

2026

## The Doctrine of Predestination: A Biblical Synopsis



ADMIN

[Company name]

1/21/2026

## Table of Contents

<b>Defining Predestination</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Introduction .....	2
Definition.....	2
Concepts of predestination from other Scriptures.....	3
The parable of the sheep and goats.....	4
<b>The Doctrine of predestination: Election</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Defining election and the elect.....	7
The account of Pharaoh .....	8
The purpose of the elect.....	10
Jacob vs Essau.....	11
<b>The doctrine of predestination: The terms and conditions</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Old Testament’s terms and conditions.....	13
The terms and conditions of the New Testament.....	14
<b>The 144 000 believers</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>A Biblical Approach to Evangelism</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>23</b>

## Introduction

Many people, including theologians, understand predestination in its most basic sense as God planning something in advance and beforehand. However, numerous individuals, preachers, and even prominent theologians often misinterpret what the doctrine of predestination truly entails. While this doctrine may not directly determine our salvation, misunderstanding it can profoundly influence how we approach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and how we engage in evangelism. I have encountered individuals who say, "If it's God's will for me to be saved, He will save me regardless of how I live my life." Some churches reject evangelism altogether, citing predestination as the reason—claiming that God will save everyone He has predestined for salvation and condemn those He has predestined for eternal judgment. When we gain a clearer understanding of God's plan for salvation, our grasp of predestination deepens, and our approach to evangelism is transformed. Rather than discouraging outreach, a proper understanding of this doctrine should inspire us to share the gospel with conviction and compassion, knowing that Jesus died to save sinners.

## Defining Predestination and key Scriptures to understanding the doctrine

The doctrine of predestination can be confusing if our interpretation of the Bible is not guided by the Holy Spirit and when we try to treat predestination as an exclusive doctrine without viewing it as part of God's plan for our salvation.

The key Scripture we will frequently refer to in this book is Ephesians 1:3- 6. (*Please take note of the underlined and highlighted portions*).

3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,** 4 **just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,** that we should be **holy and without blame before Him in love,** 5 **having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,** 6 *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved" NKJV.*

As we look at the meaning of predestination, we will pay close attention to concepts of election and adoption; the will of God for you and me and the responsibility God has given to the church.

## Definition

Predestination can be defined as God's plan for the salvation of His people. This plan was established before the foundation of the world and is based on God's grace toward His people. God planned to redeem His creation from the bondage of sin and the devil before we were created. According to God's foreknowledge, the Lord Jesus Christ was preordained to save us.

I will illustrate the doctrine of predestination as involving two positions. The first is what God intended His people or creation to be - holy, pure, and blameless in His sight and this continues to be God's perfect will in heaven. This is the very reason the Lord Jesus taught us to pray, "...Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In between is a dividing line that separates the other position or realm. This position represents the fallen state of the world and of God's people due to sin, ungodliness, and the work of evil. Whoever is in this realm is separated from God. The Lord Jesus died on the cross to save whosoever believes in Him, and through Him we are able to return to the first state we are predestined to and meet God's righteous requirements.

*"All the inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast- all whose names have not been written in Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world." Revelation 13: 8- NIV.*

*"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors. 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake." 1 Peter 1: 18-20 NIV.*

Predestination must never be regarded as God's intention to condemn some people and save others! Thus, I differ strongly from John Calvin's definition of predestination that: *"We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or death."* (Institutes of 1559, John Calvin as cited in Five Leading Reformers by C. Catherwood, 2010: 140-141).

I should admit that I only came across Calvin's definition of predestination in October 2025, well after I had written over 95% of this book, nonetheless, I already had a different understanding of the doctrine from reading the scriptures. How can we know whether someone is meant for condemnation? There are times when our hearts condemn us due to our sinfulness. These sometimes may make many people feel condemned but does this translate to eternal condemnation? Of course if people remain in their sins, they will be condemned eternally. However, what does the gracious God say through the scriptures?

*"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool" Isaiah 1: 18 – NIV.*

The Message Bible puts Isaiah 1: 18-20 this way,

*"Come. Sit down. Let's argue this out." This is God's Message: "If your sins are blood-red, they'll be snow-white. If they're red like crimson, they'll be like wool. If you'll willingly obey, you'll feast like kings. But if you're wilful and stubborn, you'll die like dogs." That's right. God says so.*

Our key scripture on predestination, Ephesians 1:3–6, shows that God chose us before the foundation of the world “to be holy and without blame before Him in love.” This scripture clearly reveals that it is God's will for you and me to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. God has predestined His creation—His people—to be holy and blameless, and He accomplishes this through His love toward us which is revealed in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is important to note that God “chose us in Himself,” meaning that we are meant to be with God and have fellowship with Him. It has never been God's plan for us to be estranged from Him.

### Concepts of Predestination from other Scriptures

Although the doctrine of predestination is often associated with the Apostle Paul's teachings, it is also a significant subject in the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and other apostles, such as Peter. In all these teachings, predestination is presented as a concept tied to God's plan for our salvation. Several Scriptures that support this are provided below:

*John 3: 16-17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that through Him, the world might be saved"- NKJV.*

Concept of Predestination: God gave his Son out of love for his creation. God's salvation in Christ is available to anyone who believes in Jesus, his death and resurrection. Jesus came to save the world not to condemn the world.

*Ezekiel 33:11 reads, "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'"- NKJV.*

Concept of Predestination: God is not happy when someone dies in their sin as this makes him or her perish or suffer eternal condemnation. God's plan is for you and me to repent and be saved.

*2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."- NKJV.*

Concept of Predestination: God is patient with us so that we may all repent and be saved. He does not want anyone to perish, and He has given all people the opportunity to repent and have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Each one of us deserves a second chance, and that chance is found in Jesus, whom God the Father designated as the one and only mediator between God and mankind.

When read alongside 1 Timothy 2:1–7, God’s heart and desire in 2 Peter 3:9 become clearer and deeper. In particular, 1 Timothy 2:3–4 makes God’s will for our salvation unmistakably clear. The verses read: “3 This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, 4 who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” (NIV).

### **The Parable of the Sheep and Goats – Matthew 25: 31- 46**

The parable of the sheep and goats is perhaps one of the most significant parables of the Kingdom, offering insight into questions we might have about predestination. What I appreciate about this parable is that it speaks of the end times, i.e., “when the Son of Man comes in His glory.” It presents a powerful image of all people from every nation (all people since creation) standing before God’s throne for judgment.

This parable also raises and addresses a profound question: Has God predestined some people to be condemned?

The New International Version reads:

*31“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’*

*37“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’*

*40“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ 41“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’*

*44“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ 45“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did*

*not do for me.’ 46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”*

Concepts of Predestination: God created us to inherit His Kingdom. In other words, God predestined us to be part of His Kingdom. He created us out of love, and when He completed creation, “behold, everything was very good.” God has chosen us in Himself; it has never been His intention for His people to be distant or separated from Him. He has already prepared good things for His people and has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

The Kingdom of God and all its blessings were prepared for us before the foundation of the world. Just as, by God’s foreknowledge, Christ was slain before the foundation of the world, so too has God predestined everyone to receive salvation in Christ. This salvation is by grace through faith and is the only prerequisite to inherit God’s Kingdom.

Has God predestined any person in this world for eternal condemnation? The Bible does not suggest at any point that God has predestined anyone for condemnation. In Matthew 25:41, the Lord Jesus makes it crystal clear that everlasting or eternal fire (the lake of fire) was prepared for the devil and his demons—not for people. In other words, eternal condemnation was predestined for the devil and his demons.

However, knowing his fate, the devil deceived people—whom God loves dearly—into sinning against their Creator. Sadly, sin separates us from God and provokes His righteous anger. As a result, when God judges His people, as described in the parable above, everyone found in sin will be condemned along with the devil.

In one of his sermons, Reinhard Bonnke, one of the most renowned evangelists who spread the gospel across Africa and the world, said, “I am not swearing when I say, ‘to hell with the devil and to heaven with the people.’” Sin is the only thing that causes some people to be condemned with the devil, but hell was never predestined for any human being.

It is God’s will that we all repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of our souls, as He predestined us to be holy and blameless before Him. It is only through Jesus Christ our Lord that we can be made holy and blameless to inherit the Kingdom of God.

### **The doctrine of predestination: Election**

The Scriptures tell us, “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated” (Malachi 1:2–3; Romans 9:13). This statement causes many to wonder whether, by the sovereign will of God, some people are meant to be saved while others are destined for condemnation. Other biblical accounts that raise similar questions about predestination include the parable of the potter and the clay, as well as the Exodus narrative involving Pharaoh. These examples are all brought together in Romans 9, where the Apostle Paul explores the theme of election and God’s sovereign choice.

To understand these Scriptures better, we need to look at Election and how this links up with predestination.

*"...so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised (or spared) you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" Exodus 9: 14- 16- NIV.*

Romans 9:10-13 reads, *"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"- NKJV.*

Romans 9 also speaks about vessels of vessels of honour and those of dishonour. Although this may seem to imply that some people are created for destruction while others for salvation, this is a misinterpretation of scripture. When the scripture is read together with other scriptures, its meaning becomes clearer.

*"But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honour and some for dishonour. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work." 2 Timothy 2: 20-21.*

### **Defining election and the elect**

Election refers to the specific times when God calls us to salvation by His grace and our obedient response when we hear His voice. Hebrews 4:7 says, "Today, when you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." I often remind people that God does not force us to believe in Him; rather, He lovingly invites us, through grace, to place our faith in Jesus.

God desires a mutual relationship with us—one rooted in an understanding of His grace and steadfast love toward each of us. When we truly grasp God's grace, we respond with loving obedience and submission to Him. God has created us with a conscience—often referred to as the inbuilt voice of God within us—which helps us hear Him whenever He speaks.

I strongly believe that even those who claim that there is no God (atheists), or those who follow other religions, can still hear God when He speaks. However, some people harden their hearts by prioritizing fleshly or sinful desires instead of humbling themselves before God. Hebrews 3:12–13 warns, *"See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But*

*encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (NIV).*

In Matthew 24, the Lord Jesus spoke about the signs of the end times. In this discourse, He repeatedly mentioned the elect. Jesus warned of widespread deception, believers turning away from the faith, and their love growing cold. In verse 22, He said, "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." The word "elect" appears about three times in Matthew 24, and in each instance, it refers to those who are already believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and are protected by the power of God.

A significant question that arises from Matthew 24 is whether the elect can be deceived and led astray by false prophets. In response, I would say that most people who are drawn to false miracles or teachings are either not yet saved or are not yet spiritually mature. Mature Christians are typically able to discern and test spirits and to understand sound doctrine. That said, some individuals may suffer shipwreck in their faith, as mentioned in 1 Timothy 1:19–20. However, by God's grace, they may be restored to faith.

### **The account of Pharaoh**

Someone may ask, what about Pharaoh, for God hardened his heart? A further question may be asked; does God harden the hearts of others so that they will not repent and believe? There is a two-way process that we should be mindful of when answering this question. The first is God's grace at work in people's lives which helps us to have obedient hearts, this will continue to be the case until Christ returns or we are united with Christ through death. The second is the sin at work in people's lives, this does not only refer to those specific times when we do something wrong, but also refers to our attitudes, pride, social status and how we want to be seen by those around us. So what was at play in Pharaoh's case was a combination of the two. Pharaoh, as king of Egypt, had a status that made him to be regarded as a god. This is a similar situation to a number of Old Testament kings who at times would become so proud and regard themselves as God, examples of such are Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar kings of Babylon. God had to remind them that he is set apart and cannot be compared to with anyone, so he would humble them and in some cases this would include fatal judgements.

In the case of Pharaoh, we can see the above at play, God used his sovereignty to demonstrate to Pharaoh and the then world that he cannot be equated to anyone or any other so called god (like the gods of Egypt) as he is set apart and all powerful. Pharaohs were largely considered to be gods or at least divine intermediary (between the gods and Egyptians) whilst alive but will always become a deity when they die. The scripture I have already shared about God raising up Pharaoh for him to demonstrate his power does not mean Pharaoh was raised up for the purpose of eternal condemnation, rather for all of us to worship and proclaim, 'no one can save like the LORD.' God sees our hearts and knows that some people may need to be humbled or brought low for them to exalt Him. When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush, he had fore knowledge on who will listen to him. It was easier for the Israelite elders who were slaves at the time and seeking a saviour to obey the voice

of God through his servant Moses, but for Pharaoh, as the king and perhaps regarded as god himself, it was difficult and it was only made possible by God demonstrating his power. Exodus 3: 18-19 reads:

Someone may ask, “What about Pharaoh, for God hardened his heart?” A further question that might follow is: “Does God harden the hearts of others so that they will not repent and believe?” To answer this, we must be mindful of a two-way process.

The first is God’s grace at work in people’s lives, which enables us to have obedient hearts. This grace continues to be available until Christ returns or we are united with Him through death. The second is the presence of sin in people’s lives. This doesn’t only refer to specific acts of wrongdoing, but also includes attitudes, pride, social status, and the desire to portray a certain image to others.

In Pharaoh’s case, both elements were at play. As king of Egypt, Pharaoh held a status that led people to regard him as a god. This mirrors the pride seen in other Old Testament kings, such as Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar of Babylon, who at times exalted themselves as divine. God had to remind them that He is set apart and incomparable, often humbling them—sometimes through fatal judgments.

With Pharaoh, we see God’s sovereignty on display. God used Pharaoh’s position to demonstrate to him and to the world of that time that He cannot be equated with any other so-called god, including the gods of Egypt. Pharaohs were often considered divine intermediaries while alive and were believed to become deities after death. The scripture that speaks of God raising up Pharaoh to show His power does not imply that Pharaoh was destined for eternal condemnation. Rather, it reveals God’s purpose: that all may worship and proclaim, “No one can save like the LORD.”

God sees our hearts and knows that some people may need to be humbled in order to exalt Him. When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush, He had foreknowledge of who would listen. It was easier for the Israelite elders—who were enslaved and longing for a saviour—to obey God’s voice through His servant Moses. But for Pharaoh, as a king and one regarded as a god, it was far more difficult. It required God to demonstrate his incomparably great power for Pharaoh to hear his voice.

Exodus 3:18–19 reads:

*“The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, ‘The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.’ 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.” NIV.*

In 1 Peter 2, the Apostle elaborated on the theme of election and explained the purpose of the elect. The elect, specifically refers to us who are already saved. The Apostle Peter wrote his letter 'to the elect by the foreknowledge of God who are scattered around...' 1 Peter 1: 1-2.

*7 "Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light;" NKJV.*

The Scriptures are clear that although some people are disobedient, their disobedience is willful. Many regard the gospel of salvation as outdated or irrelevant and reject Christ—their Saviour and the ultimate answer to this corrupt world. Scripture also teaches that the reason for stumbling is disobedience to the Word of God (the gospel of salvation), and we know that those who continue to reject the gospel will ultimately perish.

Although certain verses may seem to imply that those who are disobedient to the Word are appointed—or destined—for this outcome, it does not necessarily mean that everyone will remain in disobedience. Some people may reject the gospel out of ignorance until a certain point in their lives.

Believers come to faith in different ways and at different stages of life. Some are raised in Christian families and learn the Holy Scriptures from infancy. Others come to faith as children, teenagers, young adults, or later in life. Some even repent on their deathbed.

The Apostle Paul is a powerful example of someone who lived in disobedience and ignorance. As a young adult, he persecuted the church and described himself as extremely zealous for Judaism faith. Yet at a certain point, he became one of the elect and came to understand the gospel of salvation to which he had been predestined. In Galatians 1: 15- 16 Paul wrote:

*"But when God who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being"-NIV.*

### **The purpose of the elect**

The purpose of the elect is to proclaim—whether by testifying, sharing, teaching, or preaching—the goodness of God, so that others may be saved along with us. The elect serve as vessels through which God demonstrates His glory to the world and reaches out to His people, so they may believe in the gospel of salvation, which He prepared (predestined) for them before the foundation of the world. Matthew 5:16 expresses this beautifully: "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

God, in His sovereign will, assigns specific missions or ministries to certain individuals. To some, He elects, calls, or appoints them to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, and other servants—gifting them not only to equip those within the church but also to reach those who have not yet believed. I firmly believe that when the Word of God is faithfully preached or shared in love, it will always bear fruit. Many will come to understand God’s plan for their salvation.

### **Jacob vs Esau**

With the understanding of election and the role of the elect as above, we now turn to the account of Jacob and Esau. This helps us to grasp the second purpose of election—God’s plan to bring Christ in His first advent. Throughout the chronicles of the Old Testament, and the broader history of the Bible, we encounter the theme of grace and the concept of God’s unmerited favour. We cannot claim to deserve God’s grace, as salvation is not earned through works or merit, but is given out of His loving kindness.

This same principle is evident in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was by God’s grace that Israel was chosen, and when we trace the lineage of Christ, we see that grace abounds—even beyond birth rights.

The phrase “Esau I have hated, and Jacob I have loved” does not pertain to their salvation, but rather to God’s sovereign choice to elect Jacob as the one through whom His plan of salvation—Christ’s first advent—would be revealed. Scripture makes it clear that Esau was also blessed, though Jacob received the greater blessing. Esau, as Isaac’s firstborn son, deserved the promise by birth right, but to make His grace visible, God chose Jacob, who did not deserve the promise.

What about King David? When the prophet Samuel was sent to Jesse’s house to anoint a new king to replace Saul, David wasn’t even invited to the initial ceremony—his own father didn’t expect him to be chosen. Yet by God’s grace, David was anointed and found favour with God, who chose him to be part of the Messiah’s lineage.

Did any of the twelve disciples deserve to be chosen by the Lord Jesus Christ? Were they selected because they had better qualities or qualifications than others in Israel? What about us? Were we saved because we were better sinners than others? We are all elected at a time like this through God’s grace, and we can only humble ourselves before the Lord God Almighty for His amazing grace. There is no room for boasting. God has entrusted you and me, as His elect, to reveal His glory on earth by sharing His Word and living lives worthy of His calling. We are the light of the world—let us shine, and God will be glorified throughout the earth.

### **The relationship between the Church and the nation of Israel**

Some people may ask about the relationship between the Church and the people of Israel—or the Jews who have not yet believed in the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. There are those who hold the view that the Israelites were the “Old Testament Church,” but that the Church has now replaced them in the New Testament. Some even believe that Israel, as a chosen nation, has been rejected due to disobedience.

However, I want to emphasize that God has not rejected Israel or the Jewish people. Rather, He is also calling the Gentiles (all non-Jewish people by birth) into His Kingdom through Christ. Both Jews and Gentiles are invited into the New and Everlasting Covenant. As the Scriptures declare:

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” — *Galatians 3:26–28, NIV.*

Yes, Israel was chosen to be a light to all nations in the Old Testament, and through the Jews, salvation and blessing were to come to the world. Now, salvation has come through Jesus Christ—born a Jew in Bethlehem of Judah—and the light of the world now shines to both Jews and Gentiles through the Church.

This does not mean that God has abandoned or rejected Israel. In Romans 11:1, the Apostle Paul strongly refutes the idea that God has rejected His people. He goes on to explain that while some Jews have not yet believed in Jesus, they will be judged according to the Law. Yet many are also coming to faith in Christ.

The Church is reminded that the covenants the people of Israel still follow were established by the same God we worship. These covenants are not based on human merit but on the unchanging character of God. He remains faithful to His promises—even when His people are unfaithful to Him. Ephesians 2:11-13 NIV reads:

*“Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*

In other words, Israel or the Jewish people were already the elect, God’s chosen people and a party to God’s covenants and bearers of hope to the world. We gentiles are now being brought into the same hope in Christ Jesus. This is the very reason God’s invitation to salvation is first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16). God’s covenants with the people of Israel are ongoing and his promises to Israel remain. However, in Christ Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles are all invited to God’s everlasting covenant which is perfect and has bigger and better promises than the Old Covenant.

### **The doctrine of predestination- The terms and conditions.**

It’s quite common to hear the phrase, “Terms and Conditions apply” across the various sectors we interact with. Indeed, when these terms and conditions are violated, it may result in the withdrawal of certain privileges and even the forfeiture of goods or services

being offered. To understand how predestination applies to our lives and its limitations, we need to familiarise ourselves with the promises of God and the conditions involved.

As already explained, predestination refers to God's plan for us in Himself; He has chosen us before the foundation of the world so that you and I, and generations to come, may receive salvation through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

*Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future"-NIV.*

*"And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." John 12: 32- NLT.*

God's ultimate plan for us is our salvation in Christ Jesus. It is never to harm or destroy us or some other people. God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked — Ezekiel 33:11. This is consistent with the rest of Scripture: "For God so loved the world (every person — you and me, whether Jew or Gentile/Greek, slave or free) that He gave His one and only Son (provided the perfect sacrifice for atonement and forgiveness of sin), that whoever (any person in this world — young or old, male or female) believes in Him (knows and trusts Jesus Christ and the salvation He gives) shall not perish (experience the second death or eternal condemnation) but have eternal life."

### **Old Testament's terms and conditions**

God works collaboratively with us, for He has created us for good works and to reveal His glory, we are never passive recipients of God's grace. As a result, he has given us Terms and Conditions in respect of His offer of salvation. These terms and conditions were always present in the Old Testament and in all the covenants God made with his people. The Israelites were required to adhere to the conditions set out by God in order to enjoy his promises. Deuteronomy 30:15-20 reads:

*"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them" NKJV.*

The Old Testament or Covenant clearly stipulated that the children of Israel had the choice between life and death, based on the condition that they obey God and keep His commandments or disobey and perish. Obedience to God, expressed through love, attentive listening to His voice, and faithfulness in keeping His commandments, would lead to a life of blessing in the Promised Land. However, time and again, the Israelites disobeyed God. One of the heaviest prices they paid for their disobedience was the Babylonian exile, which lasted 70 years.

The repeated disobedience by the children of Israel does not mean they were worse than us. Rather, it points to something deeper — the nature of a sinful heart. Although atonement for sin was made on a yearly basis, sin was not fully dealt with, and this highlights the insufficiency of the Old Covenant. For this very reason, God made a promise to circumcise our sinful hearts — removing the heart of stone, or rebellious heart caused by indwelling sin — and to give us a heart of flesh or an understanding heart that enables us to obey Him. In addition, God promised to give us His Spirit to empower us and help us live in obedience (Ezekiel 36:25–27). This is why the New Covenant is both relevant and necessary for Jews and Gentiles alike.

### **The terms and conditions of the New Testament**

In as much as predestination is activated, people may lose this privilege if they do not meet God's righteous requirements. These righteous requirements are only met through and in Christ Jesus our Lord, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Can we just live in a manner that pleases us and conform to the pattern of this world? In other words, does predestination imply that we cannot lose our salvation or God will save us no matter how we live our lives? A number of Scriptures can answer this question.

*“7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire” Luke 3: 7-9- NIV.*

The Jews certainly knew they were God's chosen people. Many of them seemed to develop a sense of entitlement to God's promises and eternal inheritance. Among those coming to John the Baptist for baptism were Pharisees and Sadducees (see Matthew 3:7). John used strong words — “You brood of vipers” — to rebuke those who relied on self-righteousness and warned them of impending wrath and judgment.

John's preaching laid out the terms and conditions for salvation: to produce fruit in keeping with repentance. For us, the fruit that befits repentance is the fruit of the Spirit, which we are called to bear. John the Baptist also dismantled misconceptions about the Kingdom of God, warning the Jews that they could not inherit it based solely on the faith of Abraham and their forefathers. He emphasized the need to produce fruit.

You and I cannot live sinful lives and expect God to save us simply because He has predestined us for salvation. In Christ, we have been freed from the bondage of sin and transgression, and we must not continue to live as though we are still enslaved to sin. Each of us is called to meet God's standard — to be holy and blameless before Him — in order to inherit the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ also taught that those who are chosen and predestined to God's salvation can perish if they do not repent from their sin.

*“About this time Jesus was informed that Pilate had murdered some people from Galilee as they were offering sacrifices at the Temple. 2“Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other people from Galilee?” Jesus asked. “Is that why they suffered? 3Not at all! And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God. 4And what about the eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? 5No, and I tell you again that unless you repent, you will perish, too.” Luke 13:1-5- NLT.*

God has set an everlasting covenant with us in Christ Jesus, and through this covenant, He is inviting everyone to repentance. Jesus' blood was shed for the forgiveness of many sins. Everyone who believes in Jesus and faithfully obeys Him is saved. John 3:18 says, “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”-NKJV.

Although all people are predestined to salvation in Christ Jesus (for God chose us in Himself), we must meet the condition God set before the foundation of the world — “to be holy and blameless in His sight” (Ephesians 1:4). People can only be holy and blameless through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting Him daily. Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus alone — never by works — for no one can be good enough before God apart from believing in Christ.

Acts 4:12 declares, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Everyone who has an earthly biological father, even if they never knew him, is born with sin (the fallen state or sinful nature) passed to humanity through Adam's disobedience. As Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The phrase “all have sinned” includes everyone (you and me) as well as the founders of all other religions in the world. It also includes our Christian church leaders and founders, whom we may hold in high regard.

Jesus, however, was born of the virgin Mary and conceived by the Holy Spirit so that He would not inherit Adam's sin. I have often taught that sin is passed from the father to his children, just as Adam passed sin to his descendants. A mother does not pass on the sinful nature to the children — this is the case with Mary and Jesus. Though Mary had her own sinful nature (inherited from her earthly father) and was in need of a Saviour, Jesus did not inherit sin because His Father is God. Jesus is fully God and fully Man; the Word became flesh. As a result, “He who knew no sin was made sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God” (see Genesis 3:15;

Deuteronomy 5:9; Exodus 20:5; 34:7; Romans 5:12–6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:17–21; 1 Timothy 2:5; Colossians 1:15).

*“who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.” Exodus 34:7*

The Scripture above is very precise. God shows love and has so loved the world, God loves you and loves me also as it is God’s nature or attribute to love. The scripture is also telling us about the abundance of God’s mercy and grace in that he forgives sin, iniquity and transgression. It is God’s desire to give everyone a second chance and to forgive them, however, God will never leave any sin unpunished, meaning that everyone who dies in their sin will be punished. Although many people have interpreted visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to mean that God punishes children for the actual sins of their fathers, this is not the case as written in Ezekiel 18. The scripture however, gives evidence to children inheriting iniquity (sinful nature) from their fathers. Have you ever seen that certain sinful behaviours though they cannot always be learned behaviour, can be traced to a number of generations in some families? Thus God is reminding us of our sinful state that we inherit at birth, “Behold I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Psalm 51:5.

*“<sup>15</sup> Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. <sup>16</sup> But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. <sup>17</sup> Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*  
1 Timothy 1:15-17 NIV.

In conclusion, God has not predestined anyone for condemnation; His desire is for everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. We have a responsibility to spread the gospel to all creation and share the Word with those around us, helping them realize how deeply God loves them.

No one should live however they please, assuming that God will save them regardless of how they live. God will by no means leave sin unpunished — He will hold everyone accountable. Therefore, I invite every reader of this book to reflect on their relationship with God and choose to believe in Jesus, trusting in Him daily.

The Bible outlines a way of life and expectations for everyone who believes in Jesus, in order to inherit the riches of His Kingdom — the very Kingdom to which we are all predestined. I have referred to these expectations as terms and conditions.

It is deeply saddening that many people prioritize material things and the passions of the flesh over seeking God’s mercy and grace. Does not the Bible say, “The preaching of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing”? Many may view the gospel as

a waste of time — and tragically, they may perish as a result. The Bible further declares, “My people perish for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6). When the terms and conditions of the gospel are not met, people perish — but this is never God’s desire for them, for He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

### **The doctrine of predestination 5- the 144 000 believers.**

It is true that some portions of Scripture may be difficult to understand, and this has resulted in different interpretations by various Christian denominations. One such portion is Revelation 7, which speaks about the sealing of the saints. Before we explore the sealing of the saints and how this relates to the doctrine of predestination, I will briefly provide context on how the Book of Revelation was written.

The book was strategically designated as the last book of the Bible, as it emphasizes the importance of Scripture and issues a warning that we must not simply choose what to believe or disregard. It also warns against adding to Scripture, urging us to uphold the Word given through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the book reminds us that even though society may change over time, we must never use societal changes to minimize the relevance of the Word of God.

The Book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ — not the revelation of John, the writer. To reveal means to open up a secret, like opening a sealed envelope to see or read the contents of a letter. Therefore, Revelation should not always be interpreted as a secret, as many tend to do, but rather as a revealed secret. However, the book contains a lot of symbolic and figurative language, which calls for a good understanding of the Old Testament — especially the Book of Leviticus — and the meaning of numbers in Hebrew.

In efforts to understand Revelation, many people have used different methods, and in some cases, strange or questionable doctrines have emerged. Some preachers and writers have interpreted the seven churches as representing ‘seven church ages’ and have attempted to assign ‘the most influential person in each age.’ In almost all cases, the most influential person for the last church is identified as one of the founders of that specific Christian denomination. However, I will assert that, while applications can be made to modern-day churches, the Book of Revelation was intended to be circulated to the seven churches in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey) that already existed at the time it was written.

One of the most variably interpreted Scriptures is Revelation 7 and the meaning of the 144,000. The worst interpretations that have arisen from this passage suggest that the 144,000 represent the total number of Christians who will be saved, or the total number of Old and New Testament believers. I am going to break down this portion of Scripture to help us understand God’s plan for our salvation.

*Revelation 7:3 "...saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: 5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed...;” NKJV.*

The Scriptures tells us that the 144 000 sealed are from all the tribes of Israel and not specifically from all the nations of the world. The same Chapter tells us about a great multitude which no one could number and this multitude is from all the nations, tribes, tongues and peoples.

*Revelation 7: 9 "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,..." 10 and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,"*

The Bible is very clear that no one could number this great crowd — only God can — and it is evident that the great crowd cannot be limited to the 144,000, as they have already been numbered. Jesus died to save sinners, and all people — regardless of nationality, tribe, race, or language — are invited to receive salvation. God's Word is infallible, and multitudes upon multitudes will be saved.

In the Book of Hebrews chapter 11, we find a record of some of the heroes of faith from the beginning of creation and how they trusted God to save them. A number of great men and women of God are mentioned well before the twelve tribes of Israel existed. Examples of such heroes of faith include, but are not limited to: Abel, Enoch, Noah and his family, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Job.

So, is the 144,000 a precise number of Israelite believers who will be saved, or is it symbolic?

The sealing of these believers takes place as a prelude between the sixth and the opening of the seventh seal (trumpet). The seventh seal denotes the final revelation of God's wrath (anger) on all ungodliness. We should also understand the meaning attached to numbers, which is often evident throughout the Bible. For example:

- 1 — One God
- 2 or 3 — Witnesses
- 4 — Creation (four corners of the earth)
- 7 — Completeness or fulfillment of God's promises
- 8 — New beginning
- 12 — Perfect number (the wholeness of the nation of Israel), the twelve disciples
- 24 — The twenty-four elders, priesthood, worship of God

In this case, 12,000 from each tribe of Israel denotes the completeness of God's providence of salvation, multiplied by a thousand. Whether Jew or Gentile, God is faithful to save His people.

Therefore, Revelation 7 teaches us about God's faithfulness to save His people from generation to generation. Even in the midst of persecution and tribulation, God is faithful to save and protect us. At one point, the prophet Elijah thought he was the only

one serving God in Israel, but what was the divine response? “Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him.”

The total number of believers who have been washed by the precious blood of Jesus will not be countable by any human mind. It will not be limited to thousands, millions, or billions — because Jesus died to save us.

### A Biblical Approach to Evangelism

As stated in Chapter 1, some believers who have misunderstood predestination do not believe in evangelism at all. They hold the view that God will save everyone He has predestined to save. However, I would like to challenge every reader of this book and reiterate that evangelism is not a command given only to the apostles, nor is it exclusive to pastors, priests, evangelists, or those who hold positions in the church — it is a commandment given to us all.

Evangelism must be at the heart of every Christian church, and activities should be designed to reach out to local communities and the world at large. In addition, ordinary church members should “live out the gospel.” By living out the gospel, I mean that every believer should shine the light within them to those around them — whether family members, extended family, friends, community members, or colleagues at work. Many churches, including major mainline Christian denominations, have lost sight of evangelism, operating under the expectation that people will come to their church. This belief stands in contrast to the foundations of the early church. God has revealed Himself even to those who did not seek Him. We must always treat evangelism with urgency.

How many family members do you know who do not believe in Jesus? What about your friends, colleagues, and neighbours? What is the proportion of churchgoers compared to the size of your local community? What about community members who struggle to find answers to the many issues they face? This was Jesus’ heart when He looked around the communities near Him.

*Matthew 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. <sup>36</sup> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field”- NIV*

*Use the table below to identify differences and similarities between your community and the communities in Jesus’ time.*

Jesus’ community as written in Matthew 9: 35-38	My community in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Differences:	Differences:

Similarities:	Similarities:

How did Jesus feel when He saw those around Him? Did Jesus care about the people around Him? What did Jesus do when He identified the needs of the people? In Matthew 10, the Bible tells us that Jesus called the twelve disciples and gave them authority over evil spirits and every disease and sickness, and then sent them out. In the Gospel of Luke, we learn that after sending out the twelve disciples, He went on to send seventy others. The Lord Jesus had compassion and a heart for the people and their need for salvation.

The primary method of evangelism Jesus used was to go to the people, rather than waiting for them to come to Him. In the passage referenced above, Jesus “went to all the cities and villages, teaching, preaching, and healing.” He sent the seventy to “every city and village He was about to enter.” In Mark 1:38, after Jesus had gone out to pray and the disciples found Him, He said to them:

*“Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth”- NKJV.*

Although the gospel shines mightily and attracts many people to its light, it is the responsibility of the light to shine in darkness. In other words, light must go where darkness is and shine with confidence, knowing that darkness will never overcome it. The Great Commission clearly commands the light to go and shine in the darkness:

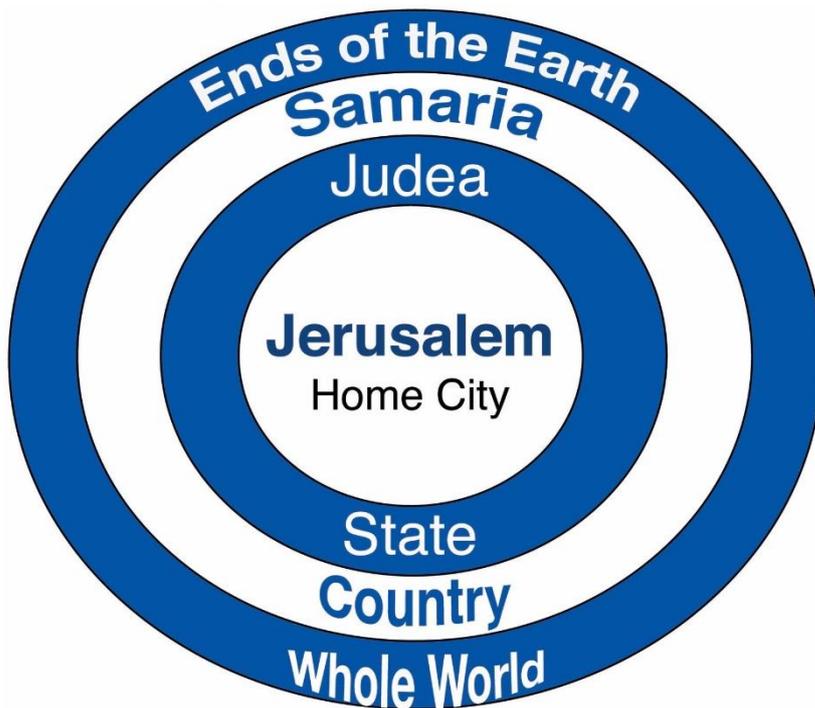
*Matthew 28:<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” NIV.*

*Acts 1: 8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

In approaching evangelism as Christians, we must be mindful and confident of the following:

- ✓ Jesus has all the authority and power in heaven and on earth.
- ✓ The authority in Jesus has been given to each one of us who believes in Him. In other words, every believer must learn to exercise the authority he or she has in Jesus.
  
- ✓ The Holy Spirit empowers us to witness and makes the authority we have been granted visible in our lives.
  
- ✓ Each believer has been commanded to go and make disciples (use all the gifts we have received in Christ) to reach out to and equip others to become mature Christians or faithful believers.
  
- ✓ The gospel needs to reach all the nations and tribes in fulfilment of scripture. This includes: The Western world which perhaps needs revival, Africa, Asia, South America, the Middle East, all Islands and all the countries which are viewed to be hostile.
  
- ✓ Every person or church branch has their own Jerusalem to start from.
  
- ✓ Our teachings must be based on the undiluted gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, rather than merely a promotion of 'our church doctrine.'
  
- ✓ If you faithfully proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, you are assured that he is with you always to the very end of age.
  
- ✓ When we preach Christ faithfully, results are guaranteed because Jesus' power is manifested in his word.

One preacher illustrated Acts 1: 8 as below:



The preacher shared that we don't have to go to Jerusalem in Israel in order to share the gospel. Instead, each one of us has his or her own "Jerusalem" — this includes our immediate family members and friends, and can also refer to those we feel most comfortable spending time with. For a local church, Jerusalem would represent its immediate neighbourhood or home city.

"Judea" refers to those who share similar values with us — for instance, extended family members or friends we interact with occasionally. For the church, it could represent a broader sphere of influence beyond its immediate community.

"Samaria" could represent the church's outreach efforts to others within the same country. However, it may also refer to those we don't usually associate with or who hold different values from us. This could include — but is not limited to — people of different racial backgrounds, people from other religions, or individuals we may not naturally feel comfortable spending time with.

The world is becoming increasingly globalized, like a village, yet it is important to remember that the Lord Jesus had the entire planet in mind when He sent out the disciples. Jesus spoke of making disciples of all nations. He commanded His followers to reach "the ends of the earth" with the gospel and reminded us, "And this gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14, NIV).

As cross-border migration becomes inevitable — though it may need to be managed and regulated — the church must connect with the global world and use every possible means to spread the gospel. This includes communication channels, social media platforms, and reaching out to people from different countries who live among us. Moreover, as believers, we should carry the gospel with us wherever we go. We do not always have to be missionaries sent out by the church to fulfil this calling. Rather, we must understand that we are missionaries and ambassadors of Christ in every place we find ourselves — and we carry the authority to share the gospel with those we meet.

In conclusion, God has chosen us in Himself out of love and has predestined us to receive salvation in Christ Jesus. God is not willing that anyone should perish but that we all come to repentance and be saved and therefore has not predestined anyone for eternal condemnation. However, many people are yet to receive the good news that Jesus Christ died to save them and unless someone preaches to them they will die in their sins and be condemned. At times, I feel like the church is becoming too

comfortable with a few hundreds of believers within their walls but then forget the millions or billions who are out there. Although it is natural to feel powerless to share the gospel, through prayer and reading the Bible we can overcome any fear and realise the immense authority we have been given by the Lord Jesus Christ. The power of the Holy Spirit is made manifest as we take action, thus when the word of God is spoken, the Holy Spirit acts on the word and through this we realise that the Lord Jesus is with us always.

May the LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen.

## References

Catherwood. C. (2010). Five Leading Reformers: Livs at watershed of history. Christian Focus Publications.

Holy Bible, New King James Version- accessed via Bible App (NKJV).

Holy Bible, New Living Translation (2015). Tyndale House Publishers.

The Holy Bible, New International Version- NIV- Copyright- 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011. By Biblica, Inc.

Peterson, E.H. (2002). The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language. Colorado Springs: Nav Press.