Rom. 9:11), is the same God who now calls a new

humanity. John saw them in heaven, and the song that he heard says of the Lamb, “by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). The word of God has not failed. It has widened, and it has widened by the same free choice that began with Abraham.

2. The Purpose of God According to Election

God’s sovereignty in salvation is not arbitrary. It is purposeful. Paul tells us the purpose in the very sentence that speaks of Jacob and Esau: God chose “in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls” (Rom. 9:11). The purpose of election is that grace may remain grace, and that salvation may rest on the One who calls and not on the one who is called.

The guarantee of salvation is thus grounded in the character of God himself: his faithfulness to his own eternal purpose, his power to accomplish what he has promised, and his love, which “never ends” (1 Cor. 13:8). Paul traces the whole chain in a single sentence: “And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). To be *called* is to be summoned effectually by the Gospel. To be *justified* is to be declared righteous before God on the ground of Christ’s work. To be *glorified* is to be brought at last into the perfect likeness of Christ. Not one link in the chain is lost between the first and the last. R.C. Sproul pressed the point repeatedly in his teaching: if God is not sovereign over all, he is not sovereign at all, and no promise of his could be trusted. Because God is sovereign over all, every promise stands.

Notice also where Paul places this chain. He does not set it in a chapter of debate but in the middle of a chapter of comfort. Romans 8 is written to believers who are suffering, and Paul wants them to know that the sorrows of this present time are held inside the purpose of God. Election is a doctrine for the sufferer before it is a doctrine for the debater, and the believer who has stood at a graveside or lain awake in grief understands why Paul wrote it there.

3. A Sovereignty That Produces Confidence, Not Fatalism

This doctrine is not meant to produce passive fatalism. It is meant to produce active confidence. The believer who grasps the sovereignty of God in salvation does not become complacent. He becomes bold. He knows that his standing before God does not depend upon the shifting sands of his own spiritual performance but upon the unshakeable purpose of the One “who works all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11). He can hear Paul ask, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies” (Rom. 8:33), and he can answer with a settled heart.

The Good Shepherd himself gives the same assurance in his own words: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27–28). The sheep are not said to hold on to the Shepherd by the strength of their grip. They are held. That is what the guarantee of God means in the life of an ordinary believer who is weak, forgetful, and often afraid.

Sovereignty also does not cancel responsibility. The same apostle who taught election commands, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12–13). The believer works because God works. And the doctrine of election gives the evangelist his courage. Paul wrote from prison, “Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10). He did not endure because he doubted that God would save his people. He endured because he was sure that God would, and he wished to be the means.

Reflection Questions — Chapter 1

1. How does understanding God’s eternal Fatherhood as the source of election change the way you think about your own salvation? In what ways might this truth lead you to deeper gratitude and humility before God?

2. The Apostle Paul argues in Romans 9 that God's word to Israel has not failed because election was always based on divine calling rather than ethnic descent. How should this understanding shape the way the Church proclaims the Gospel across all cultures and peoples?
3. In what areas of your life do you find it most difficult to rest in the sovereignty of God? How might a deeper grasp of God's sovereign goodness in election address those specific anxieties?

CHAPTER 2

The Eternal Christ in the Covenant of Divine Redemption: The Grid of Salvation

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world.”

— Ephesians 1:3–4

Election is never conceived in Scripture as a bare, abstract decree issued without reference to a Mediator. It is always an election in Christ, through Christ, and toward Christ. The eternal Son of God is not merely the executor of the Father’s plan. He is the sphere in which that plan is enacted, the grid through which the love of the Father reaches and transforms the elect. A grid is a network through which everything must pass in order to arrive. As the power of a generating station reaches a home only through the grid that connects them, so the electing love of the Father reaches sinners only through the Son in whom they were chosen. This is the great mystery that Paul unfolds in the opening doxology of Ephesians: we were chosen in him before the foundation of the world.

What does it mean to be chosen in Christ? It means that the election of a particular people is inseparable from the person and work of the Lord Jesus. There is no election apart from the Redeemer. God does not first choose a group and then go looking for a Saviour for them. He elects a people in and through the One who is both their covenant head and their atoning substitute. A covenant head is the representative person who acts on behalf of all who belong to him, so that what he does is counted as theirs. The Son is the mediating centre of all God’s saving purposes.

The older Reformed writers spoke of this eternal arrangement as the covenant of redemption, the agreement among the Persons of the Trinity

before time began. The Father gives a people to the Son, the Son undertakes to redeem them, and the Spirit undertakes to apply that redemption to them. The Scriptures nowhere set it out as a treaty with numbered clauses, but its elements are everywhere. Jesus prays, “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word” (John 17:6). He says to his disciples, “and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom” (Luke 22:29). Paul speaks of “eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began” (Titus 1:2), and before the ages began there was no one to receive the promise but the Son. The letter to the Hebrews names the result “the blood of the eternal covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

I will set before the reader two gifts that flow from this covenant, as the Scriptures present them. The first is adoption, the gift of a place in the family. The second is grace and mercy, the gift of pardon for those who deserve judgment. Both come to us in Christ and only in Christ.

A. Divine Adoption in Christ (Galatians 4; Romans 8)

The most staggering implication of election in Christ is the gift of adoption. Paul writes in Galatians 4:4–5, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.” The language is deliberate. Redemption is not the end of the story but the means to an even greater end. The elect are not merely forgiven. They are received into the family of God.

1. Redemption Serves a Greater End

Adoption (in Greek, *hnoiotesia*, literally “the placing of a son”) is a legal and relational act by which God, through union with Christ, grants to the elect the full rights, standing, and privileges of sons. Paul places it at the very centre of the purpose of election: God “predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ” (Eph. 1:5). It is easy to preach redemption as if the cross ended in a cancelled debt. The Scriptures teach that the cross ends in a home. The debt is cancelled so that the debtor

may be adopted. Without this end, redemption would leave the forgiven sinner standing outside the door with a clear record and no father.

Adoption was not unknown to the Old Testament. The LORD told Pharaoh, “Israel is my firstborn son” (Exod. 4:22), and in the first chapter of this study we read that to Israel “belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants” (Rom. 9:4). The nation was chosen as a son before it had done anything to deserve the name. What was true of Israel in shadow is true of the whole people of God in fulfilment. Every believer, Jew or Gentile, is now brought into that sonship through the One who is the true and faithful Son, and the line of election that ran through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob runs at last through Christ.

The Son came to give us what he already possessed. He is the eternal Son by nature, and we are sons by grace. This is why Paul says that we receive adoption “through Jesus Christ.” There is no other door to the family. Apart from Christ the elect remain what they were by nature, and in Christ they become what he is by right.

2. A Complete and Irrevocable Declaration

Adoption is not a gradual process, and it is not a provisional status. It is a complete and irrevocable declaration. The one who was a stranger is a child, and the declaration is made once and cannot be taken back. Those who have been adopted cry out “Abba! Father!” not as strangers cautiously approaching a distant deity, but as children whose identity is sealed by the Spirit of the Son.

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’”

— Romans 8:15

The next verse tells us who confirms the declaration: “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:16). The believer is not left to guess. The same Spirit who applies redemption also assures the adopted child that he is loved. And John adds, with something like astonishment, “See what kind of love the Father has given

to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are” (1 John 3:1). The last four words are the apostle’s insistence that the name is not a courtesy. It is a fact.

Because adoption is complete, it does not depend upon the child’s behaviour. This does not mean that the Father is indifferent to it. The letter to the Hebrews says, “For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives” (Heb. 12:6). The discipline of a father is the proof, not the denial, of the relationship. A believer who is corrected by God is not being threatened with removal from the family. He is being treated as a son, and the Father who disciplines him is the same Father who chose him before the foundation of the world.

3. A Family, Not a Collection of Individuals

The Reformers and those who followed them prized adoption as the crowning fruit of union with Christ, and the Westminster Confession gives it a chapter of its own. John Calvin, writing in the *Institutes*, understood that the benefits of Christ come to us only because he gives himself to us: “For we await salvation from him not because he appears to us afar off, but because he makes us, ingrafted into his body, participants not only in all his benefits but also in himself.” To be elect is to be, in the fullest sense, a child of God, not by nature but by gracious and deliberate divine choice. John says that those who receive Christ are given “the right to become children of God” (John 1:12), and that they are “born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13).

This has a direct bearing on how the Church lives. Those who are adopted are adopted into a household, not into a collection of private religious experiences. Paul tells the Gentile believers, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19). A church that has understood adoption will not be cold, cliquish, or proud of its own seniority. It will greet the newest believer as a brother or sister of equal standing, because the Father has already done so.

B. Divine Grace and Mercy in Christ (Ephesians 2:8–9; Titus 2:12–14; 3:5)

Election in Christ is always a display of grace and mercy. Grace (in Greek, *charis*) is God’s unmerited favour toward the undeserving. Mercy (in Greek, *eleos*) is his compassion toward the miserable. Both are fully operative in the covenant of redemption. The elect are not chosen because they are better than others. They are chosen though they were, in themselves, in the condition that Paul describes: “you were dead in the trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1).

1. By Grace, Through Faith, Not of Ourselves

“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.”

— Ephesians 2:8–9

Paul’s argument in Ephesians 2:8–9 is among the most carefully constructed statements of salvation in the New Testament. The salvation under discussion is explicitly by grace, through faith, and explicitly not of human origin or achievement. The phrase “this is not your own doing” does not point to faith alone but to the entire complex of grace, salvation, and faith. The whole of it is the gift of God. No part of the saving process originates in the sinner. It originates in the gracious will of the One who, in Paul’s words, is “rich in mercy.”

The context makes this plain. “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2:4–5). A dead man contributes nothing to his own resurrection. The initiative, the power, and the glory are God’s alone, and Paul closes the thought with a statement of purpose: “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:10). Even the good works of the believer were prepared beforehand by God.

Paul applies the same doctrine to the remnant of Israel in his own day: “So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace”

(Rom. 11:5). The remnant did not preserve itself by its faithfulness. It was preserved by the choice of God, and Paul will not allow the least admixture of merit: grace that is partly earned would no longer be grace. This is why the doctrine of election, far from being an obstacle to the free offer of the Gospel, is its guardian. Where election is denied, some measure of human desert tends to creep into the foundation of salvation, and the sinner is invited to rest on something other than Christ alone.

2. A People for His Own Possession

Titus deepens the picture by grounding grace in Christology. Paul writes that “the grace of God has appeared” (Titus 2:11), and it appeared in the person of Jesus Christ, “who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14). The elect are not a random sampling of humanity. They are a purchased possession, a people whom God has acquired for himself at infinite cost. The Saviour did not die to make salvation merely possible. He died to purify a people for himself, and Paul’s confidence is that the people he died for will be purified.

The Lord Jesus described his own mission in the same terms: “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). A ransom is a price paid to set captives free, and the captives are named: “for many.” The mercy of God was not exercised at a distance. It was exercised in a body, on a cross, at a price that no creature could have paid, and every person for whom it was paid becomes a living monument to the mercy of God.

Titus 3:5 completes the picture: God “saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” Here the three Persons are at work together. The Father shows mercy, the Son has purchased the people, and the Spirit washes and renews. Regeneration (the new birth, in which the Spirit gives spiritual life to those who were dead) is the subject of the next chapter, but it is already named here as one of the works of mercy.

3. Every Means Provided: Not One Will Be Lost

Here is the wonder of grace: the God who elected has also provided every means necessary for the accomplishment of that election. He does not simply choose and then leave the elect to their own devices. He sends his Son, provides the atonement, grants repentance, works faith, and keeps his own to the end. The Son himself testifies to the last of these, saying, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day” (John 6:39). The covenant of redemption in Christ is total in its scope. Not one of the elect will be lost.

Paul reasons from the greater to the lesser: “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32). If the Father gave the greatest gift at the cost of his own Son, he will not withhold the lesser gifts of repentance, faith, and perseverance. The believer may therefore rest on grace at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the Christian life. The grace that chose in eternity is the same grace that keeps until glory, and the same Christ is the grid through which it comes.

None of this closes the door of the Gospel. It holds it open. The Lord who chose a people before the foundation of the world is the same Lord who says to every weary hearer, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). The invitation is sincere, and the elect are the ones who come. I preach the invitation freely and without hesitation precisely because I know that the Father has given the Son a people, and that the Son has promised to lose none of them. A doctrine that gives the preacher certainty that his labour will not be in vain is not an enemy of evangelism.

Reflection Questions — Chapter 2

1. Paul says that God “chose us in him before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). What does it mean practically for your understanding of salvation that election is in Christ rather than an abstract divine decision?

2. The doctrine of adoption teaches that the elect are not merely forgiven but received as full children of God. How might a robust theology of adoption change the way your church community relates to one another and to God in corporate worship?
3. Ephesians 2:8–9 insists that salvation is entirely God’s gift so that “no one may boast.” In what areas of your spiritual life are you most tempted to take credit for your standing before God? How does the grace of election correct that tendency?

CHAPTER 3

The Eternal Spirit of God in the Covenant: The Guide to Salvation

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.”

— John 14:16–17

The doctrine of election would be incomplete, and finally inaccessible to the human soul, if it ended with the eternal decree of the Father and the redemptive work of the Son. The Holy Spirit is the One who applies to the heart what the Father has planned and the Son has purchased. He is not an optional supplement to salvation but its indispensable agent, the Guide to whom the covenant of grace entrusts the actualizing of election in every human life. Jesus promised that “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13), and the guiding that he does in the believer’s mind he first does in the believer’s heart, bringing the elect from death to life and from unbelief to trust.

John Owen, in his treatise on the Holy Spirit, taught that all the fruits of the Father’s love and the Son’s grace are communicated to us by the Spirit. This is the pattern of Trinitarian salvation as the New Testament presents it: the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Spirit applies. Each Person is fully and uniquely active, and none can be understood apart from the other two. Peter writes his letter “to those who are elect exiles,” and then he names the three Persons in order: they are chosen “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood” (1 Pet. 1:1–2). The Father’s foreknowledge, the Spirit’s sanctification, and the Son’s blood are not three competing explanations of salvation. They are three Persons working one salvation.

Paul says that the same love of the Father that was poured out in the Son’s cross is poured into the believer’s heart by the Spirit: “God’s love

has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:5). The Spirit is the One by whom the Father’s eternal love, which we considered in Chapter 1, becomes the believer’s present experience. I will consider his work under two headings. The first is regeneration, in which he gives life. The second is repentance and faith, in which he gives the grace to turn and to trust.

A. The Spirit for Regeneration: New Creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The first and most foundational work of the Holy Spirit in the elect is regeneration, the sovereign act of God by which a spiritually dead person is made alive. It is the beginning of every Christian life, and it is wholly the work of God.

1. Born of the Spirit

Jesus described this work to Nicodemus as being “born again” and “born of the Spirit.” He said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). When Nicodemus could not understand, Jesus pointed to the wind: “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). The Lord insists that regeneration is both necessary and mysterious. The Spirit moves where he wills, and no human calculation can anticipate or control his coming. No one can produce the new birth by effort, any more than a child can arrange for his own birth.

The apostles teach the same. Peter blesses God because “according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). James says of the Father, “Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). In both passages the new birth is something God does. The believer is the one who is born, and the one who is born does not contribute to his own birth.

2. A New Creation

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

— 2 Corinthians 5:17

Paul’s description of the regenerate person as a “new creation” is not hyperbole. It is precise theological language. The Greek (*kainē ktisis*) indicates not a renovation of the old but the introduction of something genuinely and categorically new. The regenerate person does not improve upon a pre-existing moral foundation. He is re-created from within by the direct act of the Spirit. This is why regeneration precedes and produces faith, not the reverse. A dead person cannot will himself to life, but a person made alive by the Spirit will inevitably cry out to God in repentance and trust.

Scripture is clear that the natural person cannot do otherwise until he is made new. “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). The problem is not that the natural person has not been told. It is that he is not able to receive what he has been told. And the Lord Jesus himself says, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him” (John 6:44). The drawing is not a suggestion. It is the Father’s effective act, and it is what the new birth accomplishes. Paul puts the same truth in the language of resurrection: God, “even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph. 2:5). The dead are not persuaded into life. They are raised.

The new creation is not invisible. The Spirit who gives life also produces the fruit of that life, and Paul lists it: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Gal. 5:22–23). I do not say that a believer is perfect in these things. I say that a believer who has been made new will begin to bear them, slowly and imperfectly, and that the bearing is the Spirit’s doing and not his own. The tree is made good

first, and then the fruit follows. Where there is no fruit at all, Scripture calls us to examine whether there has been any new birth.

3. The New Heart Is the Precondition, Not the Reward

The Reformed tradition has consistently maintained this ordering of regeneration and faith against those who would place human decision before divine action. The key promise is the one that God made through Ezekiel: “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 a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (Ezek. 36:26–27). The order in the sentence is the order in the experience. First God gives the new heart. Then he puts his Spirit within. Then the people walk in his statutes. The new heart is the precondition for obedient walking, not its reward.

Election is thus not merely the divine foreknowledge of who will believe. It is the divine determination of who will be given the capacity to believe. Luke records the result in the city of Antioch: “And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48). The appointing came first, and the believing followed. John says of those who receive Christ that they were “born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13), and the believer who understands that sentence will never again take credit for his own faith.

B. The Spirit for Repentance and Faith (John 16:8; Hebrews 11:6)

The Spirit’s second great work in the elect is the creation of genuine repentance and saving faith. These are not human achievements. They are Spirit-wrought graces.

1. The Spirit Convicts and Opens Blind Eyes

Jesus said of the Spirit, “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8). Conviction is the Spirit’s work of showing the sinner what he is and what God requires, and the Gospel that is preached does not become effective until this work is done. The Spirit then opens the eyes of the spiritually blind to see Christ as he truly is: glorious, sufficient, and freely offered. Paul describes the experience in terms of creation: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). The same God who commanded light on the first day commands it again in the heart of the sinner.

The book of Acts gives a plain example in Lydia, a seller of purple goods who heard Paul preach by the river. Luke does not say that Lydia decided to open her heart. He writes, “The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul” (Acts 16:14). Paul did the preaching, and the Lord did the opening. That is how the apostles understood their work, and it is why they preached with confidence, and with tears.

The Spirit also gives understanding to those whom he has made alive. Paul writes, “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God” (1 Cor. 2:12). Illumination is the Spirit’s quiet work of making the Word of God clear and welcome to the believer who reads it. The same Bible that was closed to him as a natural person is now a book that he loves, and he returns to it as to a letter from home. This is not a mark of superior intelligence. It is a gift, and it is given to the youngest believer as freely as to the most learned.

2. Faith and Repentance Are Gifts

“And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

— Hebrews 11:6

Hebrews 11:6 declares that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” But faith, in the biblical framework, is not a native human capacity that simply needs to be awakened. It is a gift. Paul has already told us that salvation by faith is “the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8), and in his letter to the Philippians he makes the same point about believing and suffering together: “For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake” (Phil. 1:29). Both the believing and the suffering are gracious gifts, not human contributions.

Repentance is a gift in the same way. When Peter reported the conversion of Cornelius, the church in Jerusalem “fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life’” (Acts 11:18). Paul asks Timothy to correct opponents “with gentleness,” in the hope that “God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:25). If repentance and faith were possessions of the natural person, such prayers would be unnecessary. Because they are gifts, the church prays for the unconverted with real expectation. It asks the God who gives repentance to give it.

The same is true of the simplest confession of the Christian faith. Paul writes, “no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Whenever a sinner says those words and means them, whether in a village church, at a hospital bed, or in the silence of his own room, he is speaking by the Spirit’s gift. He may think that he reached the conclusion by his own reasoning. In eternity he will understand that the One who led him there was the Guide.

3. The Spirit Renews the Will and Keeps His Own

The Spirit does not override the human will. He renews it. He does not bypass human agency. He restores it to its proper orientation toward God. The believer who repents and trusts genuinely wills to repent and trust, but he does so because the Spirit has worked in him what was not there before. Paul can therefore speak of “God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13) without any

contradiction between the two. The Spirit's work is not the destruction of freedom but the end of its slavery.

Paul says that the Spirit leads those whom he has made new: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Here the doctrines of this whole study meet. The Father has chosen, and so there are sons. The Son has redeemed, and so the sons are free. The Spirit leads, and so the sons walk home. A believer who is led by the Spirit does not experience that leading as an external force pressing him against his will. He experiences it as the growing desire of a child to please a Father whom he has come to love.

This is the great comfort for the believer who fears that his faith is too weak. "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). The Spirit who began a good work in him "will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6). Paul describes the Spirit also as a seal and a guarantee: believers "were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13–14). The word *guarantee* returns here as it did in Chapter 1. The Father's sovereignty is the guarantee of the promise, and the indwelling Spirit is the guarantee of the inheritance. Election is not in jeopardy.

The doctrine of the Spirit's work in conversion does not make the preaching of the Gospel unnecessary. It makes it necessary and hopeful. "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved,'" Paul writes, and then he asks, "And how are they to hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:13–14). The Spirit saves through the preached word, and the preacher is the means by which the Guide leads. I proclaim Christ to all who will hear me, and I rely on the Spirit to do what I cannot do: to give life, to give sight, and to give a heart that wills to come.

Reflection Questions — Chapter 3

- 1.** How does understanding regeneration as a sovereign act of the Spirit, prior to and productive of faith, change your approach to evangelism? What does it free you from, and what does it call you to?
- 2.** If the Spirit both produces repentance and sustains faith in the elect, how should this shape the way the church prays for the unconverted? What specific petitions become possible when we believe in the Spirit's sovereign work in conversion?
- 3.** Paul says the Spirit "helps us in our weakness" (Rom. 8:26) and intercedes for us when we do not know how to pray. In what specific area of weakness do you need to trust the Spirit's intercession more fully this week?

Conclusion

The doctrine of divine election, as we have traced it through three movements of Trinitarian engagement, is not a cold decree impressed upon passive recipients by an impersonal deity. It is the expression of an eternal love: the Father choosing, the Son redeeming, and the Spirit applying. Its aim is the restoration of ruined humanity to the fellowship of the living God. I have tried to show that the doctrine is not a rival to the Gospel but its foundation, and that it is not an obstacle to worship but its fuel.

We began with the Father's eternal love as the motive and ground of election. We saw that God does not elect because he has foreseen faith, but that he foresees faith because he has first elected. The goodness of God in salvation is the initiative of a Father who loves not because he must but because it is his eternal delight to give. His sovereignty is not the sovereignty of an arbitrary tyrant. It is the sovereignty of a faithful Father whose word does not return to him empty: "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

We then considered the Son as the sphere and mediator of election. To be chosen in Christ is to be united to the One in whom "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:19). Adoption, grace, mercy, and redemption all arrive to the sinner through Christ and in Christ, without diminishment and without remainder. There is no election outside of him, and there is no condemnation inside of him: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

Finally, we explored the Spirit's indispensable role in bringing the eternal counsel of election to bear upon specific human lives. Through regeneration, the Spirit makes the dead alive. Through conviction and illumination, he opens the eyes of the spiritually blind. Through the gift of repentance and faith, he unites the elect to Christ and keeps them

there until glory. The Spirit is not a supplement to election. He is its agent and its actualization in history.

What, then, shall we say to these things? The Apostle Paul answers his own rhetorical question with a doxology, and so should we. “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Rom. 11:33). He closes the great argument of Romans 9 to 11 with a sentence that gathers the whole of this study into a single line: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36). From him: the Father’s eternal love. Through him: the Son’s redemption. To him: the glory that the Spirit leads every redeemed heart to give. Election is not a doctrine to be debated into submission. It is a mystery to be worshipped. It calls us not to arrogance, as though we were better than those who remain outside of Christ, but to trembling gratitude, as those who know that “it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy” (Rom. 9:16).

May every reader who has encountered these truths leave these pages more assured of God’s unbreakable purposes, more humbled by the grace that sought them before they sought it, and more eager to make known the riches of this mystery among the nations. The God who chose before creation still calls through the Gospel today, and those whom he calls will come.

Soli Deo gloria.

Personal Questions and Challenges

On Divine Fatherhood and Sovereignty

1. Do you rest your assurance of salvation on the unchanging purpose of God, or on the fluctuating state of your own feelings and performance? What would it look like to anchor your confidence more firmly in the eternal covenant?
2. How does the truth that God loved you before you existed change the way you think about your own worth and dignity before him?
3. Are there people in your life whose conversion you have given up praying for? How might the doctrine of divine sovereignty in election renew your intercession for them? Name one person you will begin to pray for by name each day this week.

On Redemption and Grace

4. Do you truly believe that there is nothing you can add to the work of Christ on your behalf? Where do you still seek to supplement grace with your own merit?
5. What does it mean for your daily life that you are not merely forgiven but adopted, a full child of God with all the rights and privileges of the Son?
6. How has God's grace been at work in your life in ways you did not recognize at the time? Pause to trace the hand of grace in your story, and write down one way you will give thanks for it this week.

On the Spirit and New Creation

7. Are you walking in the reality of being a "new creation in Christ"? What habits, attitudes, or relationships still reflect the old rather than the new?

8. How are you cooperating with the Spirit's work of renewing your mind through the regular practices of Scripture reading, prayer, and community? Paul commands, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

9. Election calls its recipients not to passivity but to holiness. In what specific area of holiness do you sense the Spirit's most urgent call in your life at this moment, and what one concrete change will you make this week in response?

Glossary

Adoption: The act by which God, through union with Christ, receives believers into his family as sons and daughters, with the full rights and privileges of children. The Greek word is *huiothesia*.

Charis: The Greek word for grace. It means God's undeserved favour toward those who deserve his judgment.

Covenant Head: The representative person who acts on behalf of all who belong to him, so that what he does is counted as theirs. Adam acted for his descendants, and Christ acts for all who are united to him.

Covenant of Redemption: The eternal agreement among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, made before creation. The Father gave a people to the Son, the Son undertook to redeem them, and the Spirit undertook to apply that redemption to them.

Effectual Calling: The powerful work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel by which chosen sinners are summoned out of unbelief and come to Christ freely and gladly.

Election: God's eternal, free, and gracious choice of a people in Christ, before the foundation of the world, to be saved to the praise of his glory.

Eleos: The Greek word for mercy. It means God's compassion toward those who are miserable and helpless in their sin.

Foreknowledge: God's loving and covenantal knowing of his people beforehand. It is more than knowing in advance what they will do.

Glorification: The final stage of salvation, in which believers are raised and brought into the perfect likeness of Christ in glory.

Justification: God's gracious act of declaring a sinner righteous in his sight, on the ground of the righteousness and death of Christ, received by faith alone.

Kainē Ktisis: The Greek phrase for “new creation” in 2 Corinthians 5:17. It describes the person who has been made genuinely new by God.

Predestination: God’s eternal appointment of his people to a destiny that he has determined, namely adoption as sons and conformity to the image of his Son.

Propitiation: A sacrifice that turns away the righteous wrath of God against sin. In the Gospel, the death of Christ is the propitiation for the sins of his people.

Regeneration: The sovereign act of the Holy Spirit by which a spiritually dead person is given new life. It is also called the new birth.

Secondary Causes: The real but dependent actions of creatures through which God ordinarily carries out his eternal purpose. God remains the first cause and does not depend on them.

Soteriology: The doctrine of salvation, the study of how God saves sinners.

Telos: The Greek word for the goal or end toward which something moves.

Union with Christ: The spiritual bond that joins believers to Christ, so that they share in his death, his resurrection, and all his benefits.

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Ephesians	<i>2:10</i>	<i>Chapter 2</i>
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2 Thessalonians	<i>2:13</i>	<i>Preface</i>
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About the Author

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar is a Pastor Emeritus who holds the degrees of Th.B. (Bachelor of Theology), A.B. (Bachelor of Arts), and D.D. (Doctor of Divinity). He has devoted his life and ministry to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the rigorous theological formation of God's people, and the equipping of pastoral leaders for faithful and effective ministry in church and society.

Pastor Bal served for many years as a pastor and theological educator, and has been a central figure in the work of Holistic Enhancement for Lay-leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.), a parachurch ministry committed to equipping the whole people of God for faithful service across every sphere of life. His monthly theological lectures to the HELP, Inc. fellowship have addressed the most foundational questions of the Christian faith, and these studies, expanded, deepened, and formatted for print, have shaped the theological works he continues to write.

His theological formation reflects sustained engagement with the whole of the Reformed and evangelical tradition. Among those whose thought has most shaped his own are Augustine of Hippo, John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, Louis Berkhof, Benjamin B. Warfield, Oscar Cullmann, Herman Dooyeweerd, Karl Barth, Paul Jewett, Francis Schaeffer, R.C. Sproul, and Ravi Zacharias. He reads every theological question through the lens of the whole counsel of God, and has spent a lifetime teaching others to do the same.

The present work, *The Truth of Divine Election*, represents Pastor Bal's sustained engagement with one of the most debated and most glorious doctrines in the whole of Christian theology. For those who have struggled to know where to stand on the question of election, this volume offers the grounding of Scripture, the warmth of pastoral care, and the doxological conviction that every true doctrine must ultimately lead us to worship.

Other theological works by the author:

- *Spiritual Unity and Personal Diversity in Christ*
- *Why God Did Decree and Allow Evil to Exist*
- *What the Christian Church Should Be*
- *The Reformed Theological Paradigm*
- *The Holy Loving Triune Lord God*
- *The Seven Loci of Dogmatics*
- *Vital Words Related to Salvation*
- *The Athanasian Creed Understood by Faith*
- *Biblical Salvation: A Study in Soteriology*
- *Comparing and Contrasting Calvinism and Arminianism*
- *Divine Election unto Salvation*
- *In Everything, Give Thanks to God*
- *The Seven Churches of Revelation*
- *The Main Subjects of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses*
- *The Five Illustrations of Divine Truths*
- *The Reformed Theological Summary of Life*
- *The Seven Loci of Christian Theology*
- *Six Calvinistic Schools on Soteriology*
- *Paul's Summary of His Message in the Ministry*
- *Doctrines of Divine Grace Part II*
- *The Work of the Holy Spirit*
- *Our Attitude Towards Wealth*
- *The Five Solas*
- *The Progressive Parallelisms in the Book of Revelation*
- *Millennium in the Bible*
- *The Thinking Process of the Christian Mind*
- *The Threefold Understanding of Salvation*
- *The Epistemological Thinking for Christians*
- *The Seventy Weeks of Daniel*
- *Eastern Western Thinking and World-and-Life Views*

He lives with his beloved wife, Estrella. He is the father of Dr. Ellazar and Zarelle Grace. He continues to preach, teach, write, and intercede for the reformation and renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ, until the day when faith gives way to sight and the knowledge that is now partial becomes the knowledge that is full.

Soli Deo gloria.