When we consider the love of God we see it manifested in many ways but one that is not too often considered is in the doctrine of election. Throughout the ages this teaching has been debated and considered a doctrine of hate rather than a doctrine of love but the Scriptures say otherwise. Consider Ephesians 2:4-5 which says, "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ *(by grace you have been saved)." According to Paul's words to the Ephesians, God's choice of salvation is based on His love not on some injustice of God. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love Him because He first loved us." Everyone born into this world are heading for an eternal punishment in hell unless a loving God chooses to rescue them from this fate. To begin we can conclude from Ephesians 2:4-5 that God made us alive together with Christ because of His great love with which He loved us. That is a doctrine of love. When he destroyed the world with a universal flood and saved eight persons that was a doctrine of electing love.

How do we define election? One writer says, "Election is...that decree of God which He eternally makes, by which, with sovereign freedom, He chooses to Himself a people, upon whom He determines to set His love, whom He rescues from sin and death through Jesus Christ, unto Himself in everlasting glory" (Herman Hanko, The Five Points of Calvinism). John Piper adds, "Election...is unconditional in that there is no condition man must meet before God chooses to save him. Man is dead in trespasses and sins. So there is no condition he can meet before God chooses to save him from his deadness. We are not saying that final salvation is unconditional. It is not. We must meet the condition of faith in Christ in order to inherit eternal life. But faith is not a condition for election. Just the reverse. Election is a condition for faith. It is because God chose us before the foundation of the world that he purchases our redemption at the cross and quickens us with irresistible grace and brings us to faith" (Sermon manuscript What We Believe About the Five Points of Calvinism, desiringgod.org). John MacArthur, in his book, The God Who Loves, also writes, "We are redeemed not because of anything good in us, but because God chose us unto salvation. He chose certain individuals and passed over others, and He made that choice in eternity past, before the foundation of the world (Eph.1:4). Moreover, He chose without regard to anything He foresaw in the elect; simply ‘according to the good pleasure of His will [and] to the praise of the glory of His grace’ (vv.4-6, KJV). Election arises from the love of God. Those whom He chose, He ‘loved...with an everlasting love [and drew them to Himself] with lovingkindness’ (Jer.31:3) [p.12].

The doctrine of election is God choosing some individuals for salvation "before the foundation of the world. Ephesians1:4-5 says, "Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." The word "chose" Gr.ekleago (verb - middle voice) means, "to pick out, select. To choose for one’s own self" (W.E. Vine, Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words). The word "Choose" is from eklegomai which is made up of legoµ "to choose" and ek "out from." Thus, the compound word means "to pick, single out, to choose out." The genius of the word has in it the idea of not merely choosing,
but that of choosing out from a number. The adjective eklektos comes from eklegomai and is translated by the words "chosen" and "elect." The elect are "the chosen-out ones." Divine election refers therefore to the act of God in which He chooses out certain from among mankind for salvation" (Kenneth Wuest, Word Studies in the Greek NT). Paul uses another word. He said God "predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (v.5). The word "predestined" (Gr.proorizo) means, "to determine beforehand, foreordain" (Ibid., Vine). God determined beforehand whom He would adopt "as sons by Jesus Christ." He did this "according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace" (vv.5-6).

There is another aspect of election that we need to consider and that is where God the Father give individuals to Jesus Christ for salvation. Jesus said in John 6:37: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." In John 10:1-4, 14, 16, and 27 we see God giving those whom He chose to Jesus who is the great Shepherd. He calls His sheep by name and they hear His voice because they follow Him. In Romans 9 Paul goes into great detail on the subject of election to explain that Israel, "to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises" (v.4) "are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed" (vv.7-8). All of this, he says is "that the purpose of God according to election might stand" (v.11).

A final aspect of election I want to consider is how the elect come to Christ. Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who send Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (Jn.6:44). The word "Draw" (Gr.helkuo) (first aor.act.subj) means "to drag" (Strong's). It is used of the dragging of a net (Jn.21:6), of Paul and Silas being dragged into the marketplace (Acts 16:19) and of Jesus "being lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (Jn.12:32). It "carries the idea of an irresistible force and was used in ancient Greek literature of a desperately hungry man being drawn to food and of demonic forces being drawn to animals when they were not able to possess men" (John MacArthur, The MacArthur NT Commentary: Ephesians). John Calvin said, "To come to Christ being here used metaphorically for believing, the Evangelist, in order to carry out the metaphor in the apposite clause, says that those persons are drawn whose understandings God enlightens, and whose hearts he bends and forms to the obedience of Christ. The statement amounts to this, that we ought not to wonder if many refuse to embrace the Gospel; because no man will ever of himself be able to come to Christ, but God must first approach him by his Spirit; and hence it follows that all are not drawn, but that God bestows this grace on those whom he has elected" (Calvin’s Commentaries: John). John Piper adds, "Jesus' answer to the spiritual blindness of the human mind and the spiritual hardness of the human heart is that the Father draws them. He takes away the blindness of the mind and replaces the heart of stone. He grants us to see the truth of Christ's self-evidencing glory and he gives us a taste for the all-satisfying beauty of the Lord" (Sermon manuscript The Duty: Faith, desiringGod.org).

Election is the work of God on behalf of sinners whereby He draws those whom He has chosen before the foundation of the world for salvation. I conclude with Paul's words in Romans
8:28-30. He says, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified, and whom He justified, these He also glorified." The doctrine of election is one of love from a loving God who has mercy on those He has chosen.