

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CONCEPT OF JUSTIFICATION IN ROMANS
5:18 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WESLEYAN DOCTRINE OF
PREVENIENT GRACE**

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**THIS THESIS PROPOSALIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
RELIGION IN THE SCHOOL OF RELIGION AND CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF
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DECLARATION

I declare that this document and the research it describes are my original work and that they have not been presented in any other university for academic work.

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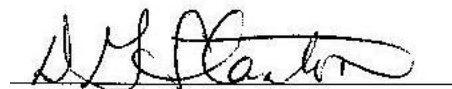
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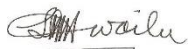


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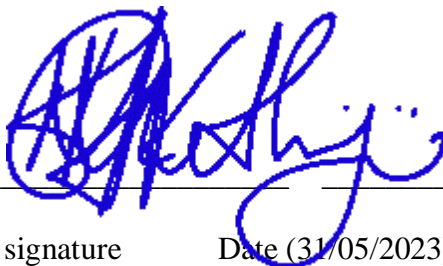


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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents and all my relatives who were used by God to shape me as a child.

To all my brothers and sisters of the Church of the Nazarene, for their impartial love and support that enables me to venture into this academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to God for His grace. All blessings that I receive from God are through His grace. This thesis is evidence that God's blessings are through relationships. Many brothers and sisters helped me to accomplish this work. The support I received from my brothers and sisters made this task enjoyable.

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ABSTRACT

The universal terms related to condemnation and justification in Romans 5:18 reveal the double dimension of justification. In the same manner that sin is contemplated as both universal and individual, as is justification. The universal dimension of justification is beyond faith and good works for salvation, while the individual dimension follows one's faith for salvation. When justification is interpreted as synonymous with eternal salvation, the universal terms found in Romans 5:18 seem to imply universal salvation or universalism. One might argue that in the same manner that all human beings are condemned in Adam's act of disobedience without their own choice, so also all humans are to be justified in Jesus' act of obedience without their own choice. However, the Bible reveals that eternal salvation requires a human response to what God has provided universally. To counteract universalism, some argue that the universal terms in Romans 5:18 do not include every person but only the elect. This position deemphasises the universal aspect of justification depicted in this passage because the universal terms are applied to both condemnation and justification which means that the target of justification is the same as the one of condemnation. The literature reviewed in this study revealed the gap in resources concerning the universal nature of justification without falling to the extreme of universalism and this research sought to fill this gap. The study showed that both universalism and the doctrine of unconditional predestination undermine the urgency of Christian ministry because if all will be saved, there is no need for evangelism, missions, or discipleship. On the other hand, if God has already elected those who will be saved, then there is also no need for evangelism, missions, or discipleship because the human response cannot change God's decree. This study investigated the meaning of the universal terms of both condemnation and justification in Romans 5:18. To reach this goal, the researcher applied a historical-grammatical exegesis of the aforementioned Biblical text to discover the sense and meaning of this passage. He then correlated the passage with the entire canon to discover its relationship with the entire Bible. The researcher discovered that throughout the history of Christianity, almost all scholars and theologians agree that for justification to take place some conditions must be made. It was also revealed that sin put humanity into a situation of being unable to fulfil the required condition for their salvation. In this way, when the Bible speaks of justification in a universal manner it refers to God's righteousness which includes His faithfulness in creating all the conditions necessary for the reconciliation with sinful humanity through the atoning work of Christ. This act is universal and independent of human action. When the Bible speaks of justification in an individual manner it refers to the way human beings exercise their choice to receive God's universal offer. Thus, the study concluded that Romans 5:18 supports the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cardiac righteousness: Conformity to the character of Christ.¹

Forensic righteousness: “A legal act by which God declares a believing sinner righteous.”²

Prevenient Grace: “All the drawings of the Father; all that light wherewith the Son of God enlightens everyone that comes into the world; all the convictions which his Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man.”³

Justifying grace: “God making right what was wrong. He changes our relational status with Him, and introduces the power and work of the Holy Spirit into our life.”⁴

Justification: “To be made right with God, by the grace of God, by which our sins are forgiven and our guilt removed by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus’ death on the cross.”⁵

General justification: “That general benevolence of our merciful God toward sinful man, whereby, through “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”, He freely makes us partakers of the light that enlightens every man who comes into the world.”⁶

Evangelical justification: “Justification of a sinner that takes place in a time of conversion, merited by Christ with evidence or instrumentality of faith.”⁷

¹ Brant Pitre, Michael P. Barber, and John A. Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew: Rethinking Pauline Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 260.

² Millard J. Erickson, *Christian theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 459

³ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Third Edition, vol. 6 (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 44.

⁴Ibid., 71.

⁵Ibid., 75.

⁶ John Fletcher, *the Works of the Reverend John Fletcher in Four Volumes* (New York: B. Waugh and T. Mason, 1833), 286.

⁷Ibid., 235.

Final justification: “Justification of believers on the Day of Judgment, merited by Christ, by the evidence or instrumentality of good works.”⁸

Regeneration: “That great change which God works in the soul when he brings it into life; when he raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.”⁹

Sanctification: Renewal in the Image of God.¹⁰

Reconciliation: The act of bringing back into harmony what has been alienated.¹¹

Atonement: Jesus’ death on the cross that makes salvation possible.¹²

Universalism: The view which holds that “in the end, all persons will experience eternal life. All will be saved and none will be lost.”¹³

⁸Ibid., 235.

⁹Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, 71.

¹⁰H. RayDunning, *Grace, Faith and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*(Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1988), 404.

¹¹ Leon Roy, “Reconciliation” in *The theology of Atonement: Reading in Soteriology*, John R. Sheets S.J. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967), 110.

¹²David A. Busic, *Way Truth and Life: Discipleship as a Journey of Grace* (Kansas City, MO: The Foundry Publishing, 2021), 57.

¹³Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, “Introduction,” in *Hell under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 11.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANU: Africa Nazarene University

MI: Michigan

NASB: New American Standard Bible

NIV: New International Version

NJ: New Jersey

SANU: Southern Africa Nazarene University

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Introduction

This research seeks to study the meaning of justification as depicted in Romans 5:18, focusing primarily on the universal terms present in this passage in connection with the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace. To this end, this chapter explains the rationale for studying this passage by presenting the background that informs the research. This background culminates in the problem statement which justifies the purpose of the study. The chapter also indicates the methodology to be employed in the thesis. Finally, the chapter describes the structure of the entire dissertation.

Background of the Study

Without a close analysis, one might argue that there is no need to write about justification because many scholars have already treated this topic throughout the history of Christianity. However, this emphasis does not assure any consensus among scholars regarding the nature, need, and scope of justification. Whereas Brant Pitre, Michael P. Barber, and John A. Kincaid define justification as cardiac righteousness, that is, “a singular righteousness that concerns both legal standing and the interior quality of the believer”,¹⁴ Millard Erickson describes it as “a forensic or declarative action of God, like that of a judge in acquitting the accused.”¹⁵ For N.T. Wright, “Paul’s view of salvation and justification is not about how individuals come into a right relationship with God but

¹⁴Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid, *Paul, A New Covenant Jew*, 188.

¹⁵ Erickson, *Christian theology* 459.

rather about how the God of Abraham has fulfilled His promises at last through the apocalyptic death and resurrection of His own beloved Son.”¹⁶

A different perspective on the identity of God, based on His revelation in Jesus Christ and Scripture causes different approaches to Christian doctrines including justification.¹⁷ For instance, Calvinists “view divine love as an expression of God’s sovereign will, which results in the doctrine of particular predestination”¹⁸ while John Fletcher agrees with John Wesley that the essential nature of God is holy-love and is universal in its scope.¹⁹ For them, the atoning death of Jesus has universal effects because God is love. “Some of its benefits such as release from the condemnation of Adam’s sin are automatically extended to all, and all of its benefits, such as forgiveness of actual sins, are for everyone who accepts them.”²⁰

When general justification is interpreted as synonymous with final salvation, the universal terms found in Romans 5:18 seem to imply universal salvation or universalism. Universalism is a broad concept but this thesis defines it as “the view which holds that in the end all persons will experience eternal life. All will be saved and none will be lost.”²¹ For this reason, many who do not agree with universalism argue that the universal terms in this passage do not include every person, but only the elect. Instead, the fact that the universal terms are applied to both condemnation and justification means that the target of justification is the same as the one of condemnation.

¹⁶ N. T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 10.

¹⁷ Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2006), 71.

¹⁸ J. Russell Frazier, *True Christianity: The Doctrine of Dispensations in the Thought of John William Fletcher* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2014), 100.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁰ Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 34.

²¹ Morgan and Peterson, “Introduction,” in *Hell under Fire*, 11.

To counter this argument, John Wesley connects the universal scope of the term “justification” in Romans 5:18 with the doctrine of prevenient grace. For him, justification should be understood in connection with prevenient grace as a precursor to conversion-initiation event. As he argues, when one properly connects justification with God’s love, the universal terms in this passage become clear. Thus, general justification can be defined as “prevenient grace guarded from universalism, not by God’s selective decree, but by faith which grace makes available to all people, even if not irresistibly leading to acceptance.”²² It is therefore correct to say that Wesley agrees with Universalists when they underline that “God’s love is the basis for His universal salvific intention and that saving grace is fully available to everybody.”²³ However, he differs from them because the Universalists deemphasise the finality of human resistance to universal saving grace.

These different views prove the need for a further study of the concept of justification as portrayed in Romans 5:18, with special consideration of its universal terms. To this end, the research did an exegesis of this passage aimed at understanding what Paul meant to his immediate addressees when he applied universal terms. Different approaches to the interpretation of this passage concerning the nature, necessity, and scope of justification were analysed before demonstrating that this passage supports Wesley’s doctrine of prevenient grace against the Calvinist doctrine of predestination.

A literature review showed a research gap in resources concerning the universal precedence of general justification for faith and salvation without falling into the extreme

²² Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972), 37.

²³ J. I. Packer, “Universalism: Will Everyone Ultimately Be Saved?” in *Hell Under Fire*, ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 171.

of universalism. Throughout the history of Christianity, the doctrine of justification has been treated in connection with faith and final salvation in a manner that tends to deemphasise the general nature of justification. However, the biblical account indicates that the justifying act of Christ is beyond one's faith and final salvation. This research aimed to fill this gap.

Statement of the Problem

Romans 5:18 employs universal terms related to both condemnation and justification. This verse has been understood to mean that Christ effected acquittal and life to the degree that Adam effected condemnation and death. The implication of which is universalism. This study sought to explore the scope to which Adam and Christ function as representative heads. There are different approaches to interpretation of this passage one of which is the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace. Does Romans 5:18 support the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace? This thesis seeks to answer this question.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine Romans 5:18 and to determine whether or not the passage provides exegetical support for Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace.

Methodology of the Study

This study is an exegetical examination of Romans 5:18 in light of its New Testament background. Therefore, the researcher used the historical-grammatical

methodology proposed by Milton S. Terry, who suggests, “The key characteristic of the historical-grammatical method seeks to gather from the Scriptures themselves the precise meaning which the writers intended to convey.”²⁴ This author clarifies that the historical-grammatical exegete has to acknowledge what the Bible teaches without prejudice. The historical-grammatical exegete will investigate the context in which the writer wrote the book. The exegete has to understand that no sensible author will be knowingly inconsistent or seek to mislead readers. This is to say that it is not the purpose or desire of the sacred writers to be misunderstood.²⁵ In the same manner, it is not reasonable to suppose that the Holy Scripture, given by the inspiration of God, is of the nature of a puzzle designed to confuse the reader.²⁶ Hence, the research approaches the Biblical text with this recognition.

This method demands the study of content related to textual criticism, including both lexical and grammatical data as well as historical-cultural background. The questions of context are divided into “historical and literary. Historical context has to do with both the general and specific historical setting of a document while the literary context has to do with why a given thing was said at a given point in the argument or narrative.”²⁷ For this reason, this study integrated the content and context of Romans 5:18 into a readable presentation before comparing the findings with the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace. To accomplish this task, interaction with *John Wesley’s Notes on*

²⁴ Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 84.

²⁵Ibid., 84.

²⁶Ibid., 85.

²⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 31.

Romans – Revelation and his other works were complemented by various secondary sources.

Structure/ Development of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One presents the thesis's introduction, covering the preliminary elements of the thesis which include the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research methodology, and the thesis structure. Then chapter two reviews the existing literature on the topic to establish a knowledge gap and the formulation of *desiderata*. Chapter three deals with contextual observation which consists in surveying the historical and literary contexts of the book. The historical context includes information about authorship, audience, date, and place of writing, and the overall purpose of *Romans*. The literary context analyses the book and its units in terms of structure and logical flow. Chapter four presents the textual analysis that relates to exegetical work. Chapter Five describes Wesley's doctrine of Prevenient Grace. Correlation and application take place in chapter six, and chapter seven consists in summarising the findings and demonstrating that *Romans* 5:18 supports the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the existent literature regarding the concept of justification in Romans 5:18 to establish a knowledge gap. Many of the primary sources are reviewed together with other secondary resources from the period of Apostolic Fathers up to the current era.

Throughout history, Romans 5:18 has been interpreted in various ways. The literature reviewed in this chapter is grouped into five approaches. The first is the universalistic approach which assumes that Romans 5:18 indicates “Just as all have participated in the sin of Adam, so all have participated in the righteous act of Christ”. In this way, “all will be ultimately and finally saved.”²⁸ The second approach holds that “the atoning work of Christ provides the meritorious means of justification, but justification is only accomplished when the sinner satisfies the condition of faith.”²⁹ This is to say that “Christ’s atoning work makes justification available for all humans, but human beings must appropriate it to be justified.”³⁰ The third approach holds that the word “all’ in Romans 5:18 means all persons in Christ. In this way, “Christ’s act of righteousness has secured the benefits of the atonement for all who belong to him.”³¹ In other words, “only those in Christ are justified.”³² The fourth view underscores that “all” in Romans 5:18 means “Jews and Gentiles and not just Jews as the target of God’s plan of salvation because all human beings, Jew and Gentile alike are in sin and can only be justified

²⁸ Richard H. Bell “Romans 5:18-19 and Universal Salvation” *New Testament Studies* 48, no. 3 (2002): 417-432.

²⁹ Godet, *Commentary on Romans*, 383.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 383.

³¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 240-344.

³² *Ibid.*, 340-344.

through faith.”³³ The fifth approach is brought by Wesley who holds to three types of justification. For him, Romans 5:18 refers to general justification which is an open door to both evangelical and final justifications.

2.1 The Classic Commentators

2.1.1 The Apostolic Fathers (A.D 50 – A.D 150)

The Apostolic Fathers are those writers who were either immediate disciples of the apostles or had some contact with and learned from them. Their period goes from A.D. 50 through about A.D. 150. Clement of Rome (A.D 35-A.D 99), Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35 A.D- c. 107 A.D), and Polycarp (A.D 69-A.D 155) are some of the Apostolic Fathers.³⁴

There are different views concerning their contribution to the doctrine of justification. The first view holds, “the pre-Augustinian fathers do not show any genuine interest in, or reflection upon, Pauline doctrines of original sin, grace, and justification.”³⁵ According to this view, “during this era, the question of justification never became a subject of controversy as the Apostolic Fathers contented themselves with a clear practical solution.”³⁶ Jason D. Gillette argues that Christianity was birthed out of a long story of Judaism. Their bedrock was a strict adherence to monotheism coinciding with messianic, eschatological hope. In addition to this common Jewish bedrock, the early

³⁴Alister E. McGrath, *Iustia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 32.

³⁵W. Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The International Critical Commentary: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), 148

³⁶Ibid., 148

fathers operated within different settings. Therefore, the strong Judean background and the variety of cultural contexts made reflection upon the doctrine of justification scarce.³⁷

The other view argues that the concept of justification was articulated in this period.³⁸ For instance, Andreas Linderman reveals, “Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp mention Paul by name, cite Pauline epistles, and make allusions to Pauline theological ideas.”³⁹ Oden claims, “There is a clear patristic consensus on justification that is virtually identical to the Reformers’ teaching.”⁴⁰

Between these two views, some scholars stress that there is a need for respecting “the historical, polemical and rhetorical particularities of the early church”⁴¹ before any possible conclusion of their doctrine elaboration. It is important to understand that “the images of salvation are many and varied within patristic literature in a way that what the Reformers consider as justification by works is better interpreted as an early Christian defence of the biblical notions of human freedom, moral responsibility and the goodness of God against the competing perspectives of fatalism, stoicism, and Gnosticism.”⁴²

Although Clement of Rome did not write much on Romans 5:18, there is a considerable contribution to the doctrine of justification from his writings to the Corinthian Church. He wrote, “Human beings are saved through faith, by which the

³⁷ Jason Gillette, *On a Collision Course or Two Sips Passing Through the Night?: A Study of the Underlying Differences in the Dispute Between John Piper and N. T. Wright on the Doctrine of Justification* (ThM thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2016), 24.

³⁸D. H. Williams, “Justification by Faith: A Patristic Doctrine” in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Volume null, 2006, pp 653

³⁹Andreas Linderman, “Paul in the Writings of the Apostolic Fathers,” in *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* ed. William S. Babcock (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990), 27.

⁴⁰ James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *Justification: Five Views* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 13.

⁴¹Ibid., 14.

⁴²Ibid., 14.

Almighty God has justified all who have existed from the beginning.”⁴³ He explains that justification is God’s great gift, received not through human will but through His will in Christ Jesus. For Clement, “Christians are a portion of the Holy One, so they are to do all the things that pertain to holiness; they are to join with those to whom grace is given by God, clothing themselves in concord, being justified by works and not by words.”⁴⁴

With these words, Clement is basing his imperative upon the indication of one’s status as a member of God’s covenant people.⁴⁵ Even without a direct interpretation of Romans 5:18, one can imply that for Clement justified people are characterised by the way they live. Clement acknowledges that human beings do not create conditions for justification. God is the provider of it and human beings are to receive it. In this way, Clement conceives Romans 5:18 as indicating “God’s universal offer to all those coming from Adam. After receiving this offer, they are to clothe themselves with concord and humility, doing good and avoiding evil, being justified by their works, and not their words.”⁴⁶

1 Clement 7:4 infers Clement’s approach towards the universal terms of Romans 5:18. He states, “Let us fix our eyes on the blood of Christ and understand how precious it is unto His Father because being shed for our salvation it won for the whole world the grace of repentance.”⁴⁷ Thus Clement of Rome belongs to the second approach which holds, “Christ won the basis for justification but such justification is only a reality if the

⁴³ 1 Clement 32:4, trans. J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), 45–46.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 45–46.

⁴⁵ Cooper and Leithart, *The Righteousness of One*, 61.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁴⁷ Clement, *The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians* Transl. J. B. Lightfoot (Athena Data Products, 1990). 48.

condition of faith is fulfilled.”⁴⁸ In other words, “Christ’s act of righteousness makes justification available for all but human beings are to receive it for them to be justified.”⁴⁹

Polycarp was the bishop of the church in Smyrna. His only surviving epistle contains a passage stating that “all things both that are in heaven and that are on earth are made subject to Christ whom every living creature shall worship whose blood God shall require of them that believe not in Him.”⁵⁰ When proconsul Statius Quadratus wrote to Polycarp treating him with burning, he replied that Quadratus’ fire was extinct but there will be eternal fire of condemnation and judgment reserved for the wicked in the other world.⁵¹ This indicates that Polycarp did not believe in universalism.

Ignatius of Antioch argued that justification is grounded in union with God. For him, “Christians are God-bearers, temple-bearers, Christ-bearers, bearers of holy things, and adorned in every respect with the commandments of Jesus Christ. Redemption is possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.”⁵² To receive grace, one must be found in Christ Jesus as it is only in Christ that one participates in God and thus will be found guiltless upon His advent. This direct communion with God is more than individualistic as it occurs primarily within the context of public worship. An ethical life is also only achievable through this union. Ignatius urges the Trallians, “You, then, take up gentleness and renew yourselves in faith – which is the flesh of the Lord – and in love – which is the blood of Jesus Christ.”⁵³ In connecting faith and love with the flesh and the

⁴⁸Ibid., 48.

⁴⁹Ibid., 48.

⁵⁰*Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians 2:1.*

⁵¹ John Legg, *The Footsteps of God* (Welwyn Garden City: Evangelical Press, 1986), 19.

⁵²*Ignatius to the Ephesians 9:1-2.*

⁵³*Ignatius to the Trallians 8:1-2.*

blood of the Lord, Ignatius emphasises good works as the blessed consequences of initial salvation for the individual.⁵⁴

In his letter to Ephesians 16:1, Ignatius states: “Be not deceived, my brethren. Corrupters of houses shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”⁵⁵ This verse shows that Ignatius has the same approach as Clement and Polycarp as they all hold that Christ made justification available to all, but human beings need to receive it. Furthermore, receiving justification is not an abstract concept because it culminates in life-changing still in this world.⁵⁶

2.1.2 The Ante-Nicene Fathers (A.D 150 – A.D 325)

After the Apostolic Fathers, comes a distinct group of writers called apologists because their major focus was “to defend the faith against Christian heretics, Jewish critics, and pagan persecutors. They lived from A.D 150 through about the Council of Nicaea in A.D 325. In this way, they are also called the ante-Nicene Fathers.”⁵⁷ Some of these apologists are Justin (A.D 100-c. A.D 165), Irenaeus (c. A.D 130 – c. A.D 202) Origen (c. A.D 185- c. A.D 253), and Tertullian (A.D 160-A.D 220).

In connection with justification through Christ, Justin Martyr proposes a universal restoration of creation. For him, the law is universal and condemns all under the curse. The law does not require partial but total obedience. Since all have sinned, the law does not save. Christ died on behalf of the curse all are under but Christ Himself is not under the curse. For Justin, only through Christ’s two natures as God and humanity, can

⁵⁴Ibid., 69.

⁵⁵ Peter Kirby, “Ignatius to Ephesians,” *Apostolic Fathers*, transl. Lightfoot and Harmer (Early Christian Writings, 1891). 3

⁵⁶Ibid., 3.

⁵⁷D’Ambrosio, *When the Church was Young*, 19.

fellowship between God and sinful humanity be restored.⁵⁸ Justin emphasises human responsibility by underlining, “They who choose the good have worthy rewards, and they who choose the opposite have their merited awards, for not like other things, as trees and quadrupeds, which cannot act by choice, did God create man.”⁵⁹ By emphasising the need for human responsibility Justin agrees with the Apostolic Fathers who held that justification is universal but humans need to receive it. Although his ideas on universal restoration seem to indicate a Universalist inclination, Justin defended that transgressors will be devoured by the worm and fire.⁶⁰

Irenaeus developed a theology of recapitulation in which creation, though distorted, is redeemed. He held that God made a good world; when human beings distorted it through sin, God remedied their distortion by recapitulating or replaying the drama of their failure and reversing it to achieve a different ending by posing the obedient Christ as antitype against a disobedient Adam as a type. To the Adam and Christ typology, Irenaeus added Eve and Mary, suggesting that humanity, male and female alike, had been summed up again and their disobedience was undone in the persons and acts of an obedient male and female.⁶¹

Irenaeus underscored the similarities between the entrance of sin into the world and its solution. Still concerning recapitulation, Irenaeus appraises, “Whilst it was still virgin, God took the dust of the earth and formed the man, the beginning of mankind. So, then the Lord, summing up afresh this man, took the same dispensation of entry into

⁵⁸ Cooper and Leithart, *The Righteousness of One*, 95.

⁵⁹ Justin Martyr “The First Apology of Justin,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 177.

⁶⁰ Martyr, *Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew*, 2017.

⁶¹ Irenaeus, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. John Behr, PPS (Crestwood, NY: Saint Valdimir’s Seminary Press, 1997), 62.

flesh, being born from the virgin by the Will and Wisdom of God.”⁶² For Irenaeus, “Adam needed to be summed up in Christ, that mortality might be swallowed up and overwhelmed by immortality; and Eve summed up in Mary, that a virgin should be a virgin’s intercessor, and by a virgin’s obedience undo and put away the disobedience of a virgin.”⁶³ For Irenaeus, even nonhuman beings took place in this process of recapitulation; “The trespass which came by the tree was undone by the tree of obedience, when, hearkening unto God, the Son of man was nailed to the tree.”⁶⁴

Although Irenaeus’ theology of recapitulation seems to incline to universalism, Irenaeus’ teaching was against both universalism and predestination. For him, “Men are possessed of free will and they are capable of making choices. Thus, it is not true that some are by nature good and others bad.”⁶⁵ He then states, “Men shall be actually raised; the world will not be annihilated but there shall be various mansions for the saints, according to the rank allotted to each individual. All things shall be subject to God the Father, and so shall he be all in all.”⁶⁶ Irenaeus followed the same approach as the Apostolic Fathers by rejecting the idea of universalism.

Origen wrote his commentary to counter the heretics such as Marcion, Valentinus, and Basilides whose teachings were perverted.⁶⁷ Marcion, Valentinus, and Basilides ignored the role of free choice by defending a doctrine of salvation by different natures. For them, “There is a nature of souls that would always be saved and never perish, and

⁶² St. Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of Apostolic Preaching* trans. Armitage Robinson (London, 1920), 68.

⁶³Ibid., 100.

⁶⁴Ibid., 101.

⁶⁵ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* Book IV, V The Complete Works of the Church Fathers: The Complete Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Collection (Toronto, 2016), 24123.

⁶⁶Ibid., 24123.

⁶⁷ Thomas P. Scheck, *Origen and the History of Justification: The Legacy of Origen’s Commentary on Romans* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 20.

another that would always perish never be saved.”⁶⁸ Against this teaching, Origen believed, “The doctrine of freedom was part of the apostolic deposit of faith as it includes the doctrine of the just judgment of God, a doctrine that summons its hearers to live a good life and by every means avoid sin.”⁶⁹

For Origen, freedom of the will always abides in rational creatures. Origen interprets Romans 5:18 as follows, “By means of Adam’s transgression certain access, as it were was given by which sin, or condemnation, spread to all humankind. Thus, in contrast, Christ opened up access to justification, through which life enters humankind. This is why Christ is the door and if anyone enters through him he will be saved.”⁷⁰ Origen acknowledges that Adam’s sin is transmitted to the rest of humanity by propagation through Adam’s loins rather than a replication of his behaviour. In the same manner, justifying righteousness is the divine presence in a believer, rather than a mere declaration. This is to say that justification can be lost through sin. In the same manner, although general salvation does not depend on works, after general salvation good works are the meritorious precondition of final salvation.⁷¹

Without ignoring the role of human accountability, Origen emulated Clement of Alexandria in defending universalism. For Origen, “if God is pure goodness divine punishments cannot be merely retributive. They must also be purgative and remedial. Therefore, the everlasting fire must not be taken literally. Although some might endure severe punishment, damnation is not final and salvation is the destiny of all.”⁷² Origen’s

⁶⁸Ibid., 20.

⁶⁹ Scheck, *Origen and the History of Justification*, 21.

⁷⁰Ibid., 44.

⁷¹Ibid., 45.

⁷² Origen, *On Prayers*, 27.15, ed. Oulton and Chadwick in *Library of Christian Classics* vol. 2 (London: SPCK, 1954), 304.

dictum states “For the end is always like the beginning: and therefore as there is one end to all things, so ought we to understand that there was one beginning, and as there is one end to many things, so there spring from one beginning many differences and varieties, which again...are recalled to one end, which is like unto the beginning.”⁷³

In general, when the pre-Augustinian Fathers wrote of salvation as being received by grace without any need for good works, they referred to general salvation or general justification. Once this initial justification has taken place, believers are expected to walk through “a transformative process of growth in grace, virtue, and good works.”⁷⁴

However, the different contexts of the Pre-Augustinian Fathers led them to have a distinct emphasis on the doctrine of justification and salvation. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa were proponents of universalism, while Justin Irenaeus and Tertullian defended the position that through Christ, justification is available to all, but human beings need to receive it, and those who voluntarily reject it will face eternal condemnation.

2.1.3 The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (A.D 354 – A.D 430)

The representative of this period will be Augustine of Hippo (A.D 354 – A.D 430). McGrath claims that all medieval theology is Augustinian, so he is the “last of the ancient writers and the forerunner of medieval theology.”⁷⁵ Concerning the doctrine of justification, early Augustine showed optimism on human freewill whereas later

⁷³Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2012), 260.

⁷⁴Beilby and Eddy, *Justification*, 14.

⁷⁵Alister E. McGrath, *Iustia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 38.

Augustine had a negative view on human freewill in the context of sin. This argument was a reaction to the “Pelagian exaggeration of the fallen humanity’s abilities.”⁷⁶

This means that the context in which Augustine lived is crucial if one wants to do justice to his doctrines. Augustine maintained, “The sinner possesses free will, but it is unable to function properly because it is taken captive; so, it does not avail for righteousness but for sin. Hence, the free will needs to be set free and aided by divine action to have the power to choose and accomplish good.”⁷⁷

Augustine defines justification as “God’s act of making a righteous person out of an ungodly person.”⁷⁸ For him, justification includes both the event and the process. “The righteousness which God bestows upon men in justification is inherent rather than imputed.”⁷⁹ It is this doctrine that enables Augustine to affirm that “everyone who is incorporated into Christ can perform a just action.”⁸⁰ Therefore, although Augustine denies merit before justification, he confirms that faith and good works are both gifts from God because when a person is justified, the Trinity enters the soul of the person and transforms that person.⁸¹

Concerning Romans 5:18, Augustine understood that “God created men as they ought to be; that is, He created humans in righteousness, the correct order of nature.”⁸² Augustine elucidates, “By choosing to ignore this ordering, humans stepped outside this state of righteousness, so that their present state may be characterised as unrighteousness.

⁷⁶Ibid., 38.

⁷⁷Augustine of Hippo, “A Treatise on the Spirit and the Letter,” in *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Peter Holmes, vol. 5, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 85.

⁷⁸Ibid., 85.

⁷⁹Ibid., 85.

⁸⁰Ibid., 85.

⁸¹Cordeiro *The Doctrine of Justification*, 26.

⁸²Ibid., 26.

Justification is therefore essentially making right, a restoration of every facet of the relationship between God and humanity.”⁸³ Thus, righteousness is not to be regarded mainly as a legal or forensic declaration because God makes the sinner morally righteous in justification.⁸⁴

Augustine then summarises, “No one is born without the intervention of carnal concupiscence, which is inherited from the first man, Adam, and no one is reborn without the intervention of spiritual grace, which is given by the second man, Christ. God wants all those to whom grace comes through the righteousness of the One unto justification of life to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”⁸⁵ He proceeds by stating that Romans 5:18 does not mean that everyone is justified in Christ, but that all who are actually justified can be justified only by Christ. In the same way, one could say that everyone enters a house through one door not because everyone enters that house but because no one enters except through that door.⁸⁶ Thus Augustine belongs to the third group in interpreting Romans 5:18 as holding that the word “all” means all in Christ. For Augustine, “Christ’s atoning work has secured the benefits of that righteousness for all who belong to him.”⁸⁷ In suggesting this idea, Augustine emphasised God’s sovereignty in a way that humans will not challenge God’s omnipotent will. For him, some are

⁸³ Gillette, *On a Collision Course or Two Sips Passing Through the Night?*, 20.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁸⁵ Augustine of Hippo, “A Treatise against Two Letters of the Pelagians,” in *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Robert Ernest Wallis, vol. 5, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 420.

⁸⁶ J. Patout Burns Jr., Constantine Newman, and Robert Louis Wilken, eds., *Romans: Interpreted by Early Christian Commentators*, trans. J. Patout Burns Jr., and Constantine Newman, The Church’s Bible (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: William B. Eedmans Publishing Company, 2012), 121-127.

⁸⁷ Augustine, “Enchiridion,” trans. J. F. Shaw, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), 97-8.

redeemed, but some are not because “God wills the elect to be saved and wills the rest to reprobation.”⁸⁸

2.2 Medieval Catholic Thought (A.D 1225 – A.D 1274)

One of the major characteristics of medieval Catholic thought is their emphasis upon “the necessity of a preparation or disposition for justification.”⁸⁹ Medieval Catholic theologians connected this preparation with the role of the sacraments.⁹⁰ Thomas Aquinas (A.D 1225 – 1274) as a representative of this period holds that “although only God can forgive sin, men are able to set in motion a series of events that culminate in the forgiveness of sins.”⁹¹ Aquinas does not mean that humans can do the required preparation or disposition to gain justification through their own power. What Aquinas seeks to emphasise is that human beings are to use what God provides to them to be justified. To put his words into the contemporary language, grace is not like offering a salary to an unemployed person. Instead, God’s grace is like offering a job to an unemployed person that will make them get a salary although the employer can do everything without the employee. The fact that human beings cannot do anything to merit employment, justification is completely dependent on God and is operative in terms of providing a job and a salary. On the other hand, human beings are to make good use of employment to get a salary. In this way, they cooperate with God, making God’s grace to be cooperative. Hence, Aquinas holds that God’s grace acts as both operative and cooperative.

⁸⁸Ibid., 97-8.

⁸⁹McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, 71

⁹⁰Ibid., 92.

⁹¹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans, the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 5 vols., rev. ed. (1948; repr., Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1981), *ST I-II.110.3.ad. 1.*

Aquinas defines justification as “a certain movement whereby God moves the human mind from the state of sin to the state of justice.”⁹² Aquinas argues that even after the fall of Adam and Eve which made all human beings to be sinful, humanity continued capable to do some good works although not meritorious. Therefore, if sinful human beings can do some good, it is reasonable that justification has to be characterised by good works because a justified person is like a healed person enabled to cooperate with God.⁹³ “Any time one cooperates with God’s grace is out of charity and therefore, it merits a reward. These rewards are only meritorious because God allows them to be so.”⁹⁴ Hence, for Aquinas, “Works are necessary and meritorious, and they are part of the process of sanctification for the individual.”⁹⁵

2.3 Protestant Reformed Commentators (16th Century)

Lutherans and Calvinists have many common aspects regarding the doctrine of justification though with some considerable differences in terms of details.⁹⁶ Their common characteristic is their basic premise that Paul was fighting against Jewish legalism. As for the nature of justification, they hold that justification is “a forensic or judicial act whereby God as Judge declares those guilty of breaking the Law to be righteous not in the sense that they are morally upright or pure, but only that the righteous demands of the Law have been satisfied in their behalf through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.”⁹⁷

⁹²Aquinas, *Summa I-II*, Q 113, A5, co.

⁹³ Lukas Steffensmeier, “Revisiting the Reformation: Aquinas and Luther on Justification” *Celebrating Scholarship and Creativity Day* (College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University, 2017), 24.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 25.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 25.

⁹⁶Beilby and Eddy, *Justification: Five Views*, 20.

⁹⁷ Cooper and Leithart, *The Righteousness of One*, 7.

Martin Luther interprets Romans 5:18 to say that Adam represented all humankind effectively and Christ represented all humankind potentially. In the same manner, “there is no carnal begetting except through Adam, so also there is no spiritual begetting except through Christ.”⁹⁸ Luther argues that the term “all” is not related to the quantity of the sinners or righteous but to the power of sin and grace. “If sin proved itself so powerful that single transgression spoiled all, then divine grace is much more powerful in a way that the one act of grace, which is Christ’s atonement can save all humans of all sins if they desire it.”⁹⁹ This is to say that one act of sin perverted all and, one act of grace can save all.¹⁰⁰

For John Calvin, Adam represented all humankind effectively and Christ represented some of humankind effectively. According to him, the benefit of Christ is not transferred to all humanity as Adam has plunged all his progeny into condemnation. For Calvin, the sin that humanity draws from Adam is derived unto them by nature and it comprehends the whole mass, while for one to come into participation of the grace of Christ, one must be grafted unto Him by faith. Therefore, to obtain the inheritance of sin, it is enough to be a human; for it is in flesh and blood. But to obtain the righteousness of Christ, one has to have faith.¹⁰¹

In summary, although there are some identifiable differences between Luther and Calvin regarding justification, their approach can be summarised as the Reformation approach. It emphasises individual salvation and it contemplates Jewish legalism

⁹⁸ Martin Luther, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1954), 81.

⁹⁹Ibid., 82.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 82.

¹⁰¹ John Calvin, *Commentary upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans* (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 142.

negatively. Usually, they consider works of the law in a general way without any division between the Torah and those ceremonial ones. Their justification definition is also identical as both accept the forensic nature of justification.¹⁰² In connection to the Romans 5:18 interpretation approach, both Luther and Calvin rejected the Universalist view. However, they differed in terms of alternative approaches. Luther goes with the second view that justification is for all human beings but they need to receive it through faith. Calvin follows the third approach that defends that justification is only for the elect.

2.4 John Wesley (A.D 1703 – A.D 1791)

Wesley understands salvation as “the entire work of God from the first dawning of grace in the soul until it is consummated in glory;”¹⁰³ this makes his approach to justification to be a mediating position between the magisterial Reformer’s doctrine and that of the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁴ In summary, Wesley’s doctrine of justification is a type of “via media” between evangelical, catholic, and reformed views.¹⁰⁵

Wesley’s doctrine of sin controls his approach to justification. For him, “Adam chose to be governed by his own will rather than the will of God although he was fully warned of the consequences of disobedience to the Creator.”¹⁰⁶ Wesley relates human spiritual death as the natural consequence of Adam’s sin. For him, “everyone descended from Adam comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin,

¹⁰²Douglas J. Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans: A Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2014), 29.

¹⁰³Jesson, *Reading Wesley in Light of the Joint Declaration on Justification*, 5.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁵Brockwell Jr., “John Wesley’s Doctrine of Justification,” 28.

¹⁰⁶John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Third Edition, vol. 6 (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 68.

entirely void of the life of God, and void of the image of God.”¹⁰⁷ Wesley proceeds by stating that the image of God in human beings is replaced by “the image of the devil, the image of the beast in sensual appetites and desires.”¹⁰⁸ This condition is called the natural state of mankind.¹⁰⁹

However, Wesley argues that God does not leave humanity in a natural state. God’s grace operates in sinful humanity through conscience which he calls the “faculty of power, implemented by God in all humanity, enabling them to perceive what is right or wrong in their own heart or life, in their tempers, thoughts, and actions. This enablement gives man a sense of morality. The conscience is a benefit of God’s prevenient grace.”¹¹⁰

Therefore, for Wesley, the freedom of the will is synonymous with a will freed by prevenient grace. This prevenient grace is not saving grace but when one responds positively with faith, one is saved. This approach to the freedom of the will enabled Wesley to recognise faith as resulting from the general grace of God in a way that those who avoid salvation are rightfully responsible for their denial, and those who accept it are not to be proud of it but humbly thankful to God who makes salvation available to the entire humanity.¹¹¹

Wesley perceives justified people as being absolved from sin by His verdict. Concerning Adam, death became universal because all human beings “were in the loins

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 68.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 68.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 68.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 512.

¹¹¹Ibid., 512.

of their first parent Adam, the common head and representative of them all.”¹¹² For Wesley, “though death since Adam generally reigns throughout the world, yet it only gains power over the individual on account of his sin. So, through one man righteousness came unto the world and life through righteousness; so life became available to all men.”¹¹³

Wesley’s concept of justification is a balanced approach of all the previous views because he found a *via media* between the theoretical antinomianism of Reformed theology which was characterized by a forensic justification or “legal fiction” and the works righteousness view of Catholicism. For instance, by emphasising the gracious enablement that makes humanity respond to God’s grace he identifies himself with the Early Fathers who avoided the doctrine of predestination. Yet, by recognising the role of God’s grace to awaken natural humanity he agrees with Augustine concerning the teaching of original sin. Furthermore, Wesley agreed with the Reformed tradition on evangelical justification where faith is the only condition. By accepting justification as “not only a soteriological but also an ecclesiological doctrine, with implications for mission and discipleship,”¹¹⁴ he goes with the catholic view. The New Perspective on Paul partially emulated this ecclesiological aspect. Finally, by assuming that the horizontal dimension of Jew versus Gentile is subordinate to the vertical dimension of human beings versus God, he accepts that Romans is about individual salvation and the

¹¹² Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2007), 67.

¹¹³ Jerry McCant, “A Wesleyan Interpretation of Romans 5- 8 in *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 16:1, (Spring 1981), 69.

¹¹⁴ Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans*, 33.

new people of God, and by so doing he agrees with the Reformation view. Again, the New Perspective on Paul followed this pattern.¹¹⁵

As for the group of interpretation of Romans 5:18, Wesley was certain that “the grace of God and the atonement effected by Christ are for everyone.”¹¹⁶ According to Wesley, “Salvation was dependent upon the fulfilling of God’s requirement of faith. Faith, therefore, is the necessary condition of justification.”¹¹⁷ The positive clarification from Wesley is that the possibility of faith is “a universal gift from God” to all human beings in a way that those who do not believe exercise their unbelief by choice. In this way, Wesley belongs to the fifth group which holds that through Christ’s atonement, the “gift came upon all men unto justification in a way that the guilt of Adam’s sin is cancelled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as men come into the world.”¹¹⁸

2.5 The Modern Interpretation of Romans 5:18 (19th Century)

Roger E. Olson underlines that modernity is generally characterised by its belief that the physical universe could be explained without reference to a creator or anything supernatural because everything in the physical is ruled by natural laws. This view brought scepticism concerning “the venerable institutions and traditions of the past.”¹¹⁹ This shift had implications for the doctrine of justification because the perceived autonomy of humanity called the sinfulness of humanity into question when moral relativism has become a prevailing strain of thought.¹²⁰

¹¹⁵Ibid., 33.

¹¹⁶John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Third Edition, vol. 12 (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 453.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 353.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 453.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 453.

¹²⁰McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, 359.

This modern view challenged Orthodox Christian claims about God as creator, sustainer, and providential governor of the universe.¹²¹ Therefore, modern theologians sought to make the Christian faith relevant to the growing modern worldview.¹²² The fundamentalists argue that “modern science, although valuable for some of its inventions, is to be resisted insofar as it conflicts with the literal, traditional interpretation of the Bible.”¹²³ The dualists posit that science and theology cannot conflict because they are about entirely different subjects. Finally the integrationists or correlationists carefully “correlate science’s material facts with revelation’s venerable truths without capitulating to every scientific hypothesis, model or theory.”¹²⁴

The group that embraces the claims of modern thought as a source and norm for doctrine critique and construction is also called liberal theology and its representatives include Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Adolf Harnack, and Walter Rauschenbusch.¹²⁵ In general, liberal theologians defend that the essence of Christianity is a universal human religious experience. Justification becomes the expression of self-consciousness at rest in contemplation. Taking into consideration the fact that religious experience is universal, justification is also universal and relative.¹²⁶

On the other hand, the neo-orthodox or the dialectical group represented by Karl Barth believed that liberal theology had succumbed to a religion of culture because it allowed religion and culture to overtake and replace the Word of God. This group is mainly recognised by its Christocentric approach to theology as the best way of avoiding

¹²¹Roger E. Olson, *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 32.

¹²²*Ibid.*, 25.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 43.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 44.

¹²⁵*Ibid.*, 128.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 128.

the anthropocentrism of liberal theology and the Biblicism of Protestant orthodox thought.¹²⁷ For Barth, revelation is the only way to know God. For him, justification cannot be found within human experience but must be sought and found in Jesus Christ. By so stressing, Barth defends that faith's power lies not in its own ability to justify but rather in the object it adores because faith alone does not validate Christ's resurrection; His bodily resurrection which is a historical event validates the Christian faith.¹²⁸

Barth argues that everyone is already justified objectively but ignorant of this reality. Thus, what is required is the revelation of this fact and the faith which recognises and apprehends it. In this way, faith produces an altered consciousness in the individual that allows the believer to begin enjoying what was already true.¹²⁹

2.6 The New Perspective on Paul (20th Century – Today)

Although the New Perspective on Paul is more considered as a critical reaction to the Orthodox Lutheran interpretation of Paul, it is important to acknowledge that the authors of this new movement were also critiquing Liberalism. In other words, although one might not find explicit differences between this group and Liberalism, the New Perspective on Paul generally opposes Liberalism by arguing that the Bible should not be interpreted from the present to the past but from the past to the present. G. Philip Arnold indicates that the New Perspective on Paul began with a re-examination of Second Temple Judaism initiated by Krister Stendahl who argued that Lutheran interpreters of Paul read their issues into "Paul's epistles and incorrectly interpreted Paul's polemic

¹²⁷Ibid., 298.

¹²⁸ Matthew Barret ed., *The Doctrine, on Which the Church Stands or Falls: Justification in Biblical, Theological, Historical and Pastoral Perspective* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2019), 636.

¹²⁹Ibid., 1221.

against Judaism in terms of their own battle with medieval Catholicism.”¹³⁰ For Stendahl, “Paul did not experience a conversion from one religion to another.”¹³¹ Rather, Paul received a call from God that parallels the prophetic calls of the Old Testament. Similar to what Isaiah experienced, “Paul experienced the glory of God and was called to a prophetic ministry as the light to the Gentiles without leaving Judaism.”¹³²

E. P. Sanders holds that the characterisation of Judaism as a religion of works was unfairly harsh because the Second Temple Judaism underscored God’s grace and forgiveness. Sanders argues that the Lutheran view of Paul was a distortion. Sanders’ concept of the model of the Jewish religion was covenantal nomism. According to this author, “Second Temple Judaism taught that a person entered the covenant by God’s gracious election but remained in the covenant through their obedience to the Law.”¹³³ Sanders ascertains that the law was evidence of God’s grace because it was not designed to be the means of entrance, but the reminder of good a relationship. In this way, “all those who are maintained in the covenant through obedience belong to the group which will be saved through God’s mercy.”¹³⁴

James D. G. Dunn underscores that when Paul wrote about “the works of the law” he was referring to “the ceremonial and nationalistic aspects of Jewish custom rather than the overall theology of Second Temple Judaism itself.”¹³⁵ According to him, the real purpose of works of the law was to clarify the religious differences between Jews and

¹³⁰ G. Philip Arnold, “Pauline Perspectives: A Summary and Critique of the New Perspective on Paul” in *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Volume 112, Number 3 (September 2015), p. 184-194.

¹³¹ Long, “A Brief Introduction to the New Perspective on Paul,” 10.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³³ Arnold, “Pauline Perspectives,” 186.

¹³⁴ William M. Greathouse and George Lyons, *Romans 9–16: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, New Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2008), 28–36.

¹³⁵ James D. G. Dunn, “The New Perspective on Paul,” in *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 183-214.

Gentiles. Dunn elucidates that “circumcision, Sabbath, food laws and laws of cleanliness were all critically important for defining who was a Jew and who was not.”¹³⁶ For this reason, Dunn perceives Paul’s doctrine of justification as focusing on the inclusion of Gentiles in the covenant community, rather than the repentance of the sinner. He then argues that “the leading of Paul’s theological thinking was the conviction that God’s purpose embraced Gentile as well as Jew, not the question of how a guilty person is reconciled with God.”¹³⁷

As for the interpretation of Romans 5:18, Dunn suggests that Paul holds together two references to Adam which include the historical figure and humankind.¹³⁸ Following Dunn’s idea one can conclude that Romans 5:18 deals with two representatives but the first representative is divided into two. The first Adam is made by one historical figure plus humankind in general. In other words, human beings are not in the middle between Adam and Christ. They are in Adam. Thus, human beings are not innocent victims of Adam’s sin. They are Adam themselves and they are responsible for their sin of disobedience.¹³⁹ Thus, human beings are to participate in the process of justification.

N. T. Wright discusses that for centuries many scholars and theologians tend to force the Book of Romans to produce vital statements on questions it was not written to answer.¹⁴⁰ He then claims that the essence of Paul’s doctrine finds its foundation in God’s covenant with Israel. This covenant is defined as “the single plan of the Creator through

¹³⁶Ibid., 183-214.

¹³⁷Ibid., 183-214.

¹³⁸ James D.G. Dunn, “Adam and Christ” in *Reading Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, Jerry L. Smuney ed. (Houston Mill Road, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 131.

¹³⁹Ibid., 131.

¹⁴⁰ N. T. Wright, “The Letter to Romans: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes* Leander E. Keck ed., (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 8.

Abraham and Israel for the world now fulfilled in the Messiah Jesus.”¹⁴¹ For Wright, first-century Judaism is characterised by its covenantal consciousness which makes it perceive the story of God as covenantal.¹⁴² In this way, first-century Judaism understood the story as “God’s covenantal relationship with Israel”¹⁴³ from Genesis to the exile and from exile to the future arrival of the Messiah who will bring the fulfilment and completion of all God’s covenantal promises.¹⁴⁴ By so stating, Wright asserts that the New Testament and incarnation of Jesus must be viewed within this story.

Wright then defines justification as “a statement about the status of the believer as being in the right for a particular legal situation. It does not matter if they are really in the right. The judge has found in their favour and they obtain that status before the court.”¹⁴⁵ Wright proceeds by stressing that justification “cannot be used to describe the whole of the salvation process because it is one metaphor of many that Paul uses to describe it.”¹⁴⁶ By so arguing, he avoids making justification equivalent to salvation.¹⁴⁷ Concerning Romans 5:18, Wright notes that Paul’s universalism in this verse is not related to the question of numerically universal salvation. His universalism means that Christ is the way for all.

¹⁴¹ N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), 172.

¹⁴² S. W. Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfilment of God’s Saving Promises* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 17-18.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

¹⁴⁵ Wright, “The Letter to Romans,” 8.

¹⁴⁶ Long, “A Brief Introduction to the New Perspective on Paul,” 13.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

Assessment of Contributions

It can be summarised that the significant characteristic of the New Perspective on Paul is its emphasis upon a covenant-nomistic view of Judaism as the foundation for Paul's definition of justification.¹⁴⁸ Their appreciation of Second Temple Judaism as founded on the covenant of grace seems to be crucial knowing that all the covenants are based on God's grace.

In terms of the classification of this group in relation to those approaches of interpretation of Romans 5:18, the New Perspective on Paul advocates belong to the fourth group which holds that "all" in Romans 5:18 means Jews and Gentiles as recipients of justification by faith in Christ. Their emphasis on the relational aspect of justification makes them related to Wesley's approach although, different from Wesley, they diminish the forensic aspect of justification as they emphasise the role of one's membership of the covenantal family more than an individual's status before God. Wesley did not diminish the forensic aspect of justification. For Wesley, it was one of many metaphors to describe justification.¹⁴⁹

2.7 Knowledge Gap

This review looked at a brief overview of the doctrine of justification. It became clear that a significant debate related to the nature, necessity, and scope of justification took place throughout history. Regarding the nature of justification, Augustine's approach which is adopted by the Catholic Church holds that justification is both an event and a process that includes sanctification while the Protestant view holds that justification

¹⁴⁸ Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans*, 29.

¹⁴⁹ Philip Eveson, "Interpreting Justification Today" *Foundations* 27 (Autumn 1991): 12-18.

is forensic and it is not a process but an event. Concerning works, there are various interpretations related to their relationship with justification. Almost all Protestant theologians recognise that good works do not precede general justification. However, good works follow general justification as benefits or fruits of it, and they are conditional of final justification. The necessity of justification is based on the universal problem of sin. The scope of justification makes Universalists to be distinct from other theologians as they interpret general justification as synonymous with universal salvation. Wesley connects the general justification with prevenient grace as the ground on which the Holy God communicates with sinful humanity. Liberal theologians seek to make the doctrine attractive to their audience and in many cases, they sacrifice its core meaning. The New Perspective on Paul follow Wesley in emphasising the covenantal nature of justification while the Protestant group underlines the individual status before God. The Universalist approach to justification forces other scholars to avoid the universal terms found in Romans 5:18 as referring to all the descendants of Adam and Eve. Although the Universalist approach does not align with the Biblical teaching of final salvation, avoiding the universal terms of justification in Romans 5:18 is not a solution. This study will fill a gap by discovering the meaning of the universal terms related to both condemnation and justification in Romans 5:18 without falling into the extreme of universalism.

2.8 Formulation of Desiderata

Although it is not common, a close reading of Romans 5:18 in connection with the entire canon reveals that there is a dimension of justification that seems to be less

explored. There might be a dimension of justification that seems to be beyond individual faith. This dimension seems to be related but not synonymous with final salvation. Paul wrote that God justifies the wicked through faith. The common theological understanding is that those who are wicked are in that condition due to the lack of faith even though they are justified through faith. Do the wicked have faith? If they do, why are they still wicked? If they do not have faith, how do they accept Jesus for salvation? The universal terms in Romans 5:18 might bring a possible answer to these questions. This study aims to explore the universal dimension of justification in connection with the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace.

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONTEXT OF ROMANS

3.1 Introduction

Epistles are occasional documents because they were first written in the context of the author and the original recipients.¹⁵⁰ Hence, before one applies their message to the contemporary audience, one needs to “form a tentative but informative reconstruction of the situation to which the author is writing.”¹⁵¹ To this end, this chapter brings the historical and literary context of the Book of Romans. In particular, it discusses the general background of Romans, in terms of the author, date of writing, the audience, occasion, and purpose. It also deals with the literary context focusing on the structure, argument, and flow of the letter as a way of establishing the relationship between Romans 5:18 and the entire book.

3.2 Historical Context of Romans

The nature of Scripture demands that “the exegete has some skills in investigating the historical background of New Testament texts.”¹⁵² Therefore, “the New Testament does not come in the form of timeless maxims because every text was written in a given first century time and space framework.”¹⁵³ The fact that the New Testament texts were written to a specific audience who had concrete concerns and problems, invites the historical-critical method to grasp their immediate message.¹⁵⁴ So, to understand the message of Romans, one has to be aware of the circumstances that took place as the

¹⁵⁰ Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Practical Approach to Bible Study in an Easy to Understand Style* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2014), 60

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 60

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 60

¹⁵³ Fee, *New Testament Exegesis*, 114.

¹⁵⁴ Karl P. Donfried, *The Romans Debate* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977), xi.

causes of that undertaking. Furthermore, the relationship between the sender and recipients is also crucial to prepare the researcher to understand the text because it prevents him from forcing the Scripture to mean whatever the researcher wants it to mean.¹⁵⁵

3.2.1 Authorship

Romans 1:1 reveals that the author of the Book is “Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus.” The internal pieces of evidence such as the nature of thought, method of argument, and style have characteristics of Paul. Moreover, the external evidence including “the testimony of early Fathers as Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Ignatius, and Irenaeus recognise Paul as the author of Romans.”¹⁵⁶ In addition to the early Fathers, Marcion whose canon was edited to suit his heretical theology recognises Romans as belonging to Paul.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, although three of the ancient heretical sects such as the Ebionites, the Encratites, and the Cerinthians doubted the inspiration of Romans, they did not deny that it was written by the apostle Paul.¹⁵⁸ Finally, Renaissance Humanists, as well as modern critical scholars accept Paul’s authorship of Romans.¹⁵⁹

Although Paul’s authorship of Romans has been accepted with great uniformity, some scholars tend to argue against it. Evanson and Bruno Bauer argue, “Luke in the

¹⁵⁵Dustin W. Ellington “The Promise of Attending to Literary Context for Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics in Africa” *ActaTheologica* 2021 Supp. 32(8): 111-131.

¹⁵⁶H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *The Pulpit Commentary: Romans*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wanalls Company, 1909), i.

¹⁵⁷ William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 12–13, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953–2001), 5.

¹⁵⁸Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Romans*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), vii.

¹⁵⁹Richard N. Longenecker, *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul’s Most Famous Letter* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2011), 4.

book of Acts does not mention the establishment of a church in Rome which means that Paul could not have written a letter to the Romans.”¹⁶⁰ In addition to this argument, they claim that “Paul could not have known by name so many people at a church he had never visited.”¹⁶¹ With this later argument, they conclude that chapter sixteen of Romans was not originally part of the letter.¹⁶²

To counter these arguments against Paul’s authorship of Romans, one needs to recognise that the book of Acts is historical and the author was not forced to narrate everything related to Rome. The Book of Acts indicates Jerusalem as the source of Roman Christianity. Because of his interest in Paul, Luke chooses to describe how the church developed to the West from Antioch rather than Jerusalem.¹⁶³ Secondly, concerning the persons mentioned in chapter 16, Dunn notes that “Paul had a number of personal contacts in Rome many of them were travelling from Rome by way of Corinth. This interchange among cities enabled Paul to be acquainted with Roman believers.”¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the numerous greetings in Romans 16 were “necessary to a relatively unfamiliar community like Rome where the acknowledgement of people known by Paul would be an implicit recommendation because these people were well known among the Roman Christians while Paul was not.”¹⁶⁵ Romans 16:22 shows that Paul used a scribe named Tertius to write the letter.

¹⁶⁰Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *Exposition of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, 5.

¹⁶¹ Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator: Romans*, vol. 1 (New York; Chicago; Toronto; London; Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), v–vi.

¹⁶²Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 5.

¹⁶³ Raymond E. Brown, “Not Jewish Christianity and Gentile Christianity, but Types of Jewish/Gentile Christianity,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45 (1983), 76.

¹⁶⁴James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), xlv.

¹⁶⁵ Raymond E. Brown and John P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 107.

3.2.2 Audience

Internal evidence indicates that the letter was written to reach “all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.” (Romans 1:7, NIV). Paul was addressing his letter to Christian Gentiles when he mentioned that he wanted to have a harvest among them as he did among other Gentiles.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, Romans 2:17 indicates that he is addressing the Jews. This makes one assume that the church in the Roman community consisted of both Gentiles and Jews.¹⁶⁷

The Roman historian Suetonius reports that “Emperor Claudius expelled from Rome Jews who were making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus.”¹⁶⁸ Although there is a considerable debate on the identification of Chrestus, many historians infer that this is a reference to “agitation in Roman synagogues concerning Jesus as the Christ, and they relate this expulsion with the one mentioned in Acts 18:2 which took place around 49 A.D.”¹⁶⁹ After Claudius’ death in 54 A.D, the banned leaders began moving back to Rome but they found that they were no longer welcome as leaders in the congregations they had found. This might explain the reason for the majority of converts being Gentiles by the time of Paul’s letter.¹⁷⁰

The returning Christian Jews had to struggle with their self-identity both internally and externally. Internally, “they had to struggle with the question of whether they were primarily Jewish or whether they were primarily Christian which became

¹⁶⁶ Romans 1:7,13.

¹⁶⁷ John R. Richardson and Knox Chamblin, *Proclaiming the New Testament: The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids 6, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1963),7.

¹⁶⁸ Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp, *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 59-60.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 59-60.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 58.

increasingly like a Gentile aspect to them.”¹⁷¹ Externally, the returning non-Christian Jews wanted to keep their distance from the Christian Jews as a way of avoiding new conflicts with the ruling Romans. These circumstances brought problems of unity between the Jews and the Gentiles.¹⁷² Although these inferences are subject to refutation, they provide the framework for interpreting the entire letter.¹⁷³

3.2.3 Occasion and Purpose

Concerning the objectives of writing, Paul knew that the journey to Jerusalem was challenging. In this way, he wrote to mobilize the prayers of the Roman church before he embarked on this difficult mission according to Romans 15:30. This request can be considered didactic in terms of the need for unity because what made Paul’s journey to Jerusalem challenging was his connection with the Gentiles. In other words, Paul is showing the church in Rome that by serving among the Gentiles, he was not against the Jews. In the same manner that prayers are needed to join Corinth with Jerusalem in Christ, the Gentiles and the Jews in Rome need prayers to live in harmony as Christians. This is clear as Paul criticised the Jewish Christians for being tied to the law and he criticised the Gentile Christians for scorning everything Jewish.¹⁷⁴ Paul then indicates that the solidarity of Jews and Gentiles in sin and their inclusive participation in salvation made them a new community in Christ. This purpose can be considered pastoral.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹James C. Walters, *Ethic Issues in Paul’s Letter to the Romans: Changing Self-Definitions in Earliest Romans Christianity* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1993), 57.

¹⁷²Ibid., 60.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 60.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 60.

¹⁷⁵ Will N. Timmins, “Why Paul Wrote Romans: Putting the Pieces Together” *Themelios* 43.3 (2018): 395.

Moreover, Paul wrote to the Church in Rome to make them ready for his visit to the capital of the Empire as his first preparatory step for the mission in Spain. Robert Jewett adds that Paul wrote to persuade the Roman Christian community to join him in a cooperative mission to evangelize Spain.¹⁷⁶ This purpose is missionary because Paul is showing his plan of furthering the work of missions among the Gentiles. After completing his missionary work in the north-eastern area of the Mediterranean, Paul sees the next step as focusing on the north-western region of the Mediterranean.¹⁷⁷ This invitation was not limited to getting an offering as it has some theological implications. Romans 1:14 indicates that in addition to the division between Jews and Gentiles, there was another possible division among the Gentiles treated in this verse as Greeks and Barbarians. There are various interpretations related to this division but almost all of them agree that the comparison between Greek and Barbarian carries positive and negative connotations to Paul's Roman readers.¹⁷⁸ In other words, in the same manner, that the Jews were used as a channel for the gospel to the Greeks, the Greeks are to be ready to be a channel for the gospel to Barbarians. Paul compares the relationship between Greeks and Barbarians with the relationship between Jews and Gentiles to encourage Roman Greeks to embrace Paul's mission to Spanish Barbarians.¹⁷⁹ In summary, the unity between Jews and Greeks in Rome will be the condition for Roman Greeks to be conscious of the need of overcoming their Roman cultural pride and being

¹⁷⁶ Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 75 – 79.

¹⁷⁷ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, lv.

¹⁷⁸ Jackson Wu, "Paul Writes to the Greek first and also to the Jew: the Missiological Significance of Understanding Paul's Purpose in Romans" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56/4 (2013), 771.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 773.

ready to submit to the missionary God of the Jews whose commission is to go and share the gospel with Barbarians in Spain.¹⁸⁰

Finally, Paul wrote his letter to strengthen the Roman church through the gospel.¹⁸¹ This purpose is apologetic because Paul wanted to help the Christians in Rome understand what he was proclaiming in his mission to Gentiles.¹⁸² In Romans 3:8 Paul reveals that there was opposition caused by misunderstandings of his gospel. In this manner, Paul had to make self-defence against those misunderstandings by setting out a complete statement related to his understanding of the gospel to gain acceptance among Roman Christians.¹⁸³

3.3 Literary Context of the Book

Each book of the Bible forms a basic literary unit. For this reason, “interpretation of passages assumes familiarity with the literary context which includes the verses that immediately precede or follow as well as the entire book.”¹⁸⁴ In other words, it is not enough to understand the meaning of certain words without taking into consideration their relationship with the rest of the book. Moreover, Biblical books make a harmonious unity in a way that the consideration of the entire canon is crucial for interpretation.

Although Biblical books make a harmonious unity, not all Biblical books use the same genre. The New Testament is made of biography related to the Gospels, history related to the book of Acts, letters related to the Epistles, and Apocalyptic related to the

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 773.

¹⁸¹ William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: The Letter to the Romans*, Revised Edition (William Barclay: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975), 3.

¹⁸²Longenecker, *Introducing Romans*, 159.

¹⁸³ Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, lvi.

¹⁸⁴ David R. Bauer and Robert A. Traina, *Inductive Bible Study: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2012), 87.

book of Revelation.¹⁸⁵ In the Gospels and Acts the writers narrate events that happened following the standard of history writing of their time. Normally the accounts are selected and arranged based on the author's theological purposes.¹⁸⁶ Although the book of Revelation is mainly apocalyptic, it also combines elements of epistles as it contains seven letters to seven churches. In addition to letters, Revelation contains prophetic features as it referred to real future events to occur.¹⁸⁷ As apocalyptic literature, the book of Revelations portrays some events symbolically, requiring discernment from the interpreter about what its original readers could be expected to have understood.¹⁸⁸

Epistles are all occasional literature because they were written in response to specific occasions.¹⁸⁹ For this reason, although inspired by the Holy Spirit and thus belonging to all time, Epistles are not to be considered theological treatises before analysing their context because the theology they contain is directed toward a particular need.¹⁹⁰ Epistles in the ancient Mediterranean world were subdivided into several special forms. As for Romans, Stirewalt describes Romans as “letter-essay because it dealt with specific topics to specific audiences but others besides the recipients were intended to read and get instruction.”¹⁹¹ Jewett labels it as “an ambassadorial letter because it presents Paul’s credentials for his planned missionary journey to Spain,”¹⁹² while Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier classify it as a “purpose-oriented letter because understanding the purposes of the letter seems to be more important than its specific

¹⁸⁵Graig L. Blomberg, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 112.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁸⁹ Fee and Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 60.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹¹ Derek R. Brown and E. Tod Twist, *Romans*, ed. Douglas Mangum, Lexham Research Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), 10.

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, 10.

genre.”¹⁹³ While Romans belongs to the general genre of a letter, Paul employs several subgenres within Romans. The most notable is the diatribe which consists of questions and answers to a hypothetical opponent.¹⁹⁴

3.3.1 Structure of Romans

Romans as an epistle, “contains each of the three major elements of an ancient letter with an opening, the body, and the closing.”¹⁹⁵ What makes the divisions differ is the extent of the body. Therefore, there are several ways of dividing the Book of Romans from three parts up to tenparts. These different ways of dividing the Book of Romans depend on what is considered the main theme of the book of Romans. For instance, some commentators see the “gospel” to be the main theme of Romans. In this context, in chapters 1 – 8, Paul deals with how the gospel saves the sinner; in chapters 9 – 11, he explains how the gospel relates to Israel); finally, in chapters 12 - 16 he indicates how the gospel bears on conduct. The gospel has the power to save sinners. In this way, justification becomes intrinsically connected to the gospel. When justification is regarded as the main theme of Romans, chapters 1- 4 belong together, 1 - 3 dealing with how God justifies, Jews and Gentiles, with the conclusion in 3: 12 which states that all have sinned, both Jews and Gentiles, giving the example of Abraham in chapter 4. Then chapter 5 - 8 is the main thesis on the doctrine of Justification with the parenthesis of chapters 9-11 on God's dealing with Jews in terms of justification with the concluding section in chapters 12 -16 on practical application or outworking of justification in practical Christian living.

¹⁹³ Kenneth Boa and William Kruidenier, *Romans*, vol. 6, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, NT: Broadman& Holman Publishers, 2000), 11.

¹⁹⁴ Brown and Twist, *Romans*, 10.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

The division into four parts seems to follow the natural flow of thought taking into consideration the fact that ancient epistles were normally divided into three parts which are introduction, body, and conclusion. In this specific book, the body is subdivided into two parts. In this way, the structure is the introduction (1:1-17), doctrinal instruction (1:18-11:36), practical application of God's righteousness (12:1-15:13), and conclusion (15:14-16:27).

In Romans 1:1-17, the author provides the introduction that includes salutation and the definition of the gospel. In this portion, Paul begins his thanksgiving and introduces the purpose he intends to achieve in the body of the letter. In this portion, Paul reveals his plans to visit Rome but does not provide details until the concluding part of the letter. Paul defines the gospel as "the message of God's righteousness which is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first the Jew, then the Gentile" (Rom. 1:16, NIV). In this manner, Paul indicates Jesus Christ as the centre of God's promise through His prophets in the Old Testament. He then concludes this portion by quoting Habakkuk 2:4 as evidence that righteousness is by faith from first to last. The fact that Habakkuk belongs to the Old Testament indicates that one should not ignore the influence of the entire Bible when dealing with any passage. Leander E. Keck argues, "In Romans, Paul states the gospel in such a way that its scope reaches from Eden to the end, from the fall to the redemption of the world."¹⁹⁶

From Romans 1:18 to 11:36 the author brings doctrinal instructions that include the universal need for the gospel, God's universal provision, and the place of Israel in God's plan of salvation. In these chapters, Paul indicates that God is faithful in providing

¹⁹⁶Leander E. Keck, "What Makes Romans Tick?" in *Pauline Theology*, Vol. 3: Romans, Ed. David M. Hay and E. Elizabeth Johnson, Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series, 23 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), pp. 3-29.

His revelation to humanity through creation but human beings rejected their Creator. Paul underlines that the gospel is universally needed because all human beings are hopeless slaves of sin. Sin might take the form of Gentile idolatry and depravity or the more sophisticated self-righteousness illusion of Jews.¹⁹⁷

In the last part of chapter one, Paul explains that Adam was not the only one who disobeyed God's revelation as throughout history human beings do exactly that. The second chapter indicates that this Adamic problem of disobedience is inclusive even for those who received the law. The law just serves like a thermometer to indicate that the body's temperature is high but it does not help to reduce the heat. Chapters three and four indicate that all have sinned, and God provided the solution for all which is a sacrifice of atonement through faith in Christ's blood. Paul then declares that the new thing God has done in Christ, offering justification by faith is consistent with Old Testament teaching in which Abraham is a prototype of all who are put right with God based on their faith in His promises.¹⁹⁸

Chapters five to eight show that justification by faith in Christ brings peace with God and enables believers to live right through the sanctifying gift of the Holy Spirit. By so indicating, Paul urges believers to live out of the resources of grace under the lordship of Christ. Paul concludes chapter eight with the confident assertion that "nothing will separate us from the love of God that is in Christ" (Rom. 8:39, NIV).¹⁹⁹

In chapters nine to eleven Paul exposes the current general lost state of most of Israel. In this portion, Paul insists that ethnic descent alone was never sufficient to determine the identity of God's people because God acts with universal mercy, apart

¹⁹⁷Greathouse and Lyons, *Romans 9–16: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, 28–36.

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 29-30.

from human claims or supposed rights.²⁰⁰ Paul is confident that within God's mercy on all people, the full number of the Gentiles and all Israel will come to faith in Christ and final salvation. Paul considers this God's plan of salvation as the incomprehensible wisdom of God and he closes chapter eleven with a doxological praise to God.²⁰¹

From 12:1 to 15:13 Paul provides practical application of God's righteousness which includes Christian life as living sacrifices, and Christian duty to other Christians. Finally, from 15:14 to 16:27 is the conclusion which includes the author's purpose and travel plans, personal greetings, and exhortations and it closes with doxology. "This structure includes customary elements similar to other letters from the first-century world which contains greetings, a prayer, thanksgiving, specific content with salutations, and an end with personal greetings."²⁰²

In terms of the flow of thought or argument of this letter, there are various approaches. However, the researcher agrees with G. R. Osborne who claims that "Paul progressed from the universality of human sinfulness described in Romans 1:18-3:20 to the provision of salvation by faith in Romans 3:31-8:39." He then highlighted that God's salvation includes both Jew and Gentile in Romans 9:1-11:36 and included the practical application of living the Christian life described in Romans 12:1-15:33.²⁰³ Chapter 16 may also be considered as a practical application because greetings and commendations are results of good fellowship and love in Jesus Christ that unites the Jews and the Gentiles.

²⁰⁰Ibid., 30.

²⁰¹Ibid., 31.

²⁰² Dale Moody, *The Broadman Bible Commentary: Romans* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1970), 155.

²⁰³ G. R. Osborne, *Romans* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 24-26.

3.3.2 The Context of Romans 5

When general justification is considered the central message of the gospel, Romans 5-8 becomes the main thesis of the doctrine of justification. Romans 5 belongs to the division that discusses God's provision of salvation that is received by faith. This chapter emphasises that peace-making, reconciling, and justifying are activities of God. The whole chapter can be seen as a description of the activity of God to move humanity from the status and state of enmity, condemnation, and death, to that of peace, reconciliation, justification, and life.²⁰⁴ In this way, chapter five indicates a major transition from faith to hope that rests upon the peace with God resulting from justification and managed by the Spirit of promise.²⁰⁵ This hope enables Christian believers to rejoice in their sufferings.

Concerning peace-making, in Romans 5:1 Paul explains, "Those who are justified through faith have peace with God through Jesus Christ." Peace in this context cannot be reduced to a subjective emotional feeling because it is both the absence of conviction over unforgiven sin and the assurance that one is reconciled with God. It means that the hostilities have ceased.²⁰⁶ In addition to peace, verse 2 assures that justified people have access through Christ into the grace in which they now stand. Vic Reasoner clarifies, "From the moment Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden, human beings no longer had direct access to God's presence."²⁰⁷ He proceeds by stating, "Even after the Tabernacle was built so that God could be in the midst of His people, only the high priest

²⁰⁴Michael D. Dabson, *An Exegetical Study of Romans 5:18-19* (MThesis: Andrews University, Avondale, Australia, 1983), 50.

²⁰⁵Brendan Byre, *Romans* Vol. 6 of *Sacra Pagina*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1996), 163.

²⁰⁶Vic Reasoner, *A Fundamental Wesleyan Commentary on Romans* (Evansville: Fundamental Wesleyan Publishers, 2002), 182.

²⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 182.

entered directly into God's presence, only one time a year. But now through justification, human beings have been restored to the presence of God."²⁰⁸ Justification provides hope that does not disappoint the believers because "God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5, NIV).

After describing the believers' experience in these first five verses Paul moves into a description of God's activity for humanity in verses 6-11. Here Paul clarifies the nature of God's grace. He underlines that this grace acted in favour of humankind while humans were still enemies of God. They were ungodly, impious, and sinners. This is a manifestation of the greatness of God's love. Paul then describes what the death of Christ accomplishes. If the death of God's own Son accomplished reconciliation when humans were enemies, it means that believers will be saved on the Day of Judgment. In these verses, Paul invites attention to an understanding of the significance of Calvary before the believer's response or participation by faith. By so stating, Paul seeks to clarify that grace is for all humankind who should properly be regarded as God's enemies, but whom God chooses to regard as the object of His grace and love.²⁰⁹

Thus, in Romans 5:1-11 Paul is convinced that the resurrected and reigning Christ has already inaugurated the age of the Spirit, and with the gracious gift of the Spirit, the Old Testament promise of heart holiness, which is closely associated with peace in both Old Testament and New Testament, has become a present possibility.²¹⁰ The pericope in which Romans 5:18 is found is determinant for understanding the verse. For this reason, the section will be analysed separately.

²⁰⁸Ibid., 183.

²⁰⁹Dabson, *An Exegetical Study of Romans 5:18-19*, 52.

²¹⁰Greathouse and Lyons, *Romans 9-16: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, 28-36.

3.3.3 The Context of Romans 5:12-21

In Romans 5:12-21, justification is illustrated as the reversal of Adam's curse as the work of both Adam and Christ represented the whole race. Here Paul has moved beyond the exclusives of Judaism and sees both the universal effects of the fall and of the atonement. In other words, the gospel as the solution to the problem of sin extends to all and is not restricted to the Jews.²¹¹

Romans 5:12-21 also indicates that there is no reason for blaming other perpetrators as responsible for Adam's fall. Satan, the fallen angels, or Eve are not the major factors in Adam's fall because he had all conditions to conquer the temptation. In this way, the blame is placed squarely on Adam. Another important aspect consists in understanding the ancient Hebrew phenomenon called corporate personality which is the idea that one person's actions represent those whom he represents.²¹² Verse 17 helps one to understand God's abundant provision of grace and the gift is to be received to be justified.

Although Romans 5:12-21 furnishes the most important data in the Bible for understanding the nature and effects of Adam's sin, the focus of this paragraph is not sin. Its focus is on righteousness and life. Here Paul assumes certain things about Adam, sin, and death to make a point about Christ, righteousness, and life. In this passage, Paul is making a positive argument about the overwhelming power of Christ's work.²¹³ This observation is crucial to show that the gospel is Good News because it does not only define the problem of humanity but it also brings the solution. For this reason,

²¹¹ Reasoner, *A Fundamental Wesleyan Commentary on Romans*, 194.

²¹² C. Marvin Pate, *Romans: Teach the Text Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 122.

²¹³ Moo, *Encountering the Book of Romans*, 140.

Greathouse and Lyons underline that “while Paul refers to Adam first and then to Christ in his reflections on the fall and restoration, Romans 5:12-21 should properly be called Christ and Adam because Adam is only a type of the one who was to come.”²¹⁴ This passage reveals that the new age has dawned in Christ Jesus, and all who are in Him have been taken out of the old order of Adam, where sin reigns in death, and transferred to the new order of Christ where grace reigns in righteousness to eternal life.²¹⁵

Taking into consideration the immediate context, verse 18 may indicate that as by the offence of one judgment came upon all to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the gift came upon all who receive the gift.²¹⁶ This point means that the universal providence of justification does not mean universal salvation. John Fletcher clarifies that human efforts do not invalidate the gift of justification by illustrating that “when farmers respect the laws established by the God of providence, their obedience to the laws does not invalidate the fact that harvest is the free unmerited gift of God.”²¹⁷ Fletcher’s illustration helps one to make a balance between the universality of God’s grace and the need of receiving that grace for one’s salvation. It is crucial to note that even the universal capacity of receiving God’s grace is also from God in the same manner that God’s grace is not limited to providing food; it includes the human capacity of gathering in the harvest what God has provided, as well as the capacity and joy of eating through the digestive system in their bodies.

²¹⁴Greathouse and Lyons, *Romans 9–16: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition*, 28–36.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*, 28-36.

²¹⁶ Cornelius R. Stam, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (Germantown: Berean Bible Society, 1984), 116.

²¹⁷ Frazier, *True Christianity*, 45.

Conclusion

This chapter established the relationship between Romans 5:18 and the message of the book to contribute to the accuracy of the interpretation of this verse. The Chapter revealed that the church in Rome was composed of both the Jews and Gentiles. The structure of the book demonstrates a logical flow of thought as it starts from the problem of sin and its solution, and it ends with the benefits of that solution which are manifested in the way of living. This is to say that although good works are not before initial salvation, they are the evidence, results, and even conditions of final salvation. Concerning God's plan of salvation, the chapter showed that general justification on God's part took place while humans were still sinners. It also indicated that God's plan of salvation is extended to all humanity, Jews, and Gentiles. Finally, the chapter showed that faith does not create salvation. It is a way of receiving God's salvation already available to all through Christ Jesus. Finally, the chapter indicated that Christian hope for the future is based on God's already proven love for all in the past. Christian believers can trust God's promises because He has already provided His Old Testament promises through the gracious gift of the Spirit.²¹⁸

In describing this relationship some questions are raised. Does justification in Romans 5:18 mean that all human beings are justified although not all will be saved? Is it possible for humans to be generally justified and still be condemned? Is justification not an aspect of God's salvation? These and many questions are beyond this chapter and the researcher hopes that an exegetical study of Romans 5:18 will establish the author's intended meaning of this verse. This will be done in the next chapter.

²¹⁸Ibid., 45.

CHAPTER 4: EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 5:18

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to determine the meaning of Romans 5:18. To this end, the chapter will analyse the target verse to determine what Paul was conveying to his original audience. All Greek words that make the verse will be analysed for exegetical purposes. Various commentaries will be consulted for this task as well as different authors in the examination and discussion of the verse. This task will be done with a proper recognition that a mere study of root meanings and etymology of words is not sufficient to discover the real meaning of words if one ignores the specific context in which the words occur. Hence, the above mentioned task of this chapter will include a careful study of the grammatical construction of Romans 5:18 in its context.²¹⁹

In the Greek New Testament, Romans 5:18 reads as follows: Ἔρα οὖν ὡς δι' ἐνὸς παραπτώματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατάκριμα, οὕτως καὶ δι' ἐνὸς δικαιώματος εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς δικαίωσιν ζωῆς·

The exegesis of this verse will include a significant consideration of its clauses and phrases together with references in the context that has immediate relevance.²²⁰ Taking into consideration the role of each word in the sentence, Greek words will be analysed in accordance with their role or task in the passage. For this reason, the verse will be divided into four portions of study. Before this division, it is important to note that Romans 5:18 indicates a direct dependence on its immediate context. For instance, chapter five of Romans brings five words that are all related to the root word δίκη which

²¹⁹James L. Boyer, "First Class Conditions: What do They Mean? *Grace Theological Journal* 2.1 (1981): 75-114.

²²⁰Dabson, *An Exegetical Study of Romans 5:18-19*, 65.

means justice.²²¹ The first word is δικαίω in vv 1 and 9 and it is translated as “justified” (in NIV and NASB).²²² The second word is δικαίωσις in verse 18 and is translated as “justification” (in NIV and NASB). The same verse brings the third word δικαίωμα translated as “righteousness.” The same word δικαίωμα appears in verse 16 and it is translated as “justification” (in NIV and NASB). The fourth word δίκαιος is found in verses 7 and 19 and it is translated as “righteous” (in NIV and NASB). The fifth word δικαιοσύνη in verses 17 and 21 is rendered righteousness (in NIV and NASB).²²³

4.2 One Act of Disobedience Brings a Universal Fall

The first word in Romans 5:18 is ἄρα which is a particle denoting transition from one thing to another by natural sequence. It means, *therefore, then, or consequently*, and it serves to introduce a transition. In classical Greek ἄρα is a postpositive conjunction that is never put at the beginning of a clause. However, ἄρα οὖν is a feature of Paul’s reasoning.²²⁴

In this use, ἄρα is sometimes strengthened by the addition of other particles, as οὖν, which means *so then or wherefore*. In this way, the two words ἄρα οὖν mean *so then, or consequently*, because οὖν is also an inferential or sequence marker and it never appears at the beginning of the sentence. With ἄρα οὖν Paul resumes the parallel,

²²¹ Reasoner, *A Fundamental Wesleyan Commentary on Romans*, 181.

²²² *Ibid.*, 181.

²²³ The Researcher’s default Bible translation is the *New International Version* (Cape Town: the Bible Society of South Africa, third ed., 1985) complemented by the *New American Standard Bible* (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation, 1977). The Greek text comes from the *Greek New Testament Fourth Revised Edition* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993)..

²²⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, vol. 38A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1988), 282–283.

summing up all the previously stated points of resemblance and difference. In this way, this phrase is translated as “*In consequence of all this, it follows that.*”²²⁵

In Greek, phrases in clauses marked by ὡς which is a conjunction and can be used as a comparative particle and conjunction *as, like*, correlatively, must be supplied with verbs such as “became”, “came”, or “led to.”²²⁶ Therefore, with ἄρα οὖν ὡς Paul is summarising his basic argument in this paragraph that starts in verse 12 which is parenthetically remarked on in verses 13 to 14 and elaborated on in verses 15 to 17.²²⁷ For Murray, the expression ἄρα οὖν ὡς makes verse 18 to be a summation of verses 12 to 17. The parallel between Adam and Christ is now stated in the clearest terms and the comparison is completed in terms of positive construction because the syntactical construction which had begun in verse 12 had been broken off by the insertion of a parenthesis that forms verses 13 to 17 and it finds its completion in verse 18.²²⁸ Jerry McCant argues, “In this passage justification is considered an accomplished fact and Paul is now prepared to consider its implications and consequences.”²²⁹

When διὰ is followed by a word in the accusative case, it means *because of, for the sake of, or therefore*. But when it is followed by a word in genitive case it means *through or by means of*. Hence, in this verse, διὰ is used as a primary preposition denoting the channel of an act because the following word, ἐνὸς is an adjective genitive

²²⁵Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible, New Testament* (Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1921).

²²⁶Robert Jewett and Roy David Kotansky, *Romans: A Commentary*, 385–386.

²²⁷Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 340–344.

²²⁸John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, *The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 199–203.

²²⁹Jerry McCant, “A Wesleyan Interpretation of Romans 5-8” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 16.1 (Spring 1981), pp. 68-84.

singular and it means *one*. The following word παραπτώματος is a noun genitive, neuter, singular from παράπτωμα.²³⁰ This noun originated from the verb πίπτω which denotes an “unintentional fall like that of buildings which collapse through earthquakes or structural defects.”²³¹ In some cases, Paul uses παράπτωμα as equivalent to ἀμάρτημα.²³² Although παράπτωμα might be translated as transgression, its more consistent translation is different from παράβασις which implies transgression of a commandment. In the context of Romans παράπτωμα, refers directly to the disconnection of humanity towards God caused by Adam’s παράβασις.²³³ In other words, Adam’s παράβασις caused him and his descendants παράπτωμα which makes them commit παράβασις. Thus, δι’ ἐνὸς παραπτώματος can be translated as “through the fall of one.”²³⁴

William E. Wenstrom defends, “The cardinal number ἐνὸς refers to the first man, Adam, and does not refer to the first sin of Adam when he disobeyed the Lord’s prohibition to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”²³⁵ Lange agrees with Wenstrom by arguing that the presence of the preposition διὰ employed with the genitive form of the cardinal number ἐνὸς indicates that ἐνὸς is referring to Adam and not his transgression. According to Wenstrom, “If Adam’s transgression as the means of condemnation were being emphasised here, Paul would use the preposition ‘ἐκ’ with the numeral ‘ἐνὸς.’ Therefore, this ἐνὸς is to be taken as masculine rather than neuter.”²³⁶

²³⁰Frederick William Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 88, 112, 269.

²³¹Wilhelm Michaelis, “Πίπτω, Πτώμα, Πτώσις, Ἐκπίπτω, Καταπίπτω, Παραπίπτω, Παράπτωμα, Περιπίπτω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 162–173.

²³²Ibid., 163.

²³³Ibid., 165.

²³⁴Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Romans*, 185–186

²³⁵William E. Wenstrom, *Romans 5:17-18 – The Contrast Between The Extent of Adam’s Disobedience and Christ’s Obedience* (Norwood, Massachusetts: Wenstrom.org, 2008), 50, 51.

²³⁶Ibid., 50, 51.

Although Wenstrom and Lange all defend that ἐνὸς in this verse refers to one man rather than one act, they differ in terms of the grammatical gender of this word. Lange stresses, “It is better to translate this phrase as through one fall, considering ἐνὸς as neuter rather than masculine.”²³⁷ Lange then clarifies that in addition to Wenstrom, some Greek writers as well as Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Bengel, Fritzsche, Philip, and Hodge have also taken ἐνὸς as masculine.²³⁸

For those who defend ἐνὸς as referring to man, they hold that the fall of one man came ideally and dynamically as a fall upon all humanity unto condemnation. This is to say that by the common fall, all human beings would without redemption, be subject to condemnation.²³⁹ On the other hand, those who defend ἐνὸς as one trespass argue that Paul has in his view the one actual sin of Genesis 3. Leon Morris reveals that Paul is referring to the one act of the one man in both cases, and he moves easily from the one act to the one man and vice versa.²⁴⁰ It is important to note that Eve was the first to eat the forbidden fruit and she gave it to Adam. Thus, the sinful act was just one done by more than one person. Concerning one man, Barclay stresses that there are two basic Jewish ideas in the light of Adam and humanity. Firstly in this verse, there is the idea of solidarity. The Jew never really thought of himself as an individual but always thought of as part of a clan, a family, or a nation apart from which he had no real existence.²⁴¹ In the same manner, the traditional African worldview of “one is because others are” can easily follow Paul’s explanation because “Africans share the belief of the Jewish community

²³⁷Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Romans*, 185-186.

²³⁷Ibid., 185–186.

²³⁹Ibid., 185-186.

²⁴⁰Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 238–239.

²⁴¹Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series*, 79.

that the action of one person can affect many others.”²⁴² For instance, “In Africa, a whole clan may need to be cleansed because a senior member of the community has broken a taboo. Those who refuse to participate are believed to be at risk from the angered spirits.”²⁴³ It is important to note that Christian believers refuse to participate in the cleansing rites because those rites involve idolatry. However, the Christians’ refusal to participate “is rooted in their security in the forgiveness of God rather than in any denial of the fact that an individual act affects many others.”²⁴⁴ That is how Paul sees Adam, he was more than an individual; he was one of humankind, and because he was one of humankind, his sin was the sin of all humanity.²⁴⁵ Although Adam is one of humankind, he is to be acknowledged as a historical person who committed a historical individual act of disobedience. In the same manner, although the atoning act of Christ brings universal and eternal effects, it was done by Jesus Christ as a real, historical individual who represents humanity as a whole but also lived in this world. He is alive because He conquered death in history.

William Greathouse notes that there is a distinction between Adam’s sin and the sin which entered into the world; “Adam sinned by missing the mark. His sin was an act of disobedience or transgression of the revealed will of God. It was also an offence against the divine sovereignty and love.”²⁴⁶ Greathouse uses Wesley’s words to affirm

²⁴²TokumbohAdeyemo, ed., *Africa Bible Commentary: A One Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars* (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2006), 1360.

²⁴³Ibid., 1360.

²⁴⁴Ibid., 1360.

²⁴⁵Barclay, *Romans*, 79.

²⁴⁶William Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Exposition Vol. 6: Romans* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975), 94.

that “Adam was created looking directly to God as his last end; but falling into sin, he fell off from God, and turned into himself.”²⁴⁷

The result of Adam’s παράπτωμα was the entrance of sin into the world. This is the παράπτωμα principle or the principle of revolt issuing in many transgressions.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, by Adam’s sin, death also entered and passed upon all humankind. In summary, because of the solidarity of the race, in Adam all human beings sinned. In this primal sin, the human race cut itself off from God. This alienation resulted in the corruption of indwelling sin. This “sin now rules in human lives and, taking advantage of God’s commandment, deceives them into disobeying God and so kills them spiritually. No human power can extricate humanity from their solidarity of sin, guilt, and death.”²⁴⁹

Wright notes that the immediate audience did not have any problem understanding Paul. He argues, “In Jewish writings such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Adam’s glory would be inherited by the true Israel.”²⁵⁰ Following Wright’s position one can conclude that Paul’s recipients did not need any explanation concerning their relationship with Adam; the problem was for them to see Adam positively as their model.²⁵¹ This is to say that concerning the original recipients of Paul’s epistle to Romans, Paul did not need any new doctrine of the mode of inheritance of nature from Adam to the entire humanity. Instead, their need was to understand which nature they inherit from Adam. It is for this reason that Christ is presented as the second Adam who can undo the problem caused by the first Adam.

²⁴⁷Ibid., 94.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 95.

²⁴⁹Ibid., 96.

²⁵⁰T. N. Wright, “A New Tübingen School? Ernst Käsemann and His Commentary on Romans,” *Themelios* 7, no. 3 (1982): 13-16

²⁵¹Ibid., 13–16.

Therefore, the phrase ἄρα οὐκ ὄντως δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος indicates that Romans 5:18 does not seek to explain how Adam's sin spread to the entire world. The verse seeks to reveal the universal problem for humanity brought by their common parent. By relating the entire humanity to Adam, Paul seeks to demonstrate that the apparent differences among tribes, nations, or religious groups are just superficial because all people share the same parent. Their one and common parent is remembered not just for bringing them into this world, but for bringing *παραπτώματος*, that is, the fall, which denotes a broken relationship with God.

4.3 The Universal Fall Brings the Universal Condemnation

The Greek word εἰς is a preposition translated as *into*, or *in*; πάντας is an adjective accusative, plural, from πᾶς, meaning *all*, in singular *whole*; ἀνθρώπους is a noun accusative, plural, masculine from ἄνθρωπος meaning '*human being*', used generically, male or female, and as individuals; and κατάκριμα is a noun, accusative, singular, neuter meaning *punishment, condemnation, or a condemning sentence*.²⁵² It means to judge someone as definitely guilty and thus subject to punishment. Furthermore, "it is a legal technical term for the result of judging, including both the sentence and the execution of the sentence followed by a suggested punishment because the suffix -μα makes it the result of judgment."²⁵³

In Romans, κατάκριμα results for all humanity from Adam's fall, but it is not an irreversible, eternal fact because Christ has already begun the process of its reversal.²⁵⁴ In

²⁵² Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*,

²⁵³ Wenstrom, *Romans 5:17-18*, 52.

²⁵⁴ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004), 288–290.

Romans 5:16 the noun κρίμα denotes the judicial decision or verdict handed down by a judge, while the noun κατάκριμα refers to the penalty resulting from the verdict. In this way, κατάκριμα refers to the penalty of real spiritual death, which results in physical death and then eventually eternal condemnation.²⁵⁵ In some cases, κατάκριμα can signify a burden ensuing from a judicial pronouncement such as servitude. In this manner, κατάκριμα can indicate a sum of money to be paid as a fine for damages or permanent imprisonment for a debt that the convict cannot pay.²⁵⁶ Matthew 18:34 indicates this kind of hopeless state.²⁵⁷ In addition to Romans 5:18, κατάκριμα is also found in Romans 5:16 and 8:1. At times the word condemnation is also used in a broader context to refer to negative evaluations of a person by others or by one's conscience. The theme of "condemnation is seen in the Bible against the background of a just God who creates, redeems, and covenants with His people so that they may live out His justice on the earth."²⁵⁸

This explanation of κατάκριμα invites one to a deep reflection on the relationship between sin and punishment. It is common to argue that sin is bad because of judgment. However, the Bible and experience show that sin is intrinsically bad and condemnation is a necessity. The natural necessity of κατάκριμα is evident because the human problem is not caused by God's κατάκριμα, but Adam's παράβασις that led to universal παράπτωμα. In other words, κατάκριμα is a clear indication that παράπτωμα is not the normal state of human beings. God's grace is revealed in God's pronouncement of κατάκριμα because

²⁵⁵Wenstrom, *Romans 5:17-18*, 52.

²⁵⁶David W. Simon, "JUSTIFICATION," in *A Dictionary of the Bible: Dealing with Its Language, Literature, and Contents Including the Biblical Theology*, ed. James Hastings et al. (New York; Edinburgh: Charles Scribner's Sons; T. & T. Clark, 1911–1912), 826–829.

²⁵⁷G. Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 264.

²⁵⁸Walter A. Elwell ed. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* sv. *Condemnation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, 1996).

the message of condemnation is not there to threaten humanity but as the next section will show, the message seeks to clarify the real human need and to indicate what was done to solve that, and how humans can appropriate the solution already given. It is the matter of accepting or rejecting the solution offered universally that differentiates the general justification from universalism.

The phrase *πάντας ἀνθρώπους* in this verse can be used to refer to different groups. Mark Rapinchuk observes that “the 70 occurrences of *πᾶς* in Romans seem to fall into three basic categories.”²⁵⁹ The first category denotes every single component of the group which means without exception. The second category denotes every manner or kind; the third category indicates all human beings without distinction.²⁶⁰ For instance, in Romans 12:18 Paul exhorts the believers to live peaceably with all men which presumably means all whom one meets day to day instead of all mankind.²⁶¹ Even in 2 Corinthians 3:2 Paul indicates that Corinthian believers are their letters read by all men also referring to those who see the Christian converts.²⁶² These examples show that the context determines how *πάντας ἀνθρώπους* is to be interpreted.²⁶³

McCant argues, “The idea of the transmission of the penalty for Adam’s sin to the entire race is not mentioned in Genesis nor does it appear explicitly in the Old Testament. That concept appears in apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature such as 4 Ezra 3:7 and 2 Enoch 30:16.”²⁶⁴ McCant suggests that Paul seems to be using the rabbinical doctrine that stresses that although death since Adam reigns generally throughout the

²⁵⁹Mark Rapinchuk, “Universal Sin and Salvation in Romans 5:12-21”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42.3 (September 1999) pp. 427-441.

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 427-441.

²⁶¹Dabson, *An Exegetical Study of Romans 5:18-19*, 70.

²⁶²*Ibid.*, 70.

²⁶³*Ibid.*, 70.

²⁶⁴McCant, “A Wesleyan Interpretation of Romans 5-8,” 68-84.

world, yet it only gains the power to the individual on account of their sin.²⁶⁵ However, Paul's description of the relationship between Adam and the rest of humanity in terms of sinfulness seems to be a normal development of the Old Testament. For instance, the book of Genesis indicates that all human beings came from Adam and Eve who were created without sin. The same book narrates the fall of Adam and Eve. In Psalm, David acknowledges that he was sinful from the time his mother conceived him (Psalm 51:5, NIV). Solomon indicated, "There is no one who does not sin" (1 Kings 8:46, NIV), and the Prophet Jeremiah described the heart as "deceitful above all things and beyond cure" (Jeremiah 17:9, NIV). These verses reveal the connection between Adam and the entire humanity as well as the universal problem of sin. So the concept of universal fall from Adam is present in the Old Testament.

Throughout the history of Christian thought there have been efforts to interpret the connection between Adam's sin and that of humankind. For some, the passage means that each human being is his own Adam. According to this interpretation, there is no real connection between the sin of Adam and the sin of humankind, other than that it could be said that Adam's sin is typical of the sin of all humanity; just as Adam sinned, all humanity has sinned.²⁶⁶ The legal interpretation holds, "Adam was the representative of humanity and the human race shares in the deed of its representative."²⁶⁷ Others interpret that what humanity inherited from Adam is the tendency to sin. For Barclay, "because of the complete solidarity of humankind, all literally sinned in Adam; and because it is the consequence of sin, death reigned over all humanity."²⁶⁸ The researcher accepts that what

²⁶⁵Ibid.,68-84.

²⁶⁶Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 80

²⁶⁷Ibid., 80.

²⁶⁸Ibid., 80.

humanity inherits from Adam is the human fallen nature characterised by a broken relationship with God.²⁶⁹

The concept of solidarity is not to be viewed desperately because the story does not end there. As humankind was in solidarity with Adam and was therefore condemned to death, so humankind is in solidarity with Christ and is therefore acquitted to life.²⁷⁰ Osborne underscores “Without Christ’s act of righteousness all people are guilty from two directions which are the sinful nature inherited from Adam that can be called passive sin, and their participation in that via in their sins which can be called active sins.”²⁷¹

For Dabson, it is clear that sin and death are the lot of all humanity both from the standpoint of Scripture and human experience. In this way, the context of Romans 5:18 indicates all humankind except Jesus Christ who entered the experience of death, but in whom there was no sin, according to Hebrews 4:15. In the same manner that Adam’s act had significance for the entire human race as they all sin and die, even so, Christ’ act as the new representative man has significance for the same group, namely, all humankind.²⁷²

Adam introduced sin because of his disobedience. As a result of the introduction of sin into the world, death also entered the world and spread to all humanity.²⁷³ Rapinchuk interprets that “sin affected everyone both in commission and consequence.”²⁷⁴ For him, sin was not a result of the law because the law neither caused nor can it heal sin. “Sin was in the world before the law and as a result of its presence in

²⁶⁹Kent Brower, “The Human Condition in Romans.” *European Explorations in Christian Holiness: ‘on Original Sin,’* n. 2 (2001): 221.

²⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 81.

²⁷¹Osborne, *Romans*, 136-145.

²⁷²Dabson. *An Exegetical Study of Romans 5:18-19*, 71.

²⁷³Rapinchuk, “Universal Sin and Salvation in Romans 5:12-21,” 427-441.

²⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 427-441.

the world death reigned over all humanity, whether their sin was like Adam's denoting direct disobedience to God's command like the Jews or a different kind like the Gentiles."²⁷⁵

In other words, human beings are to avoid two extremes related to Adam. First, they should not use Adam as the model for their good living because he is the model of a sinful person. Second, human beings should avoid blaming Adam as the cause of their problems because as his descendants they are actively sinful as they do not wait for Adam to sin on their behalf. For instance, although Cain and Abel were born sinners, the real problem of Cain was his resistance to God's gracious message of repentance and correction. God's message included light on the general situation of humankind after the fall of Adam and Eve. God assured Cain that he could master sin which was crouching at his door (Genesis 4:6-7, NIV). In the same manner, the personification of sin as an intruder crouching at the door is similar to Paul's explanation of the entrance of sin into the world when he states that "sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin" (Romans 5:12, NIV). In other words, before Adam's act of disobedience, the origin or existence of sin together with its consequences was not part of their creation. There was no way for Satan or demons to infect or affect the world if Adam and Eve did not open for it.

It is clear that God did not choose Cain to disobey and Abel to obey. Furthermore, Abel was not less affected by Adam's sin than Cain. Instead, the Biblical narrative clearly shows that God's grace was operative to both sons of Adam and Eve in a way that they were able to understand the need to present the sacrifice to God. It is also clear that when Cain failed to do what was expected, God corrected him graciously although Cain did not

²⁷⁵Ibid., 427-441.

make good use of that gracious reprehension. Cain and Abel were born after the sin of their parents. So, it is clear that God's grace is universally present in all the descendants of Adam and Eve. One might infer this narrative to Paul's message when he confirms that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:23-24 NIV).

4.4 One Act of Righteousness Brings a Universal Solution

Οὕτως is a particle serving as an introduction to the manner or way in which something has been done, is expressed, or is to be done, in that manner/way/fashion. It is translated as *thus*, or *so*.²⁷⁶ This particle is drawing a comparison from the previous historical fact of Adam's transgression with another historical fact, which is Christ's act of obedience.²⁷⁷ Adam's transgression condemned the entire human race and in the same manner, Christ's obedience established the basis for the justification of sinners, which lead to the offer of justification being extended to all human beings through faith in Jesus Christ.²⁷⁸ The simple translation of these two words οὕτως καὶ is *so also*. In this context, οὕτως καὶ is applied to introduce a consequent statement that refers to Christ's δικαίωμα.²⁷⁹ In this manner, the comparison between Adam's act of disobedience and Christ's act of obedience is brought in terms of similarities, showing that both acts affected the entire human race.²⁸⁰ In Romans 5:18 the author does not deal with the

²⁷⁶Bell, *Romans 5:18-19 and Universal Salvation*, 421

²⁷⁷Wenstrom, *Romans 5:17-18*, 54.

²⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 54.

²⁷⁹Bell, *Romans 5:18-19 and Universal Salvation*, 421.

²⁸⁰Wenstrom, *Romans 5:17-18*, 54.

difference between Adam and Christ because the difference is already explained in verse 15 where “grace did much more than merely repair the damage caused by Adam.”²⁸¹

The Greek word δικαίωματος is a noun genitive singular neuter from δικαίωμα which means a *rightful act, act of justice, equity, acquittal, or justification*. Scholars differ on the extent of Christ’s δικαίωμα. For Leenhardt, Gaugler, Murray, and Cranfield, Christ’s δικαίωμα refers to Christ’s whole life of obedience, while others such as Dunn defend that Christ’s δικαίωμα refers to His death on the cross.²⁸² Colin Kruse argues that the one righteous act is Christ’s obedience to His Father in offering Himself as the atoning sacrifice for sins, the act that made it possible for God to justify freely those who believe in His Son.²⁸³ For R. Kent Hughes, by employing Christ’s δικαίωμα, Paul summarizes the greatness of humanity’s rescue. While Adam in disobedience grasped for equality with God, Christ in obedience did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, and took Himself the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.²⁸⁴

Lange acknowledges, “The fall of one man came ideally and dynamically as a fall upon all men into condemnation.”²⁸⁵ In other words, by the common fall, all human beings would, without redemption, be subject to condemnation; on the other hand, Christ’s δικαίωμα came ideally and dynamically as δικαίωμα upon all people unto justification of life. Thus, Christ’s δικαίωμα is sufficiently powerful to justify and perfect

²⁸¹A. Snyman, “Persuasion in Romans 5:12-21,” *HTS Theological Studies* 72, N. 3, (2016): 6.

²⁸²Dunn, *Romans*, 282-283.

²⁸³Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England; Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2012), 250–251.

²⁸⁴R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 117–118.

²⁸⁵Lange, *Romans*, 185-186.

all humankind.²⁸⁶ Dabson argues, “As Adam through one act of disobedient moved humanity in one direction, Christ through one act of righteousness moves humanity in the opposite direction.”²⁸⁷ Dabson accepts that Christ’s δικαίωμα in this verse more likely focuses on Christ’s death than His righteous life, although that cannot be excluded.²⁸⁸

Murray indicates that the righteousness of Christ is defined as one righteous act because it is regarded in its compact unity in parallelism with the one trespass. As the one trespass is the trespass of the one, so the one righteousness is the righteousness of the one and the unity of the person and his accomplishment must be assumed.²⁸⁹ Christ has brought divine love into the world through His life, suffering, sacrifice, struggle, and victory. Therefore, “the incarnation of the divine and loving will and the redemptive work of this divine will is an indivisible whole knowing that the incarnation is the only possible prerequisite of the work of redemption.”²⁹⁰ In this way, the cross must be seen in connection with the whole life of Christ because the cross summarises the totality of Christ’s ministry.²⁹¹

Christ’s δικαίωμα has to be conceived as what Scobie calls “the Christ event” which means Jesus’ life and ministry on earth from His incarnation up to the ascension.²⁹² Although Jesus’ death on the cross is the climax of His salvific mission, it is crucial to understand that He came to solve the problem caused by human disobedience. His sinless life was a clear revelation to humanity that God’s commandments to Adam were doable to humanity. This is to say that what Adam failed to accomplish was not

²⁸⁶ Lange, *Romans*, 185-186.

²⁸⁷Dabson, *Romans 5:18-19*, 73.

²⁸⁸Ibid., 73.

²⁸⁹Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 199 – 203.

²⁹⁰GustafAulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), 194.

²⁹¹Ibid., 194.

²⁹²Scobie, *The Ways of Our God*, 215.

beyond humanity because Jesus was fully human in terms of passing through temptations and overcoming them. If His δικαίωμα were limited to His death on the cross, human beings could assume that God brought salvation because the commandments He gave to Adam were impossible to be followed. Jesus, as the Second Adam lived the way God wanted Adam to live, He passed through the same temptation as Adam did but He did not sin in a way that He did not deserve death. It can then be said that Jesus' death has salvific power through His sinless life because Jesus' life conquered and judged sin, while His death conquered and judged death. Hence, Christ's δικαίωμα includes His entire event.

Christ's δικαίωμα is offered to all human beings, and the δικαίωσιν ζωῆς is its purpose, but the realization of the purpose takes place only according to the measure of faith. This means that πάντας ἀνθρώπους in both clauses means all humans without exception but this does not justify a Universalist inference because Paul speaks of the objective sufficiency and intention of Christ's δικαίωμα, not of its subjective application to individuals, which depends upon faith.²⁹³ Furthermore, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους is a sign of the importance of justification because justification leads to life. Paul never attempted to bypass the step of justification because humankind must be found righteous in God's court even though it is by the grace of the Judge.²⁹⁴

There are two possibilities to interpret the result of Christ's act of righteousness which is justification εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους. The first way is to suppose that when Paul says πάντας ἀνθρώπους he means all human beings who are now on Christ's side. This is to say that all who with Adam choose sin will be condemned, while all who with Christ

²⁹³Lange, 185 – 186.

²⁹⁴ C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957), 116.

choose righteousness will be justified.²⁹⁵ The second way is to consider human beings as being either in Adam or in Christ; those in Adam are characterised as independent, self-explanatory persons, members of a race that has cut itself off from its Creator and wages war against Him; on the other hand, those in Christ are new people forgiven and enabled to live a life that pleases their Creator.²⁹⁶ For Barclay, Paul preserves the truth that humankind was involved in a situation from which there was no escape. Sin had humanity in its power and there was no hope. Christ brought with Him something that broke the old deadlock. By what Christ did, by what He is, by what He gives, He enabled humanity to escape from a situation in which they were hopelessly dominated by sin. By so stating, Paul wants to affirm that humanity was ruined by sin and rescued by Christ.²⁹⁷

The difference between Christ's δικαίωμα and δικαίωσιν needs to be clarified. In this passage, δικαίωματος is related to the grace and the obedience of Jesus Christ that removed the guilt caused by the sin of Adam and thus secured the offer of the gift.²⁹⁸ On this account, through Christ's work on the cross, none are condemned because of the first transgression, or doomed for that primal fall. In this way, all stand before God based on their individual, rather than their racial responsibility.²⁹⁹ Meyer interprets that human beings are not condemned with Adam, but may be condemned if they refuse to avail themselves of the grace of Jesus Christ.³⁰⁰ The entire race of sinners provisionally died in and with Christ on the Cross. The old humanity in Adam has been put to death with Christ on Calvary. Therefore, the death of Christ was the death of the first Adam; in

²⁹⁵Ibid., 116.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 117.

²⁹⁷ Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 82.

²⁹⁸F. B. Meyer, *Bible Commentary* (Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, 1979), 437.

²⁹⁹Ibid., 437.

³⁰⁰Ibid., 437.

Christ, condemnation is lifted and justification is given as abounding Sin has been displaced by abounding grace.³⁰¹

The expression εἰςδικαίωσιν ζωῆς means acquittal unto life. In this way, life is the purpose, goal, and result of this acquittal.³⁰² This life does not limit to the lifting of the death penalty but a liberation or redemption that is the entry into a whole new form of life. This means a new quality of life more than just an existence.³⁰³ This acquittal into life has to be understood in relation to the act of God in Christ. Although the work of divine love is once and for all accomplished in Christ and finished through the cross, this act is a constantly continuing work, the work of Christ as the Lord, and of the Spirit, the Life-giver who “proceeds from the Father and the Son.”³⁰⁴ This does not mean that the continuous activity of God is different from the finished work. It is precisely this finished act that in the present is continually realised anew.³⁰⁵ In other words, the life mentioned in this verse is to be lived in connection to its giver.

There is a significant connection between the act of righteousness and justification that brings life to all humanity. Taking into consideration the fact that God is the source of life, there is a need of appreciating the quality of life before the fall of Adam and Eve. Although death is the wage of sin, that death did not come alone. It entered into the world with many elements that made life less enjoyable. In other words, even if death were to be removed from the world, human beings will not be happy or satisfied. Many people opt for suicide not because they are angry with death; they do that

³⁰¹Greathouse, *Beacon Commentary*, 98 – 100.

³⁰²Dabson, *Romans 5:18-19*, 75.

³⁰³Luke Timothy Johnson, *Reading Romans: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001), 97.

³⁰⁴Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 182.

³⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 182.

because they feel like living is difficult. It is therefore important to analyse the kind of life Paul is mentioning in this passage. Aulén underscores, “The fellowship between God and the world was broken by the hostile power of evil;”³⁰⁶ for this reason, “reconciliation implies the destruction and subjugation of that power which separates the world with the Creator God.”³⁰⁷

For Aulén, “The work of Jesus is a struggle against unclean spirits, concentrated and incorporated in the figure of Satan. Paul regards sin, death, and the demoniac powers as the enemies whom Christ has defeated.”³⁰⁸ It is in this context that the justified life is to be understood. It is a life that testifies to the triumph of Christ. It reveals a victorious and reconciling act that involves a transformation of the human condition and a new situation for the world and implies reconciliation between God and the world.³⁰⁹ In other words, just as sin not only leads to death but is death, since it is separation from God, so also the fellowship with God established through forgiveness not only leads to life but is life.³¹⁰ In Romans 5:14 there is the personification of death as a “cosmic force not merely as a punishment for sin, but also as a king with the power to dominate.”³¹¹ In the same manner, “sin is a hostile force that dominates human beings to be hostile towards God. In this way, sin is more than a private matter, but a collective universal problem in human beings.”³¹² In this context that the problem of Adam’s fall is conceived as universal.³¹³

³⁰⁶Ibid., 198.

³⁰⁷Ibid., 198.

³⁰⁸Ibid., 199.

³⁰⁹Ibid., 200.

³¹⁰Ibid., 267.

³¹¹ C. Spicq, “NLT” *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Translated and edited by James D. Ernest, 3 volumes (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 256.

³¹² Ibid., 257.

³¹³ A. Potgieter, “Spatial Metaphors as Means of Persuasion in Romans 5:12-21” *ActaTheologica* 2019, 39 (2): 136.

In referring to life in its highest sense as eternal life, the Bible is emphasising its quality in addition to its length. Eternal life comes from God in Christ and it enables humanity to enjoy the close relationship with God for which it has been made. This enablement is evident through the change in the status of humanity. Romans 5:21 reveals, “Just as sin reigned in death, so also grace reigns through to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” However, in verse 17 Paul indicates that those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness will “reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.” These two verses reveal that through Christ, God will not only replace the reign of death with the reign of life, but the reign of life will make its recipients become kings themselves, which means, “to live the truly kingly life.”³¹⁴ It is true that being part of a world affected by sin and death, the believer may have to pass through physical death, but they never die in the sense that matters because they have eternal life now, and can look forward to the experience of that life in its fullness in the age to come.³¹⁵ When salvation is understood as life, it means that the eschatological perspective of faith is given due consideration both as something present and as something yet to come.³¹⁶ In this way, eternal life is not about living in sin and escaping the future punishment; eternal life means a victorious life over sin in the present which makes punishment unnecessary. In other words, εἰςδικαίωσιν ζωῆς does not mean to sin without dying which is the picture of hell; instead, εἰςδικαίωσιν ζωῆς means that quality of life brought by Jesus that overcomes death as the wage of sin.

³¹⁴ Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 288.

³¹⁵ Don Fleming, *Bridge Bible Directory: An A to Z of Biblical Information* (Brisbane: Bridgeway Publications, 1990), 264.

³¹⁶ Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, 269.

The personification of sin and death as king elucidates the relationship between the universality of sin and death with the universal acquittal through Christ. Throughout history, the liberation of people under bondage is possible when the liberator is benevolent, independent, and stronger than the oppressor. Furthermore, the difference between the liberator and the oppressor is that the oppressor does not allow the oppressed people to have a choice. They are forced to do what the oppressor wants, and those actions do not benefit the oppressed people. On the contrary, the liberator allows people to exercise their freedom of choice, and what the liberator commands people to obey is for their benefit in a way that those who disobey the commandments of their liberator suffer consequences although they are already rescued. It is for this reason that the universal atonement does not mean universalism.

The Bible provides several examples of how universal problems are solved universally without removing individual responsibility. Pharaoh was ruling the Israelites in Egypt in a way that bondage was a universal problem for the Israelites. God brought a universal solution to the Israelites through the Passover Lamb that made Pharaoh surrender because he lost his firstborn who was going to be his successor. The same loss happened to other Egyptians (Exodus 12). A long time after this universal deliverance, Aaron lost his two sons when they failed to follow the commandments of priestly worship (Leviticus 10). This means that universal redemption does not mean universal final salvation.

Moreover, all family members of Lot were rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah, but Lot's wife perished along the way because she voluntarily looked back (Genesis 19). Even in the New Testament, in the parable of the wedding banquet, the Lord teaches that

the invitation was universal but some did not go, and among those who accepted the invitation, one was thrown outside because he decided not to follow the orientations of that wedding. All this shows that for a universal problem, God has a universal solution. However human beings are free to appropriate it or reject it. Those who accept are saved, while those who reject perish.

Conclusion

This chapter brought an exegetical analysis of Romans 5:18. The study was done in connection with the context of the entire chapter. It became clear that several words are related to *δίκη* justice. The study also showed that *κατάκριμα* which is *condemnation* caused by Adam's *παράπτωμα* meaning the fall is not equivalent to the imputation of condemnation to innocent humanity. All human beings except Christ deserve condemnation because they are part of Adam. For this reason, Christ's *δικαίωμα* is the foundation *ειςδικαίωσιν ζωῆς* meaning for acquittal unto life because Adam had everything to avoid sin. Christ's *δικαίωμα* has a double function related to human *δικαίωσις*. First of all, Christ's life without sin brought justification to Adam's condemnation. Thus, Jesus Christ demonstrated that Adam was well created and he had all conditions to avoid sin as Jesus did. Hence, Jesus' life is a foundation of justification of God's creation and His Commandment in the garden. Secondly, Jesus' death is justification for human life. All humans except Jesus deserve death because they are sinners. When Jesus died without being a sinner, death itself became under condemnation. Adam's act of disobedience brought condemnation to humanity and

justification for death. Christ's act of righteousness brought condemnation to death and justification for life to all humanity.

By condemnation to death, one means that sin and death are no longer the kings for those who are in Christ. Through Christ, human beings are given "the light that enlightens into the world to enable humanity to choose the small gate and the narrow road that lead to life although many voluntarily choose to take the wide gate and the broad road that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13-14, NIV). This justification for life for all humanity is not limited to what will happen in the end. It is also historical as it secured the continuity of life for Adam and his descendants in a way that they had an opportunity to benefit from God's further orientations for their continuous reconciliation in which human beings can either accept or refuse as in the case of Cain and Abel. What makes the universal acquittal different from universalism is that there was no injustice for all humanity to be condemned because they are part of Adam. Thus, they need to gratefully accept the gift of life knowing that Christ was not forced to come to die for their salvation. Universalism could mean that God is forced to save people as if they were innocent of Adam's fall. Instead, the problem of the fall was with humanity in a way that those who reject this gift of Christ's atonement cannot blame Adam for their destruction. Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace draws out a necessary balance between the need for this universal acquittal for general justification and the subsequent human responsibility for final justification. This issue will be dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: WESLEY'S DOCTRINE OF PREVENIENT GRACE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to describe Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace and its connection with universal terms of justification in Romans 5:18. To this end, the chapter explores briefly the historical context in which Wesley developed this doctrine and its role in establishing the necessary connection between the seriousness of sin and the sufficiency of God's grace. Moreover, the chapter reveals various views about God's grace with a special focus on the dimension of God's grace to those who are not yet saved according to Augustine-Pelagius and Calvin-Arminius debates.³¹⁷ Finally, this chapter clarifies that Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace cannot be conceived as a mere systematization of Augustine-Pelagius and Calvin-Arminius dichotomies because in developing it, Wesley had the Scripture as the primary source without excluding other secondary sources such as experience, reason, and tradition.³¹⁸

5.2 The Historical Context of Wesley's Doctrine of Prevenient Grace

Similar to the New Testament Epistles, "Wesley's theological writings and reflections were nearly all occasional and directed to specific problems in the Church of his time."³¹⁹ This makes Wesley's theology to be more practical and occasional than theoretical, although in addressing his folks he ended up drawing some useful theoretical and systematic principles.³²⁰ This occasional and practical nature of Wesley's theology

³¹⁷ J. Gregory Crofford, *Streams of Mercy: Prevenient Grace in the Theology of John and Charles Wesley* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2010), 14.

³¹⁸ Paul Hoon "The Soteriology of John Wesley," Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Edinburgh, 1936. P. 343.

³¹⁹ Arthur Skevington Wood, "The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace" in *Grace Unlimited*, ed, Clark Pinnock (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), 210.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

invites the researcher to appreciate the context under which Wesley developed his theology. To make this task relevant, one has to reflect on the relationship between God's grace and the sinfulness of humankind throughout Christian history.

It is crucial to recognise that Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace is not based solely on Romans 5:18. In this verse, Wesley only defines justification of life as "that sentence of God by which a sinner under sentence of death is adjudged to life."³²¹ This fact does mean that the connection between Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace and universal justification in Romans 5:18 is forced. One needs to understand that the conditions for this justification are described by Wesley in the same chapter of Romans. Wesley stresses that Christ died for ungodly when they "were without strength either to think, will, or do anything good."³²² This means that without God's grace in Christ human beings are not able to perform any good act. On the other hand, it is a pleasant reality although difficult to answer when humanity in the world does good things. The challenge is to explain how those people in the world who are generally considered reprobate sometimes do what is right. The answer to this difficult question appears to be the starting point to understanding Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace.

Due to the interconnection of the theological topics, the relationship between human depravity and the existence of good in the world touches other areas of theology including eschatology because the final judgment is based on good works according to Matthew 25:31- 46. The common answer to this question is that the source of all good is God (James 1:17 NIV). However, to accept that some sinful people can do what is right is normally challenging. In this discussion, the grace of God is the answer which finds

³²¹ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 34.

³²²Ibid., 34.

support from the Bible. In summary, what makes good happen in the depraved world is God's grace. Nevertheless, this God's grace is not defined in the same way due to the nature of systematic theologies which is characterised by the predisposition of involving a first principle like "a theological prime mover from which all other Christian truths get their start."³²³

For instance, the fundamental question for Luther was how he could find a gracious God which made him stress justification by faith as the key issue that persuades all other areas of Luther's thought. For Calvin, it was how humanity can honour and do God's will which made him emphasise God's sovereignty as the starting point that controls all other doctrines.³²⁴ Thus, the choice of the controlling topics seems to be influenced by external impulses, and in many cases, it means sacrificing other complementary topics that deserve the same consideration. The forensic interpretation of the Protestant motto "justification by faith alone," for example, tends to blind readers to the diverse and often ethical uses of justification or righteousness language. However, different contextual meanings and theological applications prove that justification and righteousness cannot be reduced to a single theological concept.³²⁵ For this reason, Wesley warns that any Biblical topic such as God's sovereignty has to be related to the other divine attributes such as God's mercy and justice.³²⁶

To clarify the need of recognising various divine attributes together, Wesley reveals that God as the creator is sovereign because God's creatures are wholly what they

³²³ Luke L. Keefer, Jr. "Characteristics of Wesley's Arminianism," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* v.22, 1 1987: 91.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

³²⁵ Carey C. Newman, *Righteousness in Dictionary of the Latter New Testament and Its Development*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVast Press, 1997), 1053.

³²⁶ Randy L. Maddox, "Responsible Grace: The Systematic Perspective of Wesleyan Theology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* v.19, 2 Fall 1984: 15.

are and do what they do as ordained for them.³²⁷ It is through His sovereignty that God decided to create human beings with free will. Thus, concerning human beings, God acts as governor, as an impartial judge, guided in all things by invariable justice.³²⁸ This is to say that God's sovereignty is present in creation, God's justice is present in His governance of the moral universe, and God's grace is present in redemption.³²⁹ Knowing that all these and many other divine attributes are always present in God and are not inconsistent, Wesley admits that "in some cases, mercy rejoices over justice, although severity never does. God may reward more, but He will never punish more than strict justice requires."³³⁰ This fact is crucial in helping people understand that in God there is no room for injustice even in His sovereignty. Wesley agrees with the words of Abraham in Genesis 18:25 that "the Judge of all the earth will do right."³³¹

Concerning the existence of good in the depraved world, the Universalists will defend that it is evidence of universalism. Pelagius would relate this to the human ability to choose between good and evil; Calvin will point to the common grace which is "divine grace that extends far beyond the circle of elects and lays the corruption of human nature under internal restraint without purging it."³³² Calvin proceeds by stating that through the common grace, "God cures the disease of sin in the elect, while in the non-elect He restrains sin for the preservation of the universe."³³³ In other words, for Calvin, the common grace is universal but it operates in different dimensions. In this way, election

³²⁷ W. Douglas Mills, "Robert Earl Cushman and a Study of Predestination in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Methodist History*, 38.1 (October 1999):7.

³²⁸ Wesley, *Works X*, 362.

³²⁹ Mills, "Robert Earl Cushman and a Study of Predestination in the Wesleyan Tradition," 7.

³³⁰ Wesley, *Works X*, 363.

³³¹ Wesley, *Works X*, 363.

³³² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1 & 2*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, vol. 1, The Library of Christian Classics (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 272.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 272.

influences the way grace operates in humanity. Even for justification, only the elect by an eternal decree of God are the ones who receive the necessary faith for justification.³³⁴

It was under these circumstances that Wesley developed the already existent concept of prevenient grace. Wesley wanted to find a “third alternative to Pelagian optimism and Augustinian pessimism concerning the human flaw and the human potential.”³³⁵ Pelagius was profoundly interested in Christian conduct and he sought to improve moral conditions in the local community which seemed to him in sad need of change for the better.³³⁶ To accomplish his task, Pelagius taught that “sin is purely voluntary and individual and it cannot be transmitted.”³³⁷ For him, no one is affected by Adam’s fall. All human beings are in the same condition as Adam was before the fall. The only problem they get from Adam is the bad example. Despite this, human beings are free and able to choose either good or evil.³³⁸ Human beings can change their course of action whenever they want. For this reason, Christ came to be “our example and inspiration for Christian living.”³³⁹ In this way, divine grace is needed for instruction and enlightenment. In summary, Pelagius denied the doctrine of original sin and saw salvation as entirely the work of humanity.³⁴⁰

In contrast, Augustine taught, “Fallen man is powerless to turn to God. If any man is saved and turns to God it is through God’s grace that changes the inclination of the heart so that the man acts in freedom. In this way, man is converted not because he wills,

³³⁴ Rodney L. Reed, “Calvin, Calvinism, and Wesley: The Doctrine of Assurance in Historical Perspective,” *Methodist History*, 32:1 (October 1993), 32.

³³⁵ Albert Outler, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Nashville: Tidings, 1975), 35.

³³⁶ Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1953), 125.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, 126.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

but he wills because he is converted.”³⁴¹ In summary, Augustine defines original sin as so extensive that humanity has nothing to contribute to the work of salvation. Hence, Augustinians see salvation as entirely the work of God.³⁴²

An impartial analysis shows that both Augustine and Pelagius were attempting to preserve valid truth. Pelagius was concerned about preserving human dignity and moral responsibility which was necessary and right.³⁴³ On the other hand, Augustine wanted to preserve the absolute sovereignty of God and the absolute need for His grace about salvation which was also right. The problem is that each one, in overemphasising his truth, tended to lose the opposite correcting truth. In this way, Pelagius lost the need for God’s grace and Augustine lost the concept of true moral responsibility.³⁴⁴

Wesley found that all other subsequent theologians were not able to complement the fragmented truths left by Augustine and Pelagius. This lack of connection brought practical consequences to the church. For instance, the traditional Roman Catholic understanding of salvation pushed the church to the works righteousness doctrine. The Lutheran imputed nature of holiness served as the “taproot of human responsibility which led ultimately either to an ethical and spiritual quietism of Moravians or to an enthusiastic antinomianism.”³⁴⁵ Calvin emphasised the sovereignty of God to the point of logical and practical denigration of human responsibility.³⁴⁶ Wesley was in full agreement with Augustine in terms of the sinfulness of humanity. However, Wesley was able to strike a balance between the various extremes. He does this primarily because of the catholicity

³⁴¹ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1967), 30.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 30.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

³⁴⁵ Maddox, “Responsible Grace,” 13

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

of his sources drawing from Anglican, Patristic, Eastern, Orthodox, Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian, Puritan, and Pietist sources.³⁴⁷

5.3 Preventive Grace and the Fall of Adam

To appreciate the importance of the doctrine of preventive grace, one has to understand the consequences of Adam's fall. God had warned Adam and Eve that the immediate consequence of their disobedience would be death (Genesis 2:17, NIV). In other words, "the very existence of humanity after the Fall was dependent upon God's grace. If the penalty of Adam's sin was to be applied without mercy, Adam would have died and the human race perished with him."³⁴⁸ Therefore, physical life itself and all blessings resulting from it are a direct result of God's grace.³⁴⁹ Instead of physical death, after the fall, immediately God sought and found Adam and Eve. In other words, God, through His grace, brought the sinners to Himself. Thus, if all human beings were in Adam when he committed the first sin, it is also clear that God sought and found all human beings when he called Adam. This communication after sin culminated in a sacrifice as the Lord God made garments of skin and clothed Adam and Eve. In other words, God's plan of salvation was revealed immediately after sin entered into the world.

To confirm this point, God manifested His grace and mercy by promising them that the suffering and work of the woman's Seed was to be the hope of the world because He will redeem the world restoring it to the favour and friendship of God.³⁵⁰ It is crucial

³⁴⁷Dale W. Brown, "The Wesleyan Revival from a Pietist Perspective" *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (1989), 8.

³⁴⁸ Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator: Romans*, Vol. 1 (New York; Chicago; Toronto; London; Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), 421-424.

³⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 421-424.

³⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 21.

to note that what God did for human beings after their fall did not depend on their repentance because they tried to defend themselves. Hence, this grace went before human repentance. In other words, human repentance did not engender God's grace; instead, God's grace empowered human repentance as they were spared from immediate death. It was because of the obedience of Christ, foreseen and mercifully taken into consideration that Adam was spared and that human procreation continued to take place on the earth.³⁵¹ About children, Wesley affirms that "no infant ever was or will be sent to hell for the guilt of Adam's sin, seeing it is cancelled by the righteousness of Christ as soon as they are sent into the world."³⁵²

To accept that God communicated with Adam and Eve after their fall is to acknowledge that conditions were created for responsiveness. Communication means action and reaction. God's grace that spared Adam's life was also an empowering grace because it enabled Adam and Eve to be in communication with God. God's gracious words to Adam were powerful to bring life to a dead person. The universality of this grace is evident because the communication between the living God and dead humanity took place immediately after Adam's fall and before the birth of their firstborn. Hence Wesley underscores that the grace of God is free for all which means that it embraces all of humanity in a movement that seeks the lost.³⁵³

Adam's reason, will, and understanding became corrupt.³⁵⁴ This corrupted nature made human beings unable to respond to God. Therefore, the grace of God "enlightens

³⁵¹Ibid., 21.

³⁵² John Wesley, *The Letters of John Wesley: Standard Edition* (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 6:240.

³⁵³Kenneth J. Collins and Christine L. Johnson, From the Garden to the Gallows: The Significance of Free Grace in the Theology of John Wesley," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (2013): 9.

³⁵⁴ Wesley, *Works*, VII, 187-190.

the mind and enables man to think morally and be conscious of good or evil. From the same grace, there is some restoration of human understanding and knowledge of divine things.”³⁵⁵ For this reason, “man is a free creature, but only because he is under the grace of God.”³⁵⁶ In summary, the more fundamental or primary function of prevenient grace is to convince persons of their need to make use of this empowering grace. In this manner, prevenient grace enables a first wish to please God, making all human beings responsible for their choices for or against God because of the received power to exercise their will.³⁵⁷

The biblical account of Adam’s fall and its consequences is a clear indication that moral responsibility is not a function of nature but of grace because the debilitating effects of original sin are so severe that God had to graciously assist humanity.³⁵⁸ Two important implications can be presented about this account. First, Pelagius did not consider seriously the problem of sin because there was nothing good in Adam which escaped his fall. Everything that might be good in humanity is through God’s grace. Second, Augustine and Calvin stopped on the way by emphasising the seriousness of Adam’s sin without appreciating God’s grace to humanity. In other words, God did not leave humanity in their dead nature. Thanks to His grace, God gave life to Adam and all his descendants, through Christ so that human beings could be aware of their need and the available solution. In summary, any emphasis on human optimism for salvation is an empty pride, and any emphasis upon human incapability to cooperate with God in salvation becomes an incomplete message if it does not include the optimism of grace

³⁵⁵John Wesley, *The Letter of John Wesley*, ed. J. Telford (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), 38

³⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 38.

³⁵⁷Steve Harper, *John Wesley’s Message Today* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 45.

³⁵⁸ Wesley, *Works*, VI, 512.

which enables humanity to be responsive to that God's grace.³⁵⁹ It is for this reason that Wesley underscores, "God works; therefore you must work."³⁶⁰

5.4 Preventive Grace and Roman 5:18

As was described in the previous chapters, the universal terms related to both condemnation and justification in Romans 5:18 tend to bring several conclusions depending on the controlling approach of each reader. When "all" means the entire humanity, some argue that the passage suggests universalism which is an extreme that is not supported by the entire Bible. On the other hand, those who avoid universalism reach the extreme of considering "all" as the elected. Again, the doctrine of unconditional predestination is not in harmony with the core message of the Bible. The exegetical work in the previous chapter suggested that the universal terms in Romans 5:18 are to be regarded as referring to the entire human race although they do not necessarily support universalism.

It is indispensable to evaluate the relationship between Romans 5:18 and Wesley's doctrine of preventive grace. This assessment is based on the fact that Wesley speaks about preventive grace in the context of salvation. In this regard he declares that "salvation begins with preventive grace; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight, transient conviction of having sinned against him."³⁶¹ Wesley proceeds by stating that "preventive grace creates some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation."³⁶² This is to confirm that the redeeming

³⁵⁹ Harald Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Wilmore, Ky: Francis Asbury Press, 1980), 44.

³⁶⁰ Wesley, *Works III*: 396.

³⁶¹ John Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," *in Anthology*, 488.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 488.

work of Christ's death is the ground upon which justification rests.³⁶³ It is this connection between the prevenient grace provided through Christ and the entire package of salvation that shows the relationship between Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace and universal justification portrayed in Romans 5:18.

First, although the book of Romans speaks about Adam's sin and the consequent wrath of God, this is not the central message of the book. Otherwise, the message could not be the gospel. This is to say that the complete message of human sin and condemnation is good news because it includes God's gracious act in Jesus that deals with the problem of sin and death. In the same manner, what makes Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace unique is that Wesley recognises the gravity of sin which impedes human beings to cooperate with God for their salvation. However, he also acknowledges the power of God's grace that in addition to offering salvation, it enables human beings to receive that salvation. This grace demonstrates God's unconditional love for the entire humanity in this: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8, NIV).

Second, Wesley is convinced that through prevenient grace, God counteracts the effects of original sin enabling human beings to respond to God.³⁶⁴ Thus, "through prevenient grace, God takes the first step in the process of salvation."³⁶⁵ In other words, Wesley is certain that "God remains present in the human situation to open up universal, subtle, gradual, and cooperant opportunities for all persons to become the new creation

³⁶³ J. D. Douglas and Merrill Chapin Tenney, *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 560.

³⁶⁴ Leo G. Cox, "Prevenient Grace: A Wesleyan View," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12, no.3 (1969): 146.

³⁶⁵ Kenneth J. Collins, *Wesley on Salvation: A Study in the Standard Sermons*

that God intended.”³⁶⁶ It is this inaugural nature of prevenient grace related to the entire process of salvation that allows it to be the door to all other dimensions of grace. Paul used several related terms when he wrote to the church at Corinth saying, “You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11, NIV). In this manner, in some cases, the soteriological terms such as forgiveness, justification, salvation, reconciliation, or even sanctification are equivalent to prevenient grace because all these terms share the same characteristic of being the results or benefits of the Christ event. Thus, when these terms are used alternatively, in a universal manner, and without demanding any human action or cooperation, it means that the author is emphasising what the atonement can offer. This is the case in Romans 5:18.

Third, if prevenient grace enables human beings to be conscious of their sinfulness, it can be noted that the normal reaction of humanity to prevenient grace is repentance. In this regard, all human beings can repent through prevenient grace, as Lovett H. Weems states that “The self-awareness of one’s sinfulness is accompanied by an earnest desire to escape from one’s present condition and enter the door of the kingdom of God.”³⁶⁷ In summary, repentance is intrinsically contained in prevenient grace. Prevenient grace also enables human beings to be aware of God’s offer of salvation and it is up to them to receive the offer or to reject it. This human responsibility bestowed by the prevenient grace makes salvation and condemnation to be equivalent to reception and rejection of the offer, respectively. Therefore, there is no middle term

³⁶⁶ G. Michael Leffel, “Prevenient Grace and the Re-enchantment of Nature: Toward a Wesleyan Theology of Psychotherapy and Spiritual Formation” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 23, no. 2 (2004):133.

³⁶⁷ Lovett H. Weems, Jr., *John Wesley’s Message Today* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1991), 25.

between salvation and condemnation because all human beings are to either accept or reject salvation. To this point, Wesley summarises, “No man sins because he has no grace, but because he does not use the grace that he has.”³⁶⁸

The three above mentioned aspects of prevenient grace indicate a harmonious combination of both monergism and synergism in the process of salvation. Any apparent contradiction regarding the relationship between salvation and works is solved. First, concerning creation, “God acts in all things according to His sovereignty.”³⁶⁹ Furthermore, related to the establishment and offer of terms and conditions for salvation, God is “the sole determining cause of salvation and there is no need for any human cooperation because human beings are in a dead state as sinners.”³⁷⁰ In this way, creation and the universal offer of salvation result from a divine monergistic operation.

Second, because human beings are offered salvation and enabled to receive it, divine monergistic operation produces in human beings synergistic cooperation for salvation.³⁷¹ This expected human cooperation does not mean that through prevenient grace human beings become good people before God. Robert E. Cushman argues, “Prevenient grace does not diminish man’s corruption of the will, but rather exhibits it in its depravity.”³⁷² For this reason, Cushman affirms, “the primary purpose of prevenient grace is to enable human beings to recognise the contradiction between their will and a good of which they are aware but cannot willingly obey.”³⁷³ It is through this enabling nature of prevenient grace that humans can cry for help for evangelical justification

³⁶⁸ Wesley, *Works*, VI, 512.

³⁶⁹ Wesley, *Works*, X, 361.

³⁷⁰ Wesley, *Works*, VI, 512.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 512.

³⁷² Robert E. Cushman, “Salvation for All: Wesley and Calvinism.” *In Methodism*, William K. Anderson, ed. (New York: Methodist Publish House, 1947), 111.

³⁷³ Cushman, “Salvation for All, 113.

which establishes the hope and certainty of final justification in the Day Judgment³⁷⁴ because the justified person is enabled to do good works thanks to the saving and sanctifying grace that follow when the person responds positively to prevenient grace.³⁷⁵

Still, on this point, it is crucial to note that God's grace does not terminate the human state of probation because it is part of human nature. In other words, in the same manner, that those who are now justified were once condemned, so they may in future come again into condemnation by relapsing into sin and unbelief.³⁷⁶ Paul warns the Christian believers in Corinth, "If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you do not fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12, NIV). What makes heaven pleasant is not the absence of probation but the joy of choosing voluntarily and continuously the will of God because it is God who works in His people to will and to act according to His good purpose (Philippians 2:13). In summary, salvation is offered universally but received individually. The passages that speak about the universality of justification, as in the case of Romans 5:18 are referring to the offer of salvation while those which speak about the particularity of justification are indicating the reception or acceptance of salvation.

This relationship between the universal and individual aspects of condemnation and justification shows that the redemptive event in Christ has a universal effect in terms of offering salvation to those who are unable to either accept or reject the offer. This

³⁷⁴The definitions of evangelical justification and final justification as related, but different from the general justification come from John Fletcher (Fletcher, *the Works of the Reverend John Fletcher in Four Volumes*, 286). He starts by defining general justification as "that general benevolence of our merciful God toward sinful humankind, whereby, through the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, He freely makes us partakers of the light that enlightens every man who comes into the world." He then defines evangelical justification as "justification of a sinner that takes place in time of conversion, merited by Christ with evidence or instrumentality of faith", and final justification as "justification of believers on the Day of Judgment, merited by Christ, by the evidence or instrumentality of good works."

³⁷⁵P. Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 63.

³⁷⁶Richard Watson, "Justification," in *A Biblical and Theological Dictionary* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1851), 559.

means that “while each person comes into the world with Adamic nature, they are also already within the sphere of God’s grace.”³⁷⁷ Preventive grace is a “pervasive influence that guides humanity conversion and sanctification, and finally to heaven unless humanity determinedly breaks its way out.”³⁷⁸ The connection between universal justification in Romans 5:18 and Wesley’s doctrine of preventive grace is evident because while voluntary sinning requires personal repentance and particular forgiveness, humanity in a natural state could not be able to repent because their sin put them in a dead state. It is through preventive grace that they can recognise their sins and then repent for forgiveness.³⁷⁹

Furthermore, Romans 5:18 implies that “the condemnation for all men resulting from Adam was cancelled in the coextensive acquittal and life for all men through Christ.”³⁸⁰ However, this does not mean universalism because while in Adam it is impossible to be saved because sin puts into captivity those who are under it in a manner that they are unable to recognise their sin and repent, in Christ it is hard to be lost thanks to the universal light that “enlightens to all those who come to the world.”³⁸¹ However, “Christ causes both Adam’s influence and His own to stop short of absolute moral determinism.”³⁸² Human beings decide whether they will abide in Adam or abide in Christ. Thus, universal justification is not synonymous with universalism because human beings are to voluntarily receive the universal offer of salvation in Christ.

³⁷⁷W. T. Purkiser, Richard S. Taylor and Willard H. Taylor, *God, Man, Salvation: A Biblical Theology* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1977), 300.

³⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 300.

³⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 302.

³⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 302.

³⁸¹Wesley, *Works* III: 207.

³⁸²*Ibid.*, 302.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed the Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient grace in relation to the universal terms for justification in Romans 5:18. The study showed that the relationship between the gravity of sin and the necessity of grace for human salvation makes theologians and biblical scholars reach different conclusions and, in some cases, contradicting ones. Without ignoring the multiplicity of views on this matter, the chapter indicated that almost all the conclusions are in some place between Pelagius' optimism and Augustine's pessimism of humanity. Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace correlates Pelagius' optimism and Augustine's pessimism of humanity by bringing another optimism which is the optimism of grace. Augustine is right to acknowledge that due to sinful nature, human beings are unable to cooperate for their salvation. However, he does not emphasise the truth that through the atoning death of Christ, God graciously offers a universal remedy to the problem of sin and death. In addition to this offer, He enables all human beings to be aware of their need and equip them with the power to receive the offer without imposing them.

This divine universal act of salvation is available to all. It is in this regard that Romans 5:18 declares that Christ's act of righteousness brought justification that brings life to all. This verse shows that Adam and his descendants did not suffer the deserved condemnation, not because God changed His warning of death as the consequence of sin, but because it was through "the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (Revelation 13:8 NIV). Therefore, the universal justification patent in Romans 5:18 is equivalent to what Wesley called prevenient grace in his theology. Furthermore, Christ's act of righteousness cancels the deserved condemnation that all human beings had to

suffer because of Adam's sin which means that those who will be condemned will suffer from their sins. Finally, "what Christ's atoning work makes objectively possible, prevenient grace makes subjectively accessible to all persons. Because it is only accessible and not inevitable, the blessings of atonement are forever contingent on human response."³⁸³ This chapter indicated that the universal terms of justification in Romans 5:18 do not support universalism. This means that the term "justification" might have several meanings or dimensions depending on the context. To approve this argument, a thorough correlation of Romans 5:18 with emphasis on justification throughout the entire canon is necessary. This task will be taken in the next chapter.

³⁸³ Mildred Bangs Wynkoop, *Foundations of Wesleyan-Arminian Theology* (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1967), 235.

CHAPTER 6: CORRELATION AND APPLICATION

6.1 Introduction

The Bible is a canonical collection and not simply a group of isolated books. In this way, readers must synthesize the meaning of individual passages and books to grasp the message of the Bible as a whole.³⁸⁴ This process of bringing together the interpretation and appropriation of individual passages to arrive at the meaning of larger units of biblical material is called correlation.³⁸⁵ This chapter will bring both literary and canonical correlation of justification. This task will be done by following the chronological order of the canon, from the Old Testament to the Pauline corpus. The chapter will end with an application.

6.2 Justification in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament justification portrays various meanings depending on the context. Several words are related to justification, but the closest based on the semantic domain is the term “righteousness.” It is therefore important to explore the connection between justification and righteousness. This righteousness is also to be understood separately when it refers to God and humanity. First, in the Old Testament, the verb קָדַשׁ (*tsadaq*) and its derivatives have several meanings, and the context becomes important to understand its specific significance. One of the meanings is conformity to a norm.³⁸⁶ This means that justification in the Old Testament involves faithfulness to a relationship before it refers to ethical quality. For instance, in Genesis 38: 26 Tamar who played

³⁸⁴Scobie, *Inductive Bible Study*, 288.

³⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 283.

³⁸⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 458.

harlot was more righteous than Judah because he had not fulfilled his obligations of giving her to Shelah his son. Knowing that God has decreed a specific conduct for humanity, “the righteous person is the one who meets the divine standard and lives in a right relationship with God.”³⁸⁷ In this specific context, to justify a person means to enable them to follow the norm.

Second, if צדקה (*tsadaq*) is defined in the context of the relationship, it means that conditions for the relationship are before justification. Thus, the role of prevenient grace is evident because God is the one who takes the first step in establishing the principles and conditions for maintaining a good relationship. For instance, all the covenants that God established with humanity reveal His providence. God created Adam and Eve and put them in the garden before He established the covenant with them. In the same manner, Noah was saved from the flood before God established a covenant with him. Abraham was called and blessed by Melchizedek king of Salem before God’s covenant with him. Israel was delivered from Egypt before she entered into a covenant with God on Mount Sinai, and David was protected from Goliath, anointed to be the king of Israel, and even saved from Saul before God’s covenant with him. In summary, God’s grace is the foundation for a relationship, and a relationship is the foundation for justification.

Third, the adjective צדיק (*tsadiq*) means just, right, correct, lawful, righteous in government, in one’s cause, in conduct and character, justified and vindicated by God. In Deuteronomy 25:1 it is written, “When men have a dispute, they are to take it to court and the judges will decide the case, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty” (NIV). In this context, the judge does not cause either condemnation or acquittal. Instead, they just declare it. Proverb 17:15 reveals that the Lord detests a judge who

³⁸⁷ Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 480.

acquits the guilty and condemns the innocent, and God, being the ruler of all and the source of all criteria of righteousness, He always does what is right. This fact does not mean that God's righteousness is different from humanity's. The point is that while humanity's righteousness is derivative from God and it includes justice, thus human righteousness cannot make unrighteous people to be right. God's righteousness, on the other hand, includes justice, mercy, and forgiveness to sinners, as well as the power to heal and cleanse the hearts of unrighteous people to be righteous.

Fourth, the noun תְּדָאָה (*tsedaqah*) describes justice, truthfulness, justification, salvation, the righteousness of a judge, ruler, and righteousness of God. This means that God's righteousness brings a condemnation of sin and the deliverance of the sinner. In Psalm 143:2 David asks God not to enter into judgment with him for in God's sight no human being can be justified. In Psalm 51:6, David acknowledges that God is right when He judges, meaning that He does not overlook human sin. David does not stop there; in verses 3-4 of the same chapter of the Psalm, here cognises God's grace and mercy and he asks Him to blot out his transgression, to wash away all his iniquities, and to cleanse him from his sin. With this confidence, David invites the righteous to be glad in the LORD (Psalm 32:11, NIV).³⁸⁸ This means that God's forgiveness does not mean ignoring one's sins. It means to deal with them. From these verses, one can see that David's sin showed God to be righteous in condemning him, but David's deliverance from condemnation will show God's righteousness in saving him. The Psalmist who seeks God's covenant love and righteousness looks to the divine faithfulness in redeeming His people not only from

³⁸⁸ All the verses that deal with Hebrew text are from *BiliaHebraicaStuttgartensia* 5th ed., (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997). It is important to note that in many cases these verses are different from English Bible translations. The researcher did not use the verses as they are in English. Instead, he followed the one in the Hebrew Bible.

their enemies but from their sins, making the righteousness of God's judgment to be the righteousness of God's gift.³⁸⁹

Fifth, צדָּקָה (*tsadaq*) has a restorative character. To be unrighteous is to violate the meaning of the relationship. When such a violation takes place, offenders need restoration.³⁹⁰ This restorative character can be seen from creation. God created a perfect, harmonious world characterised by a perfect relationship between God and His entire creation. When Adam and Eve violated this relationship, God undertook to do all that was necessary to restore humanity. He preserved Noah, called Abraham, delivered Israel from Pharaoh, and chose Judah and the house of David to be the channel of the messianic seed to bring restoration of the entire creation. To elucidate the justifying sacrifice of the Messiah, the Lord says, "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11, NIV).

Sixth, the related word צְדָקָה (*tsedaqah*) also means one's right.³⁹¹ In 2 Samuel 19:28b Mephibosheth exclaimed to David, "יֵשׁ-לִי עוֹד צְדָקָה וְלִזְעַק עוֹד אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ" (*yesh-li od tsedaqah velizoq od el-hamelek*) "so what right do I have to make any more appeal to the king?" On another occasion, Nehemiah answered Sanballat and others who mocked and ridiculed the Jews. He answered them by saying, "You have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it" (Nehemiah 2:20, NIV). This aspect of justification serves as a necessary connection between the stage of justification without work and the one by

³⁸⁹ Edmund P. Clowney, "The Biblical Doctrine of Justification by Faith" in *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, D. A. Carson, ed. (London: World Evangelical Fellowship, 1992), 30.

³⁹⁰ Chris Marshall, "Divine Justice as Restorative Justice" in *Center of Christian Ethics* 2012.

³⁹¹ James H. Ropes, "Righteousness and the Righteousness of God in the Old Testament and St. Paul, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 22: 216.

works. When one has the right to be part of a family, one will live following the norms of that family. Adoption might be a good illustration of this point. No family might want to adopt a child whose behaviour will be continually against the standards of that family. Although good behaviour might not be a condition for one to be adopted, the right of being adopted will enable the adopted person to follow the rules of the family for their own good.

Seventh, what made Abraham's faith to be *ṭṣedaqah* was the content of God's promise. Abraham understood that God is faithful to His promise and through His *ṭṣedaqah* He was going to make Abraham a channel for His universal *ṭṣadeq*. God had promised Abraham in Genesis 12 that through him all the families of the earth were to be blessed. This means that all the descendants of Adam were to be blessed not by Adam's act of righteousness, but through Abraham's seed. In other words, the seed of Abraham will change the situation provoked by Adam. That restoration was gracious because while Adam acted to deserve his condemnation, Abraham did not act to deserve blessing; so he accepted in faith the promise of his seed who will bring the universal restoration as the relationship between God and sinful humankind will be restored. Abraham's faith was conceived as a great privilege and responsibility that profoundly influenced his lifestyle. In the same manner, Noah's faith in God inspired him to build the ark for salvation. In other words, there is an intrinsic connection between faith and works of obedience.

Finally, although the Old Testament *ṭṣadaq* focuses mainly on faithfulness to a relationship rather than an ethical quality, the relationship with God enables one to embrace good living in which ethical and moral righteousness is contained. In other words, if one accepts that justification is restorative, one has to assume that the

restoration of the right relationship with God produces real transformation. God said to the Israelites, “Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.” (Leviticus 20:7-8, NIV). Being in the right relationship with God should not be a dangerous experience. On the contrary, it is a blessing as Moses expressed, “What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?” (Deuteronomy 4:7, NIV). Still, what makes this good relationship with God to be the best option is that *ṭṣadaq* (tsadaq) also implies God’s gracious and undeserved goodness to His people despite repeated apostasy and rebellion on their part. For this reason, God warned Israel not to be proud. He said, “Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people” (Deuteronomy 9:15, NIV). This is to say that all saving acts that God performed for His people are also considered righteous acts as Samuel confessed, “Now, then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the LORD as to all the righteous acts performed by the LORD for you and your fathers” (1 Samuel 12:7, NIV).

In summary, in the Old Testament justification is connected to faithfulness to a relationship. God’s grace is revealed through several covenants that God established with humanity because He always takes the first step in establishing the principles and conditions for maintaining a good relationship. Although human good works are not the condition for entering into a covenant, a good relationship with God enables humanity to perform acts of righteousness. This relationship with God does not mean involuntary or undesirable obedience to God because although God provides all the conditions for a

good relationship with humanity, human beings remain free to choose to walk in God's commands because of what God has already done to them, and what He will continue doing on their behalf. For this reason, Joshua claimed to his fellows, "If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve,... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15, NIV).

6.3 Justification in the New Testament

What was discussed regarding the concept of justification in the Old Testament is significant to understand the same topic in the New Testament because the New Testament generally advances upon the Old Testament view including the concept of Justification.³⁹² Similar to the Old Testament, the concept of justification in the New Testament has several meanings depending on the context. The Septuagint acts as a bridge to the New Testament because it often renders $\rho\tau\zeta$ with $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$ in a forensic sense.³⁹³ The Septuagint also applies the judicial usage of $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$ as "to do justice."³⁹⁴ First, in the New Testament, the verb $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$ means to recognise as right.³⁹⁵ For instance, in Matthew 11: 19 Jesus declares that "wisdom is justified by her deeds" and in Luke 7:39 it is written that all people, even the tax collectors " $\epsilon\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\sigma\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$ " which can be translated as "they justified God" meaning that they recognised the righteousness of God. In other words, God was right even before the recognition of people and wisdom is also right even before her recognition. In this context, recognition does not mean pretending. However, $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega$ can also mean pretending or a superficial

³⁹² Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 459.

³⁹³ Bird, "Justification," 532.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 532.

³⁹⁵ Michael F. Bird, "Justification" in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

seeking for human approval. For instance, a scribe asked Jesus who his neighbour was because he wanted to δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτὸν “justify himself” (Luke 10:29, NIV). In the same manner, Jesus reprehended the Pharisees, “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts” (Luke 16:15, NIV).

Second, the verb δικαιόω means being forgiven or vindicated. In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the tax collector “went home justified before God” (Luke 18:14, NIV). The tax collector went home justified in terms of being forgiven. This is to say that in certain contexts, to be justified means to be forgiven. In Pisidian Antioch, Paul said to both the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through Him, everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses” (Acts 13: 38-39, NIV). This dimension of justification appears in the Bible as an eschatological antonym of condemnation. In Matthew 12:37 Jesus says, “For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Third, the adjective δίκαιος is translated as just or righteous and it is used in relation to the Messiah as the Righteous One who is unjustly rejected and killed but subsequently vindicated by God through resurrection. When Peter healed the crippled beggar, he said to the onlookers, “You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life but God raised him from the dead” (Acts 3:14-15, NIV). Then in his letter, Peter proceeded, “For Christ also died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous” (1 Peter 3:18, NIV).³⁹⁶ Jesus called His Father the Righteous Father in John 17:25. In this application δίκαιος indicates

³⁹⁶ The translation used throughout this chapter is New International Version.

divine righteousness which is absolute. It is God's righteousness that embodied justice and mercy (2 Timothy 4:8).

When δίκαιος is applied to human beings it might mean innocent as in the case of Herod's pronouncement regarding John the Baptist in Mark 6:20 and the testimony of the centurion during Jesus' crucifixion recognised Jesus as a righteous man in Luke 23:47. To the same application, Jesus said, "And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berakiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:35, NIV). The adjective δίκαιος also means upright referring to those who express loyalty to God's ways and commandments. Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth were "upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly" (Luke 1:6). The same applies to Simeon in Luke 2:25, and Joseph from Arimathea in Luke 23:50. These righteous people practice righteousness and will go to eternal life (Matthew 25:40, 46; 1 John 3:7, NIV).

The Bible connects being righteous with practising righteousness. "Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous" (1 John 3:7, NIV). On the other hand, the Bible links practising righteousness with having faith. "By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going" (Hebrew 11: 8, NIV). As James stressed, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action is dead (James 2: 17), in the Bible, all men and women of faith did some action showing their faith. Even the ex-criminal on the cross manifested his faith by asking Jesus to remember him when He comes into His kingdom (Luke 23:42, NIV). Although his action cannot be counted as

good work in practical terms, if he were given more time to live he could start living like a Christ-like disciple.

Fourth, the noun δικαιοσύνη is translated as justification or righteousness.³⁹⁷ In Synoptic Gospels, righteousness is related to God's Kingdom in a manner that refers to God's covenantal loyalties to promises made. In this way, to seek first God's δικαιοσύνη is to seek first the kingdom and its values.³⁹⁸ In Matthew, Jesus has come to fulfil the law and the prophets and His followers must have a δικαιοσύνη that surpasses that of Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:17, 20). Jesus' followers are to practice δικαιοσύνη which involves the kingdom values of mercy, justice, and faithfulness including covenant actions of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting which should be done for God's approbation and not for human attention and honour (Matthew 6:1-8; 9:13; 12:7; 23:23). James warns the readers that the "anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:20, NIV) which means that human anger does not bring into being the "state of affairs" typical to God's Kingdom.³⁹⁹ John relates God's δικαιοσύνη with His faithfulness in forgiving and purifying His people. He declares, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9, NIV).

Finally, God's δικαιοσύνη is applied to eschatological judgment and it serves as the source of Christian hope for the future. The message of the Book of Revelation indeed seems to bring fear to many readers. However, Christian believers need to

³⁹⁷Carey C. Newman, "Righteousness," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 1053–1058.

³⁹⁸J. K. Brown, "Justice, Righteousness," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels, Second Edition*, ed. Joel B. Green, Jeannine K. Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove, IL; Nottingham, England: IVP Academic; IVP, 2013), 463–467.

³⁹⁹Newman, "Righteousness," 1053–1058.

understand that three times in Revelation it is said of God that His judgments are just (Revelation 16:5,7; 19:2). In fact, Peter claims that “in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13, NIV). Newman acknowledges that “because the future kingdom is imminent, there is an ethical urgency for the righteous to practice righteousness.”⁴⁰⁰

In summary, the concept of justification in the New Testament is not completely new as it is developed upon the Old Testament teaching. In the same manner that in the Old Testament the righteousness of God was manifested in His saving acts that culminated in the establishment of several covenants, the New Testament connects justification with God’s saving acts in Christ that culminated in the establishment of the Kingdom of God which is characterised by its universal invitation to enter into it knowing that all the requisites were fulfilled by Christ. In this way, justification continues to be synonymous with the relationship between God and humanity. Still similar to the Old Testament, the invited are free to choose to partake or to reject. In this way, the universal act of justification is not synonymous with universalism.

6.4 Justification in Pauline Epistles

Paul goes to the Old Testament to base his doctrine of justification.⁴⁰¹ This means that what was discussed about the Old Testament continues relevant for Paul. Together with other New Testament writers, Paul claimed that the Gospel was known during Old

⁴⁰⁰Ibid., 1053-1058.

⁴⁰¹ Richard M. Davidson, “Justification by Faith According to the Old Testament: In Footsteps of the Reformers,” *Faculty Publications* (2017) , 17.

Testament times. Paul reveals that Abraham and David were justified by faith.⁴⁰² This means that Paul's theology should not be treated in an isolated manner because in it there is a continuity of teaching from the Old Testament up to Christ. Paul's original contribution to the doctrine of justification was his inference that "the truth of justification overruled any necessity for gentile converts to be circumcised and to obey the Jewish dietary rules."⁴⁰³ Thus, the doctrine of justification by faith is a derivative of Paul's Christology developed in an attempt to interpret the theological consequence of Christ's death and resurrection within his missionary theology.⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, the doctrine of justification in Paul should not be pushed to the extreme of considering it solely Pauline to the point of ignoring the coherent core of the entire canon.⁴⁰⁵

Paul's Jewish background played a fundamental role in his doctrine of justification. Paul converted from a zealous practitioner of the Law to someone who wanted his Gentile converts to know that Christ is the end of the Law. In other words, Paul persecuted Christians because he thought they were abandoning the law. In this persecution, Paul did not seek Christ; instead, Christ sought him and saved him in the same manner that God went to Adam and Eve after the fall. Through this encounter, Paul was converted to the position he had persecuted.⁴⁰⁶ Therefore, Paul understands that the righteousness of God consists in seeking and saving the sinner like Adam, Abraham, Moses, the church members Paul was persecuting, and even the persecutor himself. In

⁴⁰² Raymond F. Surburg, "Justification as a Doctrine of the Old Testament: a Comparative Study in Confessional and Biblical Theology," *Concordia Theological Quarterly*.

⁴⁰³ Richard B. Hays, "Justification," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1130–1133.

⁴⁰⁴ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflections on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 245.

⁴⁰⁵ Ladd, *the Theology of the New Testament*, 684.

⁴⁰⁶ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 346.

this way, it was revealed to Paul that all human beings are recipients of God's grace through Christ, and are found in different stations of life.

Furthermore, Paul's experience on the road to Damascus made his thought to be informed by the Old Testament because he understood that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. Paul understood that the Law bears witness that God always intended to reveal His righteousness through Jesus Christ in such a way that Jews and Gentiles alike will experience salvation.⁴⁰⁷ In other words, for Paul, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from Law, but the Law and the prophets bear witness to this righteousness (Romans 3:21-22). Before the experience on the road to Damascus, Paul felt that revelation was embodied in its totality in the Law, and nothing more was to be expected from God beyond the Law.⁴⁰⁸ Therefore, Paul's Damascus Road experience helped him find a new understanding of revelation which forced him back beyond the Mosaic law to rediscover the promise given to Abraham and see its fulfilment in the person and work of Christ.⁴⁰⁹ This is illustrated by God's faithfulness to His covenant even a long time before the establishment of the Law. Hay notes that "Paul, like James, never uses the expression justification by faith alone"⁴¹⁰ because faith is always active and it always produces good works. In summary, when Paul speaks of the righteousness of God he means God's saving activity.⁴¹¹ In this saving activity, Christ is referred to as "our righteousness, holiness and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30, NIV). Paul clarifies that Christ becomes "our righteousness" because, through His death, believers become "the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV).

⁴⁰⁷Hays, "Justification," 1130.

⁴⁰⁸Ladd, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 413.

⁴⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 413

⁴¹⁰Hays, "Justification," *id.*, 1131.

⁴¹¹*Ibid.*, 1131.

It can be inferred that when righteousness or justification is referred to human beings, Paul means the benefits of being part of God’s covenant through Christ.⁴¹² This is to say that God demonstrates righteousness through faithfulness to His promises, while humanity expresses righteousness in and through loyal obedience.⁴¹³ It is therefore important to acknowledge that according to Paul, righteousness or justification is not limited to forensic interpretation.⁴¹⁴ Accordingly, Paul uses righteousness or justification as the opposite of condemnation. He stresses, “If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!” (2 Corinthians 3:9, NIV). This righteousness comes from God as it is not a legal fiction because there is a real recovery of relationship with God and with other people (Galatians 3:13, NIV).

In 2 Corinthians 5:19 Paul states that “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” It is through this recovered relationship that makes justification or righteousness to be transformative. In other words, those united with Christ must live as such because the Holy Spirit works in the life of believers to conform them to the image of God’s Son so that at the final judgment they will be proved to have lived a life under the grace given to them in Christ. Paul clarifies this by connecting good works with the finality of salvation. He affirms, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10, NIV). J.

⁴¹²Michael F. Bird, “Justification,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

⁴¹³Newman, “Righteousness,” 1053–1058.

⁴¹⁴*Ibid.*, 1053–1058.

D. Douglas and Merrill Chapin Tenney conclude that for Paul, salvation can never be separated from the “participational act of the believer in Christ.”⁴¹⁵

Paul’s theology was also derived from Jesus in a way that what was discussed in the gospels can also be applied to Paul. For instance, Paul’s use of righteousness or justification in connection with salvation has a basis in Jesus’ teaching of the Kingdom of God. For instance, Paul understands that the righteousness or justification that has come through Jesus is corporate and even cosmic, not just individual.⁴¹⁶ Furthermore, for Paul, the gospel is the righteousness of God which means God’s activity in drawing individuals into and sustaining them within the relationship with Him as the power of God for salvation.⁴¹⁷ In the same manner, Jesus draws humanity when He invites them “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, NIV). Paul sees the atoning works of Christ as the foundation of universal justification realised in the forgiveness of sins, and adoption into the family.⁴¹⁸ The justification of a sinner does not diminish the evil nature and desert of sin because God can never regard sin with less than perfect, and infinite hatred.

Finally, Paul’s reprehension of the believer who failed to show the evidence of Christian life is an indication that Pauline's letters are to be understood in connection with what Christ taught. Paul showed that those who belong to the community of faith can be

⁴¹⁵J. D. Douglas and Merrill Chapin Tenney, *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 559-560.

⁴¹⁶ Ladd, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 704.

⁴¹⁷, James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 344.

⁴¹⁸ James Hastings et al., *Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), 510-511.

expelled to Satan. He admonishes, “Hand this man over to Satan so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 5:5, INV). This admonition is in line with what Jesus taught when He said that if a brother refuses to listen to church was to be treated as a pagan or a tax collector (Matthew 18:15-17, NIV). This means that the person was to be treated as someone not yet saved, in need of evangelism to belong again to the community of faith. Thus, justified people can go astray if they do not continue walking in faith.

Conclusion

The correlation of justification revealed that the term has to be treated according to its context. This task showed that in connection to salvation, justification is based upon the righteousness of God which is God’s activity in drawing individuals into and sustaining them within the relationship with Him for salvation.⁴¹⁹ This saving act is based on Christ’s atonement. The correlation also elucidated that the conditions for justification are completely dependent on God because He is the One who reconciles the world to Himself. Reconciliation means a new relationship, and it is that relationship that makes justified people perform good works. Thus, when justification is treated universally it refers to what God did in Christ for the entire world. This is the case in Romans 5:18. It became clear that human beings need to receive the universal offer for their individual, final salvation. Finally, the correlation confirmed that in the same manner that sinful life is manifested through sinful works, justified life is also manifested through good works. A tree is planted, watered, and nurtured not because it has been producing fruits.

⁴¹⁹James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 344.

However, the normal expectation is to see the fruits in that tree. Thus, through Christ, all people are planted, watered, and nurtured. However, only those who produce fruits are finally saved.

Application

The Bible views all peoples as equal in God's sight equally sinners in need of grace, and equally called to be part of a new humanity. God is the provider of universal justification because, without His grace, the consequence of Adam's sin could be beyond repair. Everything necessary for salvation is from God. First, it is God's grace that makes faith to be a valuable condition for salvation because no person invented it. Second, God's grace makes faith a universal possibility in a manner that its absence is a consequence of human voluntary rejection. In other words, human beings will be condemned or saved because of their reaction or response to the universal grace.

Third, the fact that Christ's act of righteousness brought salvation to all does not mean that all will be saved because each member has to voluntarily live the life of justification. The exodus of Israelites is a good indication of the relationship between universal justification and individual salvation. The blood of the Passover Lamb was universal for all the Israelites in a way that all the firstborns were saved from death. In Leviticus 10 it is written that Aaron's firstborn and his brother died because they did not follow the religious procedures for the Tabernacle. This means that universal atonement is both privilege and a responsibility.

In the African context, the connection between the universal offer and individual responsibility is easily understood. The idea that the universal justification in Christ

should mean universalism just because the condemnation is also universal does not find support in the Bible as well as in the African context. An analogy of drought and good rain might help to elucidate this relationship. Normally, most Africans depend on agriculture as their major source of economy. For this reason, drought normally means death while good rain means life. It can be said that Adam's sin brought a universal drought that leads to death, while Christ's act of righteousness brought universal good rain that leads to life. There is a natural difference between universal drought and universal good rain.

With the universal drought, no one can live even if one tries to cultivate. There is no possible good work that might bring life in the context of universal drought. On the other hand, with the universal good rain and good health, there is universal food in abundance available to all, but some might opt not to cultivate and they can die because of famine. Hence, with universal condemnation brought by Adam's sin, there was no way for life. However, with universal justification brought by Christ people are free to either accept or reject this life. Still related to this analogy, God's grace is manifested through the good rain and the strength that God gives humanity to cultivate. Although cultivating is work, it does not cease to be grace because cultivating is possible only when there is good health, and it is rewarding only when there is good rain.

Finally, Romans 5:18 reveals that through Christ's death, no one is far from God's grace. Political and economic diversity might influence people to think that some are in a better place than others. However, the universal act of atonement proves that all human beings are recipients of God's grace and deserve the message of the gospel. There is no

tribe, nation, race, or community to be excluded from the good news about Christ's universal atonement that is already there.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

This chapter seeks to summarise what has been discussed throughout the entire thesis. To this end, the chapter will briefly synthesise different approaches towards the meaning of justification as depicted in Romans 5:18 focusing especially on the universal terms patent in this passage. The chapter will close with recommendations for further study.

7.1 Summary of Findings

In an attempt of understanding the meaning of the universal terms of both condemnation and justification in Romans 5:18, the researcher reviewed the literature related to this topic throughout the history of the Christian church before the exegetical task of the passage in study. The literature review showed that although scholars differ in terms of the meaning and conditions for justification, there is a common point that is found in almost all the approaches. From the Apostolic Fathers throughout the contemporary theologians, all agree that for justification to take place some conditions must be met. The Catholic tradition emphasises faith and good works while the Reformists underscore faith as the only condition for justification. In this regard, there is no problem to conclude that justification requires some conditions. Still on this point of similarity, although the conditions for justification might differ, almost all scholars recognise the role of faith for one's justification. Even those who underline good works, do not despise faith. The difference is related to the relationship between faith and good

works. For some, faith alone is necessary for salvation, for others, faith is prior good works, and for others, good works culminate in faith.⁴²⁰

Although there is an agreement in terms of the role of faith in justification, scholars differ on the origin of faith. Moreover, although there are many approaches toward the origin of faith, the Augustine-Pelagius dichotomy seemed to establish the framework through which all other scholars are placed. Augustine recognised the seriousness of original sin in a way that he did not expect anything good from humankind for justification. Pelagius, on the other hand, argued that human beings were able to get what they need including faith for justification. Pelagius' teaching was considered heretical by the church. After all, if human beings were able to solve their problems, Christ should not die for the salvation of humanity because Christ's teaching could be enough to teach humanity how to choose wisely. Christ's work of salvation reveals that sin is more destructive than what Pelagius taught.

Although the teaching of Augustine was orthodoxy, it faced some challenges in explaining the relationship between the universal spiritual death of humanity and the need for human cooperation for justification. In other words, if all human beings are dead in sin, their behaviour had to be the same because among dead people one cannot expect different behaviour. The fact is that in this world some people are saved while others are not. The doctrine of predestination became Augustine's answer to this question. Knowing that dead people can neither accept nor reject God's offer, those who receive justification are elected and thus resurrected from spiritual death to be able to receive salvation. This teaching is not coherent because God's offer of salvation requires one of the two

⁴²⁰ McGrath, *Iustia Dei*, 32.

responses which are reception and rejection. Both reception and rejection cannot be expected from a dead person. One has to be alive to either accept or reject an offer. If salvation is through the reception of God's offer, condemnation has to be through the rejection of God's offer, and both can take place only if human beings are alive.

Wesley's doctrine of prevenient grace was analysed and the review showed that Wesley's teaching was neither Pelagian nor semi-pelagian because he aligned with Augustine by recognising that Christ died for ungodly to rescue their life when they were all "without strength either to think, will, or do anything good."⁴²¹ In this way, Wesley agreed with Augustine that sin killed humanity. The difference between Wesley and Augustine is the extent of Christ's atoning death. While both agree that God needs to resuscitate the dead for them to receive salvation, Wesley understands that this resuscitation is universal and it is the basis for either reception of God's grace that culminates in salvation, or the rejection of God's grace that culminates in condemnation.

It was elucidated in this thesis that even those who taught the doctrine of predestination taught the universality of God's grace. For instance, Calvin acknowledged the universal grace of God as common grace which extends to all human beings. For Calvin, the common grace is universal but operates in different dimensions because election influences the way grace operates in humanity. For the elect, God uses the common grace to cure their disease of sin while for the non-elect He uses the common grace to restrain their sin for the preservation of the universe.⁴²² The challenge with this approach is that it undermines God's generosity and His plan for salvation. The God who

⁴²¹ Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, 34

⁴²²John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion 1 & 2*, 272.

“causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and unrighteous” (Matthew 5:45, NIV) is the same who takes “no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live” (Ezekiel 33:11, NIV). This means that the same God who cares for the physical needs of His creatures also cares for their salvation. Therefore, God cannot provide a limited grace to some people just to restrain the temporary consequences of sin. Instead, the same grace that restrains sin is also powerful enough to illuminate the soul of every human being that comes into this world. What makes other people be saved and others not, is the way human beings react to it rather than the different quality of grace.

First of all, it is God’s grace that makes salvation possible. Without His grace, no one was to be saved because Adam was to die both spiritually and physically, immediately after his fall. If they continued alive it was not due to their luck but God’s grace that provided a sacrifice on their behalf. Thus, although faith is essential for one’s salvation, it cannot produce justification because God is not under obligation to reward one’s faith. On the contrary, faith works for justification because the gracious God made it to be that way. It is in this line that Romans 5:18 indicates the universal justification meaning that God in Christ provided everything necessary for the justification of all human beings. The offer is universal, but the reception is individual. It is this individual aspect of the reception of justification that impedes the universal offer to be synonymous with universalism.

The exegetical task of Romans 5:18 revealed that justification is intrinsically dependent upon the act of righteousness done by Christ. Although the passage connects Adam’s fall with the universal condemnation, the aim of this connection is not to teach

how Adam's sin is transmitted to his descendants; instead, the verse seeks to explain how one action done by one person brings universal effects. In this way, as one Adam's act of disobedience brought universal condemnation, so also one Christ's act of righteousness brought universal justification. In summary, God was not indifferent to the problem caused by Adam. Instead, He brought the solution through the atoning work of Christ.

It was also discovered that sin is intrinsically destructive in a way that condemnation becomes necessary. Although human beings deserved God's condemnation because of their sinful nature, God in Christ condemned sin and death rather than the sinner. This is to say that one Adam's act of disobedience opens the door for sin to enter into the world as a wicked king who put humanity in bondage. It is for this reason that human beings in their natural state are unable to think, will, or do anything good because they have neither strength nor permission to do that. It is in this context that "while we were still sinners, still powerless, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6, 8, NIV). In summary, if God's priority was to punish or condemn humankind, there could be no need for Christ to come and die because sin was already at work of bringing universal trouble that was culminating in death.

It became clear that Romans 5:18 connects universal condemnation with Christ's righteous act because through this Christ's act the enemy was conquered and human beings were rescued from its dominion. Thus, through Christ's act of righteousness, all human beings are put in a place where salvation is possible and available. This is the meaning of the universal term of justification in Romans 5:18. The major difference between bondage and freedom is that in bondage no one can choose, while there is no liberation without freedom to choose. Thus, the universal justification brought by Christ's

act of righteousness enables human beings to exercise their God-given freedom of choice. They can choose either to belong to their deliverer to enjoy eternal life, or they can return to their previous wicked, but defeated ruler. It is this freedom of choice, which is good that makes universal justification in Romans 5:18 not to be synonymous with universalism.

Finally, Romans 5:18 revealed that the social, racial, political, or religious differences among human beings are superficial because there is only one problem for all people which is the problem of sin, and there is only one solution for that problem which is universal justification brought by Christ. Therefore, human superficial differences should not be allowed to be barriers to sharing the good news with all nations because in the same manner that the entire world became the recipient of sin and condemnation through Adam, the same world is the recipient of Christ for justification and life.

The correlation helped the researcher understand that in the Bible justification is treated in connection with other terms such as righteousness, faithfulness, and justice. When justification is related to God's righteousness, it includes His mercy and faithfulness in His saving action. It is in this context that covenants were established in the Old Testament. God was the One to determine the conditions for covenants and deliverance was always before covenants. The conditions to remain in the covenant were graciously established by God and they included the opportunity for people to repent and be forgiven. In this regard, human righteousness consisted in gratefully obeying the established commandments.

In the same manner, the central message of the New Testament was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 3: 2, 7). This means that although justification

is an important theme in the New Testament, it has to be treated in conjunction with other related themes. When justification is connected to the kingdom of God, justification can be described in universal terms because it indicates God's providence of all the conditions necessary for entrance into the kingdom. Furthermore, what makes justification to be related to redemption is that Christ conquers the kingdom of darkness and delivers humanity from the bondage of sin and the devil into His kingdom of light. In this way, God is both the King and the Saviour. Those in His kingdom are to be thankfully obedient to their Lord. This is the universal aspect of justification. However, the state of probation is part of human beings and they are to choose either to continue in Christ or to go back to darkness. This choice is individual and it makes universal redemption not to be synonymous with universalism.

The deaths of Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10 and of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 are evidence that universal justification is not synonymous with universalism. The practical experience also shows that although a universal drought is synonymous with universal famine that brings universal death, universal rain is a universal condition for a universal abundance of food but it does not necessarily mean that all human beings will have food because others may decide not to work the land and suffer the consequence of famine. So, Romans 5:18 indicates that Christ's atoning work brings universal justification and human beings are free either to receive it or reject it.

7.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

This thesis sought to relate the universal terms of both condemnation and justification in Romans 5:18 and the findings revealed that justification is possible and available through God's grace. The study showed that universal justification is not synonymous with universalism. The consequent question is related to the relationship between universal justification and the message of evangelism. If human beings are already universally justified, why is the message of evangelism a complete discontinuity that culminates in the new birth rather than the continuity of the already existent justified nature? Is universal justification replaced during conversion, or is it only added by other elements of salvation? An independent study on the relationship between general justification and the message of evangelism may help the researcher discover that the theological tension "between past and future, between the already and the not yet, between memory and hope, between the proclamation and promise"⁴²³ has to be taken into consideration when one lives in Christ, knowing that the same God who invites human beings to work in His mission created everything and can do all things without any need of human beings.

⁴²³Scobie, *The Ways of Our God*, 92.

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