

Doctrinal Statement

of
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My Testimony and Call to the Ministry

I was privileged to be born into a Christian home where my parents taught me Scripture as early as I can remember. As a Pastor's kid I remember thinking as a four-year-old that I was born a Christian because of my identity as a "PK." This thought was not a result of any ideas from my parents. The Lord used a sermon my dad preached to convict me of my sin, but I felt ashamed to admit I wasn't already saved, thinking it would make my parents look bad. Two years later (at age seven) my dad preached a communion message that the Spirit used to convict me again. That night I was unable to sleep. I went to my dad, and he knelt with me by our couch and led me to Christ!

I don't remember ever struggling with doubt of my salvation, but I struggled a lot with pride. I continued to think I was a "special" Christian because my dad is a Pastor. That pride ultimately led me to a strong desire to do my own thing in life. I thought that I could choose whatever I wanted to do with my life, and it would look good to those who knew me . . . because I was a good PK. I began to become enamored with life in the military and read all the military aviation books I could from the local library. I planned my future career, never surrendering the rest of my life to what God had for me.

A few months before I turned old enough to join the Air Force, the Lord brought a missionary family (Randy and Elena Smith and family) to present their ministry to our church. It was from their son, Matt, that I first heard about missionary aviation. During Mr. Smith's presentation I felt the strongest burden I had ever felt for something. As I walked down the steps to leave the church building the Lord did a miraculous work in my heart by completely removing my desire for what I wanted and replacing it with what He had for me. I knew He wanted me in missionary aviation.

Since that day, almost fifteen years ago, I have never once doubted what the Lord has for me. The Lord led Rachel and me to do a missions internship in Alaska to visit the ministry where we are now going. During our six weeks there I was again burdened to follow the Lord's call for me: to reach the Alaskan native people for the Gospel. I believe God has called my family and me into full-time ministry because of the supernatural and irresistible call I received from Him, an awareness of God's gifts in my life, an undeniable burden for the people where we are serving, and the encouragement of more mature believers.

Bibliology

Doctrine of Scripture

I believe the sixty-six books of the Bible, Genesis through Revelation, are the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and preserved words of God. God's Word has received attack from His enemies since the day Adam and Eve fell to temptation in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3:1–5 Satan blatantly attacked the very words of God spoken to Adam and Eve by casting doubt on the validity of what God said. Although Satan himself knew what God said was true, he performed a gross act by tempting the first man and woman to doubt the words of their perfect Creator. Since that day, immeasurable doubt has been placed on the authoritative words of God, and ultimately, on the written Word of God. This is why a solid belief in the doctrine of Scripture is essential to accurately navigate our lives, and it is this dependence on the truth of God's Word that is needed to combat the doubt authored by the devil. Just the first sentence of the first chapter of Genesis is enough to set the Bible apart from any other book.

Inspiration

I believe the Bible is inspired by God. The wording of the entire Bible (verbal, plenary) is God-breathed. The inspiration of Scripture was a divine act that took place as each book was written. This is mentioned in 2 Peter 1:21 when Peter says the Holy Spirit "moved" men. The authors who penned Scripture never claimed that they were inspired, but that Scripture itself was inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; Rev. 1:10–11; 3:22). Inspiration means that God spoke (or "breathed") the words that men "moved by the Spirit" then wrote. There are passages like Hebrews 4:12 that teach the Bible is living, and the Scriptural fact that God inspired the Bible means that it is a living Book. I believe inspiration extended to the original manuscripts alone. I reject "double inspiration," which teaches that the English 1611 KJV is an inspired English translation.

Inerrancy and Infallibility

I believe the Bible is inerrant, meaning that there is no error in any of its teaching (John 10:35). Human beings are capable of being without error in certain parts of life. A person can take a written test and achieve an inerrant score, 10 out of 10, for example. However, it is entirely *possible* for a person to make a mistake on any given test. I also believe the Bible is infallible and *incapable* of any error. The words of Scripture are from God, and Titus 1:2 teaches that God "cannot lie." This is an impossibility. No human being is capable of being infallible in any of our earthly experiences. The infallibility of the Bible sets it apart from any other book written. This divine work is exactly what happened during the inspiration of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

Preservation

I believe the Bible is preserved in that it is everlasting: protected by God from any form of decay as a result of time, distribution, or the multiplicity of copies. There is plenty of historical data to support preservation of Scripture. Over five thousand manuscripts of the New Testament alone have been discovered, and all these manuscripts are miraculously unified in their doctrine.

There are historical events where copies of Scripture have been burned and those daring to carry or copy Scripture were martyred. Attempts have also been made to distort the truth of Scripture by writing alternative texts. All these things have failed to rid the world of the living Word of God because He has promised it would be preserved (Ps. 119:89; Is. 40:8; Matt. 24:35). This is an incredible act of God!

I believe the sixty-six books of the Bible we have today make up the finished and preserved Word of God, with *nothing* needing to be added for revelation or clarity, also known as a closed canon (Prov. 30:5–6; Gal. 1:6–9). The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament can be trusted as the preserved Word of God because they were written by prophets of God, they were received by priests of God who accepted their divine authority, and Jesus along with the apostles quoted them as Scripture (Matt. 4:4; Mark 10:6–8; Luke 10:26–28). Likewise, the twenty-seven books of the New Testament can be trusted as the preserved Word of God because the writers were given apostolic authority and the books are unified in all their teaching (Mark 1:1; Luke 1:1–4; John 16:13; Rom. 16:25–26; 1 Cor. 14:37).

Translation

I believe the accurate translation of God’s holy Word from the original manuscripts is not confined to any single translation. If a modern translation of Scripture interprets the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts in a literal style, it is a good and faithful translation. I personally use the KJV, NASB, ESV, and NKJV (1 Cor. 3:22).

Theology Proper

Doctrine of God

The Person of God

I believe God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchanging (Ps. 90:2; Is. 40:28; John 4:4). God is One but exists in three Persons Who are distinguished in Scripture: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; Is. 48:16; John 14:26; 1 Pet. 1:2). We know that all three Persons are eternal because they were present “In the beginning” (Gen. 1:26; Is. 48:16). We know that all three Persons are one God because they are all recognized as God (John 10:30; Acts 5:3-4), and they are unified in substance, power, and glory (Matt. 28:19; John 10:30; 14:26; 2 Cor. 13:14).

Because God is infinite, He has incommunicable qualities (attributes) that we cannot completely understand (Job 11:7–9). God is unchangeable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and perfect in holiness (James 1:17; Ps. 139:7–12; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 4:8; Matt. 19:26). These attributes should cause us to worship God, the very reason we were created. The Holy Spirit says in Psalm 95:6 “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” The fact that God does not share these attributes means that He alone is worthy to receive worship (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 6:1; Matt. 4:10). God also has communicable attributes. These include love, wisdom, kindness, justice, and mercy (John 3:16; James 3:17; Rom. 11:22; Ps. 33:5; Eph. 2:4). All people are familiar with these attributes of God, and we find these qualities in

ourselves in a limited sense. We can love; we can attain a level of wisdom; we can show kindness, justice, and mercy as well. Man can display these attributes because God made us in His image (Gen. 1:26).

The Work of God

Because God created us to worship Him, He graciously reveals Himself and His character (Ps. 34:8; Prov. 8:17; John 17:3). Our knowledge of the workings of God is a wonderful gift from Him as He reveals His work to us in general (natural) revelation and special revelation. General revelation shows all men in all places of the world God's "invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature" (Rom. 1:20). This revelation is enough to bring each person to an understanding that God exists.

I believe the first chapter of the Bible teaches that God created the world from nothing in six consecutive twenty-hour days (Gen 1). The book of Genesis is a crucial part of our Bible as it is the foundation of the rest of Scripture. More specifically, Genesis 1–3 are the foundational chapters in the book. If a person does not believe what Genesis 1–3 teaches about God and man, he will leave room to doubt any part of the rest of the Bible. The creation account puts on full display God's incommunicable attributes. Genesis chapter 2 shows us the work of God in designing man for work, then establishing the foundational truth of marriage. Genesis 3 records for us the first sin of man, separating mankind from a holy God.

Since the final day of creation God has been accomplishing the work of providence by ordering all things to happen according to His perfect will (Gen. 50:20; Prov. 16:9; Rom. 8:28; 11:36). God's providence is over all the earth, and every human being is under His ultimate control (Prov. 16:9; 21:1; Dan. 4:35; Matt. 5:45).

We also see the work of God in special revelation. General revelation is enough to bring all men to accountability before God as He reveals His existence to all. However, this general revelation is not enough to bring man to a full knowledge of God's plan to redeem sinful men. For this we need His special revelation which is seen in His preserved Word. In the Bible alone God has sufficiently given mankind all we need to know about Who He is, who we are, what He has done, and what He will do (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:3). God's special revelation testifies to the redemptive work of His Son, Jesus Christ (John 5:39–40).

Christology

Doctrine of Jesus Christ

Person of Christ

“What do you think about the Christ, whose Son is He?” Jesus asked this question about Himself in Matthew 22:42. What a religion teaches about Jesus of Nazareth is will very often be one proof that it is a false religion.

I believe Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity. Scripture makes it clear that Jesus is fully God (John 8:58; Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:5; 13:8) and that He became fully man (Matt. 20:28; John 8:40; 1 Tim. 2:5). John 1 is a foundational passage where the Bible teaches the eternity and divinity of Christ. Verses 1–4 explain that Jesus, being God, created all things. The writer of Hebrews explains that Christ is “the exact representation” of God’s nature, once again proving the divinity of Christ (Ex. 3:14; John 1:1–4; Heb. 1:3). Christ also displayed divine power over the natural world by performing many miracles in front of eyewitnesses (Matt. 8:3, 15, 32; 9:6–8; Mark 8:6–8; Luke 4:40; 7:10; John 2:1–11; 5:9; 6:19). The premier evidence of the deity of Christ is His resurrection from the tomb (Matt. 28:2–6; John 11:25). Jesus promised us, “because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19). Christ’s resurrection is our guarantee and foundational hope that we will be resurrected with Him (2 Cor. 4:14). Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead our doctrinal beliefs would be worthless (Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:12–19).

Jesus was miraculously conceived by a virgin woman. He was incarnated into a body of flesh, yet He retained His perfect deity (John 1:14; Col. 2:9). The virgin birth is very significant because it fulfilled OT prophesy (Is. 7:14), and was necessary concerning the sinless character of Christ which was needed for a perfect sacrifice (1 John 3:5). John tells us that to reject the incarnation is to align with the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 4:2–3). This joining of divine and human natures into one perfect Person is called the hypostatic union.

Work of Christ

Very often the work of Christ is considered under the three offices He holds as Mediator: Prophet, Priest, and King. One thing that sets Jesus above all other prophets is that He teaches with divine authority (Mark 1:22). Peter preaches in Acts 3 that the appointed Christ (v. 20) is the Prophet that Moses foretold (v. 22), and that every OT prophet since Samuel prophesied the same thing (v. 24). One of Jesus’ primary roles as Prophet was to proclaim the message from God through His preaching ministry (Matt. 4:17). Jesus Himself claimed to be a Prophet speaking for God (Matt. 13:57; John 8:26; 15:15; 17:8). The prophetic ministry of Christ was authenticated in two ways: some of His prophecies have already come true (Matt. 16:21; John 2:19–21), and He performed miracles which proved He was a true Prophet (Matt. 8:3, 15, 32; 9:6–8; Mark 8:6–8; Luke 4:40; 7:10; John 2:1–11; 5:9; 6:19). Another thing that sets Christ above all other prophets is that the prophets before communicated God’s words to people, but Christ *is* the Word of God personified (John 1:1).

The priests of the OT spoke to men from God, and primarily they spoke to God on behalf of men. Leviticus 21 lays out the strict qualifications of the Jewish priests, but despite meeting all the qualifications they were still imperfect priests and needed their own sin covered by sacrifice (Heb. 7:27). They continually offered sacrifices for sin because the atonement by animal sacrifice was not perfect (Heb. 10:1–2); in fact, “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (10:4). Unlike the Jewish priests, Christ is sinless and did not need to offer sacrifices for Himself (7:27). He is an eternal priest (7:17), and He acted as a perfect high Priest by offering His body as a perfect sacrifice “once for all” (10:10). Perhaps the most significant truth that sets Christ above all other priests is His substitutionary sacrifice. The satisfaction offered by Christ’s sacrifice was not for Himself, but for all mankind (John 6:51; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21). Surely this is the highest display of the mercy of God: that the Sovereign and the Judge would not only allow a substitute for our punishment but be the provided substitute Himself (John 5:22; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:28; 1 John 2:2). Praise God for this mercy! Another way Christ serves as high Priest is being our Mediator to God (John 17). Other Jewish priests mediated for a limited time, but Scripture clearly teaches that Christ is the only Priest Who continually intercedes before God on our behalf, and there is no other (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:25).

Christ also displays His work as a King Who rules His people (Matt. 28:18; John 18:37; Col. 1:13). Jesus currently reigns over His body, the Church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18), and in the hearts of His people (Col. 1:13). In Isaiah 45:23 Jesus promises, “That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.” As King, Jesus will subdue us to Himself and will one day cause all mankind to “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:10). There is coming a day when Jesus Christ will physically reign as King over all creation (Zech. 14:9; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16), and He will conquer all His enemies and abolish death (Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25–26).

Pneumatology

Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Person of the Holy Spirit

I believe in the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit, the third Member of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14). The Holy Spirit shows divine attributes like omnipotence in creation (Job 33:4), omniscience (John 14:26), and omnipresence (Ps. 139:7–10). He also displays attributes of personality: He has a will (1 Cor. 12:11), He has intelligence (1 Cor. 2:10–11), and He expresses emotion (Eph. 4:30). If we fail to recognize the Spirit as a divine Person, we will fall short of worshipping Him as God (John 4:23–24).

Work of the Holy Spirit

I believe the Spirit works past, present, and future. Scripture teaches He was present in creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30). He “overshadowed” Mary to have a miraculous conception (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:35), filled and led Christ (Luke 4:1), and anointed Jesus to “preach the Gospel” (Luke 4:18). The Spirit also empowered Christ during His earthly ministry (Matt. 12:28). Not only did

He work in Christ, but also in God's people. He has directed believers in the right way (Ps. 143:10; Is. 30:21) and has instructed them in truth (Neh. 9:20; Acts 8:29; 13:2; 1 Cor. 2:12). The Spirit inspired the Word of God by moving men effectually as they wrote (2 Pet. 1:21).

The work of the Holy Spirit continues today. He is the means by which Christ baptizes believers into "one body" at conversion (Matt. 3:11; 1 Cor. 12:13); He secures the believer's salvation by sealing him (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30); He indwells the believer for eternity (John 14:12; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16); He extensively controls and influences the believer by filling him (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 6:3–5; Eph. 5:18); and He gives spiritual gifts to each believer to serve the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, 18; 1 Pet. 4:10). This work in the life of believers produces the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23). The spiritual gifts include prophesy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leading, and mercy (Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:8–11). I believe the cessationist position that teaches the sign gifts (healing, prophesy, tongues, and miracles) were "partial" and are no longer needed because the written Word of God communicates "perfect" truth to mankind (1 Cor. 13:8–13; Heb. 2:3–4).

Angelology

Doctrine of Angels

Ministering Spirits

I believe God created angels as eternal spiritual beings, powerful and majestic (Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:14; 2 Pet. 2:11). The angels are found in Scripture to praise (Is. 6:3), worship (Heb. 1:6), and serve their Creator (Ps. 103:20). Scripture alludes to certain ranks among angels: the archangel Michael (Jude 9), cherubim (Gen. 3:24), and seraphim (Is. 6:2, 6). God often employed angels to be messengers of His word (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:26–38; Acts 8:26).

Unclean Spirits

Scripture calls Satan "the father of lies" (John 8:44). Sin originated with Lucifer and the angels that fell with him (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:4) These fallen angels are now spiritual demons who serve Satan (Matt. 12:24). These demons have been used by Satan to posses spiritually vulnerable humans and control their faculties to perform supernatural and destructive things (Mark 5:1–5; 9:17–18). The prince of the demons currently rules the unsaved of this world, and his demonic angels work at his beckoning (1 John 5:19). Although the demons are terrifying beings, they remain in full submission to God's will and are unable to possess a child of God (Mark 1:27; John 14:16–18; James 2:19).

Anthropology

Doctrine of Man

Origin and Fall

I believe God created man in His image on the sixth day of creation and breathed into him the breath of life, giving man an eternal soul (Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Job 33:4). God created Adam and Eve, male and female, without sin and in perfect communion with Him (Gen. 1:27; Eccl. 7:29). Despite their perfect condition, Adam and Eve both chose to adhere to Satan's deception and disobey the commandment of the Lord (Gen. 3:1–6). Eve was deceived and the first to rebel against God, but Adam was held responsible by God because he represented the human race (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Tim. 2:14). At the point of Adam's rebellion, sin was imputed to all mankind through him (Rom. 5:12).

Nature

Scripture teaches that man is made of two parts: material and immaterial (Gen. 2:7; Matt. 10:28; James 2:26). After the fall, man's material part (the body) was marred by sin and subject to decay and death (Gen. 3:19; 2 Kings 5:1; Job 2:7–8; Rom. 5:12; Rev. 21:4). Though distorted by sin, people are capable of using their bodies to bring honor to God and are commanded to do so (Rom. 12:1). Man also has an immaterial part that is referred to in Scripture as "soul" and "spirit," interchangeable terms describing the eternal part of man (Gen. 2:7; Job 32:8; Matt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 2:11).

Marriage

Through Adam and Eve, God initiated marriage to be only one male and one female joined together in covenant (Prov. 2:16–17; Mal. 2:14). Although the husband and wife are equal in importance (Gal. 3:28), God gives the husband the role of "head" (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23) and the wife as "helper" (Gen. 2:18). Husbands are instructed to love their wives in such a self-sacrificing way that it mimics Christ's love for His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25, 28–29; 1 Pet. 3:7). Wives are instructed to submit themselves to their husbands in such a surrendered way that it mimics the relationship the Church should have with Christ (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18). Marriage is a permanent vow that is only severed by death (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39). Divorce disfigures God's intended permanence for marriage (Matt. 19:4–6), and it forces the broken marriage to misrepresent the intended picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:22–26). Scripture strongly teaches against remarriage after divorce and labels it adultery, supporting the permanence of marriage designed by God (Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:3). God created sexuality as something good and reserved exclusively for marriage (Gen. 1:28; 2:24; Heb. 13:4). Scripture is clear that any sexual deviation from God's design (male and female in marriage) is a sin (Lev. 18:22–23; Deut. 5:18; Rom. 1:26–27; 1 Thes. 4:3–4).

Hamartiology

Doctrine of Sin

I believe sin is any action, intention, or thought that misses the mark of God's standards (1 John 3:4) and misrepresents His character (Rom. 3:23). God did not create sin; it was introduced to the first man and woman by Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8). When Adam disobeyed God's command, it was such a serious crime against His holiness that the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to all mankind so that all people are born in sin and with a sin nature (1 Kings 8:46; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1–3). Both man and Satan were given the eternal penalty of death (Gen 2:17; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10). People experience pain and suffering because of the Fall, yet God controls these experiences through providence (John 16:33; Rom. 5:3–4; James 1:2–4, 15–17). One day all of God's people will be free from pain and suffering (Ps. 34:19; Rev. 21:4).

Though salvation through Christ is necessary to escape the eternal punishment of sin, countless infants and mentally handicapped die before they are capable of understanding God's existence and their accountability to Him (Deut. 1:39). I believe God extends grace to infants and mentally handicapped when they die. There are several passages that support this (Deut. 1:39; 2 Sam. 12:19–24; Jonah 4:11), but Christ's words in John 9:41 are especially helpful.

All mankind is totally depraved. Scripture teaches that every aspect of our bodies and souls is affected by sin (Gen. 6:5; Is. 64:6; Rom. 7:18; Titus 1:15).

The nature in all people to commit sin is called the flesh. Scripture teaches that the flesh produces evil works (Gal. 5:19–21), is characterized by its desires (Gal. 5:24; Eph. 2:3; 1 John 2:16), and possesses no good thing (Rom. 7:18). The spiritual condition of an unsaved person is that he is *dead* in sin and indulges in the lusts of his flesh (Eph. 2:1–5). This is a sad and miserable state that people are in. They choose sin and its bondage over their Creator (Rom. 1:25; 3:10–12). Even if a person only committed one sin against God, that is enough to face eternal punishment (James 2:10). The righteous wrath of God is on all sin, and no transgression can go unpunished (Prov. 11:21; Eccl. 12:14; Rom. 6:23).

Soteriology

Doctrine of Salvation

“But God”

Even in the sad and miserable state all people are in, God loves us all and has given a wonderful solution (John 3:16). The only reason God has provided a way of salvation from sin is because He is divinely merciful (Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:5). In God's mercy and because of His love He sent His Son to live the sinless life required for the atonement of mankind (Heb. 4:15). Christ then bore on the wretched cross all the sin humanity has ever committed and will commit (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2). He willingly received the punishment for all the transgressions committed against His

Father's will (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8; Heb. 9:14). During the imputation of all our sin upon our Savior, the Father turned His face away from His only Son (Matt. 27:46). God willingly accomplished all this to make salvation available to mankind.

Before Salvation

I believe that Scripture teaches God has predestined and elected all those who come to Christ for salvation (Luke 18:7; Rom. 8:29–30; Eph. 1:4–5). I do not believe God in eternity past chose certain people to eventually come to saving faith *because* of their talents or merits; it was simply “according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 1:9). Election encourages evangelism of the lost because we are promised that some will be saved (Acts 18:9–11; 2 Tim. 2:10). Scripture clearly commands believers to evangelize all people (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). God draws men to Himself for salvation and without His effectual calling, no man would come to repentance (John 6:44; Rom. 3:11). At the same time, I believe in free will. God's offer of salvation is extended to all people, and the elect will *willingly* come to repentance (John 3:16; Rom. 3:22–23; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 2:2). What an amazing mystery that any sinner such as I would gain interest in the blood of my Savior!

At Salvation

I believe repentance is necessary for salvation (Matt. 4:17; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 2 Pet. 3:9). Repentance is not a work that a person contributes to his salvation; it is granted to him by God (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25). Repentance is when a person changes his mind and turns from sin, realizing its seriousness (2 Chr. 7:14; Jer. 31:18–19; Acts 26:18; Rom. 3:20).

Grace Alone

I believe a person is saved by *grace alone*, without any earned favor before God (Eph. 2:8; Heb. 4:16; Titus 3:4–5). Grace is undeserved favor on those who deserve the wrath of God. The origin of this grace is the eternal mercy of God (Luke 6:36; 1 Pet. 1:3). Because our salvation is by grace alone, God alone receives the glory.

Faith Alone

I believe a person is saved through *faith alone*, free of any works (Rom. 3:28; 4:5; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8–9; Heb. 11:2, 6). Faith is a confident hope we have in something we have not seen (Heb. 11:1). Philippians 3:9 tells us the object of our faith is Christ. Our saving faith in Christ is not a work, but a gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

Results of Salvation

Justified!

I believe a person is fully justified when by God's grace and through faith he “confesses” that Jesus is Lord and “believes” in His atoning work and His resurrection (Rom. 4:25; 5:1, 18). Only through the imputation of Christ's righteousness to a person will he be justified by God (Rom. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:21). The word *justified* is a legal term that means being declared righteous, usually by a judge. All people will stand before the judgement seat of a holy Judge and receive a declaration (2 Cor. 5:10). Those who are saved will boldly approach the eternal throne and,

being labeled *justified* because of the blood and righteousness of Jesus on their account, claim their crown (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22; 10:19; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). Clothed in Jesus' righteousness, no believer needs to dread condemnation!

Freedom

A born-again person has experienced being set free from the bondage of sin (Rom. 8:1; Gal. 5:1; Rev. 1:5). The sinner's chains fall off and his heart is set free! Instead of sin reigning in the heart of a Christian, the Lord Jesus promised that He would send the Comforter (Holy Spirit) to "teach" and "guide" the believer to follow Him (John 14:26; John 16:13). Once freed from slavery to sin, Christians are most honored to serve their wonderful Savior and live for the King who gave Himself for them (Rom. 6:16, 22; 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 2:20).

Sanctification

Scripture teaches that all believers are sanctified in the sense that they are **consecrated** positionally for Christ (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11). We are also told that when Christian people come into the heavenly presence of the Lord, they will receive **total** sanctification (1 Thes. 3:13). Between these two events, Scripture makes it clear that believers are to **progress** in sanctification, which is conformity to the image of Christ (John 17:17; Rom. 6:19; 1 Thes. 5:23–24; Heb. 12:14). Romans 12:1–2 pictures very clearly what progressive sanctification should look like in a believer. It is a transformational process. As a Christian continues to sacrifice his own desires from the flesh and conform to Christ, he will progressively become less and less conformed to the world. Progressive sanctification is not the cause of salvation; it is the fruit of it.

Eternal Security

I believe in the permanence and security of God's salvation to those who come to Christ (John 6:37; 10:27–29; Rom. 11:29; 2 Cor. 1:22; Jude 1:1). John 10:27–29 assures us that if we know Christ, both He and the Father will hold us forever. Scripture encourages us to remain faithful through the trials we experience in our lives (Rom. 5:3–4; Heb. 10:36; James 1:2–4, 12). Believers can be assured of their eternal security because of the power of God's salvation, and not man's ability (John 10:28; 2 Tim. 1:12).

Ecclesiology

Doctrine of the Church

The Universal Church

I believe the universal Church is comprised of all born-again believers (Matt. 16:18). The Church is the bride of Jesus Christ Who "lovingly gave Himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). Acts 2 records the beginning and early events of the Church. The Church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head of His Church (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:22–23; Col. 1:18). The Church is to be a "pillar" of truth by representing and proclaiming Christ (1 Tim. 3:15).

With regards to the relationship between the Church and civil government, the people in the Church are commanded in Scripture to submit to governmental laws (Rom. 13:1–5; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13–15), pay taxes (Matt. 22:17–21; Rom. 13:6–7), and pray for the governmental leaders (1 Tim. 2:1–2). The roles of the Church and civil government are different (Matt. 28:18–20; Rom. 13:3–4); therefore, government should not interfere with the Church and the Church should not use governmental power for ministry.

The Church did not exist in the OT. In Matthew 16:18 Christ promised to “build” His church, obviously referring to something not yet started. The functioning entity of the Church could not exist until the ascended Christ “gave gifts to men” and set up offices within the Church (Eph. 4:8–12). The universal Church stands distinct from the nation Israel.

The Local Church

I believe local churches are visible and local gatherings of Christian people devoted to the following: God’s Word being taught, fellowship, ordinances, and prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thes. 1:1; Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7,14). Local churches are also instructed to evangelize the lost and disciple those who come to Christ (Matt. 28:19–20).

Government

Scripture teaches an order of authority in the local church with Christ being the Head (Eph. 5:22; Col. 1:18). The local church should be congregational in its polity, which is especially significant in matters regarding electing church leaders (Acts 6:3), church discipline (Matt. 18:17), and sending missionaries (Acts 15:3–4, 30, 33; 17:10, 14). The congregation is led by two Scriptural offices: elders and deacons. Elders are also referred to as overseers (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1). Elders must meet the Scriptural qualifications laid out in the NT (1 Tim 3:2–7; Titus 1:5–9). Their role is described by the term “shepherd” which is the idea of feeding the flock of God (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:9). While we have biblical examples of the plurality of elders in NT churches (Acts 14:23; 15:4; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1), there are cases where a local church may only have one elder due to several reasons including: financial limits; the small size of the church; and the lack of qualified men. The second office is deacon. The deacons of a church must also meet Scriptural qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8–10, 12) and are instructed to help meet the material needs of those in the church (Acts 6:1–6).

Ordinances

Local churches are instructed to observe two ordinances: baptism and communion. Baptism is reserved for the person who is already saved (Matt. 3:6; 28:19; Acts 2:38, 41; 16:14–15, 33–34), and it should be done by immersion (as pictured in Rom. 6:1–4). The usage of the Greek word *baptizo* in the NT points to immersion. Baptism is a one-time public declaration of the new believer *symbolizing* their union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1–4; Col. 2:12). Communion (the Lord’s Supper) is a repeated ordinance in which the church corporately remembers the atonement of Christ by eating and drinking physical elements to *symbolize* His body and blood (Matt. 26:26–28; 1 Cor. 11:23–25). Every believer should

examine himself to make sure he is not taking communion in an “unworthy manner” (1 Cor. 11:27–31). Both ordinances are for those who are already saved, and neither baptism nor communion grants added grace to the believer.

Church Membership

Believers should join themselves to a local church in membership as a public identification with the body of Christ before the world (John 13:35). While Scripture does not specifically teach the process of membership, it clearly teaches commitment to the local church (Heb. 10:23–25). One of the greatest benefits of joining a local church is knowing there is a body of brothers and sisters committed to restoring an erring believer who wanders from the Lord (1 Cor. 5:13). Another benefit to membership is that it naturally encourages participation and accountability (Heb. 10:25).

Eschatology

Doctrine of Last Things

Rapture

I believe in the glorious and imminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 12:40). God’s people pray for this (Rev. 22:20) and sing hymns in anticipation of this event. The souls of believers who die *before* the rapture are immediately welcomed into heaven where they await the rejoining of soul and body (Luke 23:43). The souls of those who die without knowing Christ are sent to hell (Luke 16:19–31). Scripture teaches a pre-tribulational Rapture of God’s people where “in a moment” the “dead in Christ will rise first” and living believers will then ascend with Christ (1 Cor. 15:51–53; 1 Thes. 4:15–17; Rev. 3:10–11). Directly following the Rapture, the earth will go through seven years of unparalleled judgment known as the Tribulation (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 6–18). The Tribulation will have two primary purposes: (1) God uses judgment to convert the nation Israel (Jer. 30:7; 31:31–34; Dan. 12:1; Rom. 11:26); and (2) the wrath of God will be displayed upon those who reject Him (1 Thes. 5:1–3; 2 Thes. 2:12; Rev. 6:15–17).

Tribulation and Millennium

After the seven-year Tribulation, heaven will open, and Jesus will return to earth leading a heavenly army (Rev. 19:11–14). Upon Christ’s arrival on earth there will be a great battle between the heavenly army and the nations of earth who have persecuted Israel (Rev. 16:13–16). Christ will then cast the false prophet and the Antichrist, who have deceived mankind during the Tribulation, into the eternal lake of fire (Rev. 19:19–20). This marks the beginning of the Millennium, a literal one-thousand-year reign of Christ on earth with His people (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:1–6). The true nation of Israel (Gal. 3:29) will enjoy their land promise fulfilled (Gen. 17:8; Eze. 36:24–38; Amos 9:14–15). Satan will be bound during this time and not allowed to deceive (Rev. 20:2).

Following the Millennium, Satan will be released and deceive the nations to rebel against God one last time. A glorious fire will rain from heaven and destroy God’s enemies. Satan, the ultimate enemy of God, will finally be cast into hell to face his deserved and eternal torment

(Rev. 20:7–10). Praise God! Then, **all** people who rejected God will receive their eternal sentence of damnation in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11–15). Once God’s enemies are destroyed along with sin forever, a new heaven and earth will come where all of God’s people will dwell with Him for eternity (Rev. 21–22).