

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

of

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Bibliology

I. THE REVELATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

General Revelation - All men are responsible for the knowledge of God through general revelation in creation (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:18-32); human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15); and providence (Acts 14:17). The Bible teaches that God is at work in this world, sovereignly directing all events (Job 12:23, Ps. 47:7-8, 66:7, Is. 10:5-12, Dan. 2:21, Acts 17:26). One cannot know the specific truths about God and His provision of salvation without special revelation.

Special Revelation - I believe that God has revealed Himself and His works in a much greater way through special revelation utilizing direct communication with man (Gen. 2:16-17, 12:1-3; Acts 9:3-6); the inspired, written Word (2 Pet. 1:20-21, see Superintendence by Holy Spirit); and the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1-5, 14-18, 1 Jn. 1:1, Rev. 19:13).

II. THE INSPIRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible teaches that the *autographa* of both the Old and New Testaments were verbally and plenary inspired (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Mt. 5:18, Lk. 16:17). The authors were borne along by the Holy Spirit to write down the inspired words of God (2 Pet. 1:20-21, 2 Sam. 23:2). The Bible in its entirety is inerrant (Mt. 5:18, Lk. 16:17) sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Heb. 4:12), infallible (Jn. 10:35), and authoritative for faith and practice (Ps. 119:7-11, 119:9-11). The Bible is not subject to one's private interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20).

The Bible itself claims to be God's inerrant revelation (2 Sam. 23:2, Jer. 23:28, Eze. 11:5, Hos. 2:13, Joel 2:12, Acts 2:16-17, Jn. 5:45-47). The New Testament implicitly authenticates its own inspiration, affirming that the inspired text was written down by men as they were moved along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21, Acts 1:16, 2 Tim. 3:16).

Process - I believe that the process of inspiration was supernaturally and providentially controlled by the Holy Spirit through various means (2 Pet. 1:16-21, 2 Tim. 3:16), including word-for-word dictation (Ex. 20:2-17; cf. 31:18, also Jer. 1:9, Ex. 4:12, Num 22:38, Isa 30:8,12-14; Jer 6:10-12) and the special enabling of individual writers borne along by the Holy Spirit to write down exactly what He willed though using the human authors' vocabulary and personality (Lk. 1:1-3, Heb. 1:1, Jn. 14:26, 2 Pet. 1:21).

Inerrancy and infallibility - I believe that the Bible is inerrant (without error) and infallible (true) in every word and every part (Mt. 5:18, 2 Tim. 3:16-17). God's Word has the same authority as its Author, God Himself. If the Bible is inspired of God and therefore infallible and inerrant, it is also authoritative in our lives. The Bible itself claims inherent authority (Isa. 42:8-9, 2 Tim. 4:2, Isa. 55:11, Ex. 7:17); Jesus quoted the Word to counter Satan's temptations (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10); and He quoted Scripture as coming from God (Mt. 19:5, Gen. 2:24). The New Testament speaks of itself as being the Scripture on the same level as the Old Testament (*graphe* – 2 Pet. 3:16, 1 Tim. 5:18).

Sufficiency - I believe in the sufficiency and relevancy of Scriptures to meet every need of all peoples at all times in history (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:3). The Scripture is sufficient to bring men to salvation (Rom. 10:17, Jas. 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23) and to equip us

for our God-given responsibilities (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Ps. 119:1). The Bible strongly warns against adding to or deleting from God's Word (Dt. 4:2, Prov. 30:5-6, Rev. 22:18-19).

III. THE CANON OF THE WORD OF GOD

I believe that the canon of Scripture is made up of the sixty-six books of the Old and the New Testaments and that the canon is now closed (Rev. 22:19, Heb. 2:4).

The canon of Scripture is the collection of books that has been universally recognized by the church as the authoritative, inspired Word of God. The term canon has reference to certain standards by which Bible books could be measured to ascertain canonicity. Standards include the apostolic authority of the authors (2 Pet. 3:2), the book's unique, vital contribution to the whole of Scripture, and universal acceptance by the church. The Old Testament testifies to its own inclusion in the canon (Josh. 1:8, Ps. 119). The writers recognized the divine authority of their writings (Josh. 6:26 and 1 Kgs. 16:34; 2 Chr. 36:22-23). The New Testament writers viewed the Old Testament as inspired (Lk. 1:70; Heb. 1:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:10-12). The New Testament writers viewed their own writings as inspired (1 Thes. 4:15; Rev. 1:3-4) and regarded other Bible authors as Scripture as well (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

IV. THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD (PRESERVATION)

I believe that the Word of God was written down in the *autographa* in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek and then preserved for every generation in the totality of extant manuscripts (Ps. 119:89, 160; Is. 40:8, Mt. 24:35, 1 Pet. 1:25).

V. THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

I believe in the vital importance of God's Word being translated into the common language of every nation and people group (Neh. 8:8). While there is a breadth of differing translation philosophies, I believe the stronger translations are the more formal equivalent (word-for word) translations that are yet understandable and readable in the language of our day. Such translations include the NASB, NKJV, ESV, and KJV. Good German translations include the Elberfelder, Schlachter, and Luther Bibel (1984).

VI. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

Perspicuity – I believe that the central message of the Bible can be clearly understood by anyone who is seeking God and who is willing to obey Him. Moses commanded parents to teach their children the Scriptures (Dt. 6:6-7). The Bible can make simple people wise (Ps. 19:7, 119:130).

Illumination – The natural man cannot and will not accept the things of God, but the spiritual man is able to understand God's Word through the Holy Spirit's illumination (1 Cor. 2:14-15, Eph. 1:17-19, Ps. 119:18, 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

Unity – I believe the Bible is a coherent unity focused on God's sovereign rule in the universe through the Person and work of Christ (Ps. 2, Matt 4:17; 24:14; Acts 8:12; 28:31, Gen. 3:15, Heb. 10:11-14, See Christology, Mediatorial Offices).

Grammatical-historical interpretation – I believe that the literal, grammatical and historical interpretation of Scripture is critical to right doctrine (2 Tim. 2:15, Neh. 8:8, Ezr. 7:10). This natural approach to the study of God’s Word must take into account the inherent grammar of the language, the particular historical and cultural context of the text, as well as the genre in which the passage was written.

Application – I believe the Word of God is intended to be carefully and personally applied to the individual’s life. A literal exegesis and explanation of the text is critical, but without application to one’s life, the soul is left unaffected (Mt. 7:24-27, Ps. 119:4, Jas. 1:25).

Theology Proper

I. EXISTENCE OF GOD

I believe in the existence of one God in three persons. The Bible assumes the existence of God. The Scripture also depicts rational arguments for God's existence such as the cosmological and teleological arguments (Ps. 19:1-6, Rom. 1:19-20).

II. NATURE OF GOD

God is a Person

I believe that God is a personal being and not just a force. He has a personal name, *Yahweh* or *Jehovah* (Ex. 3:15, Ps. 20:7). He has personal attributes of anger (Num. 22:22, Rom. 1:18); love (1 Jn. 4:7-8, 2 Cor. 13:11); volition (Dt. 7:7-8, Rom. 9:14-15); and intellect (Rom. 11:34, 1 Cor. 2:16). God acts as a personal being in desiring fellowship with man (Gen. 3:8-9, Rev. 3:20) and can be approached as a Father by those who trust in Him (2 Cor. 6:18, Ps. 103:13, Lk. 11:9-13).

God is the only Being Who is completely independent of anything or anyone. God does not need a relationship with man although He desires it (Rev. 3:20; Jn. 17:5, 24).

God is a Spirit and therefore is immaterial, has no spatial dimensions, cannot be perceived by the senses, and has a unique excellence beyond anything else (Jn. 1:18, 4:21, 24). The Lord sometimes revealed Himself as a theophany, a self-manifestation of God in the form of a physical being (Gen. 32:22-30, Judg. 13:6, 17-18).

God is Great

Holy – God is holy in majesty in that He is completely unique and separate from any other being that would claim to be a god (Ex. 20:3; Is. 6:3, 1 Cor. 8:4-6, 1 Sam. 2:2, Jer. 2:11, Dt. 4:35). He is completely in His own category.

Sovereign – God is the absolute sovereign over all things. He answers to no other being. He is the Ruler over all (Dan. 4:35, 1 Tim. 6:15, Rev. 17:14).

Infinite – God is not limited by anything. He is infinitely greater than anything else (Dan. 4:29-35, Ps. 135:5-6, Job 42:2).

Eternal – He is unlimited in time and has no beginning or end (Rev. 1:8, 4:8, Jn. 8:58).

Omnipotent – God is unlimited in His power. He is able to do anything that He wills to do (Mt. 3:9, Ps. 115:3, Is. 40:15, 43:13).

Omnipresent – God is not confined to space (Jer. 23:23-24, Ps. 139:7-10).

Omniscient – God knows everything (Ps. 139:1-4).

Immutable – God never changes. Unlike man and His creation, God is unchangeable in His nature (Mal. 3:6, Ps. 102:26-27, Jas. 1:17).

God is Good

Righteous – He is just and meets the obligations of every relationship (Gen. 18:25, Dt. 32:4).

Loving – He loves mankind and desires to save them from sin (Jn. 3:16, 1 Jn. 4:7-8).

Merciful – He is compassionate to those in need (Ps. 86:15, Lk. 6:36, Lam. 3:22).

True or faithful – He keeps His promises (Num. 23:19, Lam. 3:23, Dt. 32:4).

Gracious – God offers undeserved favor for sinners (Jn. 1:14, Rom. 5:20, Eph. 2:8-9).

God is a Triunity

God is and always has been eternally one God (Dt. 4:35, 6:4, 1 Tim. 2:5, Rom. 3:30) in three distinct Persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They are all equally God (Ps. 45:6-7, Heb. 1:8, Mt. 3:16-17). God the Father is the Person that is sovereign over all (1 Cor. 15:24, Mt. 6:26). The Person of the Son, Jesus Christ, is revealed most clearly in the New Testament (Jn. 1:1-3, 14; see Christology). The Holy Spirit is presented as a distinct Person from the Father and the Son (Mt. 28:19, Lk. 3:22, 11:13 – see Pneumatology).

III. THE DESIGNATIONS OF GOD

The personal name of God, *Yahweh*, is designated in many English translations with “LORD” (Ex. 3:14, Is. 42:8, Ps. 83:18). It is His covenant name, revealing Himself as the faithful, unchanging God Who will keep His promises (Mal. 3:6). *Elohim and Theos* are the original language terms for deity. *El Shaddai* is literally translated “God Almighty” (Gen. 17:1, Ex. 6:3). *El Elyon* means “God Most High” (Gen. 14:18, Ps. 78:35). *El ‘Olam* - is the title meaning “God Everlasting” (Gen. 21:33). *Adonai* is the Hebrew word translated “Lord” or “Master.” (Gen. 18:12, Judges 6:13). *Kurios* is the primary Greek word translated “Lord or Master” in the New Testament (Rom. 10:9-10, Phil. 2:9-11, Mt. 11:25).

IV. THE WORKS OF GOD

I believe that God is actively involved in His creation within the realm of time. He has created all things and He sustains and guides His creation for His own purposes.

Creation – God made all things with His words out of nothing in six literal days (Ex. 20:8-11, Gen. 1:1, Ps. 33:6,9; Rev. 4:11, Is. 43:7, Gen. 1:5,8,13,19,23,31). All things were created by God (Jn. 1:3) including matter (Col. 1:16).

Providence – is God’s intervening power in creation to sustain all that He has made and to direct all of it for His purposes.

Preservation – God actively and purposefully sustains all of Creation with His decretive will (Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:17, 2 Pet. 3:7, Job 34:14-15, Ps. 104:29).

Presence of evil – God is sovereign over all, yet He does not perform evil actions and cannot be held morally responsible for the sinful actions of others (Jas. 1:13-14). God has permitted evil to take place (Gen. 50:20, cf. 37:11,20,24; Ex. 7:3, 9:16; Ps. 105:25; 1 Sam. 2:25, 2 Sam. 24:1). God uses evil to glorify Himself and perform His purposes (Prov. 16:4, Acts 2:23, 4:27), including punishment of individuals for sin (Amos 3:6, 4:6, 1 Kgs. 11:14, Is. 10:5, Jer. 25:9); sanctification of His people (Rom. 8:28); and the display of His glory (Rom. 9:14-24).

Prayer – is ordained by God as a means of bringing about His perfect will. I believe in God’s perfect sovereign control over every process and event in the universe, and I must obey His command to pray for His purposes to be accomplished in the earth (Jn. 16:24, Jas. 4:2-3, Mt. 6:10).

Government – God governs all of His creation so that it fulfills the purposes He intends (Ps. 103:19, Dan. 4:35, Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 15:27, Eph. 1:11). The *decrees* of God refer

to His plan before Creation to perform all of His purposes (Ps. 139:16, Job 14:5, Acts 2:23, Acts 4:28, Eph. 1:4, 2:10). However, from man's finite perspective and the Scripture's revelation, man's choices are highly significant not only for himself, but for the wellbeing of others and God's glory (Eze. 33:11, Mt. 11:28; 23:37; Jn. 5:40).

Miracles are God's works in creation that are clearly supernatural. Whether or not the miracles are a suspension of natural law or a countering of natural law with supernatural forces is not clearly revealed in Scripture. However, the purposes of miracles are clear: to glorify God (Mt. 9:8, Jn. 9:3), to substantiate revelation (Lk. 5:24; Jn. 3:2, Heb. 2:4), and to meet human needs (Mt. 14:14, Lk. 7:13).

Christology

I. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Deity of Christ - I believe in the deity of Jesus Christ as the second person of the Godhead. Christ Himself claimed to be God (Jn 8:21-23, 42; 14:9). He claimed the personal name of God, "I Am" (Jn. 8:58) and called Himself the "Alpha and Omega" (Rev. 1:8). Jesus said that He and the Father were One (Jn. 10:30).

Divine designations of Christ - Many Scriptures use designations for Christ testifying to His deity. He is called God (*theos* – Jn. 1:1, 18; 20:28, Tit. 2:13, Heb 1:8) and the Lord (*kurios* – Mt. 4:10, 7:22; Rom. 10:9-10, Phil. 2:10-11). The Scripture testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Mt. 11:25-27; 17:5, 1 Cor. 15:28, Heb. 1:1-3, 5, 8). He is called the "only begotten Son" (*monogeneis*), a reference to His uniqueness as the preeminent Son (Jn. 1:18, 3:16; Heb. 11:17). He is also called the firstborn (*prototokos*), a reference to His superiority over all creation (Col. 1:15, Rom. 8:29). He is preexistent, being sent by the Father (Jn. 3:16, 5:23, 10:36). He is the heir of all things (Ps. 2:8, Heb. 1:2). He is the Word (Jn. 1:1). Christ has eternally been the Son, the second member of the Godhead (Jn. 8:58, 17:5,24; Phil. 2:6). Christ called Himself "the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev. 22:13). He spoke of Himself as the Son of Man, a reference to Daniel 7:13, where the Son is given "an everlasting dominion ... which will not be destroyed" (Acts 7:56, Dan. 7:13-17, Mt. 26:64).

Divine Attributes - I believe the deity of Christ is demonstrated by His divine attributes. Jesus Christ demonstrated omnipotence (Mt. 8:26-27; Jn 2:1-11), omniscience (Jn. 1:48, Jn. 16:30), omnipresence (Mt. 18:20; 28:20), sovereignty (Mk. 2:5-7), and immortality (Jn. 10:17-18). He also accepted worship (Mt. 14:33, Heb. 1:6, Rev. 5:13).

Humanity of Christ - Old Testament prophecy spoke of Christ as coming as a man (Is. 53:2-3). He was born of a woman (Gal. 4:4); partook of "flesh and blood" (Heb. 2:14); and was revealed in the flesh (Jn. 1:14, 1 Tim. 3:16). The people of Christ's day called Him "the carpenter's son" (Mt. 13:55). He had a record of human ancestry (Lk. 3:23-38, Mt. 1:1-17). He was born and matured (Lk. 2:7, 40). He suffered fatigue (Jn. 4:6, Lk. 23:46), hunger (Mt. 4:2), and thirst (Jn. 19:28). He suffered physical death (Heb. 2:9, Lk. 23:46). Jesus willingly limited the use of His omniscience (Mt. 24:36) having a human mind and maturing "in wisdom" (Lk. 2:52). He learned submission to His parents (Lk. 2:51, Heb. 5:8).

Incarnation of Christ - I believe that Jesus was the Son of God from eternity past. He willingly humbled Himself to become a man in order to be exalted and enjoy greater glory and rule over His creation (Rom. 1:4; Heb. 10:5, Phil. 2:5-11). I believe that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary as prophesied by Isaiah (Is. 7:14). The New Testament unequivocally states Mary's virginity at Christ's conception when the Holy Spirit came upon her (Mt. 1:18, 24-25; Lk. 1:27-35).

Hypostatic union - I believe that Jesus at His Incarnation became fully a man and was still fully God (Jn. 1:1-3, 14). At the point Christ became a man, He emptied Himself (Phil. 2:4), not of His divine attributes but only of the use of some of His attributes for a time (Lk. 2:52). His divine and human natures remain distinct from one another.

II. THE WORK OF CHRIST

Mediatorial offices - I believe that Jesus Christ, as the God-Man, is able to mediate between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). Christ perfectly fulfilled three Old Testament offices. He was the perfect *prophet* as Moses prophesied (Dt. 18:15-18, Lk. 7:16, Jn. 6:14, Acts 3:22-24). As the God Man, Christ fulfilled the office of *priest* by offering Himself as the sacrifice for sin (Heb. 2:17; 9:11-15, Jn. 10:17-18). He continues presently His intercessory work at the Father's right hand (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 4:14-16, 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5). Jesus fulfilled the role of the promised *King* as the rightful heir to the Davidic throne (2 Sam. 7:12-14, Mt. 1:1, 6; Rom. 1:3).

Specific works - I believe that the second member of the Godhead plays an active role in fulfilling the divine plan. He was active in creation (Jn. 1:2-3; Heb. 1:2). He possibly appeared in His pre-incarnate state as the "angel of Yahweh" (Gen. 18:1-33, Gen. 6:22).

Life and ministry - Jesus took flesh and lived a sinless life in order to perfectly fulfill God's Law for all mankind (Rom. 5:19; Gal. 4:4-5). Christ lived as our perfect example of a selfless Servant (Mt. 16:24, Jn. 13:12-15, Phil. 2:1-11, 1 Cor. 11:1, 1 Pet. 2:21). During His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ not only did not sin, but He was unable to sin. This is called Christ's impeccability. Being both fully God and fully man and having no sin nature (1 Jn. 3:5, Jn. 5:19, 14:30), it was impossible for Him to be tempted to do evil as we are tempted (Jas. 1:13).

Substitutionary death - Jesus suffered physical death for mankind (Phil. 2:8, Heb. 2:9).

Sacrifice – Jesus' blood was sufficient to be the perfect sacrifice to take away the sins of all men (Mt. 26:28; 2:2; Heb. 9:12-14; Eph. 2:13; Acts 20:28). Jesus' death propitiated (fully satisfied) God's righteous anger for sin (1 Jn. 2:2, Rom. 3:25-26).

Redemption – Redemption is the act of buying someone back from slavery. Christ's blood was the ransom paid for those who were slaves to sin but now have placed their faith in Christ alone (Acts 20:28, Eph. 1:7, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, Rev. 5:8-9, Rom. 8:23).

Reconciliation – Man is by nature at enmity with God because of sin and deserves to suffer God's wrath (Col. 1:21, Jn. 3:36). Christ in His death took the wrath of God for man and brought peace between the repentant sinner and God (2 Cor. 5:18-21, Rom. 5:1).

Extent of the atonement – Jesus' death was for the sins of the whole world for peoples from every age (1 Jn. 2:2; 4:14, 1 Tim. 4:10). In His omniscience, God has known from eternity past those who will and will not place their faith in Christ's atonement, and yet He still offers salvation freely to all men (Jn. 3:16; 1:29).

Resurrection – The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the keystone of the Christian faith (1 Thes. 4:14, 1 Cor. 15:15; 20-21).

Ascension – Jesus bodily ascended to heaven forty days after His resurrection from the dead (Mk. 16:19-20, Lk. 24:50-51, Acts 1:3, 9-12) and sat down at the Father's right hand (Ps. 110:1, Mk. 16:19). At His ascension, Christ was exalted as Lord of all and has subordinated all things to Himself (Phil. 2:9-11, Rom. 1:4, Eph. 1:22-23).

Present Ministry to and for Believers - Christ continues His ministry to His people in the present age. He intercedes for His people (Rom. 8:34), leads as Head of the church

(Eph. 1:22-23), gives gifts to His Body (Eph. 4:7-13) sanctifies its members (Eph. 5:26-27, Rev. 2:1), and reveals Himself through His Spirit (Jn. 16:13-15). He is now in heaven preparing the eternal dwelling place for the Church (Jn. 14:2).

Second Advent

Judging the world – Christ will one day return bodily with His angels to judge the world and establish His millennial reign on earth (Acts 1:11, Mt. 16:27; Mk. 13:26, 24:37-44, Mk. 8:38, 2 Thes. 1:7; 2:1-3, Is. 66:15, Rev. 1:7). (see Eschatology)

Ruling the world – Christ will establish His political Kingdom on earth, sitting on David's throne, conquering all the kingdoms of this world, and reigning for a thousand years (Ps. 2:9; Is. 60:12; Dan. 2:34-35, 44; Rev. 11:15-17, 17:14, 20:6). After the Millennial period, Christ will conquer the powers of darkness (Rev. 20:7-15) will give the throne to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-25), and will reign with His saints for all eternity (Rev. 22:5).

Pneumatology

I. THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Person

I believe in the Person of the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is a Person and not just a force. A masculine pronoun is assigned to the neuter noun *pneuma* (Jn. 16:13-14). He is referred to as a “Helper” or “Comforter” (*Parakletos* – Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:7). He is named as a separate Person along with the Father and Son (Mt. 3:16-17, 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14, Jude 20-21, 1 Pet. 1:2). He is named as a distinct personality among other persons (Acts 15:28). The Holy Spirit has personal attributes of intelligence (Jn. 14:26), volition (1 Cor. 12:11), and emotion (Eph. 4:30). The Spirit acts as a person interceding for believers (Rom. 8:26-27), convicting of sin (Jn. 16:8), bearing witness to Christ (Jn. 15:26), knowing God’s thoughts (1 Cor. 2:11), and giving direction for life (Acts 8:29). The Holy Spirit can be sinned against. The indwelt believer can lie to, grieve, quench, resist, and blaspheme the Spirit (Acts 5:3-4, Eph. 4:30, 1 Thes. 5:19, Mt. 12:31, Mk. 3:29). The unbeliever can also blaspheme the Holy Spirit which is an indication of complete rejection of Christ (Mt. 12:31-32, see Hamartiology).

Deity

I believe that the Holy Spirit is God in every respect as are the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is fully God and co-equal with God the Father and God the Son (Mt. 28:18, 2 Cor. 13:14, 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 1 Pet. 1:2). The terms Holy Spirit and God are used synonymously (Acts 5:3-4, 1 Cor. 3:16-17). The Spirit has divine attributes of **omniscience** (1 Cor. 2:10-11, Jn. 16:13); **omnipotence** (Lk. 1:35); and **eternality** (Heb. 9:14). The Holy Spirit performs divine work, playing a key role in **creation** and the providential sustaining of it (Gen. 1:2, Ps. 104:30), in Christ’s **resurrection** from the dead (Rom. 8:11), and in the inspiration of Scripture (2 Peter 1:21). He has the power to influence and **regenerate** men’s hearts (Jn. 16:7-11, 3:5-8, Acts 1:8).

II. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Scripture reveals specific activities that the Holy Spirit performs.

Old Testament – The Spirit of God was active in creation (Gen. 1:2). The Holy Spirit is the Person of the Godhead primarily involved in the inspiration of Scripture (Eze. 2:2, 1 Sam. 10:6, 2 Sam. 23:2, Num. 24:2, 2 Pet. 1:21, Acts 1:16, 4:25). The Spirit is often seen in the Old Testament as anointing individuals for specific divine tasks (Ex. 31:2-3, Zech. 4:6). The Holy Spirit was a purifying presence (Ps. 51:11, also Neh. 9:20).

In the life of Christ – The Holy Spirit played a vital role in Christ’s Incarnate life being responsible for Mary’s virgin conception (Mt. 1:18, 20). and empowering Him during His ministry (Lk. 4:1, 10:21, Is. 11:1-2); The Spirit led Christ throughout His life in doing the Father’s will (Mt. 4:1, 12:18). At His baptism, the Spirit anointed Christ publicly, identifying Him as the Messiah and empowering Him in a greater way for His future ministry (Mt. 3:16-17). The works that Christ performed were by the Spirit’s power (Mt. 12:24-27, 31). Christ gave the Spirit to those who were His followers to guide and

empower for service (Mk. 1:8, Jn. 16:7). Christ rose from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11).

In the life of the Christian – I believe that the Holy Spirit plays a vital role in every aspect of the Christian's life. **Conviction** - The conviction of the Holy Spirit is vital for bringing one to repentance and faith in Christ (Jn. 16:8-10). **Regeneration** - The Spirit is the supernatural Agent that brings about the regeneration of an individual who was dead in his sin (Eph. 2:1; Jn. 3:3, 5-6). **Baptism** - The baptism into the Holy Spirit (Mk. 1:8) was predicted by John the Baptist and Christ (Mt. 3:11, Jn. 1:33 & Acts 1:5, 11:16) and was fulfilled at Pentecost when the Spirit was sent to empower the Apostles (Acts 1:5, 2:1-4, 11:16). Our baptism into the Spirit occurs at regeneration and is not a second work of grace (1 Cor. 12:13). **Indwelling** - The Spirit indwells all who are truly believers in Christ (Jn. 14:17, 1 Cor. 6:19, Rom. 8:9; Eph. 2:22). The indwelling of the Spirit indicates being possessed by Him as well, implying complete control over the individual (Rom. 8:9). **Sealing (earnest)** - The Spirit is the down-payment of the believer's salvation blessings (Eph. 1:13-14). **Illuminating** – The enlightening or teaching of the Holy Spirit is a primary part of the Spirit's work in the New Testament church. Jesus revealed that the Spirit would lead the Apostles into all truth after His ascension (Jn. 14:26, 16:13), influencing the authors of Scripture and inspiring the text, giving them the words to say when they were opposed for their faith (Lk. 12:12, Mt. 10:20, Mk. 13:11), and assisting the believer in understanding God's Word (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). **Sanctifying** - The Holy Spirit is active in the work of sanctifying the believer and making him more like Christ. The Spirit testifies to the believer's spirit that He is a child of God (Gal. 4:6-7) and makes him fruitful as he gives himself to the Spirit's desires (Gal. 5:16, 22-23). **Interceding** - The Spirit intercedes for the believer, assisting him in his prayers to the Father (Rom. 8:26, Eph. 6:18) and grants the believer access to the Father (Eph. 2:18). **Empowering** - The believer is empowered for spiritual service by the Holy Spirit to do greater works than Christ (Jn. 14:12, 16:7).

Gifts by the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all believers for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:4, 11-12, 1 Cor. 12:11, Heb. 2:4).

Verbal vs. manual gifts

There are four lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament (Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-11, Eph. 4:11, 1 Pet. 4:11). Some of the gifts are verbal in nature, such as prophecy, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. There are also manual gifts which include liberality, giving aid, serving, and acts of mercy. All of these are given by the Spirit to individual members of the church. Church members have different gifts in order to provide a unity and mutual dependency (Rom. 12:4-6).

Temporary vs. permanent gifts

Some spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture are no longer operable, including speaking in tongues and healing. The most widely misunderstood spiritual gift is speaking in tongues. The advent of tongues speaking in Acts 2 was clearly not that of ecstatic speech but was miraculous empowering to speak in known human languages (Acts 2:4-11). Speaking in tongues as well as other miraculous signs and wonders were given in order to confirm the preaching of the Gospel by the early church (Heb. 2:3-4). The

presence of miraculous signs is not presented as normative in human history or in the early church. Finally, even if tongues-speaking were construed to mean “ecstatic speech,” the way in which it is usually administered in the Charismatic movement is far from the biblical directive (1 Cor. 14:1-5, 13, 27-35).

Angelology

I. ANGELS IN GENERAL

I believe in the existence of angels created by God to serve Him (Gen. 28:12, Heb. 1:15). The Scripture seems to imply that angels, or “messengers,” came into being along with the heavens on the first day of Creation (Gen. 1:1, Neh. 9:6, Ex. 20:11, Ps. 148:5). The angelic host is made up of millions of beings (Ps. 68:17, Dt. 33:2)

Angels have personal attributes. They have an intellect and volition (2 Sam. 14:20, Rev. 22:9). They have morality (Mt. 25:31, 2 Pet. 2:4). All angels were originally holy as part of the unfallen creation (Gen. 1:1, 31). Angels are spiritual beings and are therefore invisible (Acts 23:8-9, Col. 1:16). When revealed, they may appear as human beings (Gen. 18:2, 16, 22; Lk. 1:11-20, 24:4). Some appear as a wheel and full of eyes (Eze. 1:15-21, 10:16-17). The seraphim have six wings (Is. 6:2). The cherubim minister near to God’s throne (Eze. 10:1, 18; Ps. 80:1, also Gen. 3:24). Every angel is immortal and has an eternal destiny (Mt. 25:41; Jude 1:6). While angels are more powerful than humans, they are still part of God’s creative order and are subordinate to His sovereign rule (2 Pet. 2:11, Jude 9). Christ is superior to angels (Heb. 2:7).

II. GOOD ANGELS

I believe in the existence of elect angels who make up two-thirds of the created angelic host. They are the ones who remained faithful to God during the rebellion of Lucifer (Is. 14:12) and will be kept in that righteous state for all eternity (1 Tim. 5:21, Mt. 13:39). These angels are also called “sons of God” (Job 1:6), “holy ones” (Ps. 89:5, 7), “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14), “watchers” (Dan. 4:13), “thrones,” “dominions,” “principalities,” “authorities,” (Col. 1:16), and “powers” (Eph. 1:21).

The Scripture indicates different classes of angels but not their significance. Michael seems to be the superior angel to all others as he is identified as the “archangel” (Dan. 10:13, Jude 9). The angel Gabriel is an agent of revelation during key transitions of the New Covenant. His appearances in the New Testament are directly related to the coming of the Messiah (Dan. 8:16-18, Lk. 1:19, 26-27). Angelic beings seem to have responsibilities over certain human governments (Dan. 10:13, 20). The *cherubim* were appointed to guard the entrance-way into the Garden of Eden after the fall (Gen. 3:24). They are also referred to as part of God’s throne and His chariot (Ps. 18:10, Eze. 10:1-22). The *seraphim* are constantly worshiping the Lord (Is. 6:2-5).

The Lord has created angels to have specific ministries including worshiping and serving Him (Rev. 5:11, 7:11, Lk. 2:13-14), mediating divine revelation (Lk. 1:13-20, 26-38; Act 11:13), and executing judgment (2 Sam. 24:16, Acts 12:23, Rev. 16:1, Mt. 13:39). They minister to God’s people through answering prayer (Mt. 26:53, Acts 12:5-7), protecting (Acts 5:19, Ps. 91:11-12), encouraging (Mt. 4:11, Heb. 1:14), and accompanying souls at death (Lk. 16:22).

III. SATAN

I believe in the existence of Satan, a created angelic being who chose to rebel against God. Satan may have originally borne the name Lucifer or “bearer of light” (Is. 14:12). He lifted himself up in pride against God and was thrown out of the third heaven (Is. 14:12-15, also Eze. 28:11-19). Probably soon after his fall, he entered the serpent and tempted Eve to disobey God’s command (Gen. 3:1-5). The sacrificial death of Christ in the stead of all mankind reversed sin’s victory and defeated Satan and his ultimate power over sinners (Gen. 3:15, Heb. 2:14). Satan will be active in the Tribulation (Rev. 12:7-9); bound during the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-3); released for a short time (Rev. 20:7-8); and then thrown into the Lake of Fire for eternity (Rev. 20:9-10).

Satan is actively involved in the world today seeking to oppose the advancement of God’s kingdom (Job 1:7-11, Gen. 3:1-6, Eph. 6:12, 2 Cor. 4:4). Satan is called the Devil, or “slanderer” (Mt. 4:1); “Beelzebul” (Mt. 10:25); the “ruler of this world” (Jn. 12:31); the “serpent” (Rev. 20:2); a “roaring lion” (1 Pet. 5:8); “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2); “the evil one” (Mt. 13:19); the “father of lies” (Jn. 8:44); and “the accuser of the brethren” (Rev. 12:10). Since Satan is a liar and is in direct opposition to God. The child of God is to have no fellowship with him or his works (Jn. 8:44, 2 Cor. 6:15).

IV. EVIL ANGELS

I believe in the existence of demons, fallen angels who make up a third of the original angelic host (Rev. 12:3-4). They were initially good angels who joined Satan in his rebellion and were thrown out of heaven with him (Gen. 1:31, Is. 14:12-15, Rev. 12:3-4). Some have been sent to judgment already (2 Pet. 2:4) while others remain free, awaiting future eternal judgment for their sin (Mt. 8:28-29, Rev. 20:1).

The demons also oppose the Lord and His people through temptation (Mt. 4:1-11, Jn. 8:44, Rev. 12:9), sickness (Mk. 1:26), and deception (1 Kgs. 22:10-23). Demon possession refers to an unusual demonic influence in which the demon controls the faculties of the individual (Mk. 5:3-5, Lk. 8:27-29; Mt. 17:15-18). A believer cannot be demon possessed since the Holy Spirit dwells in him (1 Cor. 6:19, Rom. 8:9) but can be demonically attacked and severely affected physically, mentally, or spiritually (Job 1:10-12, 2:5-6; 2 Cor. 12:7, Lk. 13:16).

Anthropology

I. THE ORIGIN OF MAN

I believe that God created the first man Adam on the sixth day of creation out of dust (Gen. 1). God provided Adam with a woman, Eve, fashioned from one of Adam's ribs to be His companion and helper (Gen. 2:18-24).

God created mankind to glorify Him through fellowship, worshipful obedience, and service (1 Cor. 10:31, Is. 43:7, Gen. 1:26-27, 3:8; Ps. 100:2). Man was created to *obey* God (Gen. 2:16-17, Ps. 119:4). He is to be a *steward* of God's creation (Gen. 1:26-30, 2:15). Man is responsible to *multiply* on the earth through reproduction (Gen. 1:28).

II. THE NATURE OF MAN

I believe that God created man in His own image, as a representation of His characteristics and unique from all other life forms (Gen. 1:26-27, Mt. 6:26). Like God, man is relational, intellectual, and volitional. Man is able to reason and have self-determination (Gen. 2:20). Man has a sense of what is morally right and wrong (Gen. 2:16-17, 25). Man is also distinct from animals in that he has a spirit (Gen. 1:26-27, 2:7; Jn. 4:24). Man is immortal and will exist forever (Lk. 16:22-23, Ps. 23:6, Mt. 25:41, Rev. 21:1-4). Man was uniquely created with the ability to have deep relationships with other human beings and God.

The immaterial part of man - I believe that man is endowed with a soul, the immaterial part of him.

Origin – the spiritual part of every man is the result of a direct creation of God at the point of conception (Zech. 12:1, Ps. 139:13).

Composition – man is made up of a dichotomy (two parts): body (physical) and soul (spiritual) (1 Cor. 7:34, Jas. 2:26). The spirit and soul are not two distinct anthropological parts but are terms used interchangeably in Scripture (Jn. 12:27, 13:21; Lk. 1:46-47).

Man as male and female - I believe God made mankind as male and female, both equally in His image. Marriage is a covenant relationship made before God between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:22-25). The marriage relationship is exclusive and for life (Mal. 2:14-16, Rom. 7:2) and is for the purpose of companionship, completeness, and human reproduction (Gen. 2:18-24, 1:27-28, Jer. 29:5-6). Marriage is ultimately to be a picture of Christ's relationship with His church, to demonstrate Christ's love for the Church and the Church's rightful subordination to Christ (Eph. 5:25-33).

God hates divorce (Mal. 2:6) and it is not His will that a person divorce his spouse and remarry (Gen. 2:24, Mt. 19:5-8, 1 Cor. 7:10-11, Rom. 7:1-3). The exception clause allowing for divorce and remarriage (Mt. 5:32, 19:9-10) does not clearly identify the nature of the exception. Therefore, I will not perform a ceremony of someone who has been divorced but will allow someone to be involved in our ministry who has been remarried after being the innocent party in a divorce or who has shown true repentance for their sin. I also will allow a divorced and remarried person in good spiritual standing to serve in the church but not in the official capacity of elder or deacon (1 Tim. 3:2, 12).

Although the man was created first and the woman from the man, yet God made them to be equal in nature and status before Him (Gen. 1:27, 5:1-2; 1 Cor. 11:8-12). God gave the man and woman differing roles in the marriage relationship. Man was given the responsibility of being the wife's head, the loving leader in the relationship (1 Cor. 11:3). He is to lead the home spiritually. Adam is the one charged with introducing sin into the human race, not Eve, even though she sinned first (Gen. 3:6, 1 Cor. 15:22, Rom. 5:15). The man is to love his wife in a selfless way as his own body (Eph. 5:25-33). He is to sanctify His wife (Eph. 5:25-26). The role of the wife is to be a helper (completer) to her husband (Gen. 2:18, 1 Cor. 11:9). She is also to submit to his headship (Eph. 5:22-24).

III. THE FALL OF MAN

I believe that man was created sinless but chose to disobey God's command thus infecting the entire human race with sin (Rom. 5:12).

The Test - God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden among trees filled with available food, including the tree of life (Gen. 2:8-9). One tree was forbidden, however, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:15-17). It is apparent, although not explicitly revealed in Scripture, that man had a period (sometimes called the probationary period) in which he had the ability to choose or reject God according to this one command (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:1-7).

The Temptation - The serpent tempted Eve to take of the fruit from the forbidden tree, saying that she would become "like God, knowing good and evil" if she partook of it. Satan deceived Eve into viewing the tree as "good for food," pleasant to look at, and able to make her wise (Gen. 3:6, 1 Jn. 2:15-17, 1 Tim. 2:14). Adam knowingly partook of the forbidden tree and brought sin to the entire race (1 Tim. 2:14, Rom. 5:12-14).

The Result - The sin of Adam and Eve brought consequences on the entire human race (Rom. 5:12).

Death - God had promised that disobedience would bring death (Gen. 2:17, Rom. 6:23). Adam and Eve immediately experienced spiritual death (Gen. 2:26, 3:10). They began growing older, experiencing the effects of physical death (Gen. 2:16-17, Rom. 5:12). Eternal death was promised in the future without accepting God's provision of salvation (Gen. 3:15, Rev. 20:11-15) (see Eschatology).

Sin - Sin severely marred the image of God in man but did not destroy it (Gen. 1:31, Ecc. 7:29) (see Hamartiology).

Struggle with the created order - Following their sin, God taught them of even further repercussions: Sin would seriously effect His creation. God promised that Adam would have difficulty in farming (Gen. 3:17-19). Eve would experience great pain and sorrow in childbirth and would struggle with submission to her husband, her God-ordained head (Gen. 3:16).

Hamartiology

I. THE ORIGIN OF SIN

I believe that after the creation of all things sin began as a result of the voluntary decisions of angels and mankind. God created the universe perfect and without sin and is not the author of sin (Gen. 1:31, Ps. 104:24, Jas. 1:17). Lucifer, perhaps the greatest of God's angels, was the first to sin in seeking to lift himself above God (Is. 14:12-15, Jn. 8:44). He was immediately banished from heaven with a third of the angelic host (Rev. 12:4). God originally made man sinless. However, man chose to disobey God's order not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and subsequently infected the entire race with sin (Gen. 3:6, Rom. 5:12).

Decree of God to permit sin - God in His sovereign wisdom, permitted sin to enter His universe, but was not in any way responsible for originating sin (Gen. 50:20, 37:11,20,24; Jas. 1:13 – see Theology Proper).

II. THE NATURE OF SIN

I believe that sin is any act, attitude, or nature that is counter to or different than God's law and ways (1 Jn. 3:4, 5:17, Gal. 3:10; Ex. 20:17 & Mt. 5:27-28). The Scripture has many descriptions and terms for sin. Sin is described as missing the mark (Gen. 20:6, Judg. 20:16, Prov. 19:2); transgression, or crossing a line (Num. 14:41-42, Rom. 5:14, 1 Tim. 2:14, Jas 2:11); iniquity (deviance from a prescribed course; crookedness - Lev. 19:15); lawlessness and rebellion (1 Jn. 3:4, 1 Kgs. 12:19, Rom. 1:30, 2 Thes. 2:3); and an irreverent spirit, or a lack of awareness of God (Jude 15, Rom. 1:18).

Source of sin, inordinate desire – I believe that the source of sin is the uncontrolled desire of man to go outside the prescribed bounds of God's Law. These desires, such as pleasure, possession of things, and achievement are God-given and are not inherently evil (Eccl. 5:12). However, man's sin nature has affected and energized these desires to be unholy, self-seeking, and unlawful (Col. 3:5; Ps. 78:18, 29-30). Man sins at the moment that he gives in to the desires of his sinful flesh and chooses to disobey God (Jas. 1:14-15) (see Anthropology).

IV. INHERITED SIN

I believe that sin is not only an act or attitude, but the one who commits sin has the essence of sinners, a sin nature (Rom. 5:8, Eph. 2:3). The entire human race has been plunged into sin, every individual inheriting a sin nature from the first man Adam (Gen. 3:6; Rom. 3:23, 5:12).

Human depravity - I believe that man is corrupt from conception as a result of the fall in every part of his being: in his mind, emotions, and volition (Ps. 51:5, Rom. 7:18, Tit. 1:15, Jer. 17:9). Mankind is incapable of improving his relationship with God (Is. 64:6, Ps. 14:1-2, Job 25:4, Rom. 8:7-8). God alone gives the desire for repentance from sin and the grace to trust in Christ alone for salvation (Jn. 6:44).

V. IMPUTED SIN

I believe that while all men are guilty before God for their own sin, all men suffer death through the sin of Adam, the first man (Rom. 5:12, 1 Cor. 15:21). As the federal representative of the human race, Adam chose to disobey God in the Garden and corrupted the entire human race (Gen. 3:6, Rom. 5:12, 15-17, 1 Cor. 15:21).

VI. PERSONAL SIN

Degrees of Sin - I believe that sin has no degrees in relation to our legal standing before God. Scripture states that one sin is required to make one worthy of God's punishment (Rom. 5:16, Jas. 2:10-11). However, some sins are more egregious than others as reflected by the degrees of sin's consequences in life and in our relationship with the Lord (Eze. 8:6,13, Jn. 19:11). While any sin is enough to make one legally guilty before God (Gal. 3:10, Jas. 2:10), consequences for sin may vary depending on intentionality (Lev. 4:2, 13) and grievous nature of the sin (Gen. 9:6, 1 Cor. 6:18, Mt. 5:19). Leviticus refers to sins that were committed unintentionally (Lev. 4:2, 13). God prescribes degrees of punishments reflecting the grievous nature of the sin (Gen. 9:6, 1 Cor. 6:18). There is a sin unto death (1 Jn. 5:16, 1 Cor. 11:30, Acts 5:1-11).

The unpardonable sin - I believe that the unpardonable sin, called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, does not refer to one particular sin that is unforgivable by God and committed by accident or against one's will. This sin is a willful, outspoken rejection of Jesus Christ despite clear knowledge of who He is. Christ promises that that sin will not be forgiven and neither does the individual have any desire to be forgiven (Mt. 12:31-32, Mk. 3:29-30, Heb. 6:4-6).

The fate of those who die in infancy - I believe that God does not send infants and those lacking moral competence to eternal damnation despite the fact that all men are guilty before God from the womb. David had a confidence that he would see his deceased infant son again (2 Sam. 12:23). Scripture also implies that such young lives are not morally accountable (Dt. 1:39, Jon. 4:11).

The Christian and sin - I believe that while the believer is positionally in Christ and sanctified for all eternity, his progressive and personal sanctification is a process and that he will persevere until glorification. Sin no longer has the ruling power over the believer's life, but the believer could still allow himself to be under the control of sin for a time while failing to rely on God's grace (Rom. 6:14, 17-18) (see Soteriology).

Soteriology

I. ELECTION

As far as the Scripture allows an explicit harmonizing of the passages related to soteriology, I believe in the doctrine of divine, unconditional election of those who will be saved (Eph. 1:4, Rom. 9:11-13). While God has showered grace on all mankind, He chose some before the foundation of the world to receive His effectual saving grace through His Word and His Spirit (Acts 14:17, Eph. 1:4, Rom. 10:17, Acts 13:48). Divine election is based on God's predestination, which is the assuring of the believer's destiny of complete Christ-likeness (Rom. 8:29-30). Predestination is based on God's foreknowledge, His prior intimate knowledge and love for the elect (Rom. 8:28-30).

While the Scripture teaches divine, unconditional election, it also testifies to man's free will, which is his ability to make real choices with real consequences (Gen. 2:16-17). God commands men to make choices (Josh. 24:14-15, Mt. 11:28, Jn. 7:17, Acts 17:30, Rev. 22:17). The Bible calls all men to come to Christ (Rom. 10:14, 17, Mt. 22:14).

II. EFFECTUAL CALLING (IRRESISTIBLE GRACE)

I believe in the necessity of God's effectual calling to salvation (Rom. 8:28-30, 1 Cor. 1:9, Jn. 6:44) to all men who will not come to Him of their own volition (Rom. 3:9-18). God is responsible for convicting of sin (Jn. 16:8-11, Jude 15), illuminating the heart (2 Cor. 4:3-6), persuading the mind (Jn. 6:44, 12:32), and ultimately enabling the sinner to repent and believe the Gospel (Phil. 2:13, Eph. 2:8-9).

III. CONVERSION

I believe that salvation from sin brings about a radical obvious change in the life of the believer. The process of salvation is called new birth and becoming a new creation (Jn. 1:12-13, 3:4-8; 2 Cor. 5:17). In order to be saved, one must accept Christ's work of salvation and position as Lord of all (1 Cor. 12:3, Rom. 1:4-5; 10:9-10, Phil. 2:10-11).

Repentance is a volitional changing of one's mind to turn away from sin and to submit to the mastery of Christ (Acts 26:20, Lk. 3:8-14). The Scripture commands men to repent of their sin and put their faith in Christ alone (Mk. 1:15, Acts 17:30, Lk. 13:3). Repentance is a gift of God (Acts 5:31, 2 Tim. 2:25, Rom. 2:4).

Faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross is necessary for salvation. Faith is a confidence in something that cannot be seen or experienced (Heb. 11:1, Jn. 20:29, 2 Cor. 5:7, 4:18). Saving faith is a wholehearted confidence in God's salvation plan through the work of His Son alone and is a recognition of one's own inability to save himself from sin through human effort (Rom. 10:13, Eph. 2:8-9). True saving faith will prove itself through good works (Jas. 2:17-18, Lk. 3:8-14, Mt. 7:15-20, Eph. 2:10).

IV. REGENERATION (NEW BIRTH)

I believe that regeneration, bringing to life from the dead, is necessary for salvation. An unconverted person is spiritually dead as a result of sin and its curse (Gen. 2:17, Rom.

6:23, Eph. 2:1). At the moment that a lost person puts his faith in Christ's saving work alone, that person is born again through the power of the Spirit by means of God's Word (Jn. 1:12-13, 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:23, Eph. 2:5).

V. JUSTIFICATION

I believe in the doctrine of justification, the judicial act of being declared righteous before God despite guilt for wrongdoing. One cannot be justified by keeping God's Law, but only by grace through faith in the substitutionary work of Christ alone (Rom. 3:24, 28; Tit. 3:7). Christ satisfied God's just wrath for sin by taking the penalty of sin in His own body on the cross, and therefore making it possible for the sinner to be counted righteous (2 Cor. 5:21, Gen. 3:13, Rom. 3:26).

Christ not only died for our sins, but He also lived for us in that He lived perfectly and kept God's Law blamelessly during His incarnate life (Mt. 5:17, Rom. 10:4, Gal. 4:5). At the moment of conversion, a person becomes one with Christ, and is in Him and he not only enjoys forgiveness of his sins but also the imputation of Christ's righteousness on his account by faith (Rom. 3:21-22, 2 Cor. 5:21, Is. 61:10, Phil. 3:9). The believer is positionally as righteous as Christ (Rom. 8:1-2, 39; Eph. 2:6).

VI. ADOPTION

All believers have been predestined to receive the adoption of sons because of Christ's salvific work (Eph. 1:5, Gal. 4:7, Jn. 1:12). Adoption is a future event when the effects of sin's curse on all creation are reversed and our bodies are glorified (Rom. 8:15-23).

VII. SANCTIFICATION

I believe that sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ and set apart to Him and less like our sinful nature.

Positional sanctification - At the moment of salvation, the new believer has been set apart for the Lord (1 Cor. 1:2, 6:11, 1 Cor. 1:2, Rom. 1:7, Acts 20:32) in which his standing in the eyes of God is as holy as Christ (Rom. 4:3, 2 Cor. 5:21). In addition, at the point of conversion, the power of sin over the life has been broken (Rom. 6:14, 17-18).

Progressive sanctification - The process of progressive sanctification is a constant battle against our sinful flesh (1 Pet. 2:11, Rom. 7:7-25), the evil world system (Lk. 8:14, 1 Jn. 2:15-17), and Satan and his minions (Eph. 6:12). Our sinful flesh is provoked by the Law of God and must be resolutely resisted, giving oneself instead to the power of Christ (Rom. 6:6, 19; 7:7-12). The means of sanctification are dependence on God's grace (Tit. 2:11-12), a diligent pursuit of growth in grace (2 Pet. 1:5-9, 3:18), feeding on God's Word (Jn. 17:17, Eph. 5:26), yieldedness to the Spirit's control (Eph. 5:18), submission to divinely ordained tribulation (Rom. 8:28-29), confession of sin (1 Jn. 1:8-9), and hope in Christ's imminent return (Tit. 2:13).

As believers, we must remain set apart from the evil world system, not allowing the world to influence any part of our lives and consciences (Rom. 12:1-2). Our personal worship, attitudes, motives, desires, and conversation as well as our entertainment

choices, dress standards, and deportment must be reflective of our desire to be holy like God and set apart from the world (2 Cor. 6:14-18, 1 Pet. 1:14-16, 1 Jn. 2:5-17). Growth in sanctification is a life-long commitment with perfection only attainable at glorification (1 Jn. 1:8, Phil. 3:12-15, Jude 24, Eph. 5:27, Heb. 12:23, Phil. 1:6).

Ultimate sanctification will only be realized when the believer stands before the Lord in eternity complete in Christ and free from sin for all eternity (1 Jn. 3:2, Col. 1:28, Rom. 7:24-25, 1 Cor. 15:57, 1 Thes. 5:23, Heb. 12:23).

VIII. PERSEVERANCE

I believe those who have put their faith in Christ alone for salvation will never depart from Christ and cannot lose their salvation. The Bible promises eternal life for all who believe (Jn. 3:16). Eternal life cannot be rescinded (Jn. 10:28, 5:24, also 1 Jn. 2:19).

While eternal security in salvation is promised, the subjective sense of assurance of salvation is denied to the believer who refuses to diligently pursue growth in grace (2 Pet. 1:8-9, Jn. 15:2). The profession of a person who lives in rebellion against God's Word is in serious question (Mt. 16:26, Heb. 6:4-6, Jas. 2:20-26).

IX. GLORIFICATION

The consummation of our salvation is the moment when our bodies, once cursed by sin, are glorified and free from the effects of sin and death (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Christ was the first fruits of our glorification and all who have placed their faith in Him will also rise in their bodies to be with Him (1 Cor. 15:20). It is for this moment that the believer is waiting expectantly (Rom. 8:23).

Ecclesiology

I. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

I believe in the universal church comprised of all true believers from every geographical location and age since the day of Pentecost. The New Testament makes repeated reference to the church universal (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23, 3:10, 4:4, 5:23-27; Col. 1:24).

Images of the church - The Scripture uses different images to illustrate the nature of the church and her relationship to Christ, the world, and to each other.

The body of Christ – The church is called the body of Christ, with Christ Himself as the Head, sustaining, leading, and being the glory of His body (Col. 2:19, Eph. 4:15-16, Eph. 5:23-24, Col. 1:18). The church is a diverse body of members that makes up an organic unity (Rom. 12:4-5, 1 Cor. 12:14-27).

The temple of God and the priesthood – The temple imagery used of the church hearkens to the Old Testament place of worship where God's special presence resided. The church is being divinely built by God as a perfect unity with Christ as the chief Cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-20, also 1 Pet. 2:5-6, Isa. 28:16). The believer's body is also called the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:18-19). The New Testament church is called a priesthood in which every member can individually come to God as priests (1 Pet. 2:9; 3:18; Heb. 4:16).

The bride of Christ – The imagery of the church as Christ's bride is a New Testament implication made in the context of instruction on the marriage relationship. The relationship between a husband and wife is to be a type of Christ's relationship to His Church (Eph. 5:22-33).

Inauguration of the church - The church was inaugurated on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Christ's resurrection. This is the point at which the Old Covenant transitioned to the New Covenant dispensation (Eze. 36:26-27, Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:17-21). Christ promised to build His church (in the future) (Mt. 16:18). 1 Corinthians 12:13 testifies that the Body of Christ was formed by the Spirit's baptism, a reference to Pentecost (Acts 1:5, 2:1-4). Acts 2 is the first Scriptural record of an official corporate body of believers functioning as the New Testament church (Acts 2:41-47).

Distinctiveness of the church

In relation to the Holy Spirit – Old Testament saints were occasionally filled with the Holy Spirit on an individual and temporary basis for special tasks (Ex. 31:3, Num. 11:16-17, 14:6, 1 Sam. 16:13). In the New Testament, all believers have the promise of the Holy Spirit's indwelling (Num. 11:29, Acts 1:8, Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:17-21, Rom. 8:9, 1 Cor. 3:16 – see Biblical foundation of Eschatology).

In relation to Israel – The Old Covenant blessings were limited to the members of national Israel by blood or outward submission to covenant requirements (Eph. 2:11-13, Rom. 9:2-5). The blessings of the New Covenant are offered to the church which consists of peoples from every tribe, tongue, and nation (Rev. 5:9).

In relation to the Kingdom of God – The kingdom of God refers to the realm of Christ's reign (1 Cor. 4:20). The church is to be the reflection of the kingdom of God on earth but is not the sum total of that kingdom (Col. 1:13). All of creation will one day be submitted under His feet (Eph. 1:22-23, Ps. 2:8-9, 1 Cor. 15:24-25).

II. THE LOCAL CHURCH

I believe in the local church which is comprised of a corporate body of believers that regularly meets for prayer, worship, Bible teaching, fellowship, and administration of the ordinances (Acts 2:42-46). The New Testament makes repeated references to the church in specific regions or cities (1 Cor. 1:2, 16:19, 1 Thes. 1:1).

Purposes of the church

Toward God: worship – I believe that corporate worship is one of the chief purposes for the church. Worship is the act of giving God the praise and honor that He alone deserves (Rev. 4:10-11, Acts 2:46-47, Phil. 3:3, Heb. 10:19-25).

Toward the brethren: edification – I believe the church is to edify one another to greater Christ-likeness (1 Cor. 12:27, Rom. 8:29). Edification takes place through the use of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:6-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-11– see Pneumatology), the teaching of the Word by gifted teacher preachers (2 Tim. 4:2-4, Eph. 4:11-12, 1 Tim. 5:17), and the believers' fellowship around the things of God (Heb. 10:24-25, Acts 2:42).

Toward the lost: evangelism – I believe that Christ commissioned His disciples to proclaim His name to an unbelieving world (Acts 1:8, 2 Tim. 4:1-4). The church is to make disciples from every nationality and ethnic background (Mt. 28:19-20).

Membership in the church - Church membership in a local body of believers is assumed in the New Testament (Mt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:2-5, Acts 2:42, 47, 5:14). Membership provides accountability for the members of the body (Gal. 6:1-2, Eph. 5:21).

Government in the church- Congregational polity emphasizes the autonomy of the local church and the individual priesthood of the believer. The early church congregation was directly involved in the decision making process of the church, including selection of church officers (Acts 1:21-26, 6:1-6), recognition of correct doctrine and practice (Acts 15:2-5, 22), and church discipline (Mt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5). In addition, Christ Himself taught against a leadership scheme that puts some individuals higher than others (Lk. 22:25-27, Mt. 23:8). Congregational church polity along with a plurality in leadership best accounts for the commands and examples of the New Testament.

Leadership for the church

Pastor / elder – These three terms of leadership (elder-*prebuteros*; overseer-*episkopos*; and pastor-*poimaino*) are used interchangeably to refer to the same office (Acts 20:17, 28, 1 Pet. 5:1-2). The New Testament indicates that there was a plurality of elders in local churches (Acts 14:23, Phil. 1:1, 1 Tim. 5:17, Tit. 1:5) as well as a single elder who may hold the primary position of leadership among the elders (Acts 15:12-13, 1 Tim. 3:15, 1 Cor. 3:6). An elder must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9). Women cannot hold the position of elder in the church (1 Tim. 2:12, 3:1-2).

Deacon – The primary role of the deacon is to serve and facilitate serving the physical needs of the members (Acts 6:1-6) and must meet the biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-13). The Scripture does not teach that women can hold the office of deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-10, 12).

Discipline and separation in the church - The church is to be the reflection of their Head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, the church must be characterized by obedience, holiness, and love (Eph. 5:23-27, 32). The church is to be set apart from the satanically-energized world system (Eph. 2:2, Rom. 12:2), from false teachers (2 Jn. 7-11, Rom. 16:17), and from unrepentant, disobedient Christians (Mt. 18:15-18, 1 Cor. 5:1-5, 1 Thes. 3:6, 14).

Ordinances of the church - An ordinance is something specifically ordained by Christ for the Church to practice until His return. Christ gave only two ordinances to be practiced by the church in this age: baptism and the Lord's Table (Mt. 28:19-20, 1 Cor. 11:26). These ordinances are not means of obtaining saving grace (sacraments) but should be a means of sanctifying grace for the participant who has embraced Christ and His work.

Baptism - Baptism is for those who have voluntarily placed their faith in Christ alone for salvation from sin (Jn. 3:23, Acts 2:41, 8:38, 9:18, 10:47-48). It is to be a public testimony of one's heart repentance from sin and is an identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and with His body, the church (Acts 2:37-38, Mt. 28:19, Mk. 10:39, 16:16, Rom. 6:3-7). Immersion is the only proper mode of baptism. The Greek word *baptizo* in the principal usage means "to dip." In addition, there is indication that New Testament baptisms included going into a body of water (Jn. 3:23, Mk. 1:10, Acts 8:36-39). Immersion also best symbolizes Christ's salvific work (Rom. 6:3-5).

Lord's Supper - I believe that the Lord's Supper is to be practiced out of obedience to Christ's command (Lk. 22:19, 1 Cor. 11:24-25). The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to be a visible reminder and an unspoken message of Christ's atoning death for the Church (Lk. 22:20, Mt. 26:28, 1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's Table is anticipatory of Christ's imminent return to earth to establish His millennial kingdom (1 Cor. 11:26). Communion is also to be a time of fellowship with other believers around the remembrance of Christ's atoning work and is a true fellowship with Christ Himself (1 Cor. 10:15-17, 11:17-22).

The elements of the Lord's Supper are symbols of Christ's body and blood (Mt. 26:26-29). The bread and wine also have a true spiritual significance to the believer who, in faith and submission to Christ, is partaking of the elements.

Eschatology

I. INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY

I believe that God has clearly revealed the spiritual and eternal destiny of individuals according to how each responded to Jesus Christ in his earthly life (Jn. 3:18, 36).

Death

The existence of death in the world is a direct result of sin (Rom. 5:12, 6:23, Gen. 2:17) and is experienced by all creatures effected by sin (Gen. 3:17-19; 8:19-22).

Physical death – Adam began to die physically the moment he disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6). Physical death is the absence of physical life in the body and a separation of soul and body (2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:23). Christ defeated death when He rose from the dead (Rom. 6:4, 1 Cor. 15:20-22). All who place their faith in Him and His work on the cross, although suffering the pangs of physical death, will one day rise again (Job 19:26, 1 Cor. 15:50-56, Rom. 6:5).

Spiritual death is the separation of man's spirit from His Creator as a result of man's sin and God's perfect holiness (Eph. 2:1, 4:18; Ps. 130:3). Salvation brings spiritual life and reconciliation to God through Christ's work on the cross (Eph. 2:5-6, 1 Pet. 2:24).

Eternal death – While Adam and Eve experienced spiritual death and the effects of physical death the moment they sinned, the ultimate penalty of sin eternal death, was imminent if they failed to trust God's way of salvation through His Son (Gen. 3:15). All who experience physical death outside of Christ will spend eternity separated from Him in their physical bodies in the Lake of Fire (Mt. 25:41-46, Rev. 20:11-14).

The Intermediate State

I believe in the doctrine of the intermediate state of the soul, when the soul is separated from the body after physical death and prior to resurrection.

Since Jesus' resurrection from the dead, God promises that people from every age who have believed in Christ alone for salvation and who experience death will immediately enter God's presence (2 Cor. 5:3-4, 8; Phil. 1:23).

The wicked will be kept in an intermediate state after death called *sheol* in the Old Testament or *hades* in the New Testament Greek. While *sheol* and *hades* can refer to the abode of the dead, regenerate and unregenerate (Gen. 37:35, Acts 2:31), it usually refers to the place of eternal, divine punishment for sin after death (Dt. 32:22, Prov. 5:5, Mt. 11:23, 16:18, Lk. 16:23).

II. GENERAL ESCHATOLOGY

I believe in the imminent return of Christ to catch away His people prior to the seven years of Tribulation. After the Tribulation, Christ will set up His earthly kingdom on earth for a thousand years before the Great White Throne Judgment and the eternal state.

Biblical foundations of eschatology - A proper view of God's covenants is critical for a right interpretation of eschatology and the place of Israel in end time events. In the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 13:14-17, 15:1-7, 17:1-16), God promised Abraham that his

descendants would be a great nation and would possess the entire land of Palestine unconditionally forever according to the boundaries promised in Genesis 15:18-21 (1 Kgs. 4:21). In the Davidic Covenant, God promised that his throne would be forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16). The New Covenant was made to Israel for a yet future age. Some of the New Covenant promises partially apply to the Gentiles in the Church age (Jer. 31:33, 2 Cor. 3:2-3; Rom. 9:6, Heb. 10:17); yet they are conditioned on the future and permanent reinstatement of Israel in the land (Jer. 32:37, 41). According to all of these Covenants, the nation of Israel still has a future in end time events.

Interpretive framework for eschatology - I believe dispensationalism best explains the unity of the Bible. Dispensationalism is a system of theology that bases its interpretation of Scripture on the unifying principle of the kingdom of God. This kingdom, or sovereign rule of God, is revealed in Scripture under several dispensations, a reference to God's particular way of administering His rule in the earth in different periods of history.

I believe the premillennial, pretribulation position best accounts for the eschatological passages. Premillennialism maintains that Christ will return to earth ushering in His thousand year reign on the earth. Pretribulationism states that Christ will return to rapture His church before the seven years of Tribulation (1 Thes. 4:16-17). During this Tribulation period, there will be a widespread conversion of Jews (Rom. 11:26). Christ's Second coming to earth will take place at the end of the Tribulation period when He returns with His saints to establish His earthly kingdom for one-thousand years (Rev. 20:1-10). This view best accounts for the doctrine of Christ's imminent return and most clearly distinguishes Israel and the church.

Order of eschatological events - I believe the following order of eschatological events best represents the Scriptural revelation based on a premillennial, pretribulation rapture position.

Rapture – The next prophetic event to be fulfilled on the eschatological calendar is the Rapture of the Church. This event, also called the secret return of Christ, will begin with a shout, followed by the voice of the archangel and God's trumpet sounding (1 Thes. 4:16). The bodies of those believers who have already died will be resurrected and reunited with their spirits. Then the believers who are still alive will be caught up to meet Christ in the air and will be with Him forever (1 Thes. 4:16-17).

Judgment Seat (*bema*) of Christ – The Judgment Seat of Christ, or the *Bema*, is the rewards ceremony for all saints who lived before the Tribulation (Lk. 14:12-14).

Marriage of the Lamb – The marriage of the Lamb is the consummation of Christ's relationship with His Church immediately following the Rapture and the Judgment Seat (Mt. 25:1-13, Eph. 5:26-27).

Tribulation – The purpose of the seven-year Tribulation period (Daniel's seventieth week, Dan. 9:27) is to judge the unbelieving world and to bring the nation of Israel to repentance (Eze. 20:33-38, Jer. 30:1-17). The Antichrist is a figure who will arise as world leader early in the Tribulation (Rev. 13:1-3) to deceive many into worshipping him as god and to persecute God's people (2 Thes. 2:3-4, 9, Rev. 13:11-18).

Second Coming – After the seven years of Tribulation, all the nations will be gathered to the valley of Megiddo to fight the nation of Israel (Rev. 16:12-16, 19:19).

Christ will return to earth with His saints destroying the wicked with the sword of His mouth (Rev. 19:11-19). Satan will be bound and incarcerated in the abyss for one-thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).

Millennium – Following the seven years of Tribulation, Christ will begin His earthly reign for one-thousand years during which time Satan will be bound and kept from deceiving mankind (Rev. 20:1-3). The Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected to reign with Him (Rev. 20:4), and the saints who survived the Tribulation will repopulate the earth (see Rev. 19:20-21, Is. 65:20). The effects of the curse on creation will be nearly completely eradicated (Is. 2:4, 11:6-9, 65:20). Although all who live at the Millennium's commencement will be believers, those born in the Millennial period must choose or reject Christ. At the end of the Millennium, those who refuse Christ will join Satan's final rebellion against Him and will be destroyed (Rev. 20:7-10).

Resurrection of unrighteous and Great White Throne Judgment – The resurrection of the wicked will take place followed by the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). All individuals whose names are not found in the Book of Life will be condemned to the lake of fire for all eternity (Rev. 20:12). There will be degrees of punishment based on the past decisions made by each individual during his life on earth (Rev. 20:13).

Eternal state – The eternal state will mark the end of eschatological events and world history. The *righteous* will experience a complete recreation of the universe called the new heaven and new earth free from the effects of sin (Rev. 21:1, 4; Is. 65:17). The New Jerusalem will descend out of heaven and God will dwell with His people for all eternity (Rev. 21:2-3).

Practical Issues

Salvation Testimony

I grew up hearing the Gospel from my earliest memory. Although I made a profession of faith in Christ when I was four, I struggled with doubts for years following and did not bear any fruit of true salvation. In 1994 at The WILDS Christian Camp, I truly came to a saving faith in Jesus Christ. The evangelist preached on hell, and I was under great conviction. During the message, God spoke to me, "Daniel, why are you in fear? Christ did it all for you. Just trust Christ." At that moment, I was saved. Several years later, I was baptized by immersion at Mount Calvary Baptist Church.

Call to the Ministry

Almost immediately following my conversion, I felt called to preach and studied Bible at Bob Jones University and completed a Masters of Divinity at Bob Jones Seminary. During my college years, the Lord opened opportunities to preach at a local Rescue Mission. During our years in the Undershepherds in Training program, I had the opportunity to minister to teens in the neighborhood with the Friday teen club. I have also enjoyed working in Awana, VBS, Sunday School, and the music ministry.

My love for Germany began in junior high through an interest in the German language. In college, I studied German as minor and traveled on two mission teams where I was first exposed to the country of Germany. It was during these years, that I began to sense the Lord calling me into German missions. He confirmed this through providential contact with German missionaries, a survey trip to Germany in 2002, and a sense of giftedness for communicating the Gospel in Germany.

Philosophy of Ministry

Goals

Our short-term goal during the first two years in Germany is to gain a firm grasp of German language and culture. Our long-term (ten-year) goal is to plant churches in the Thüringen region of the former east Germany.

Purpose Statement

To plant indigenous, self-propagating churches made up of a unified body of believers that are zealous to win the loss and are mutually edifying one another to Christ-likeness through the ministry of the Word.

We plan to do this through mass evangelism, personal evangelism through relationships, and one-on-one discipleship. We desire to disciple young converts through the systematic study of God's Word,¹ regular worship as a church body, and by our example. The church must be characterized by a unity of purpose found in their head, Christ (Jn. 17:21, Col. 1:18, Eph. 4:11-13; 2:21); a focus on the preaching and teaching of God's Word (Acts 2:42, 2 Tim. 4:1-5); and a zeal to share the Gospel with the lost (Acts 1:8, Mt. 28:19-20).

¹ German resources include *Training in Christentum* and *Changed into His Image* by Jim Berg.

Church Worship

The main purpose of the church is to bring glory to God individually and corporately. The church is to meet together to worship the Lord as a corporate body of believers through music that honors the Lord (Acts 2:47, Col. 3:16), public Scripture reading (1 Tim. 4:13), preaching of the Word, (2 Tim. 4:1-4), practice of Lord's Table and baptism (Acts 2:42, Mt. 28:19), fellowship (Acts 2:42), and public prayer (1 Tim. 2:1-2, 8). We believe that our music, both personal and public, must be in agreement with God's character and distinct from the world. CCM is Christian lyrics set to the music of the world (pop culture) and must be rejected as contradictory to God's holiness (2 Cor. 6:14-18, Rom. 12:1-2).

Missions – The church must feel the responsibility of fulfilling the Great Commission. Our church plant needs to consider being involved in missions very early through prayer and support.

Indigenous principle – The church plant must grow to the point of being indigenous and independent of financial and spiritual support from the American missionary and American churches. It is best for the nationals to take responsibility for their own ministry and come to the point that Germans can lead the ministry without the aid of the missionary.

Personal Walk with the Lord

We believe that our ministry must flow out of a vibrant personal walk with the Lord through His Word and prayer (Jn. 15:5, Ps. 127:1). We are also determined to live holy lives separate from the world. God's holiness must affect every area of our lives and conduct including our attitudes, desires, priorities, speech, dress, choice of entertainment, and worship style (1 Pet. 1:14-16). We will also only work with believers that have seriously attempted to apply the principles of separation on the personal and ecclesiastical level. Issues of separation include holding to false teaching, practicing ecumenical evangelism, or using a contemporary worship style.

We believe that accountability to other believers is an important aspect of our walk with the Lord. In addition to mutual accountability, my wife and I desire to hold ourselves accountable to our sending church, Mount Calvary Baptist Church, other supporting churches (to a lesser degree), the directors of Gospel Fellowship Association Mission, and our future coworkers, Jeff and Linda Brown.

Priority of the Family

I believe my first ministry and mission field is my own family. If I neglect my wife and children, I have failed to fulfill my obligations as the head of my family (Eph. 5:25-27) and I am disqualified as a minister of the gospel (1 Tim. 3:4).

Finances and Stewardship

As God's children, all we own is His, and we are only stewards. We desire to use our money to further the work of God through hospitality, benevolence, and evangelism. We must be wise and save a portion of our money for the future (Prov. 22:3, 23:3-4). We do not believe in sustaining credit card debt, but desire to trust the Lord to provide for our daily bread through our own careful stewardship (Ecc. 11:1-2) and His faithful hand (Ps. 37:27, Heb. 13:5-6).