

*GraceLife Church Presents . . .*

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# Soteriology

The Purpose,  
Accomplishment, Plan, and  
Application of Redemption

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ Pelagianism
- ❖ Semi-Pelagianism
- ❖ Arminianism
- ❖ Calvinism

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ Pelagianism
- ❖ Semi-Pelagianism
- ❖ Arminianism: Prevenient Grace
- ❖ Calvinism

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ Pelagianism
- ❖ Semi-Pelagianism
- ❖ Arminianism: Prevenient Grace
- ❖ Calvinism: Saving Grace

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ Pelagianism
- ❖ Semi-Pelagianism
- ❖ Semi-Augustinianism
- ❖ Augustinianism

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ The ultimate difference between Calvinism (Augustinianism) and Arminianism is this doctrine of prevenient grace.
- ❖ Another way to point out the chief difference between the two doctrines of salvation is with the words *Monergism* and *Synergism*.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ *Monergism:*
  - ❖ Mono = one, alone, single;
  - ❖ Erg = unit of energy
  
- ❖ *Synergism.*
  - ❖ Syn = united, acting or considered together;
  - ❖ Erg = unit of energy

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ *Monergism*: God alone works to bring man to salvation through regeneration. This is sometimes called *monergistic regeneration*.
- ❖ The historical litmus test of this issue is whether or not regeneration precedes faith in the *ordo salutis*.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

- ❖ *Synergism*: God and man work together in salvation.
- ❖ There is a spectrum on the *synergism* scale from Pelagianism in which most of the work is up to man, Semi-Pelagianism in which man initiates the work, to Arminianism in which God initiates salvation via prevenient grace.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

“Synergism is any theological belief in free human participation in salvation. Its heretical forms in Christian theology are Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism. The former denies original sin and elevates natural and moral human ability to live spiritually fulfilled lives. The latter embraces a modified version of original sin but believes that humans have the ability, even in their natural or fallen state, to initiate salvation by exercising a good will toward God.”

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

“Contrary to confused critics, classical Arminianism is neither Pelagian nor semi-Pelagian! But it *is* synergistic.

Arminianism is *evangelical synergism* as opposed to heretical, humanistic synergism. . . . I am referring to evangelical synergism, which affirms the prevenience of grace to every human exercise of a good will toward God, including simply nonresistance to the saving work of Christ.”

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# The Application of Redemption

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## Views on The Salvation of Man

“We can identify at least four distinct positions concerning the monergism-synergism debate throughout church history: (1) humanistic monergism [Pelagianism], (2) human-initiated synergism [Semi-Pelagianism], (3) God-initiated synergism [Semi-Augustinianism / Classical Arminianism], and (4) divine monergism [Augustinianism / Calvinism].”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, xxvii.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ *Prevenient* grace comes from the Latin *venio*, 'to come.'
- ❖ The prefix 'pre' means before.
- ❖ *Prevenient grace* is grace that comes before salvation. Thus, it is grace that neutralizes or somehow nullifies original sin giving man the ability to respond to the gospel *before* regeneration occurs.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Classical Arminian synergism sees conversion (faith and repentance) preceding regeneration in the *ordo salutis*.
- ❖ Some Arminians understand prevenient grace to be restricted to only those places where the gospel is preached (Arminius' view).
- ❖ Others (like Wesley) believe that it is universal in scope and extends to all people.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

“Arminian doctrine of universal prevenient grace means that because of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit *no human being is actually in a state of absolute darkness and depravity*. Because of original sin, helplessness to do good is the natural state of humanity, but because of the work of Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit *universally no human being actually exists in that natural state.*”

Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 154; quoted in Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 220; emphasis added by Barrett.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

“Wesleyans believe that God has given prevenient grace to all people. As descendants of Adam they were born with no ability or desire to choose God, but God has counteracted this inability by the gift of prevenient grace. Now all people have the ability to choose God. The ultimate determination of salvation is the human decision to say no or yes to God.”

Thomas Schreiner, “Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?” in *Still Sovereign* ed. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware, 237.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

“Prevenient grace does not guarantee that the good will be chosen. It simply provides the opportunity or liberty to choose salvation. People may stifle the grace given and turn away from God, or they may respond to God’s grace and turn to him in order to be saved.”

John Wesley, *Works*, 6:509; quoted in, Thomas Schreiner, “Does Scripture Teach Prevenient Grace in the Wesleyan Sense?” in *Still Sovereign* ed. Thomas Schreiner and Bruce Ware, 237.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

“To summarize, prevenient grace (1) mitigates total depravity so that no man is in a state of mere nature and (2) restores to every man a measure of free will so that he can cooperate or resist God’s plea to be saved.”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 221.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ What prevenient grace does then is put man into a sort of intermediate state.
- ❖ The Arminian says, “Yes, man is dead in trespasses and sins.” Then they turn around and say, “Man is not actually in that state because of prevenient grace.”

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

“Prevenient grace, by mitigating total depravity, also places sinners in an ‘intermediate state,’ where, according to Arminians like Olson, the process of regeneration has begun due to the application of prevenient grace, but is incomplete because regeneration is still contingent upon whether or not man will cooperate with God.”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 222.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Prevenient Grace View of Salvation

“The intermediate stage is when the human being is not so much free to respond to the gospel (as the semi-Pelagians claimed) but is freed to the good news of redemption in Christ. Arminius thus believes not so much in free will but in a freed will, one which though initially bound by sin, has been brought by the prevenient grace of the Spirit of Christ to a point where it can respond freely to the divine call. *The intermediate stage is neither unregenerate nor regenerate, but perhaps post-unregenerate and pre-regenerate. [!]*”

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Whichever view of salvation we arrive at *all* of them are labeled after their primary proponents in church history.
- ❖ The opinions of men are not important, what is important is what Scripture teaches.
- ❖ We must remember that doctrine is clarified through history as different teachings arise and the church goes to Scripture to discern truth.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ The ultimate problem with the other views of salvation, besides the fact that they have no Scriptural support, is that they understand salvation to be ultimately in the hands of man.
- ❖ Pelagianism is all up to man, Semi-Pelagianism is man initiated, and in Semi-Augustinianism the final decisive factor in salvation is the individual's decision not to resist God's work.
- ❖ These teachings undermine the Bible's teaching that salvation is by grace.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Today I want to present saving grace through the lens of church history.
- ❖ The apostles and writers of the New Testament believed in the depravity of man and the necessity of grace. We will look at some of the Scriptures as we follow the development of the doctrine.
- ❖ The earliest church fathers however, focussed their attention on the necessity of repentance and faith.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ In other words, the emphasis of their writings was on the side of man's responsibility.
- ❖ Man's responsibility to respond to the gospel is not in contradiction with the doctrine of salvation by grace and God's sovereignty.
- ❖ Nevertheless, the earliest fathers seemed to speak of man's freewill and responsibility to come to Christ for salvation.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Note: History is not our authority but it is helpful to trace the development of doctrine and to lean on those who came before us and were gifted to teach Scripture.
- ❖ Take the doctrine of the Trinity for example. The church always believed that there is only one God *and* that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God.
- ❖ They didn't write about this doctrine directly until Arius began teaching the Christ was a created being.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ In a similar way, the church always believed that God is sovereign in salvation *and* that man is responsible.
- ❖ They believed that salvation was by grace and grace alone.
- ❖ But they didn't do as much direct thinking and writing about it until Pelagius began teaching that man had the ability to merit eternal life by his own deeds.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

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

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 2.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Augustine was hesitant, initially, to confront Pelagius but soon realized that his teaching undermined the grace of God in salvation.
- ❖ If part of salvation is up to man, however small that part might be, man is enabled to boast and God is robbed of his glory.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

“For Augustine, if grace is not necessary, sufficient, and efficacious, God is robbed of his glory and man given the credit in salvation.”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 9.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Augustine taught that grace was necessary, sufficient, and efficacious.
- ❖ Necessary to undo the effects of original sin.
- ❖ Sufficient because nothing else is needed besides God's grace.
- ❖ Efficacious because the grace of God works to actually save sinners from their fallen condition.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

“Augustine argues from John 8:36 and Ephesians 2:8 that it is only by God’s saving grace that man can be set free from his slavery to sin and instead become, as Paul says, a slave to righteousness.”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 7.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**John 8:31** So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” **33** They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?”

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**John 8:34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commmits sin is the slave of sin. **35** “The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. **36** “So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ We saw that man is a willing slave to sin. Because we are born into this world in sin, we are enslaved by our own sinful desires.
- ❖ Our only hope, Augustine argued, was for the Son to set us free. We are unable to free ourselves.
- ❖ God's saving grace releases us from this bondage.
- ❖ There was no other way to be delivered. Grace is absolutely necessary.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**Eph 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; **9** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**1 Cor 4:7** For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ The other views of salvation must admit that the ultimate determiner in whether someone will be saved or not rests in man.
- ❖ The answer to the question, ‘who makes you differ?’ must be, ‘I make me differ.’
- ❖ For Paul and Augustine, this would leave an opportunity for boasting. No, salvation is by grace.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

“Augustine not only taught that grace is necessary but also that it is both particular and efficacious. God does not bestow his special, saving grace upon all of mankind and wait to see if man will cooperate with it (i.e. synergism), but God works upon his elect in an irresistible manner, giving the sinner a new heart and a renewed will so that the sinner *will* respond in faith and repentance (i.e. monergism).”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 7.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ The to the question, ‘who makes you differ?’ Augustine answered, ‘God makes the difference.’
- ❖ Augustine saw that the gospel is to be preached to all people but not all people respond to the gospel for salvation.
- ❖ Therefore he distinguished two gospel calls. One general to all people and one particular—a saving call—to the elect.
- ❖ Theologians refer to the saving call as *Irresistible Grace* or *Effectual calling*.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**Matt 22:14** “For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ *Irresistible grace* is not intended to imply that men (or the elect) do not resist the work of the Holy Spirit or the proclamation of the gospel.
- ❖ It does not mean that God draws sinners to himself against their will.
- ❖ It is only intended to signify that no elect person will ultimately and finally be able to resist the power of God's saving grace.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

“However, *gratia irresistibilis* does not mean that man does not resist God, but rather that when God so chooses to act upon his elect he overcomes all of man’s resistance. Augustine demonstrates from texts like 1 Corinthians 1:24; Romans 8:28–29; 9:12–13; and 11:25–29 that there are two distinct callings, one universal and the other particular.”

Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace*, 8.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**1 Cor 1:21** For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. **22** For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; **23** but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, **24** but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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# The Application of Redemption

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

**Rom 8:29** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; **30** and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ The Arminian concept of foreknowledge does not work in Romans 8:29–30.
- ❖ If God chooses (predestines) those whom he foresees will believe and then he calls them in a saving way so that they are justified how do those people have the ability *not* to believe unto salvation?
- ❖ Or, if God chooses those he foresees will believe and he calls them in a general way, how are all those thus called *not* justified and what would be the point of such a predestining?



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ The calling in Romans 8:30 is a calling that begins in eternity past and reaches to eternity future.
- ❖ It is a calling that results in justification.
- ❖ Since justification is *by* (Rom 3:28; 5:1; Gal 3:24), *through* (Gal 2:16), or *on* faith (Phil 3:9), it must be a call that produces, grants, or in some way ensures faith.



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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

- ❖ Like 1 Corinthians 1:24, the calling in Romans 8:30 distinguishes between people in general and the elect in particular (those who are being saved (1 Cor 1:18), those who are called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 1:24))
- ❖ This call is particular to those whom God has chosen and it is effectual in bringing salvation to those people.
- ❖ There is no person thus called who does not reach glorification.

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# The Application of Redemption

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## The Saving Grace View of Salvation

“Proceeding, as he did, from humanity’s total moral corruption as a result of Adam’s sin and of its total inability to do any spiritual good, Augustine arrived at a completely different doctrine of grace. Frequently he also described the objective benefits—the gospel, baptism, the forgiveness of sins, and so on—with the word ‘grace.’ But this grace is not enough. Still another grace is needed, an internal and spiritual kind that illumines the intellect and bends the will.”

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:509.

