

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 4, Election

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson and his teaching on salvation. This is session 4, Election.

We continue our lectures on salvation.

Let us begin with a word of prayer. Gracious Father, we thank you for your sovereign grace, which chose us, drew us, saved us, keeps us, and will lead us safely home. Make us more grateful.

Make us more holy and loving, we pray, through Jesus Christ the mediator. Amen. We move to the doctrine of election and our first theme here is our first topic, subtopic, is historical theology.

After that, we want to study a systematic theology of election, and in order to do that well, we need to work with Augustine and Pelagius in the early church. Martin Luther, John Calvin, Arminius and the Synod of Dort, and then more recently Spurgeon and the Hyperists. An amazing story.

My overused saying is that God gives the gifts. He gave them to Spurgeon as somebody in his young 20s in London in a context of Calvinistic Baptists, and he was the boy among these men, old enough to be his father, and they were hyper-Calvinistic, and he withstood them with grace from the Word of God and eventually won. Amazing story, an amazing story indeed.

Election, God choosing people for salvation, historical reconnaissance, Augustine and Pelagius. The historical roots of predestination debates go back to the North African Bishop Augustine of Hippo, Aurelius Augustine of Hippo, 354 through 430, and the British moralist Pelagius. I mentioned Augustine's conversion earlier.

He was the son of a Christian woman named Monica, who prayed for him every day. He had a concubine, certainly wasn't living for the Lord, and didn't even make a Christian profession, I don't think. He was out in the back of his home in a garden, and somehow, on a pillar, there was a Bible. He was out there one day and heard children playing a game in an adjacent garden. Part of their game was the words *tol lege, take up and read, take up and read*, and he did.

He did. He picked up the Bible, and we don't recommend this method of Bible reading, but his eyes fell on Romans 13:14, and he read, *let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for*

the flesh to gratify its desires. Needless to say, he was engaged in sexual immorality and sensuality, and he was making plenty of provision for the flesh to indulge in his sins. the gospel is not in that verse, but God used it.

Obviously, he had heard the gospel previously and God used it to prick his heart. Now, he lied to his mother and told her he was not going to go to Rome, but he did, and there he got and came in conjunction with Bishop Ambrose and through his preaching and concern for Augustine, Augustine came not only to know the Lord but became a pastor to be honest, a Roman Catholic priest and a bishop in the church whose influence is perhaps the greatest of any single individual in the history of the Christian Church. How's that? Both Luther and Calvin credit him for the Reformation.

Calvin, in fact, said I could get all of my teaching from the writings of Augustine. Now, they both disagreed with him at points, but that is an amazing statement. Or B.B. Warfield said the Reformation was a revival of the Augustinian teachings of predestination and grace against the Augustinian teachings of the church and sacraments.

That needs to be parsed, but it's true in its general outlines. Augustine and Pelagius. Augustine's worldly background and teaching of rhetoric were one thing that attracted him to Ambrose because Ambrose was a brilliant preacher.

He was rhetorically sound and eloquent, and his speech was attractive, which ultimately drew St. Augustine to the gospel. His immersion in Manichaeism and Neoplatonism, both false systems of thought, are well known from his autobiographical Confessions, one of the most famous books ever written. Augustine's Confessions.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, directed Augustine to Paul's letters through which he became convicted of his great guilt before a holy God, especially by the verses in Romans 13:13 and 14 that I had read previously. Augustine returned to North Africa as a believer and, in time, became Bishop of Hippo. His writings brought him popularity, and through them, the concept of monergism in salvation gained acceptance as far as Rome.

Here, the British monk Pelagius encountered the concept in 405. Monergism is contrasted with synergism. Monergism speaks of one working alone in salvation.

Synergism speaks of God and man working together in salvation. I co-authored a book with Michael Williams called Why I Am Not an Arminian. This has, I'll give you a little bit of the backstory.

Jerry Walls, a brother in Christ, a Wesleyan brother in Christ, and I don't know how to say it frankly and honestly except to say an anti-Calvinist, proposed and wrote a book

for InterVarsity called *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*. InterVarsity came to the school where I taught and to the head of the theology department who said his name is David Jones, he's now with the Lord, how about Peterson, Williams, you and I do this book. We said fine and for some reason then Jones dropped out and it was Williams and I. We misunderstood the assignment because we didn't want to write *Why I'm Not Another Kind of Christian*, all right, that's unsavory to me.

We wanted to write *Why I Am a Calvinist*. InterVarsity wisely said no, no, *Why I'm Not a Calvinist* has to have as its counterpart *Why I'm Not an Arminian*. The books are not debate books, they're companion books.

We didn't debate each other but we wrote from two distinctly different viewpoints. Thankfully, we both accepted each other as brothers, and in fact, although Jerry is a very strong anti-Calvinist, Williams and I are not strong anti-Arminians; we're not Arminians; we are Calvinists, but we're not. Anyway, I was delighted a couple of years after that to meet Jerry Walls at the Evangelical Theological Society meeting.

I was delighted, and I was very happy that he saw me, extended the right hand of fellowship, and said Robert met me and greeted me as a brother with enthusiasm. It did my heart good because he's a strong customer, and I respect that. So anyway, InterVarsity said no, it's got to be *Why I Ain't an Arminian*.

Well, some of my students have said well, you called it *Why I'm Not an Arminian*, but you still wrote *Why I Am a Calvinist*. Anyway, in writing this book, Williams, who's a very gifted man, reaped from their debate the following scientific classification in a chapter dealing with Augustine and Pelagius. Why does this word always allude me? A scientific classification is also called a; I'm sorry, I got to look this word up because I forgot it, a vocabulary.

A taxonomy, there it is. At least I know where to get it. A taxonomy.

Williams set up this taxonomy, which is really good. On the one side is, and unfortunately, Pelagius, I hope he was a believer; his theology was not good, and it is not fair to call Roman Catholics or Wesleyans or any Arminian Pelagians the way Luther did. Luther was a very strong customer.

They might be semi-Pelagians, the best of them are semi-Augustinians as we'll see, but Pelagianism is a humanistic monergism, it's man alone, as we'll see, saves. On the other end of the spectrum is the divine monergism of Augustine and of Calvinism. So Augustinian and Calvinian monergism say God alone saves.

Of course, people believe to be saved, but in both Augustine and Calvin's understanding, even that faith, which human beings must exercise along with repentance to be saved, is a gift from God. They would never believe on their own

given their being dead in their trespasses and sins. Now, in between the monergistic humanism of Pelagius and the monergistic sovereignty of God of Augustine is semi-Pelagianism and semi-Augustinianism.

They both hold God and human beings together and cooperate for salvation. Can a person be a true believer in Christ and be a semi-Augustinian? Surely they can. It's the official position of the Roman Catholic Church, and it's the best Arminian position.

There are many Arminianisms. Can a person be a believer and be a semi-Pelagian? Yes. Clark Pinnock is an example, a famous Christian apologist, chosen but free, was written by a good brother in Christ and a great apologist.

He did much good for the church. Chosen but Free was written by Norman Geisler. Norman Geisler and Clark Pinnock, by their own admission, were semi-Pelagians, as was Charles Finney, from whom the following illustration originates.

My wife is from southwest New York State, Olean, New York. Perhaps you're familiar with Olean Tile or St. Bonaventure's University. Yes, the Bonneys are both located in Olean, New York, two hours southeast of Niagara Falls and Buffalo.

Finney was a famous American evangelist, unfortunately, because his theology was really bad. A handsome devil with great powers of persuasion and a great influence. Some for good, others for ill, which I won't get into all that now except to say he envisioned that he pictured this some poor person falls in the Niagara River and is heading for the falls, all right? Four viewpoints.

God is pictured as a person on the land who is ready to help the person in the water. According to Pelagius, he's able to swim out on his own. That's a human monergism, get it? According to both semi-Pelagianism and semi-Augustinianism, both God and the swimmer are involved.

The difference is in semi-Pelagianism, the swimmer must make the first move. God, save me! God always responds by saving the sinner and rescuing the sinner in terms of the image. Semi-Augustinianism says God makes the first move.

This is the universal prevenient grace of both Arminius and, more famously, of John Wesley, which makes a true Christian theology not of works but of grace through faith and works in many, many areas. I will criticize it for its lack of biblical moorings in my estimation, but in any case, God makes the first move. But to that, the sinner whose will has been freed by grace must respond to be saved.

So both semi-Pelagianism and semi-Augustinianism are synergisms with God and man working together. Augustinianism and later Calvinism, its stepchild, its descendant, says God alone works. The guy in the water is spiritually dead.

Even the faith he exercises is a gift of God. God saves him. God jumps in the water, rescues him, pulls him to land, and gives him the gift of faith.

I don't know whether that was whether he was in the water or on the land; it doesn't matter, but you get the idea. At the extremes are two monergisms, a human one, Pelagius, a divine one, Augustine. In between are semi-positions or synergisms.

Human beings make the first move toward God, semi-Pelagianism. God makes the first move toward human beings, semi-Augustinianism. But in both cases, God and man work together.

So, we're back to Pelagius. Augustine is famous for his anti-Pelagian writings. They were prompted by this good man who was concerned for morality and was offended by the sinful lives of professed Christians in Rome.

Pelagius was known for his interest in monasticism, which does not concern us at present and which I'm not a big fan of, but it's not part of this. I'm not making a judgment about that—and Christian moralism.

Christians should practice what they claim and preach. Arriving in Rome, the capital of Christendom in 405 to teach, he was shocked at the city's dreadful moral condition. After hearing Christians repeating Augustine's prayer, grant what you command and command what you will address to God.

Command what you will, O Lord, and grant what you command. Give us the ability to obey what you want us to do. Pelagius was offended.

As he heard this, grant what you command and command what you will. He concluded that it was Augustine's theology that fostered sin, and he opposed Augustine's teaching as a concern for Christian ethics. I'll say it again a second time now. Roman Catholicism is not Pelagian, and certainly, our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Free Methodist Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and United Methodists who believe the gospel they're not Pelagians either.

The best of them are semi-Augustinians, and the worst can still be saved being semi-Pelagians. Anyway, so I'm not saying anybody's a full-blown Pelagian. I hope not.

I don't know if they would be saved because they'd be relying on their works, understand? Like the Apostle Paul, Augustine's doctrine of sin and grace grew in part out of his conversion experience. His great sense of sinfulness, read the Confessions,

oh my word, his description of himself as a youth with a band of his brothers, figuratively speaking, stealing figs from the neighbor's backyard, the neighbor's garden, not to eat figs, but purely out of the sinful joy of stealing. The Waste of It All is classic because it focuses on sinful desire and pleasure in sin.

Now, he wasn't murdering or robbing anybody, but he was robbing his neighbor. But the point was just the sheer joy of sinning. It's a famous exposition.

Augustine's great sense of sinfulness and of God's redeeming mercy led him to formulate a monergistic doctrine of grace in which salvation was all of God's doing and none of humans doing. Augustine conveyed this understanding of God's saving grace in his Confessions and later more systematically with biblical exposition in his anti-Pelagian writings. In case anybody is interested, these are in chronological order: on the spirit and the letter, 412 AD; on nature and grace, 415, on the grace of Christ and original sin; 418, on grace and free will, 427; and on the predestination of the saints, 429.

Augustine taught that free will is simply the ability for humans to do what they will. It does not involve moral freedom since the fall. We are free to act according to our natures, which, since the fall, are corrupted and in bondage to sin.

This view of free will has been under attack ever since Augustine's time. Again, just to be fair, this is a bad view. The view he's attacking, that we have not fallen so far in sin, that we need divine grace to help us, is really problematic.

And so he teaches what we call later to be called total inability. Unsaved people are unable to contribute anything to their salvation. They're unable even to believe because they are dead in their trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1 to 3. They are bound in sin by the devil, 2 Corinthians 4: 4, who blinds their minds so that they cannot believe in Christ.

They lack the spirit, 1 Corinthians 2:13 and 14, so that they do not understand the things of the spirit of God and cannot understand them. Now, in fairness, am I saying anybody who's not an Augustinian or Calvinist doesn't believe in saving grace? I am not saying that. And it is instructive that although Calvinist systematic theology books under the doctrine of humanity and sin talk about the inability of sinners, the best Arminian systematic theology books talk about gracious ability.

That is, it is not inherent, and Wesley wrote a lot of things, but his one official theology book or treatise was on original sin. He believed it. But by the same token, the effects of original sin on the human will, which were devastating, were ameliorated by universal preparing, preceding, prevenient grace, so that although technically everybody was spiritually unable, actually in the world, nobody was

spiritually unable to believe because God's prevenient grace intervened and enabled them to believe.

Hence, gracious ability. Get it? That is the system. It is the doctrine of prevenient grace is a brilliant move and makes the Wesleyan understanding of the gospel and a whole systematic theology.

It's the glue that holds it together. It is brilliant. I had a sweet student named Brian, oh my word, I lost his last name now.

He has written a book on prevenient grace. He dedicated it to his Arminian brother in seminary, who introduced him to prevenient grace, and he dedicated it to me, who urged him to write that book. And he said to Robert Peterson, my former professor of theology, who, although he disagrees with me on this doctrine, treated me fairly or something like that.

Brian Shelton. It's a good book. It is strong on historical theology.

It is strong on systematic theology. And it makes a valiant attempt to be strong biblically. I do not think it passes muster in that regard.

But I certainly give Brian a sweet brother in Christ, the right hand of fellowship, because he's a fellow believer in Christ. In any case, St. Augustine's view of the freedom of the will, being not moral freedom, the ability to choose God, but merely the ability to act as out of our sinful nature since the fall, has been under attack ever since. And in full disclosure, to be fair, the great Calvinist philosophers, this is not a happy point for me, but Cornelius Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, have capitulated and have gone over to the other side's view of free will in order to maintain philosophical consistency.

Do I love them as brothers in the Lord? Yes. And respect them as fellow Calvinists? Yes. Do I agree with them on that move? No.

Anyway, God bless them. And that's just to be fair. It is hard to sustain a Calvinist understanding of the bondage of the will and be a world-class philosopher.

I'm no philosopher. My goal as a professor of systematic theology, as I've told you before, is to be an exegetical theologian, not even a full-blown systematic theologian. They have to know too much about other disciplines.

And I've tried to be philosophically informed at least to know how philosophical assumptions influence theology, all right? But I'm no philosopher, and I respect Christian philosophers who do their work. Although I've got to tell you, sometimes I find them more conducive, their views more in keeping with sola philosophia than

sola scriptura, enough said. Corresponding to these views of the fall, free will, and sin, Augustine held that salvation is a gift of God's efficacious or effective grace.

Grace does not enable sinners to cooperate with God. It affects God's sovereign and gracious will. It saves sinners.

Now, it saves sinners, and that means it gives them the gift of repentance and faith. Augustine thus teaches that God's prevenient grace is not universal but particular and effective. I taught with fellow reformed theology professors who thought prevenient grace was only the possession of Wesley and Arminius.

It is not so. Saint Augustine taught God's grace comes before salvation for Pete's sake. And although there are dimensions of God's grace, so-called common grace, that indeed is universal, saving grace is not universal.

It is particular, and it doesn't merely enable us to choose God. It chooses us for God. It's effective.

Augustine thus teaches that God's prevenient grace, it comes from the Latin *prevenire*, to come before. It's preparing grace, preceding grace is a good synonym. Prevenient grace is not universal, but it's particular and effective.

And why do some receive God's grace and others don't? Augustine was forthright, quote, the reason why one person is assigned, assisted by grace and another is not helped. The reason why one person is assisted by grace, and another is not helped must be referred to the secret judgments of God. That is called divine election.

Augustine held to absolute divine election. Before creation, God chose some for eternal life and others for eternal punishment. Does Peterson agree with that? Yes, but I would say it in a different way than that.

But it's not me right now, and it's Augustine. Just like in fairness to my Arminian brothers and sisters, I say they're not Pelagians. In fairness to many Calvinists, we're Augustinian, but we have different nuances there.

But anyway, Calvin is right with Augustine on that. Before creation, God chose some to eternal life, others to eternal punishment. Just for your knowledge's sake, my understanding is viewing the whole mass of humanity, the *massa damnata*, the damn the mass, God gave grace to some and passed over others, allowing them to reap what they sow and to receive the condemnation they deserve.

He gave to, thus he gave to some what they do deserve, judgment, and gave to others what they do not deserve. That's called grace and salvation. The elect receive

what they do deserve, sorry, the elect receive what they do not deserve, God's grace and salvation.

The non-elect receive exactly what they deserve: the judgment of a holy and just God. Predestination and grace are divine matters, not human, and we dare not pry into God's secret councils. I can't help but talk about Calvin and a woman who came to him.

Calvin was not the only preacher in Geneva, there were a number of churches, and she had heard messages of predestination and election. She was scared to death, and she came to Pastor Calvin and said, Pastor, I do not know if I am elect. I am so afraid that I'm going to perish.

And he said to her, Dear lady, we do not understand election by trying to probe into God's secret councils before the creation of the world. Calvin used his familiar image of a labyrinth, a maze. That is a labyrinth.

You get lost in there. We cannot figure out God's mind. Rather, Christ is the mirror of the election.

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus? Oh, yes, I do. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe he died for my sins.

My confidence was only in him alone, and there was nothing I could do. He says, Dear lady, you are chosen. That is why you believe.

Christ is the mirror of the election. We understand our election not by trying to fathom God's eternal councils, which we cannot do, but by believing in Christ, which we can do as God enables us to turn from sin and to receive his son as he's offered to us in the gospel. Foundational to Pelagius' theology, on the other side, is the idea that humans' responsibility before God assumes their ability as well.

I've heard it said God does not command anything which we're not able to do. Well, that is a fallacy. Be perfect as I am perfect, says the Lord.

Be holy as I am holy, says the Lord. Leviticus and 1 Peter 1. Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect. The last verse in Matthew chapter 6. We cannot do those things.

Why would God command Christians to do something they can't do? To be as holy as he is. To be perfect as their father in heaven is perfect. Two reasons.

Number one, to humble us. We're saved by grace through faith, and we live the Christian life the same way. We will not attain moral perfection in this life.

Number two, God gives us his impossible standard for the Christian life. Or how about this? Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Are you kidding me? Who loves his wife like that? That is the goal.

To humble us, to put us in our place, and to teach us, we need his enabling grace every day of our lives. If God did not grant us the ability, Pelagius said, to respond to what he demands as he demands, he would be unjust. I just shudder at these human demands on God.

Since God commands us to believe the gospel, we must then have the ability to believe it. How about a better way? Testing our theology by the Bible at every single point. Even if it sometimes lands us in areas we can't fully understand.

As in the mystery of the Trinity, as in the mystery of the two natures of the person of Christ, and it's a lesser mystery to be sure, not essential for salvation, but as in the mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. This was not Pelagius's way. This, in turn, led Pelagius to deny Augustine's view of original sin, the idea that all Adam's descendants inherited guilt and corruption from his primal sin, which is precisely my understanding of Romans 5:12-19.

Instead, Pelagius held that Adam's sin affects us only by setting a poor example for us. Did Adam set a poor example? Yes. Is that original sin? No.

Original sin is his sin, which is our sin. To be fair, putting Romans 5:12-19 in the context of Romans, first of all, after announcing the theme of the book, the saving righteousness of God in the gospel in Romans 1:16 and 17, from 1:18 to 3:20, Paul does not speak of original sin, but actual sin, the sins of men and women in rebellion against God. Then, perhaps to answer the question, did God make us like that, sinners? In chapter 5, 19-21, he talks about original sin.

So, we're condemned both for our own sins and surely, more ultimately, for the sin of our first father, Adam. Augustine held that all Adam's descendants inherited guilt and corruption from his first sin. That is called in Christian theology, original sin.

Instead, Pelagius held that Adam's sin was a bad example, only to Pelagius, all humans are free to choose good or evil. Same as Finney, and Finney did not attribute it to universal preeminent grace. And nothing inclines them to the evil.

We are all our own Adam, as it were. And so, we all fail or pass the test based on our performance. That is a human monergism.

Didn't Pelagius read the word grace in the Bible? Oh, he did, he did. For him, grace is, here it comes in one sentence or two. Pelagius rejected Augustine's view that grace is God's powerful love that saves and keeps us.

Rather, according to Pelagius, grace includes free will, God's commandments, and Jesus' example. That is not grace. All those things are important.

Free will, not in the way he understood it. As we would expect, Pelagius' doctrine of election clashed with Augustine's. Pelagius emphasized God's foreknowledge of human faith or unbelief as the key to election.

So when the Bible says God chose us for salvation, the meaning is he foresaw that we would believe in him and chose us on that basis. Quote, to predestine is the same as to foreknow. Therefore, God foresaw those whom God foresaw would be conformed to the image of Christ in life.

He intended to be conformed in glory. So, to then, he has now chosen those, I'm quoting Pelagius, whom he foreknew would believe from among the Gentiles and has rejected those whom he foreknew would be unbelieving out of Israel. That's his exegesis of Romans 9—Pelagius' commentary on Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans on 829, 910, and 915.

Greg Allison, in his historical theology book, clarifies Pelagius' theology by citing his interpretation of Romans 9:15, where Paul quotes Exodus 33:19, and God says, "I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Pelagius understands, quote, I will have mercy on him whom I have foreknown will be able to deserve compassion.

I'm sorry, this is what we call merit theology. Salvation is based upon human merit. Again, it's a human monergism.

No Christian holds that, thankfully. Augustine's and Pelagius' theologies were on a collision course. Both attracted supporters, and their disputes lasted 20 years.

Finally, however, the church decided for Augustine and against Pelagius as the ecumenical council of Ephesus condemned his views in 431. Nevertheless, things were not so simple, and eventually, the Roman Catholic Church opted for a semi-Augustinianism along the lines that I described earlier. That would be the best Catholic theology.

Folk theology, however, is often not the same as formal theology, and in the folk theology of many Catholics, it is closer to semi-Pelagianism or, perish the thought, even Pelagianism. I've had students of a Methodist background who believe the Bible and want to serve the Lord and love God's grace, who say that the Reformed

teaching that I and others gave them helped them move from semi-Pelagianism to semi-Augustinianism but that they feared some in their churches, fellow Methodists, who believed the gospel, thank the Lord, were more semi-Pelagian than semi-Augustinian, and that made them sad. Martin Luther.

Martin Luther, 1483 to 1546, was an Augustinian monk who became a professor of Bible and then a Protestant Reformer. He protected the free grace of God in justification by underscoring God's election of sinners who suffered under the bondage of the will. Desiridius Erasmus, 1466 to 1536, the famous Dutch humanist, generally welcomed Luther's critique of Roman abuses but broke ranks with him in 1524.

Erasmus was a very bright man, and Luther himself said, you are a gem that would be welcomed as a jewel in any court of Europe because of your scholarship. However, he went on in the next paragraph to say, but in terms of theology, sit down and shut up because you don't know what you're doing. Luther was a strong customer.

Specifically, he was referring to Erasmus' book on the freedom of the will, which Luther thought destroyed the Christian faith. Erasmus agreed with Luther when he broke with Rome over justification, when he opposed the selling of indulgences where German peasants were using money that they needed to buy milk for their children and instead were trying to get grandma and grandpa out of purgatory. Ah, Luther said, if only the good father, the holy father in Rome, and the pope knew what was going on.

Little did he know the Renaissance pope in Rome had his hand in the till for 50% of the take of the sale of indulgences. Erasmus rejoiced when Luther made fun of the pope in some ways that I can't say in these lectures because he had a potty mouth, and the German peasants loved his scatological humor. I'll say more for a closed seminary classroom than a public videotaping of theological lectures.

In any case, Erasmus wrote on the freedom of the will in 1524, and no doubt at that point, there was a break between him and Luther. He applauded Luther in many ways but not in this extreme determinism he regarded, Augustinianism. Luther applauded Erasmus for pointing to the key issue, the debate between monergism and synergism.

What do failed human beings contribute to God's grace in salvation? Erasmus' position on free will reflected that of the sixth-century semi-Pelagians who held to a weakened free will as a result of Adam's fall. I do not take pleasure in saying that was the view of Norm Geisler, who was with the Lord. That was the view of Clark Pinnock, who was with the Lord.

I do take some pleasure in saying that was the view of Finney, who I hope is with the Lord. I'm sure he is with the Lord. God saves us, as Jim Packer said, in spite of our very flawed theologies.

Although free choice is damaged by sin, it is nevertheless not extinguished by it. Although it has become so lame in the process that before we receive grace, we are more readily inclined toward evil than good, it is not altogether cut out. Gordon Rupp and Philip Watson editors, *Luther and Erasmus, Free Will and Salvation*, part of the library of Christian classics, which includes the two volumes of Calvin's Institutes and many other important books.

Although Erasmus appealed to humanity's need for God's cooperating grace, which made repentance possible, Luther, I should say unfairly, labeled Erasmus's views Pelagian and criticized him for lacking the courage to take a stand for the truth of the gospel. Luther was so strong. In evaluating him, I have to say he had to be a strong customer to do what he did, and few would have had the courage to stand against the pope, the church, the whole tradition of the church, and especially the late medieval Roman Catholic theology that he was taught as a monk.

But with that great strength, there came an overzeal, an overzealous lack of uh love and acceptance, for example, for Zwingli and others, and what he should have called semi-Augustinianism or maybe semi-Pelagianism he just called Pelagianism without question. Luther responded by penning on the bondage of the will, a direct attack on Erasmus's theology. Luther agreed with Erasmus that absolute free will exists, but Luther insisted that only God possesses it.

You don't hear much about the free will of God. Karl Barth talked like that, too. He accepted Augustinian's doctrine of original sin and, with it, the corollary that the human will was bound in sin and unable to extricate itself.

Luther was concerned with exegesis and particular theological conclusions but was much more concerned with the place of election and free will systematically. Luther juxtaposed he put against each other the theology of glory monergism with the theology of cross synergism. The theology of glory is Pelagius's human monergism.

The former exalts human accomplishment in salvation and human pride. The latter focuses on Christ on the cross, gives God the glory, and squashes human pride. Christ's cross, the basis of justification and saving faith, highlights man's utter inability to aspire to grace.

Election is important in that it shows God's great grace and human's great helplessness. Wow, I disagree with my own notes here. I don't know if it's a typo or what.

I think I have these words confused. Luther juxtaposed the theology of glory, a synergism in which God and man work together for salvation, with the theology of the cross, a monergism. The theology of glory exalts human accomplishment in salvation and human pride.

We work together with God. Our will is not altogether bound. We're free to choose him.

And that's not because of universal pre-median grace. It's just we haven't fallen that far. The latter, the theology of the cross, is a monergism.

It focuses on not human ability but the crucified Christ. It gives God all the glory because we can't save ourselves and squashes human aspirations to grace. Election is important to Luther in that it shows God's great grace and humans' great helplessness.

My correction of that was correct. Monergism and synergism were out of place. I wonder if that has gone to the publisher like that.

A correction is forthcoming. However, Luther's strong Augustinian doctrine of election was diluted by Philip Melanchthon, his brilliant disciple, brilliant disciple, Greek scholar, and heir of the Lutheran Reformation. He turned from Luther's monergistic view of election to a gracious synergism.

In loci communis, theological commonplaces, Melanchthon taught that there are three causes of salvation. Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and free will. That is not the teaching of his master.

Why does one person believe and another does not? He answered, the reason is in us. As we bring this lecture to a close, we will take up John Calvin and then the debates in the Dutch church in the early 17th century that led to the five points of Arminianism and Calvinism in the next lecture.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson and his teaching on salvation. This is session 4, Election.