

Statement of Doctrinal Beliefs

Section 1 – The Holy Scriptures

God's complete written revelation to man consists of the sixty-six books of the Bible. The Scriptures were given to us by the Holy Spirit¹ through verbal, plenary² inspiration³ as objective, propositional truth.⁴ God used human authors to compose and record His exact revelation to man through His superintendence of their unique personality, background, circumstances, and writing style as they composed the original manuscripts, and that every part of the Bible, in its original documents, is inerrant, infallible, the very Word of God.⁵ The Scriptures were written in such a way that its teachings are able to be clearly understood by all who have a heart to follow what it says.⁶

Since the purpose of the Scripture is to instruct mankind, and is absolutely necessary for knowing the Gospel and God's will, it is the duty of every Christian to regularly and diligently search the Scriptures to understand their meaning.⁷ This meaning is best discovered through use of a literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.⁸ Though there is only one true interpretation, there may be many faithful applications to life's varied circumstances.⁹

Since the Bible comprises the only authoritative and inerrant rule of salvation and a life pleasing to God, it is an entirely accurate and sufficient communication of God to mankind, and is the measure by which all men will be judged on the last day.¹⁰

Section 2 – God

A. The Trinity

The Lord our God is the only living and true God.¹¹ He is infinite in perfection and independent.¹² His essence cannot be fully comprehended by anyone but Himself, and yet He has chosen to reveal Himself through His Word.¹³ He is an immortal Spirit¹⁴ that dwells in unapproachable light.¹⁵ He is unchangeable;¹⁶ personally present everywhere,¹⁷ eternal,¹⁸ almighty,¹⁹ holy,²⁰ all knowing,²¹ and wise.²² He works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable righteous will.²³ He is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth. He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, and rewards those that diligently seek Him, but will by no means clear the guilty.²⁴ He is just in all His judgments,²⁵ hating all those enemies of God who transgress His law.²⁶

¹ John 16:12-13

² meaning equally inspired in all parts (see Matthew 5:18)

³ 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

⁴ John 17:17

⁵ Psalm 19:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21

⁶ 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

⁷ Acts 17:11; Romans 10:13-17; Colossians 3:16

⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:7-16

⁹ Joshua 1:8; 2 Tim 2:15

¹⁰ John 12:48; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Peter 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19

¹¹ Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7

¹² Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12

¹³ Exodus 3:14; John 12:49-50, 17:7-8 Hebrews 1:1-3

¹⁴ John 4:24

¹⁵ 1 Timothy 6:16; Deuteronomy 4:15-16

¹⁶ Malachi 3:6 (immutable in His essence, attributes, knowledge, & plans)

¹⁷ 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23

¹⁸ Psalms 90:2

¹⁹ Genesis 17:1

²⁰ Isaiah 6:3

²¹ 1 John 3:20

²² Job 12:13; Romans 11:33

²³ Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:9-10; Ephesians 1:11

²⁴ Exodus 34:6-7; Hebrews 11:6

²⁵ Deuteronomy 32:4

²⁶ Psalms 5:5-6

God is unique in being all-sufficient both in Himself and to Himself.²⁷ Though He is glorious in and of Himself, He has freely chosen to demonstrate His own glory through His creation, and yet His glory is in no way dependent upon His creation.²⁸ He is the Creator, from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things,²⁹ and He has absolute sovereign dominion over all creatures to do to them, for them, or with them as He pleases.³⁰ In His sight all things are open and laid bare.³¹ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependent upon any other source, so that nothing for Him is contingent or uncertain.³² He is holy in all His words and in all His works.³³ Therefore, all creatures are obligated to Him for whatever He requires of them,³⁴ owing Him complete allegiance, worship, service, and obedience.³⁵

The one God eternally exists in three Persons (Trinity): the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Each is fully God and is the same in essence and substance, and yet they are distinct individuals and not just different manifestations of the same person. The Son is eternally begotten (not created) Son of the Father,³⁷ and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.³⁸ Each person of the Godhead is distinguished in the Scriptures by the design and exercise of their work.

B. God, The Father

God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity who created all things and causes all things to work together according to His sovereign plan, and yet does so in such a way that He is neither the author nor approver of the sinful actions of men.³⁹ As the Creator and supreme Ruler of the universe, His sovereignty extends over all things including creation and redemption.⁴⁰ His character is most profoundly and uniquely seen in the demonstration of His sovereign grace, in His choosing to redeem individuals from the due punishment of their sin and mercifully providing the means for that redemption through His only Son, Jesus Christ.⁴¹

C. Jesus Christ, The Son

Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the attributes of deity, and is co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit.⁴² Although sharing equality with the Father, the Son is submissive to Him in the execution of the Father's will. The Father created all things through the Son in literal six, 24-hour days, and the Son is the One by whom all things continue in existence and operation.⁴³

The Son became incarnate man by willingly taking on limitations to His divine attributes and prerogatives according to the will of God by uniting His divine nature with sinless human nature in an indissoluble union, forever becoming the God-man.⁴⁴ The means of the incarnation was through the Holy Spirit supernaturally overshadowing the virgin Mary, such that Jesus was virgin-born, fully God and fully man.⁴⁵

²⁷ Acts 17:24-25

²⁸ Job 41:11; Psalm 50:12; John 17:5; Isaiah 43:7

²⁹ Romans 11:34-36

³⁰ Daniel 4:24-25, 34-35

³¹ Hebrews 4:13

³² Psalm 139:1-6; Isaiah 55:9

³³ Psalms 145:17

³⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, Acts 17:30-31

³⁵ Revelation 5:12-14

³⁶ Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

³⁷ John 1:14, 18 ("one and only" is a better translation of Greek word *monogenes*, commonly translated "only begotten")

³⁸ John 15:26; Galatians 4:6

³⁹ James 1:13, 17; Job 1:22; Habakkuk 1:13

⁴⁰ Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 103:19, 145:8-9; Habakkuk 1:13; Matthew 20:15; Romans 3:19, 8:28, 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 1:11, 3:9-11;

Revelation 4:11

⁴¹ John 1:12, Ephesians 1:4-6

⁴² John 5:17-18, 8:58, 10:30, 14:9-10; Colossians 1:19, 2:9

⁴³ John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3

⁴⁴ John 1:1, 14; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 5:6-9

⁴⁵ Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:23, 25; Luke 1:26-35; Galatians 4:4-5

Jesus lived out His earthly life with sinless perfection⁴⁶ exactly as recorded in the Scriptures.⁴⁷ He was put to death by order of Pontius Pilate, buried, physically resurrected from the dead on the third day by the power of God,⁴⁸ appeared alive to disciples over a period of 40 days,⁴⁹ and then ascended into heaven as ruler over all.⁵⁰

The Son is the only Mediator between God and man⁵¹ (His physical death, burial, and resurrection providing the only means through which God justifies sinners),⁵² and He is now seated at the right hand of the Father as advocate for all the redeemed.⁵³

Jesus Christ is the Head of the church⁵⁴ and the promised Messiah who will reign on the throne of David as the universal King.⁵⁵ He is also the One through whom God will judge all mankind,⁵⁶ issuing reward to those who follow Him, and eternal punishment to those who do not.⁵⁷

D. Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, possesses all the attributes of deity and is co-equal, co-existent, co-eternal with the Father and the Son.⁵⁸ The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, uncreated, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect,⁵⁹ eternity,⁶⁰ omnipresence,⁶¹ omniscience,⁶² omnipotence,⁶³ and truth.⁶⁴

The Holy Spirit's special role in the church age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ⁶⁵ to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church.⁶⁶

The work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. This includes His sovereign activity in creation,⁶⁷ the incarnation of the Son,⁶⁸ the written revelation of God,⁶⁹ and the work of salvation.⁷⁰ In this present age, the Holy Spirit was sent forth from the Father and the Son to initiate and complete the building of the church, to speak of and glorify the Son, and to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.⁷¹ The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration who draws men to Jesus Christ and enables every believer to possess faith.⁷² Jesus Christ baptizes all believers with the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, at which time the Holy Spirit indwells them with all fullness.⁷³ The Holy Spirit also sanctifies them, instructs them, empowers them for service, seals them unto the day of redemption, and transforms them into the image of Christ.⁷⁴ The Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the prophets and apostles to write God's special revelation, the Bible.⁷⁵ He administers spiritual gifts to the church but neither glorifies Himself nor His gifts by

⁴⁶ Hebrews 4:15

⁴⁷ John 21:24-25

⁴⁸ Luke 9:22, 18:33, 24:7, 19-24, 46-48; Acts 4:27-28, 10:40, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

⁴⁹ Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7

⁵⁰ Acts 1:9; Ephesians 1:20-23 (cf. Psalm 2:7-9)

⁵¹ 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 7:25

⁵² Romans 5:9; John 1:29; John 14:6

⁵³ Philippians 2:9-11; 1 John 2:1-2

⁵⁴ Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23

⁵⁵ Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33

⁵⁶ John 5:22-24; Acts 17:30-31

⁵⁷ John 3:36; 2 Corinthians 5:10

⁵⁸ Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:15-17.

⁵⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:10-14

⁶⁰ Hebrews 9:14

⁶¹ Psalm 139:7-10

⁶² Isaiah 40:13-14

⁶³ Romans 15:19

⁶⁴ John 16:13

⁶⁵ John 14:16-17; 15:26

⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians 12:13

⁶⁷ Genesis 1:2

⁶⁸ Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35

⁶⁹ 2 Peter 1:20-21

⁷⁰ John 3:5-8

⁷¹ John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 1:5, 2:4; Ephesians 2:19-22

⁷² John 6:44,63; 2 Corinthians 3:6

⁷³ Matthew 3:11; John 3:34;14:17; Romans 8:9,11; 1 Corinthians 12:13

⁷⁴ Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:6,18; Ephesians 1:13; 4:7-13,30; 1 John 2:20-27

⁷⁵ John 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21

ostentatious displays. Instead, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by implementing His work of drawing the elect and building up believers in the most holy faith.⁷⁶

The Scriptures teach the calling of all saints to the work of ministry.⁷⁷ The Holy Spirit facilitates this by personally indwelling each believer and by providing differing spiritual gifts. First, He gives equipping gifts to men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for ministry,⁷⁸ and He also gives unique and special spiritual serving gifts to each member of the body of Christ.⁷⁹ These gifts are sovereignly distributed to each individual believer for the common good of the body.⁸⁰ As believers serve in the local body they should begin to recognize, develop, and deploy their unique spiritual giftedness within the context of a local church.⁸¹

The Scriptures indicate that there were certain gifts given to the early church that are no longer normative for today. Gifts of divine revelation and miraculous wonders occurred during periods of the Old Testament (Moses, Elisha, Elijah), and during the Apostolic era of the early church. These gifts were given temporarily for the purpose of delivering direct divine revelation and confirming the authenticity of the revelation and those that revealed it. As the New Testament Scriptures were completed as the final revelation of God for the church, revelatory and confirmatory gifts were no longer necessary and were removed by the Spirit from use within the church.⁸² Despite the cessation of the ongoing ministry of certain supernatural gifts by individuals in the church, God still sovereignly works in the world by whatever means He may choose. For instance, though the confirmatory spiritual gift of healing is no longer normative, God has promised to hear the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will and His own glory for the sick, suffering, and afflicted.⁸³

The Holy Spirit played a unique role prior to the church age. He took part in creation,⁸⁴ He guided and protected Israel,⁸⁵ He spoke through the prophets to produce the OT Scriptures,⁸⁶ and He selectively and conditionally came upon and empowered certain people.⁸⁷ The Spirit's temporary residence upon OT saints was specifically related to enabling a certain task.

Section 3 – Man

Man was directly, immediately, and uniquely created by God in His image and likeness,⁸⁸ distinct from the beasts,⁸⁹ free of sin,⁹⁰ having a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God.⁹¹ God created man in two parts – the material part (body, members, flesh),⁹² and the immaterial part (soul, spirit, heart, conscience, mind, will).⁹³

God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God,⁹⁴ enjoy God's fellowship,⁹⁵ live in dependent obedience to God,⁹⁶ and thereby accomplish his purpose as the pinnacle of God's creation in the world.⁹⁷

⁷⁶ John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18

⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12

⁷⁸ Ephesians 4:7-12

⁷⁹ Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11

⁸⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:7,11; 1 Peter 4:10

⁸¹ Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Timothy 4:14

⁸² 1 Corinthians 13:8-12, 14:21-22; 2 Corinthians 12:12

⁸³ Psalm 115:3; Luke 18:1-6; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15

⁸⁴ Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30

⁸⁵ Isaiah 63:10-14

⁸⁶ 1 Peter 1:11; 1 Peter 1:20-21

⁸⁷ Genesis 41:38; Numbers 27:18; 1 Samuel 10:6-10, 16:13, 16:14, Psalm 51:11

⁸⁸ Genesis 1:26; James 3:9

⁸⁹ Genesis 1:28-29; Psalm 8:6-8; Matthew 6:26

⁹⁰ Romans 5:12; Eccl. 7:29

⁹¹ Genesis 2:7, 15-25

⁹² Romans 7:18, 23-24

⁹³ Matthew 10:28; Luke 1:46-47; Eccl. 12:7

⁹⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:31; Isaiah 43:7

⁹⁵ Psalm 73:25-28, John 14:1-3

⁹⁶ Deuteronomy 13:4

⁹⁷ Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 1:14; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11

In Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence,⁹⁸ incurred the penalty of physical and spiritual death,⁹⁹ became subject to the wrath of God,¹⁰⁰ and became inherently corrupt in all of his faculties, and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God.¹⁰¹ This total depravity in unregenerate man does not mean that every man is as bad as he could be,¹⁰² but rather every part of unregenerate man is so corrupted by sin that his heart,¹⁰³ mind,¹⁰⁴ will,¹⁰⁵ and emotions¹⁰⁶ will never cause him to seek God in and of himself. Enslaved to sin¹⁰⁷ with no ability to rescue himself, man is hopelessly lost¹⁰⁸ except by divine intervention.¹⁰⁹

The consequence of Adam's sin has been transmitted or put to one's account (imputed) to all men of all ages, and to all of their faculties, Jesus Christ being the only exception.¹¹⁰ All men are sinners by divine declaration,¹¹¹ by nature,¹¹² and by choice.¹¹³

Once redeemed, man is a new creation.¹¹⁴ He has been born again,¹¹⁵ indwelt by the Holy Spirit,¹¹⁶ and no longer a helpless slave to sin.¹¹⁷ The "old man" and his associated sin nature is crucified and gone, as the new man walks in newness of life.¹¹⁸ Sin can only gain a foothold in a believer's life through the flesh (body or members)¹¹⁹ which remains until our mortal body is transformed in glory.¹²⁰

We believe that God created mankind in His own image.¹²¹ In two separate acts, He created only two distinct genders: male and female.¹²² The genders of Adam and Eve were established by God and defined by their physiological sex at creation.¹²³ Subsequent to creation, God determines the gender of all other humans by their physiological sex at the time of birth.¹²⁴ Thus, all attempts to redefine human sexuality beyond the physiological male-female distinction (whether framed biologically or culturally) and all attempts to change one's birth gender (whether physiologically or socially)¹²⁵ – are sinful rebellion against our Creator. As our Creator, God explicitly stipulates in His Word that the only legitimate and acceptable sexual desires and sexual acts are those between a man and a woman within the context of marriage.¹²⁶

Section 4 – Salvation

Salvation is the work of God whereby a guilty sinner is made fit to be and finally brought into the presence of a holy God solely on the basis of God's grace through the finished work of Jesus Christ, and not on the basis of any human effort.¹²⁷ It is judicially accomplished by the merit of Christ's shed blood¹²⁸ and righteous life¹²⁹ being applied to the account¹³⁰ of the one who comes to the Lord in humble repentance¹³¹ and sincere faith or belief.¹³² This work of God will necessarily result in a change of the recipient's life,¹³³ from one of willful

⁹⁸ Genesis 3:9-11

⁹⁹ Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 3:23, 6:23, 8:7-8

¹⁰⁰ John 3:36; Ephesians 2:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:10

¹⁰¹ Romans 3:23, 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁰² Luke 11:13

¹⁰³ Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:21

¹⁰⁴ Romans 1:28; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Romans 8:5-8; Ephesians 4:17-18; Titus 1:15; 1 Corinthians 2:14

¹⁰⁵ John 8:44; John 1:12-13

¹⁰⁶ John 3:19-20; 1 John 3:10; Romans 1:30

¹⁰⁷ John 8:34, 44; Romans 6:6, 17-18

¹⁰⁸ Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:1-3

¹⁰⁹ 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 19:25-26;

John 8:36; John 1:12-13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:4-5

¹¹⁰ Romans 5:12 & 19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 8:46

¹¹¹ Romans 3:9-18; Romans 5:18-19

¹¹² Ephesians 2:3

¹¹³ Psalm 14:1-3; James 1:14-15; Ephesians 2:3

¹¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹¹⁵ John 3:3; 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1,4,18

¹¹⁶ 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Romans 8:9

¹¹⁷ Romans 6:6-7, & 14

¹¹⁸ Romans 6:3-11

¹¹⁹ Romans 6:12, 7:18, 23-24

¹²⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:50-57

¹²¹ Gen. 1:27; 5:1; 9:6; James 3:9

¹²² Gen. 1:27; 5:1-2; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

¹²³ Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 22

¹²⁴ Gen. 18:10; Lev. 12:2, 5, 7

¹²⁵ Deut. 22:5; 1 Cor. 11:14-16

¹²⁶ Gen 2:24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Matt. 5:28; 19:4-6; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 7:1-5; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Th. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4

¹²⁷ Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 2 Timothy 1:9; Isaiah 64:6

¹²⁸ 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 20:28;

¹²⁹ Romans 5:18-19

¹³⁰ Romans 8:3-4, 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21

¹³¹ Luke 24:47-48; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20

¹³² John 3:16, 3:18, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2: 8-9

¹³³ Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 12:14; James 2:14-26

rebellion¹³⁴ to one of growing in humble obedience.¹³⁵ Though the sinner receives the benefit, the purpose of salvation is to the praise of the glory of God's grace.¹³⁶

Salvation can be broken down into many elements since they are separately spoken of in Scripture. Some of them can be placed in a definite order because Scripture is clear on the matter.¹³⁷ Other elements, however, are not as clearly delineated by God's Word as to their sequence. Some indeed, probably occur almost simultaneously as one comes to Christ in saving faith. We have placed our discussion of the various elements of salvation in the order that can most easily be supported by Scripture and fits best with a God centered process of salvation in which He and not man is glorified.¹³⁸

Election

Before the foundation of the world God sovereignly and graciously chose in Christ those whom He would save.¹³⁹ God's election was not caused by any human initiative or will,¹⁴⁰ or in response to His anticipation of what man would do as He looked into the future (aberrant definition of foreknowledge). Indeed, foreknowledge means that God chose to have an intimate relationship¹⁴¹ with certain individuals before time began.¹⁴² God's election is based solely on His sovereign grace and mercy.¹⁴³ God's election is in perfect harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, and wisdom.¹⁴⁴ Sovereign election does not contradict nor negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,¹⁴⁵ nor does it negate the Christian's responsibility to boldly proclaim the gospel to all men.¹⁴⁶

Atonement

The atonement is the necessary¹⁴⁷ work that Christ accomplished in His life¹⁴⁸ (in that He showed Himself qualified to be the perfect sacrifice) and death¹⁴⁹ to earn the salvation of His elect. The atonement showed Christ's love¹⁵⁰ and justice¹⁵¹ as He took our sins upon Himself.¹⁵² Christ's death was an actual atonement for the elect and not a potential atonement for everyone.¹⁵³ Four terms are seen commonly in Scripture that show how the atonement met the needs that we have as sinners. First, because we deserve to die as a just penalty for our sin,¹⁵⁴ Christ died as a *substitutionary sacrifice* for us.¹⁵⁵ Second, because we deserve to bear Christ's wrath against us,¹⁵⁶ Christ died as a *propitiation* (the sacrifice that appeased or satisfied the wrath of God) for our sins.¹⁵⁷ Third, because we are separated from God by our sins,¹⁵⁸ Christ death *reconciled* us to God.¹⁵⁹

¹³⁴ John 3:19-20; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:21

¹³⁵ Luke 9:23; 1 Peter 1:2

¹³⁶ Ephesians 1:6, 12 & 14; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

¹³⁷ Romans 8:29-30

¹³⁸ Ephesians 1:6, 12 & 14

¹³⁹ 1 Peter 1:1-2; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9

¹⁴⁰ John 1:12-13; Romans 3:10-12, 9:16

¹⁴¹ Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 1:25, 7:23; John 10:27, 13:18; Romans 11:2, 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2

¹⁴² Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9

¹⁴³ Titus 3:4-7; Romans 9:15; Ephesians 1:4-7

¹⁴⁴ Romans 9:11-14

¹⁴⁵ Ezekiel 18:23 & 32, 33:11; John 3:16, 18 & 36, 5:40; Acts 17:30-

31 Romans 10:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Revelation 22:17

¹⁴⁶ Romans 10:13-17; Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁴⁷ Luke 24:25-26; Hebrews 2:17, 9:23, 25-26

¹⁴⁸ Romans 5:19; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26 & 28

¹⁴⁹ John 3:16; Romans 3:24-25, 5:8

¹⁵⁰ John 3:16; Romans 5:8

¹⁵¹ Romans 3:25-26

¹⁵² Isaiah 53:6; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24

¹⁵³ Isaiah 53:4-6, 8b, 10-11, 12b; Matthew 1:21, 20:28; John 6:37, 39, 44, 10:11, 15, 25-30, 11:51-52, 17:6, 9, 20; Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 10:28

¹⁵⁴ Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 1:32, 5:12, 6:21 & 23, 8:13; Ephesians 2:1,4-5

¹⁵⁵ Isaiah 53:4-6, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-13;

Hebrews 9:26-28; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18

¹⁵⁶ Psalm 7:11; John 3:36; Romans 1:18, 9:22; Ephesians 2:3, 5:6; Colossians 3:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10

¹⁵⁷ Romans 3:24-25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10

¹⁵⁸ Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21

¹⁵⁹ Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:19-21

Fourth, because we are in bondage to sin and the kingdom of Satan,¹⁶⁰ Christ died to *redeem* us out of that bondage,¹⁶¹ and make us slaves to righteousness.¹⁶²

Gospel Call

Scripture speaks of two types of “gospel calls.”¹⁶³ The “external/general call” to salvation and the “internal/effectual” call to salvation can be clearly discerned from God’s Word. Both calls are required for salvation to occur. They can be defined as follows:

The external/general call is when anyone hears the proclamation of the gospel message. All believers are commanded by God to evangelize everyone.¹⁶⁴ This general call was modeled by Christ,¹⁶⁵ the apostles,¹⁶⁶ and others,¹⁶⁷ and should be done at all costs¹⁶⁸ by believers as they are God’s instruments of spreading the gospel.¹⁶⁹ Many do not respond and in fact reject this gospel call.¹⁷⁰

The internal/effectual call is a supernatural act of God in which He uses the verbal proclamation of the gospel¹⁷¹ to summon His elect¹⁷² to Himself in such a way that they will respond in saving repentant faith¹⁷³ as He builds His church.¹⁷⁴ This call is invincible in that all whom the Father calls will come in repentant faith,¹⁷⁵ and all who come in repentant faith the Father will receive.¹⁷⁶

Regeneration

Regeneration is a supernatural work of God, primarily of the Holy Spirit, by which a new spiritual nature and life are given.¹⁷⁷ It is instantaneous and accomplished solely by the power of God, and not the human will,¹⁷⁸ through the instrumentality of the Word of God,¹⁷⁹ so that the believer is spiritually born again to be a new creation.¹⁸⁰ This work of the Holy Spirit combined with the effectual calling of the Father¹⁸¹ secures voluntary obedience to the gospel.¹⁸² Regeneration is evidenced by man exercising faith and repentance (conversion), and a pattern of righteous living.¹⁸³

Conversion (Faith/Repentance)

Conversion occurs when an individual, after being regenerated¹⁸⁴ and having received the internal effectual call of God, willingly responds to that gospel call.¹⁸⁵ It involves one’s repentance from sins¹⁸⁶ and placing one’s faith

¹⁶⁰ John 8:34 & 44; Romans 6:6, 17-18; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 3:8, 5:19

¹⁶¹ Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24; Galatians 3:13, 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 Peter 1:18-19

¹⁶² Romans 6:17-22; Titus 2:14

¹⁶³ Matthew 22:14

¹⁶⁴ Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; 2 Corinthians 9:19-23

¹⁶⁵ Matthew 7:13-14, 22:14; John 3:18-20;

¹⁶⁶ Acts 2:14-41; 3:12-26

¹⁶⁷ Acts 7, 8:4

¹⁶⁸ 2 Timothy 2:9 & 10

¹⁶⁹ Romans 11:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

¹⁷⁰ Matthew 7:13-14, 22:14; John 3:18-20;

¹⁷¹ Romans 1:16, 10:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

¹⁷² 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 9:15

¹⁷³ John 6:37; Acts 2:39; 13:48

¹⁷⁴ “Church” is literally “called out ones” – 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 1:5-6, Romans 8:28 (“the called” definite article); 1 Peter 2:9

¹⁷⁵ John 6:37, 44; John 17:12; Romans 8:29-30

¹⁷⁶ John 1:12, 6:37

¹⁷⁷ John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:3 & 23; Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5; Ezekiel 36:26-27

¹⁷⁸ John 1:12-13

¹⁷⁹ James 1:18; John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:23

¹⁸⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:17

¹⁸¹ John 6:37, 44 & 65; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

¹⁸² Acts 16:14

¹⁸³ 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1-4

¹⁸⁴ Acts 16:14; 1 John 5:1 — John’s reasoning throughout 1 John describes the actions of those that *have been* “born again”. This includes a decreased pattern of sin (3:9); love for the brethren (4:7); the ability to overcome temptation (5:3-4); protection from Satan (4:4 & 5:18); and belief (5:1).

¹⁸⁵ Matthew 11:28

¹⁸⁶ Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 4:17, 9:14; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 8:22, 14:15, 17:30, 20:21; Revelation 9:20-21, 16:8-11

or belief¹⁸⁷ in Jesus Christ alone¹⁸⁸ as Savior¹⁸⁹ and Lord¹⁹⁰ for salvation. Our salvation, including the aspects of repentance and faith, is a gift from God.¹⁹¹ Repentance is an acknowledgement of one's own sin against God,¹⁹² a heartfelt sorrow for that sin,¹⁹³ a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to God to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.¹⁹⁴ True faith or belief is more than knowing the facts of the gospel or believing them to be true.¹⁹⁵ It is a complete trust in, reliance upon, or commitment to those facts of the gospel, embracing Jesus Christ and His work on the cross in all of their fullness as they are presented in God's Word.¹⁹⁶ Christ is presented in God's Word as Prophet (the one whose words are true and tell us the way of salvation),¹⁹⁷ as Priest (the sacrifice for our sins),¹⁹⁸ and King (the one to whom we owe our allegiance as Savior and Lord).¹⁹⁹

Justification

Justification is a legal act of God in which He declares us to have a righteous standing before Him.²⁰⁰ This verdict from God pardons us from the guilt and penalty of sin,²⁰¹ and imputes Christ's righteousness to our account.²⁰² Justification comes to us entirely as a gift by grace through repentant faith, completely apart from any works righteousness or merit on our part.²⁰³

Adoption

Adoption is an act of God, that occurs in conjunction with our conversion (faith and repentance),²⁰⁴ whereby He makes us His children.²⁰⁵ Our resultant relationship from being adopted into God's family has many implications including:

1. We have the privilege of relating to God as a good and loving Father.²⁰⁶
2. We have the privilege of being heirs with Christ.²⁰⁷
3. We have the privilege of being led by the Holy Spirit.²⁰⁸
4. We have the privilege of being disciplined by a loving Father.²⁰⁹
5. We have the privilege of relating to fellow believers as brothers and sisters in Christ.²¹⁰
6. We have the privilege of imitating our heavenly Father in His holiness,²¹¹ and of honoring our heavenly Father to bring glory to Him.²¹²
7. We are no longer children of wrath.²¹³

¹⁸⁷ John 1:12, 3:16, 3:18; Romans 10:9; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9

¹⁸⁸ Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24; John 10:1-9, 14:6; Acts 4:12

¹⁸⁹ Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:10; Titus 3:4 & 6; 1 John 4:14

¹⁹⁰ Romans 10:9-10; Jude 4 ("Lord" here is gr. *despotes* – master, Lord, one with supreme authority – same in 2 Peter 2:1 – both passages are describing *false teachers* that deny the Lordship of Christ)

¹⁹¹ Daniel 9:13; John 4:10; Acts 5:30-31, 11:18; Romans 2:4, 5:15-16, 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 6:4

¹⁹² Psalm 51:1-4; Acts 3:26, 26:18

¹⁹³ Matthew 11:20-21; 2 Corinthians 7:10

¹⁹⁴ Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 3:8; Acts 14:15, 26:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:9

¹⁹⁵ James 2:19

¹⁹⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:1-4;

¹⁹⁷ John 1:14, 6:35, 14:6; Acts 3:22-23

¹⁹⁸ Hebrews 3:1, 4:14-16, 10:11-14

¹⁹⁹ Mark 8:34-37; Luke 14:24-33; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4; Revelation 19:16

²⁰⁰ There is a sense of "declared righteous" vs. "made righteous" in Deuteronomy 25:1; Proverbs 17:15; Isaiah 5:23; Luke 7:29; Romans 3:20, 26 & 28, 4:5, 5:1, 8:30, 33-34, Galatians 2:16, 3:6, 3:24

²⁰¹ Psalm 32:2; Romans 4:5-8, 5:1, 8:1, 33-34; 2 Corinthians 5:19

²⁰² Romans 4, 5:16-17

²⁰³ Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:25-28, 4, 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5

²⁰⁴ John 1:12; Galatians 3:26

²⁰⁵ John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; 1 John 3:1-2

²⁰⁶ Psalm 103:13-14; Matthew 6:9, 32, 7:11; Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:7

²⁰⁷ Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:4

²⁰⁸ Romans 8:13-14

²⁰⁹ Hebrews 12:5-6

²¹⁰ Matthew 12:50; Romans 1:13, 8:12, 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10, 6:8, 7:15; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; James 1:2, 2:15

²¹¹ Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16;

²¹² Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-15; 1 Peter 3:7

²¹³ Ephesians 2:3

Sanctification

At the moment of salvation, every believer is *positionally sanctified* (set apart from sin to be a dedicated possession to God)²¹⁴ by the work of Jesus Christ, and is therefore identified as a saint (“holy one”).²¹⁵

There is also, by the believer’s submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the word of God, a progressive sanctification by which the believer’s life is continually brought into increasing conformity with the reality of his position in Christ – in essence becoming transformed into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.²¹⁶

Every saved person is involved in a daily conflict – the new creation in Christ doing battle with the flesh. The struggle stays with the believer and is never completely ended all through this earthly life. While the total eradication of sin (sinless perfection) is not possible in this life, we are no longer slaves to sin and adequate provision is made for victory in every temptation through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.²¹⁷

Eternal Security

It is the privilege of God’s children to be completely sure of their eternal security in Christ. As we deal with the issue of our eternal security in Christ, it is important that we understand four terms – eternal security, preservation, perseverance, and assurance.

Eternal security means that all who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and granted faith and repentance by the Holy Spirit, cannot fall from grace and are eternally saved.²¹⁸

Preservation is what God does through His almighty power as He “preserves” the faith that He has given us and causes us to persevere in the faith until the end.²¹⁹

Perseverance of the saints is what we as believers do and means that all those who are truly born again will remain true to the faith – not only in *word*, but also in *deed* until the end of their lives or the rapture of the saints.²²⁰ It also means that *only* those who persevere to the end were ever truly born again.²²¹ When God saves an individual they are truly changed²²² and therefore it would be inconsistent with their new nature to use their liberty in Christ as a license for sinful living and carnality.²²³

Assurance means that we are able to know with certainty the reality of our salvation through the objective testimony of Scripture²²⁴, the supernatural internal testimony of the Holy Spirit²²⁵, and the increasing fruit of righteousness observed in one’s own life.²²⁶

²¹⁴ Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9

²¹⁵ John 1:12; Acts 10:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 13:12

²¹⁶ John 17:17 & 19; Romans 6:1-22; Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 5:23

²¹⁷ Romans 6, 7:14-25; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9; 1 Peter 1:14-16; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:8-10

²¹⁸ John 3:16, 3:36, 5:24, 6:38-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:38-39;

Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

²¹⁹ John 17:11 & 15; 1 Corinthians 1:6-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 1:24-25

²²⁰ Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13; John 8:31-32, 15:6; Romans 11:22; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 3:14; James 2:14-17

²²¹ 1 John 2:19

²²² Romans 6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9

²²³ Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1;

Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14

²²⁴ John 3:16, 3:36, 6:38-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 5:13

²²⁵ Romans 8:16-17

²²⁶ Matthew 3:8-15, 7:15-20, 13:3-23; John 14:21, 15:1-11; Romans 8:1; 1 John 2:3

Death And The Intermediate State Of The Believer

Physical death is the means (prior to the rapture) by which the believer is brought into the presence of the Lord, and therefore it is something that we should eagerly anticipate.²²⁷ Death for the believer is not an expression of God's wrath or condemnation.²²⁸ Our death does not result in any loss of our immaterial consciousness²²⁹, our soul will pass immediately into the presence of Christ,²³⁰ and our corruptible body will undergo decay on the earth.²³¹ As our soul is separated from our body, all of the sinful propensities that are associated with in our flesh (body, members) will be forever gone.²³² Until our complete glorification, our redeemed souls will remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.²³³

Glorification

For believers, our glorification is complete when our redeemed souls are reunited with our new glorified bodies in the resurrection. These bodies are incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual. We will spend the rest of eternity in our glorified state worshipping and serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.²³⁴

Section 5 – The Church

Universal And Local

All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body,²³⁵ the bride of Christ,²³⁶ the church of which Christ is head.²³⁷

The formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost²³⁸ and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture.²³⁹

The Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age.²⁴⁰ The church is distinct from Israel,²⁴¹ a mystery not revealed until this age.²⁴²

The New Testament Scriptures clearly teach that the universal Church is established and propagated through the agency of local churches²⁴³ and that the members of this one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies that conform to Scripture.²⁴⁴

²²⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23

²²⁸ Romans 8:1

²²⁹ Revelation 6:9-11

²³⁰ Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23

²³¹ 1 Corinthians 15:35-50

²³² Romans 6:11-19, 7:13-25, 8:23, 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 9:27, 15:50-57; Philippians 3:20-21; James 4:1

²³³ 2 Corinthians 5:8

²³⁴ John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-3

²³⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5

²³⁶ 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8

²³⁷ Ephesians 1:22, 4:25; Colossians 1:18

²³⁸ Acts 2:1-21, 38-47

²³⁹ 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

²⁴⁰ Ephesians 2:11-3:6

²⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 10:32

²⁴² Ephesians 3:1-6, 5:32

²⁴³ Acts 14:23, 27, 20:17,28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1

²⁴⁴ Hebrews 10:23-25

Leadership

The one supreme authority for the Church is Christ,²⁴⁵ and His authority is directly mediated via His Spirit and His Word.²⁴⁶ The Biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders,²⁴⁷ deacons,²⁴⁸ both of whom must meet biblical qualifications.²⁴⁹

These leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ²⁵⁰ and have authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership in all manners of church life.²⁵¹ In general the elders are to be involved in spiritual shepherding such as ministry of the word and prayer, whereas deacons are involved in the day to day ministry activities of serving the body in practical ways.²⁵²

Each local church is autonomous in its own government, free from any external human authority or hierarchy of persons or organizations, yet all are subject to Christ.²⁵³ Autonomy is not meant to exclude interdependence among local churches as they cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the gospel.²⁵⁴ The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well, under the guidance of God's Spirit and in accordance with the commands and principles in God's Word.²⁵⁵

Purpose

The purpose of the church is to glorify God²⁵⁶ by building itself up in the faith,²⁵⁷ by making disciples through the proclamation of the gospel and the Word,²⁵⁸ by fellowship with one another,²⁵⁹ by doing these things showing the wisdom of God to heavenly beings,²⁶⁰ by standing for the truth of God's Word,²⁶¹ by maintaining the purity of the church²⁶² to provoke Israel to jealousy,²⁶³ and by keeping the ordinances.²⁶⁴

Ordinances

Two ordinances have been perpetually committed to the local church: Baptism²⁶⁵ and the Lords Supper²⁶⁶.

Christian baptism by immersion in water²⁶⁷ is an expression of the believer's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is the solemn and beautiful visual testimony of our union with Christ in which we portray death to sin and resurrection to a new life.²⁶⁸ It is also a sign of initial fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ.²⁶⁹ While not necessary for salvation, water baptism is commanded and an act of obedience for all who come to saving faith.²⁷⁰

The Lord's Supper is the ongoing commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes, by eating bread, signifying His body broken, and drinking the cup, signifying His blood, shed on our behalf.²⁷¹ The

²⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18

²⁴⁶ John 14:26, 15:26; 16:13, 17:14-21; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Peter 1:19

²⁴⁷ Acts 20:28-32; 1 Peter 5:1-4

²⁴⁸ Philippians 1:1

²⁴⁹ 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5

²⁵⁰ 1 Timothy 5:17-22

²⁵¹ Hebrews 13:7,17

²⁵² Acts 6:1-4

²⁵³ Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

²⁵⁴ 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

²⁵⁵ Acts 15:19-31, 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4

²⁵⁶ Ephesians 3:21

²⁵⁷ Ephesians 4:13-16

²⁵⁸ Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2

²⁵⁹ Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3

²⁶⁰ Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12

²⁶¹ 1 Timothy 3:15

²⁶² Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2

²⁶³ Romans 11:11-12

²⁶⁴ Acts 2:38-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

²⁶⁵ Acts 2:38

²⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

²⁶⁷ Acts 8:36-39

²⁶⁸ Romans 6:1-11

²⁶⁹ Acts 2:41-42, 8:12-17, 10:47-48

²⁷⁰ Acts 10:47; 1 Corinthians 1:17

²⁷¹ Luke 22:19-20; John 6:53

Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination.²⁷² Whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the body and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper nevertheless is an actual communion with the believer and the risen Christ.²⁷³

Section 6 – The Spiritual Realm

Angels

Angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. As a different order of being than man, they were created to serve and worship God in the spiritual realm and do not experience marriage, reproduction, or redemption.²⁷⁴

Satan And Demons

Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator, by taking numerous angels with him in his fall,²⁷⁵ and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve.²⁷⁶ Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man,²⁷⁷ the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,²⁷⁸ and shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire.²⁷⁹ Although Satan and his minions are powerful beings, they are completely subservient to the sovereign will of almighty God.²⁸⁰ Although the Apostles were given power to and did exercise control over demons,²⁸¹ believers have no power in and of themselves and have not been called to direct or order the activity of Satan and his demons, and should recognize that only God Himself is able to do so.²⁸² Rather, believers are called to resist the devil and rely on the Word of God to give them strength to do battle with Satan.²⁸³ Since believers are called to resist Satan, we can say that believers can be *influenced and tempted* by Satan; however, believers cannot be *possessed* (or enslaved) by Satan to the point of having no ability to resist sin and temptation.²⁸⁴

Death And The Afterlife Of The Unbeliever

All mankind will undergo a bodily resurrection after death – the saved to eternal life in heaven,²⁸⁵ and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment.²⁸⁶ The souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment in hell until the second resurrection,²⁸⁷ when the soul and a resurrection body will be united.²⁸⁸ They shall then appear at the Great White Throne for judgment, and shall be cast into the lake of fire, cut off from the life of God forever, as a just retribution and punishment for their sins.²⁸⁹

²⁷² 1 Corinthians 11:28-32

²⁷³ 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

²⁷⁴ Mark 12:25; Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 2:6-7 & 16; Revelation 5:11-14, 19:10, 22:8-9

²⁷⁵ Ezekiel 28:11-19

²⁷⁶ Genesis 3:1-15

²⁷⁷ 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10

²⁷⁸ Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14

²⁷⁹ Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10

²⁸⁰ Job 1:6-12; Luke 22:31-32; Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 12:10-11

²⁸¹ Mark 6:7 & 13; Luke 10:1 & 17

²⁸² 2 Peter 2:10-11; Jude 8-9

²⁸³ Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 6:4, 11, 14; 1 Corinthians 10:13;

Ephesians 6:11-16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9

²⁸⁴ Luke 4:2; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 6:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8

²⁸⁵ John 6:39; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2

Corinthians 4:14

²⁸⁶ Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15

²⁸⁷ Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15

²⁸⁸ John 5:28-29

²⁸⁹ Isaiah 59:18; Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15

Section 7 – Last Things

The Rapture Of The Church

The return of the Lord Jesus is imminent and will be a personal, bodily return to remove His church from the world prior to the period of the Great Tribulation.²⁹⁰

The Tribulation Period

Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world.²⁹¹ These 7 years are the 70th week of Daniels prophecy.²⁹² This period will also serve to purify the nation of Israel, and prepare her for entrance into the Millennial Kingdom, and Jesus Christ's literal reign on earth.²⁹³

The Second Coming of Christ And His Millennial Reign

These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth, at which time He will strike down the unbelieving nations at the Battle of Armageddon.²⁹⁴ Christ will occupy the throne of David,²⁹⁵ tribulation martyrs will be raised and the living will be judged,²⁹⁶ and Jesus will establish His Messianic kingdom for a literal thousand years on the earth.²⁹⁷ During this time, all the resurrected and glorified saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth.²⁹⁸ This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and the removal of Satan from the world.²⁹⁹

The kingdom itself will be the literal fulfillment of God's promise to Israel³⁰⁰ to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience.³⁰¹ The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside,³⁰² but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing.³⁰³ This time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life.³⁰⁴

The Judgment Of The Lost And Hell

Satan will be released after the thousand year reign of Christ³⁰⁵ and will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints. At that time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven.³⁰⁶ Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone³⁰⁷ whereupon Christ, who is the judge of all men³⁰⁸, will resurrect and judge the unsaved dead at the Great White Throne of Judgment and they will be committed to an eternal, conscious punishment in the lake of fire.³⁰⁹

²⁹⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, 5:9

²⁹¹ Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27, 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16

²⁹² Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46

²⁹³ Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 20:33-38; Zechariah 13:8-9

²⁹⁴ Matthew 24:27-31, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16:16, 19:11-21

²⁹⁵ Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11, 2:29-30

²⁹⁶ Revelation 20:4-6; Matthew 25:31-43 (Note: the exact timing of the resurrection of Old Testament saints is not clearly specified in Scripture, but it will certainly be prior to the Millennial Kingdom – Daniel 12:2-3).

²⁹⁷ Revelation 20:1-7

²⁹⁸ Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:18,22,27; Matthew 19:28; 1

Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:4-6

²⁹⁹ Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 19:20-21, 20:1-3

³⁰⁰ Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 27:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17

³⁰¹ Deuteronomy 28:15-68

³⁰² Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26

³⁰³ Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 20:33-38, 36:22-32; Zechariah 12:10, 13:8-9

³⁰⁴ Isaiah 11, 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38

³⁰⁵ Revelation 20:7-8

³⁰⁶ Revelation 20:9

³⁰⁷ Revelation 20:10

³⁰⁸ John 5:27; Acts 17:30-31

³⁰⁹ Romans 2:5-10, 3:19; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:11-15

The Eternal State

After the closing of the millennium and the judgment of unbelievers, the redeemed will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved³¹⁰ and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells.³¹¹ The heavenly city will come down out of heaven,³¹² and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another.³¹³ Our Lord Jesus Christ, His redemptive mission coming to full fruition, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father³¹⁴ that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever.

³¹⁰ 2 Peter 3:10

³¹¹ Ephesians 5:5

³¹² Revelation 21:1-2

³¹³ John 17:3; Revelation 21-22

³¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

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