



# AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH

At GraceLife Bible Church, we strongly desire to be unified under the love and authority of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The primary way God has designed for His body to be spiritually one is through the Word and Spirit of God. This is why these *Affirmations of Faith* are so important to us as a church family... They are the nails and glue that hold us together.

## FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS

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*At GraceLife Bible Church we encourage a level of doctrinal tolerance. However, there are some fundamental truths which a person must affirm if one desires to fellowship and minister within our church body. We believe the following truths constitute the fundamental beliefs of the historic Christian faith.*

1. We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is only one true and living God—the God of the Bible—an infinite, all-knowing Spirit, perfect in all His attributes, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that all men are born with a sinful nature and are lost sinners, incapable of meriting God's forgiveness and hopeless apart from God's mercy.
5. We believe that salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit and is by grace alone, through faith alone, based on the blood and righteousness of Christ alone.
6. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling every Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
7. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost—the saved to eternal life with Christ and the lost to eternal punishment in hell.

# WHAT WE TEACH STATEMENT

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*The following document outlines the position of GraceLife Bible Church on biblical doctrines. It is recognized that there will be those who choose to fellowship with us who do not agree in all points with our doctrinal teaching position. We welcome you to participate freely with us, yet at the same time we cannot permit doctrines to be taught within our body that are contrary to what we believe the Bible communicates. The reason for this is because we believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served by elevating the truth, and then demonstrating how Christians can love each other across boundaries, rather than removing the boundaries.*

## **I. The Bible**

*The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, all-sufficient Word of God comprised of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament and the only source of Christian truth.*

### **A. Revelation**

*Revelation is God's general and special disclosure of Himself to mankind. Without God's revelation, mankind would be completely ignorant to who God is.*

#### **1. General Revelation**

*General revelation is God's foundational revelation as revealed in creation and conscience. It is "general" because all men have this revelation intuitively. General revelation is not enough to save anyone but is enough to hold men accountable to their Creator (Rom 1:20).*

##### **a. Creation (Psa 19:1; Acts 14:16–17; Rom 1:19–20)**

*Ever since God created the world, all men have seen clear proof that God exists through His creation. There is no other way to explain the existence of the universe.*

##### **b. Conscience (Rom 1:32; 2:14–15)**

*Since man is created in the image of God, inherent in every person is an understanding of God's existence and His moral law via the conscience.*

#### **2. Special Revelation**

*Special revelation is God's specific revelation of Himself through various means. Unlike general revelation which cannot save, special revelation is necessary for salvation. Apart from the truth concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ, no sinner can be saved.*

- a. Various Means (Heb 1:1; Job 38:1; Gen 41; 1 Sam 3:1–14; Dan 7:1–2)

*God used various means of revelation—dreams, visions, audible voice—to communicate His Word to His prophets.*

- b. Jesus Christ (Heb 1:2–3; John 1:1–5, 14, 18; 6:63; Col 1:15)

*The essence of special revelation centers on the person and work of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as the final and greatest revelation of God.*

- c. The Bible (Psa 19:7–11; 1 Cor 15:1–4; Luke 24:27; John 1:1; Heb 4:12)

*The Bible accurately presents the special revelation of God in Christ. The entire Bible centers on the person and work of Jesus Christ.*

## B. Inspiration

*Inspiration is the process by which God, through his Spirit, inspired every word of the 66 books of the Bible in the original autographs (i.e., the original manuscripts).*

1. The words of Scripture are God’s words (2 Tim 3:16; Rev 1:10–11; 2 Pet 3:15–16)

*The words of Scripture are affirmed by both the OT and NT as God’s words and not the words of men.*

2. Human authors wrote the Scriptures (2 Pet 1:21)

*The words of Scripture were written down by human authors as the very words of God. The biblical writers were “moved” along by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wrote through the biblical writers using their own languages, culture and individual personalities, resulting in God’s Word without error in the original autographs.*

3. Scripture was recorded without any errors (Titus 1:2; Psa 12:6; Prov 30:5; John 17:17)

*If Scripture is “God-breathed” and God recorded His words to man through human authors, all supervised by the Holy Spirit, what was recorded is and must be without any error.*

4. The specific letters, words, and grammar are inspired (2 Tim 3:16; Matt 5:18; Gal 3:16)

*Inspiration extends all the way to the selection of words by the biblical authors. The extent of inspiration goes down to the very letters, words, and grammar of the Bible and covers the entire Word.*

5. Inspiration relates only to the original autographs.

*Verbal, plenary inspiration is applied only to the original autographs (scrolls, letters). This does not mean, though, that we don’t have a reliable Bible today.*

### C. Inerrancy

*Inerrancy means that Scripture in the original autographs has no errors—it does not contain anything that is contrary to the truth.*

1. The basis of inerrancy is the doctrine of inspiration (2 Tim 3:16; Isa 30:8; John 10:35).

*God cannot lie (Num 23:19); everything God speaks is absolutely true (Prov 30:5); therefore the Scriptures are absolutely true and without error (John 17:17).*

2. Inerrancy allows for human language.

*The Bible was written in human languages and written for man. Therefore, it is written in language that man can fully understand. This includes scientific or historical descriptions from man's perspective (Psa 50:1), the use of approximate numbers and measurements (Ezra 2:64–67; Neh 7:66–67), and idiomatic statements (Gen 22:17; Jer 33:22).*

3. Inerrancy allows for different angles and details.

*In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark & Luke), the various authors used different words and at times, details, to describe the same event.*

### D. Clarity

*Clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is capable of being understood by men who approach it by God's enabling help (2 Pet 1:3; 1 Cor 2:12–14; John 7:17).*

1. The Bible affirms its own clarity.

*The OT assumes widespread clarity (Deut 6:6–7; Psa 19:6). Jesus also affirmed that the OT should be plain in meaning (Matt 12:3, 5; John 3:10). Paul's letters were written to the "churches" (Gal 1:2, Phil 1:1) rather than to a spiritual or intellectual elite who were able to sift through complexity to grasp their meaning.*

2. Clarity is necessary for daily encouragement from God's Word.

*Knowing that the Scriptures were written to be understood should be an immense encouragement to our hearts. We ought to give ourselves to the reading of the Word and seek to understand the things that God communicates to us in it (John 5:39; 1 Cor 13:3).*

### E. Necessity

*Necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel, spiritual growth in Christ, and His will for the believer's life.*

1. The Bible is necessary for knowing the gospel (Rom 10:17; Heb 11:13), spiritual growth in Christ (Matt 4:4; 1 Pet 2:2), and His will for the believer's life (1 Thess 4:3; 5:18; 1 Pet 2:15).

2. The Bible is not necessary to know that God exists (Psa 19:1; Rom 1:19, 21) or to know something about God's character and moral laws (Rom 1:20, 32; 2:14–15).

*General revelation teaches the existence of God. All men know that He does indeed exist. Not only do all men know that God exists, but through general revelation, all men also know something about God's character and moral laws.*

#### F. Authority

*Authority means that Scripture is the only infallible basis of faith and practice for individual believers and for the church.*

1. The authority of Scripture is based on God's ultimate authority (Psa 62:11; Rom 13:1; 2 Chron 20:6) and the authority of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18; Phil 2:10; Jude 25). Therefore, Scripture has authority (Deut 4:1–2; Prov 30:5–6; Rev 22:18–19).

*God the Father and Jesus the Son did not inherit their authority—it was already theirs. Therefore, their words carry the full weight of their divine authority.*

2. Jesus affirmed the authority of the OT (Matt 4:1–11; 12:1–8; 19:3–9).

*In every use of the Scriptures, Jesus affirmed and appealed to the authority of the OT to resolve all matters of faith and practice.*

3. Jesus affirmed His words as God's words, therefore they were fully authoritative (John 8:26–28; 14:10; 17:7–8).

*Jesus repeatedly declared that when He spoke, His words were the very words the Father had given Him to speak.*

4. Jesus affirmed that the apostles/biblical authors would be given additional revelation that was fully authoritative (John 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:12–14).

*Jesus promised to His disciples that after His departure, the Holy Spirit would come and recall His words as well as reveal to them additional revelation.*

5. The writers of the NT recognized their own writings as Scripture, and therefore, as having full authority (1 Thess 2:13; 2 Pet 3:15–16; 1 Tim 5:18).

#### G. Sufficiency

*Sufficiency means that Scripture alone is the only place where man can know the words/will of God and is sufficient for all of our answers and needs.*

1. Scripture is sufficient for salvation (2 Tim 3:15; Jam 1:18) and sanctification (2 Tim 3:16–17; Psa 119:1).

*All God requires of His creatures is given to us in His Word—His will is revealed through His Word. Therefore, we have all that we need for salvation and sanctification in Scripture.*

2. Scripture answers all of our questions (2 Tim 3:16–17).

*There is no topic, issue, or question that the Bible does not answer for us either directly or indirectly. The Bible gives specific principles that cover a wide range of practical topics relevant to everyday life—our relationship with God and others, family life, church life, government, social life, etc. The Bible also gives us a principle or principles that indirectly apply to every area of life.*

#### H. Preservation

*Preservation refers to the acts of God whereby He has preserved through the centuries the written record of His special revelation for His people.*

1. Since the completion of the New Testament, God has given no further written revelation (Heb 1:1–2; Rev 22:18–19).

*The inspired Scripture (the Canon) contains the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. No church council or group of men made certain books canonical. Rather, these 66 books were recognized as clearly inspired by God.*

2. God promises that His Word will be eternally preserved (Psa 119:89, 152, 160; Isa 40:8; Matt 5:18).

*The Bible makes direct promises that God’s Word will be eternally preserved and is eternal.*

3. God providentially preserved His Word through human means (Exod 31:18; 32:19; Deut 17:18–20; Jer 36:27–28, 32).

*God entrusts the care of His Word to His people and providentially restored it when it was lost.*

## II. God the Father

### A. The Existence of God

*God exists. He has always been and always will be since He is the “eternal, immortal, invisible God.”*

1. The Presupposition of Scripture (Gen 1:1; Acts 17:24)

*The Bible begins with the presupposition that God exists and does not provide a rationalistic argument to prove His existence.*

2. Man’s Internal Awareness of God (Rom 1:18–20; Psa 14:1)

*The biblical presupposition of God’s existence is due to His general revelation whereby all men have an inherent knowledge of God’s existence.*

3. God Enables Spiritual Sight (Eph 4:17–18; 2 Cor 4:4–6)

*The only possible means by which man can know and worship His creator and accept biblical truth is through the power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.*

4. “Proofs” for the Existence of God

*There are philosophical arguments that “prove” the existence of God. Although these are unnecessary to support God’s existence due to the sufficiency and authority of Scripture, they can be beneficial in the right context.*

B. The Knowability of God

*God has revealed knowledge of Himself through Scripture, and therefore, is knowable to the extent of biblical truth. Man may know God truly, yet not exhaustively.*

1. God’s Sufficient Knowability

*The Bible affirms that God can be known truly and personally (Jer 9:23–24; John 17:3; 1 Jn 5:20).*

2. God’s Incomprehensibility

*God, in His infinitude, is too great and too glorious to ever be fully comprehended by His finite creation (1 Tim 6:16; Rom 11:33; Isa 55:8–9).*

C. The Character of God: Introduction

1. Classifying God’s Attributes

*The most common theological classification of God’s attributes is “incommunicable” (those attributes God does not share with us) and “communicable” (those attributes God shares with us).*

2. The Names of God

*The names of God in Scripture reveal God’s character, position, and actions.*

D. The Character of God: Incommunicable Attributes

*God’s incommunicable attributes are those attributes/perfections God does not share with us. When speaking of the attributes of God, there is no distinction between God’s essence and His perfection/attributes. Each attribute characterizes God’s complete essence.*

1. Independence/ Self-Sufficiency

*God is independent of all things. He is perfectly self-sufficient, not depending on anything outside Himself for anything, and is therefore the eternal, foundational being, the source of life and sustenance for all other beings (Acts 17:24–25; Exod 3:14).*

## 2. Immutability

*God is unchanging in His being, perfections, purposes, and promises, yet God does act and feel emotions, and He acts and feels differently in response to different situations (Psa 102:25–27; Mal 3:6; Jam 1:17).*

## 3. Eternality

*God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in His own being, and He sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time (Psa 90:2, 4; 2 Pet 3:8; Gal 4:4–5).*

## 4. Unity

*God is not divided into parts and each of His perfections comprise His essence, yet we see different attributes of God emphasized at various times (1 Jn 1:5; 4:8).*

## 5. Omnipresence

*God does not have size or spatial dimensions and is present at every point of space with His whole being, yet God acts differently in different places (Jer 23:23–24; 1 Kgs 8:27; John 14:23).*

## E. The Character of God: Communicable Attributes

*God's communicable attributes are those attributes/perfections God shares with us.*

### 1. Attributes Describing God's Being

*In speaking of "being" as a category, we are speaking of God's divine essence and make-up.*

#### a. Spirituality

*God exists as a being that is not made of any matter, has no parts or dimensions, is unable to be perceived by our physical senses, and is more excellent than any other kind of existence (John 4:24; 1 Kgs 8:27).*

#### b. Invisibility

*God's total essence, all of His spiritual being, will never be able to be seen by us, yet God still shows Himself to us through visible, created things (John 1:18; 1 Tim 1:17; Exod 33:21–23).*

### 2. Mental Attributes

#### a. Knowledge/ Omniscience

*God fully knows Himself. He also knows all things actual and possible in one simple and eternal act (Job 37:16; Heb 4:13; Isa 46:8–10).*



b. Truthfulness/ Faithfulness

*God's truth and faithfulness are the perfect correspondence of God's nature with what God should be, and that all His knowledge and words are both true and the final standard of truth (John 17:3; Deut 32:4; 2 Cor 1:20). God's faithfulness means that God will always do what He has said and fulfill what He has promised (Deut 32:4; 2 Cor 1:20).*

c. Wisdom

*God's wisdom means that God always chooses the best means in order to accomplish His good pleasure and glorify Himself (Rom 16:27; Job 12:13; Rom 8:28).*

3. Moral Attributes

a. Goodness

*God's goodness is the perfect sum, source, and standard of that which is wholesome, virtuous, beneficial, and beautiful, and all that God is and does is worthy of approval (Psa 100:5; Jam 1:17; Psa 84:11).*

b. Love

*God's love means that He eternally gives of Himself to others for their highest good (1 Jn 4:8; John 17:24; Eph 2:4).*

c. Grace

*God's grace is His favor and goodness towards those who cannot merit it because they have forsaken it and are under the sentence of divine condemnation (Exod 34:6; Psa 103:8; John 1:14; Eph 2:8–9).*

d. Mercy

*God's mercy is His compassion and goodness towards those in misery and distress, even though they do not deserve it (Rom 9:15; Deut 4:31; 2 Cor 1:3).*

e. Patience

*God's patience is His peace and goodness in withholding punishment toward those who sin over a period of time (Psa 103:8–9; Rom 3:25; 2 Pet 3:9).*

f. Holiness

*God's holiness is His inherent and absolute greatness which is perfectly distinct from everything outside Himself and is absolutely separated from sin (Isa 6:3; Psa 99:9; Lev 11:44–45).*

g. Peace

*In God's being and in His actions, He is separate from all confusion and disorder, yet He is continually active in innumerable well-ordered, fully controlled, simultaneous actions (1 Cor 14:33; Phil 4:9).*

h. Righteousness/ Justice

*God's righteousness means that He always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right (Deut 32:4; Psa 19:8; Rom 3:25–26; Job 40:2).*

i. Jealousy

*God's jealousy means that He continually seeks to protect His own honor, His glory, and His people (Exod 20:5; 34:14; Isa 48:11).*

j. Wrath

*God's wrath means that He intensely hates all sin (John 3:36; Rom 1:18; Eph 2:1–3).*

4. Attributes of Purpose

a. Will

*God's will is that attribute of God whereby He determines and ordains all things in order to bring about every action necessary for the existence and activity of all creation for His utmost glory (Eph 1:10–11; Rev 4:11; Jam 4:15; Rom 9:18).*

b. Freedom

*God's freedom is that attribute of God whereby He does whatever he pleases (Psa 115:3; Dan 4:35).*

c. Omnipotence/ Power

*God is able to do anything consistent with His nature and divine will (Jer 32:17; Eph 3:20).*

d. Sovereignty/ Providence

*God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that He (1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which He created them; (2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do; and (3) directs them to fulfill His purposes (Col 1:17; Acts 17:28; Eph 1:11; Psa 103:19; Acts 4:28).*

## 5. “Summary” Attributes

### a. Perfection

*God’s perfection means that He completely possesses all excellent qualities and lacks no part of any qualities that would be desirable for Him—He is the sum total of all conceivable perfections (Matt 5:48; Psa 18:30).*

### b. Blessedness

*God’s blessedness means that He delights fully in Himself and in all that reflects His character (1 Tim 1:11; 6:15; Zeph 3:17).*

### c. Beauty

*God’s beauty is the sum of all desirable qualities (Psa 27:4; 73:25).*

### d. Glory

*God’s glory is the fullness of all that God is in His infinite perfections and the visible manifestation of His excellencies (Psa 145:5; Matt 17:2; Rev 21:23).*

## F. The Trinity

*God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.*

### 1. Scriptural Support

a. Old Testament (Gen 1:26; 3:22; Isa 6:8; Isa 63:10)

b. New Testament (Matt 3:16–17; 28:19; 2 Cor 13:24; 1 Pet 1:2)

### 2. Three Summary Statements

#### a. “God Is Three Persons”

*God is three Persons, and each Person is unique and distinct from the other two Persons (John 1:1–2; 1 Jn 2:1; Heb 7:25; John 14:26; Rom 8:27; John 16:7).*

#### b. “Each Person Is Fully God”

*Each Person of the Trinity is fully God—God the Father is God (Gen 1:1; Deut 6:4), Jesus the Son is God (John 1:1–4; Heb 1:3; Titus 2:13), and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3–4; Psa 139:7–8).*

#### c. “There Is One God”

*God is only one being. There are not three Gods; there is only one God (Deut 6:4–5; 1 Tim 2:5; Jam 2:19).*

### 3. Trinitarian Distinctions

#### a. Differing Primary Functions

*In Scripture, when speaking about the way in which God relates to the world, the 3 Persons of the Trinity have differing primary functions (Eph 1:9; John 8:29; Rom 8:13).*

#### b. Eternal Existence

*All 3 members of the Trinity have existed in their primary functions from eternity past and will continue to do so into eternity future (Eph 1:3–4; Gal 4:4; 1 Cor 15:24; 11:3; John 16:14).*

#### c. Trinitarian Relationships and the Being of God

*All 3 members are fully God. They are not just a third of God; each Person is fully God and possesses each and every one of the attributes of God eternally and infinitely (John 17:1, 5, 24; 16:4).*

#### d. The Mystery of the Trinity

*God is an infinitely unsearchable being. Therefore, the Trinity is a mystery, not a contradiction (Psa 145:3)*

### G. Creation

*God's creation is His work by His Word and for His glory in creating the universe out of nothing so that its original condition was perfect, without any physical or spiritual corruption.*

#### 1. God Created the Universe Out of Nothing

*Other than the eternal Triune God, nothing existed prior to creation. God created everything in the universe out of nothing, including the elements of time, space, and matter, by the power of His word (Gen 1:1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 26; Psa 33:6, 9; John 1:3).*

#### 2. God Created the Universe in Six Literal Days

*God created the universe in six literal, 24-hour days. Any form of evolutionary theory is incompatible with the evidence found in the creation account (Gen 1:1–31; Exod 20:8–11).*

#### 3. God Created Man and Woman as His Special Creation

*Of all creation, God created man and woman in His image, and thus, delineated mankind as His special and unique creation, distinct from all other creatures (Gen 1:26–30; 2:7; Psa 8:3–8; 1 Cor 15:39, 45).*

#### 4. God Created the Universe for His Glory

*The purpose of God's creative work in all that He created is for His own glory—so that the highest good of mankind would be the worship of His glory (Psa 19:1–2; Isa 43:7; Rev 4:11).*

### III. Jesus Christ

#### A. The Preincarnate Christ

*The person of Christ is fully divine and fully human; thus Jesus Christ, the second member of the Trinity, has eternally existed.*

##### 1. Christ in Eternity Past

*Jesus Christ has eternally existed as the Son of God (John 1:14; 5:26) and shares the same divine attribute of self-existence and eternity with God the Father (John 1:1; 17:5; Col 1:16–17).*

##### 2. Christ in the Old Testament

*The works of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament include creation, revelation, and judgment (John 1:3; Jdgs 6:11–18; Isa 6:1–5; Dan 7:13 & Matt 25:31, 41).*

#### B. The Incarnate Christ

*The incarnation of Christ explains the full deity and full humanity of Christ combined in one person.*

##### 1. The Deity of Christ

*Jesus Christ is absolutely equal with God the Father in His person and work and possesses the whole fullness of God's attributes (John 1:1; 20:28; Phil 2:6; Titus 2:13).*

###### a. Divine Names

*Names reserved for God the Father are also used of Jesus Christ (Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Luke 2:11; Rev 19:16).*

###### b. Divine Claims

*Jesus made divine claims of equality with God the Father (John 8:58; Rev 1:8).*

###### c. Divine Attributes

*Jesus fully exhibits and exercises all the divine perfections and attributes of God (John 1:1; Heb 7:26; Matt 18:20; Eph 1:21; Col 1:16–17).*

d. Divine Works

*Jesus performed supernatural works throughout His earthly ministry that point to His divine nature (Matt 8:27; 9:2; John 1:3; 11:25).*

e. Divine Worship

*Jesus received worship equal to the worship given to God (John 20:28; 2 Pet 3:18; Rev 4:11).*

2. The Humanity of Christ

*Jesus Christ was fully human and had a true human nature that was united to His divine nature as God, yet each nature retained its own attributes (Matt 1:23; Luke 2:52; John 11:35; Phil 2:5–11).*

a. The Virgin Birth of Christ

*Jesus Christ was physically conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit and was the only means by which both divinity and humanity could be united without sin (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:22–23).*

b. The Human Weakness and Limitations of Christ

*Jesus Christ was both externally and internally human, and thus humbled Himself to the weaknesses and limitations of human nature (Matt 4:2; John 11:35; Phil 2:5–7).*

c. The Sinlessness of Christ

*Jesus Christ lived a life of moral perfection and never sinned in thought, word, or deed (John 5:30, 36; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5).*

d. The Impeccability of Christ

*Jesus Christ was incapable of sinning because His deity was not dependent on the weakness of humanity (John 5:19; Heb 4:15; Jam 1:13).*

e. The Necessity of Christ's Humanity

*Jesus Christ had to take on the nature of man fully in order to be an acceptable substitute for us at the cross (Phil 2:5–7; Heb 2:17).*

3. The Incarnation of Christ

*The incarnation of Christ is the doctrine that explains the full humanity and full deity of Christ combined in one person.*

a. The Relationship Between Jesus' Divine and Human Natures

*The divine and human natures of Jesus Christ are at times distinct from each other (Luke 3:23 & John 8:58; Luke 23:46 & John 10:17–18), yet anything either nature does, the person of Christ does (1 Cor 15:3).*

b. The “Kenosis”

*Jesus Christ willingly and voluntarily condescended in becoming a man (i.e. the “kenosis”, yet never gave up any attributes of His divine nature (Phil 2:5–8; Col 1:19).*

4. The Death and Resurrection of Christ

a. The Death of Christ

*The Scriptures clearly testify through eyewitness accounts that Jesus Christ died a physical death (Luke 23:46; John 19:34–35).*

b. The Resurrection of Christ

*The Scriptures clearly testify through eyewitness accounts that Jesus Christ rose from the dead with a glorified physical body on the third day after His death (Matt 28:1–8; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–8; John 20:1–10), thus proving that He is the Son of God and conquered sin and death once and for all (1 Cor 15:54–57).*

C. The Glorified Christ

1. The Ascension of Christ

*Jesus Christ ascended back into heaven (Luke 24:50–51; Acts 1:9–11) and now sits at the right hand of the Father (Heb 1:3; 1 Pet 3:22).*

2. The Eternal Humanity of Christ

*Jesus Christ retained His glorified body after His resurrection and He remains fully God and fully man (John 20:25–27; Luke 24:39; Rev 5:9).*

3. The Offices of Christ

*Israel had three major offices within its spiritual and political realms: prophet, priest, and king. These three were separated to preserve a “balance of power” which belonged to God alone. Jesus Christ assumes all three of these offices.*

a. Jesus Christ as Prophet

*Jesus Christ not only communicated God's message to the people, He also was the source of the message and spoke on His own authority as the living Word (Matt 5:22–44, John 1:1; Luke 7:16).*

b. Jesus Christ as Priest

*Jesus Christ fulfilled the office of priest by offering Himself as a sacrifice for sin and continually interceding on our behalf (Heb 9:26; 6:19–20; 4:16).*

c. Jesus Christ as King

*Jesus Christ is the King over His kingdom citizens and will return to physically rule and reign over His kingdom—the universe and all peoples (Matt 16:19; Phil 2:10; Rev 19:11–16).*

#### **IV. The Holy Spirit**

A. A Biblical Survey of the Holy Spirit

*The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and is fully God. The Bible refers to the Holy Spirit from the time of creation (Gen 1:2) all the way through Revelation (Rev 22:10).*

B. The Person of the Holy Spirit

*The Holy Spirit is a Person possessing the same characteristics of personhood as the Father and the Son—the essential qualities of intellect, emotion, and will.*

a. Intellect

*The Holy Spirit possesses intellect and cognition (1 Cor 2:10–11; Rom 8:27).*

b. Emotion

*The Holy Spirit has emotions or sensibility—the awareness and ability to respond emotionally to something (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 1:6).*

c. Will

*The Holy Spirit has a will and the power of sovereign choices and decisions (1 Cor 12:11; Acts 16:6).*

C. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

*The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and is fully God.*

a. Divine Names

*One of the chief evidences for the triunity of the Godhead involves the names used in relationship to the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:16; Rom 8:9–11; Phil 1:19; Gal 4:6).*



b. Divine Identification

*The Holy Spirit is identified as equal to God when speaking of God directly or about His words (Acts 5:3–4; Heb 3:7; Acts 28:25).*

c. Divine Attributes and Works

*The Bible clearly represents the Holy Spirit as possessing divine attributes and exercising divine works (Gen 1:1–2; Heb 9:14; Psa 139:7–10; Isa 40:13; 2 Pet 1:20–21).*

D. The Ministries of the Holy Spirit

1. The Inspiration of Scripture

*The Holy Spirit was the active agent in the inspiration of Scripture, directing the authors of Scripture to write God's holy Word (2 Pet 1:21; John 16:13).*

2. The Ministry of Jesus Christ

*The Holy Spirit ministered to Christ during His earthly ministry, descending upon Him in baptism and empowering Him in all He said and did (Matt 3:13–17; 12:28; Luke 4:4–15; Acts 10:38).*

3. The Believer's Life

a. Regeneration

*The Holy Spirit gives new spiritual life to those who were previously dead in their sins. This is the initial work of God in salvation (Rom 8:10–11; Titus 3:5; John 6:63).*

b. Baptism

*The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the one-time work of the Holy Spirit upon regeneration whereby the believer is joined together with Christ and placed into His body, the church (1 Cor 12:13; Col 2:12; Rom 6:3).*

c. Sealing

*The sealing of the Holy Spirit is God's pledge to the believer at the moment of conversion whereby the Holy Spirit is given as God's guarantee of the believer's future inheritance in glory (Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 1:21–22).*

d. Indwelling

*The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the permanent residence of the Spirit within the believer for the purpose of glorifying Christ (John 14:17; Rom 8:9; 2 Tim 1:14).*

e. Gifting

*The gifting of the Holy Spirit is the imparting of spiritual gifts to the believer for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ (1 Pet 4:10–11; Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 14:12).*

f. Filling

*The filling of the Holy Spirit is the control and empowerment of the Spirit upon a believer's life for the purpose of Christlikeness—bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Eph 5:17; Gal 5:16, 22–23).*

g. Sanctifying

*The believer's sanctification is often directly associated with the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13; 2 Thess 2:13; Gal 5:16; 2 Cor 3:18).*

h. Illuminating

*The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God to the minds and hearts of believers, helping God's people to appreciate and apply the truths of Scripture (1 Cor 2:12, 14–15).*

i. Praying

*The Holy Spirit empowers the prayers of believers and aids us to pray according to the will of God (Jude 20; Eph 6:18; Rom 8:26–27).*

## V. Angels

### A. The Nature of Angels

*Angels are created (Neh 9:6; Col 1:16) spirit beings (Luke 24:39; Heb 13:2) with personhood (1 Pet 1:12; Luke 15:10; Jude 6) and are finite (Luke 1:26), eternal (Luke 20:36), non-pro-creative beings (Matt 22:30), and of a higher order than man (Heb 2:7).*

### B. The Classification of Angels

#### 1. Angelic Rank

*The Bible places the angelic realm in different classes or ranks (Jude 9; Dan 10:13).*

#### 2. Angelic Number

*Although Scripture does not give an exact figure, the angelic realm appears to be a very large number (Rev 5:11; Matt 26:53; Heb 12:22).*

### 3. Other Kinds of Heavenly Beings

#### a. Cherubim

*Cherubim are a higher class of heavenly being and play a unique role in protecting the glory of God and His holiness (Exod 25:22; Heb 9:5).*

#### b. Seraphim

*Seraphim are another class of heavenly beings that serve to praise and protect the holiness of God (Isa 6:2–3).*

#### c. Living Creatures

*Living creatures are an exalted order of angelic beings and serve the purpose of worship to God and to the Lamb (Rev 4:6–8).*

## C. The Ministry of Angels

### 1. Their Ministry to God the Father

*The primary ministry of angels in relation to God is that of worship and praise to Him (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:6–8; 5:11–14) and the protection of His holiness (Ezek 1:15–21; Isa 6:2–3; Rev 4:6–8).*

### 2. Their Ministry to Jesus Christ

*Angels ministered to Jesus Christ in a variety of ways, ranging from protecting Him (Matt 2:13) to strengthening Him in the garden (Luke 22:43) to announcing His resurrection (Matt 28:5–7; Mark 16:6–7).*

### 3. Their Ministry to Believers

*Angels perform a wide range of ministry to men—communicating predictions of God (Dan 7:15–27; Luke 1:11–20; 2:8–12), guiding and directing men (Matt 1:20–21; Acts 8:6; 10:1–8), providing physical needs (Gen 21:17–20; 1 Kgs 19:5–7), protecting from physical danger (Dan 6:20–23; 3:24–28; Acts 12:5–10), and carrying believers home (Luke 16:22; Dan 12:1–3).*

### 4. Their Relationship with Unbelievers

*When it comes to angels relationships with unbelievers, there is one primary function, and that is of carrying out the judgment of God (Matt 13:39–42; Rev 14:4, 7–9, 15, 17–18; 16:2–17).*

### 5. How to Relate to Angels Today

*Scripture calls believers to beware of false doctrine from a supposed “angel” (Gal 1:8; 1 Kgs 13:18) and to never worship angels, pray to, or seek them (Rev 19:10; 1 Tim 2:5).*

## D. Satan and Demons

### 1. The Origin of Satan and Demons

*God created the angelic realm by the sixth day of Creation (Gen 1:31), and sometime between the sixth day and Genesis 3:1, Satan and other angelic beings sinned against God and thus became demons (Ezek 28:12–15, 17; 1 Tim 3:6; Rev 12:3–4).*

### 2. The Nature of Satan and Demons

*Satan and demons are fallen angelic beings in a permanent state of evil and rebellion against God and cannot be redeemed in any manner (Matt 25:41; 12:24; Eph 2:2).*

### 3. Demonic Activity in History

#### a. With Unbelievers

*Satan and demons blind unbelievers to the truth of the gospel (2 Cor 4:4; 1 Jn 5:19) and can possess and oppress unbelievers (Matt 10:1, 7–8; Luke 10:17; Acts 15:6).*

#### b. With Believers

*Christians cannot be possessed by a demon, but can be oppressed—harassed and tormented externally (John 14:17; 1 Pet 5:8; 2 Cor 12:7).*

#### c. The Casting Out of Demons

*Casting out demons was not the normal practice of the early church and believers. The ordinary way of bringing people out of demon-possession is through the knowledge of the truth and the gospel (2 Tim 2:25–26; Rev 12:11).*

### 4. The Defeat of Satan and Demons

*Though Satan and his demons are powerful, cunning, and influential in our world today, Christ has defeated them completely and their destruction is absolutely certain (Gen 3:15; Heb 2:14; Col 2:15; 1 Pet 3:18–20; Rev 20:10).*

## VI. Man

### A. The Creation of Man

*The Bible affirms that man was created by God on the sixth day of Creation, and that he was created instantaneously and made in God's image (Gen 1:26–28; 2:4–9).*

## 1. The Purpose of Man's Creation

*The purpose of man's creation was to give God glory by reflecting His glory as co-regent of the earth—man was to fill, rule, and subdue the earth (Gen 1:26–28; Isa 43:7).*

## 2. The Image of God in Man

*Man was God's most special creation because he was created in God's image, which refers to man's likeness to God as a spiritual being designed for worship with the essential characteristics of personhood—intellect, will, and emotions (Gen 1:26; John 4:23).*

### a. The Image of God after the Fall of Man

*After the fall of mankind into sin, although the image of God remains, sin has distorted and marred this image (Rom 3:23; Jam 3:9).*

### b. The Image of God after the Redemption of Man

*Through Jesus Christ, believers are able to recover more and more of our lost image by becoming more conformed into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10).*

### c. The Image of God upon the Glorification of Man

*Upon the believer's glorification, God will restore His image in His people so that we are physically and spiritually perfect (Rom 8:29; 1 Jn 3:2).*

## 3. The Sanctity of Human Life

*We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life.*

### a. Every Person Is Created by God in His Image

*Every human life is sacred because every person is created by God and made in God's image (Psa 139:13–14; Gen 1:26).*

### b. The Bible Regards the Unborn as Human Persons

*God considers the unborn child as fully human, even though physically the unborn child is in the process of development. God views the unborn child in the same manner as He views children who have been born (Jer 1:5; Isa 44:24; Gen 25:22; Luke 1:44).*

c. Intentionally Killing an Unborn Child Is Murder

*Murder is defined biblically as the intentionally killing of an innocent victim out of a sinful motive. Since the Bible makes no difference between a born child and an unborn child, it is murder to intentionally kill an unborn child (Exo 20:13; Rom 13:9).*

d. Addendum: Christ Forgives Those Who Have Aborted a Child

*For those who have had a sinful abortion in the past, there is grace and forgiveness by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, every single sin that the saved sinner has committed in his/her earthly has been forgiven through the death of Jesus Christ (Psa 32:5; Col 2:13).*

B. The Constitution of Man

*The essential nature of man is comprised of a physical, material body (Gen 2:23; Rom 8:11; Gal 6:17) and an invisible, immaterial spirit (Gen 2:7; John 12:25).*

1. Material Being

*Man is comprised of a physical body which constitutes his material being. The physical body, as a result of sin, is corrupted with the remaining sin principle (Rom 7:24; 8:23; Phil 3:21).*

2. Immaterial Being

*The immaterial being of man is referred to with several biblical terms, each of which refers to the same invisible, immaterial part of man—soul, spirit, and heart (Deut 6:5; Matt 22:37; Heb 4:12).*

C. Mankind as Male and Female

*God created all mankind with one of two genders—a clear biological distinction between male and female (Gen 1:27; 5:2).*

1. Equality in Personhood and Importance

*Both men and women are created in God's image, and therefore, they are equal in personhood and importance (Gal 3:28; 1 Pet 3:7).*

2. Distinction in Roles

*Just as there are role distinctions within the Trinity, men and women are created in His image by also reflecting role distinctions and differences (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22–33).*

3. Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

*The Bible teaches that there are fundamental differences between “maleness” and “femaleness,” all by God's perfect design for men and women (1 Cor 11:3).*

a. The Essence of Biblical Masculinity<sup>1</sup>

*At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for, and protect women in ways appropriate to a man's differing relationships (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:23, 25; 6:4; 1 Pet 3:7).*

b. The Essence of Biblical Femininity<sup>2</sup>

*At the heart of mature femininity is a freeing disposition to affirm, receive and nurture strength and leadership from worthy men in ways appropriate to a woman's differing relationships (Eph 5:22–24; 1 Pet 3:1–7; 1 Cor 11:3).*

D. Biblical Marriage

*Marriage is defined biblically as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, publicly pronounced by a God-delegated authority (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4–6; Mal 2:14; Ruth 4:9–12). God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2–5; Heb 13:4).*

1. The People of Marriage

*The first unalterable, absolute truth that constitutes a biblical marriage is you must have one man and one woman (Gen 1:27; 2:7, 21–23).*

2. The Promise of Marriage

*The second unalterable, absolute truth that constitutes a biblical marriage is the man and woman must make a lifelong promise—a mutual covenant for life (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:6; Mal 2:14).*

3. The Pronouncement of Marriage

*The third unalterable, absolute truth about marriage is that it must involve a God-ordained pronouncement (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4–5; Ruth 4:9–12).*

4. The Perversion of Marriage

*Any sexual or intimate relationship outside of the covenant relationship of marriage is sin before God and demands repentance. Those illicit relationships include fornication (sex with a partner while not married), adultery (sexual relationships with someone other than your spouse), polygamy, homosexuality, lesbianism, pedophilia, incest, and bestiality (Rom 1:24–27; 1 Cor 6:9; Eph 5:3; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:3–7; 1 Cor 5:1; Lev 18:6–18).*

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<sup>1</sup> John Piper and Wayne Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

## E. Biblical Human Sexuality

### 1. Gender in the Bible

*God created gender and human sexuality, which is based on the biological and genetic makeup of a man and a woman. Gender is permanently established at conception and revealed at birth, and no person can change their gender, regardless of what they claim or attempt to do physically (Gen 1:27–28, 31; Deut 22:5; Matt 19:4).*

### 2. Homosexuality

*Homosexuality is a sinful perversion of the heart whereby a man engages in sexual relations with another man, and a woman with another woman. The Bible clearly condemns homosexuality as an absolute sin, not a sin of conscience, and this sin opposes God's good and holy plans for marriage and sexual intimacy (Lev 18:22; Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9–10).*

### 3. Transgenderism

*God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary sexes together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen 1:26–27; Matt 19:4; 1 Cor 11:14–15). Rejection of one's biological sex is a sinful rejection of the image of God within that person (Gen 1:31; Deut 22:5).*

### 4. Addendum: Communicating the Truth in Love

- a. Homosexual or transgender orientation is a result of the fall of humanity into the sinful condition that pervades every person. Some have temptations towards heterosexual lusts, others homosexual lusts, and others transgender desires (Rom 1:28–32).
- b. Whatever biological or familial roots of homosexuality or transgenderism may be discovered, these would not sanction or excuse homosexual or transgender behavior, though they would deepen our compassion and patience for those who are struggling to be free from these temptations.
- c. There is hope for the person with a homosexual or transgender orientation and that Jesus Christ offers a healing alternative in which the power of sin is broken and the person is freed to know and experience his or her true identity in Christ and in the fellowship of his Church (1 Cor 6:11).
- d. All persons have been created in the image of God and should be accorded human dignity, therefore hateful, fearful, unconcerned harassment of persons with a homosexual or transgender orientation should be repudiated. Christian churches should reach out in love and truth to minister to people touched by homosexuality and transgenderism, and that those who contend Biblically against their own sexual temptation or identity should be patiently assisted in their battle, not ostracized or disdained. Both heterosexual, homosexual, and transgender persons



should find help in the church to engage in the Biblical battle against all improper sexual thoughts and behaviors.

## VII. Sin

### A. The Definition of Sin

*Sin is any failure to conform to the moral will of God in attitude, act, or nature, whether committed actively or passively (Num 14:41; 1 Jn 3:4; Rom 5:8; Eph 2:1–3).*

### B. The Origin of Sin

*The Scriptures clearly and absolutely affirm that God is not the author of sin, nor is God even tempted to sin (Jam 1:13; Deut 32:4; Job 34:10).*

#### 1. Satan Is the Originator of Sin

*Satan, a fallen angel, initiated the first sin in an act of prideful rebellion against God (Gen 3:1; Ezek 28:17; 1 Tim 3:6).*

#### 2. Adam and Eve Committed the First Human Sin

*Adam and Eve, the first human beings, committed the first human sin and willfully rebelled against God (Gen 3:1–7).*

### C. The Consequences of Sin

*The consequences of sin against God are severe, which demonstrates that the glory of God is of infinite value (Jer 2:12–13; Rom 3:23).*

#### 1. Relational Consequences

*As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, the perfect harmonious relationships they shared with God, each other, and creation were instantly damaged (Rom 1:18; Eph 4:18; Gen 3:17).*

#### 2. Physical Consequences

*Sin instantly brought forth the process of physical death (Gen 3:19; Rom 6:23).*

#### 3. Spiritual Consequences

*Adam and Eve's sin instantly brought about spiritual death and alienation from God (Eph 2:1; 4:17–18; Rom 8:7–8), which ultimately results in eternal death—the eternal separation of sinners from God in the lake of fire (Rev 20:6, 11–15).*

## D. The Inheritance of Sin

*Due to Adam's role as the head of the human race, when he sinned he came to possess a sinful nature. This sinful spiritual nature is passed along to all human beings (Rom 5:12; Psa 51:5).*

### 1. Total Depravity

*Sin is rooted in the core of our nature and permeates every aspect of our being—our mind, desires, motivations, and bodies (Rom 8:5–8; Gal 5:19–21; Jer 17:9; Rom 8:23).*

### 2. Sinful Actions

*Since we are totally depraved and every area of our being has been corrupted by our sin nature, we cannot perform any acts that would please God (Rom 8:8; Isa 64:6).*

### 3. The Old Self and the New Self

*The “old self” is the unregenerate self, whereas the “new self” is the regenerate self, united with Christ, who permanently replaces the old self upon salvation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10).*

## E. Personal Sin

*As a result of man's total depravity and inherited sin nature, he commits personal sin against God (Jam 1:13–15; Gen 6:5; Prov 15:28).*

### 1. Causal Influences of Sin

*There are outside influences that tempt the believer to sin, namely the world, the flesh, and the devil (1 Jn 2:16; Gal 5:17; Eph 6:11).*

### 2. Degrees of Sin

*Although on one hand, all sins incur the same legal guilt before God (Rom 5:16; Jam 2:10–11), knowledge of God's moral law incurs greater accountability to God and affects the degree of punishment (Jam 3:1; Matt 10:15; Luke 12:47–48).*

### 3. The Unpardonable Sin

*The “unpardonable sin” is the willful and final rejection of the Holy Spirit despite the clear witness of the Holy Spirit regarding the identity of Jesus Christ (Matt 12:31–32; Heb 6:4–6).*

## F. Overcoming Personal Sin

### 1. When Christians Sin

*When a Christian sins, his legal or positional standing before God remains unchanged (Rom 8:1, 38–39; Col 2:13–14), but there is a practical change that affects his fellowship and communion with the Lord (John 15:9–10; Psa 51:12).*

### 2. Sanctification by Faith

*Believers overcome sin by walking by faith in the person, work, and Word of Jesus Christ (Gal 2:20; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Pet 2:2) and the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16; Rom 8:13).*

## VIII. Salvation

### A. Common Grace

*God's common grace refers to His unmerited favor which is given to all men for His general care of them and mankind's common good.*

#### 1. Examples of God's Common Grace

##### a. Physical Beauty

*God gives grace to the physical world through plant and animal life, rain, etc. The beauty of God's creation is clearly evident for all to see (Rom 8:20–21; Acts 14:17).*

##### b. Intellectual Ability

*God has given the human mind rationality, intelligence, and understanding, all of which can be evidenced in the fields of science and technology (John 8:44; Rom 1:21).*

##### c. Moral Conscience

*God's common grace is seen in His restraining of evil in the world through man's conscience. Though men are totally depraved, no one is as evil as they could be (Rom 2:14–15).*

##### d. Creative Skills

*God has graced mankind with a variety of creative skills, talents and abilities (Exod 36:8; 1 Chr 22:15). This includes artistic ability, musical skills, athletic ability, etc. Along with creative abilities, God provides the ability to enjoy and appreciate the beauty found in or created by these things (Psa 145:15–16).*

e. Societal Structures

*Most societies also have other social structures or organizations that can be expressions of God's common grace such as family relationships, friendships, government, educational institutions, and charitable organizations (Prov 18:22; Psa 127:3; Prov 17:17; Rom 13:1–4).*

2. Reasons for God's Common Grace

a. For the Restraint of Sin

*The full manifestation of mankind's sinfulness is restrained through the conscience which enables sinners to understand the difference between right and wrong (Rom 2:15) and to live within a society, for the most part, in civility (Rom 13:1–5).*

b. For the Enjoyment of God's Beauty and Goodness

*All men enjoy numerous temporal earthly blessings from God—life, food, earthly beauty, and happiness (Psa 50:2; Matt 5:45; Acts 14:15–17; 17:25).*

c. For Time to Hear the Gospel

*Although God could execute judgment against sinners instantly, He temporarily withholds His rightful punishment in order to preserve those who can respond to the gospel in faith (2 Pet 3:9; Rom 2:4).*

B. Election

*Election is the free and sovereign choice of God made in eternity past, to set His love on certain individuals and to choose them—on the basis of nothing in themselves—to be saved from sin and damnation through the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ.*

1. Old Testament Passages

*The Old Testament contains a number of references to God's election or choice (Gen 18:19; Exod 33:17; Rom 9:11–13; Psa 65:4).*

2. New Testament Passages

*The New Testament contains a large number of references to God's election or choice (Matt 11:25–27; John 15:16; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:28–30; 11:7; Eph 1:4–6; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; 1 Pet 1:1–2; Rev 13:8).*

3. Summary on Election

*A summary of the above verses indicates that the work of salvation in the human heart through the work of Christ comes because of the electing choice of God before the foundation of the world, and entirely independent of the works of man.*

#### 4. Reprobation

*The doctrine of reprobation is the consideration that God's choice of some unto salvation necessitates His decision to pass over others and punish them for their sins (Rom 9:17–18; Jude 4; 1 Pet 2:8; Rev 20:12).*

### C. The Atonement

*The atonement is the work Jesus Christ accomplished in His life and death to earn our salvation.*

#### 1. The Cause of the Atonement

*The ultimate cause that led Jesus Christ to come to earth and die for our sins is both the love of God (John 3:16; Eph 2:4) and the justice of God (Rom 3:25–26), all for the glory of God (John 17:1).*

#### 2. The Necessity of the Atonement

*When God decreed to save sinners, there was no other way for Him to do this other than through the death of His Son (Acts 2:23; Matt 26:39; Heb 10:4).*

#### 3. The Nature of the Atonement

*The nature of the atonement speaks of the essence of Jesus' death on the cross and what it actually accomplished.*

##### a. Christ's Perfect Obedience ~ Imputation

*Jesus had to live a perfect life in order to impute His perfect righteousness to believers (John 8:29; Heb 4:15; Rom 5:19).*

##### b. Christ's Sufferings ~ Expiation

*Jesus' entire life was one of suffering, but the pinnacle of His suffering was His death on the cross in order to appease God's wrath (Isa 53:3; Matt 26:38; Rom 3:25; 1 Jn 2:2).*

##### c. Christ's Death as Payment for Sin

*The requirement of God's justice for sin is His wrath, a wrath that leads to physical death and separation from God. When Jesus died, He bore the full fury of God's wrath against the sins of everyone who would ever believe and became our "sin substitute" (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 9:22; 1 Pet 3:18).*

#### 4. The Extent of the Atonement

*The design of God in the death of Christ was for Jesus to be made a substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of everyone who would ever believe, not for all humanity (John 10:11, 15; 17:9; Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25; Rom 8:32).*

a. The Accomplishment of the Atonement

*The atonement of Christ actually achieved the appeasement of God's wrath and the forgiveness of sins since the punishment of Christ was complete (2 Cor 5:21; Matt 27:46; Rom 3:25; John 19:30).*

b. The Nature of Punishment

*Christ died for the sins of the elect; sinners who go to hell are punished for their unrepentant sinful deeds (Rev 20:11–15; Rom 5:13–16).*

5. The Practical Benefits of the Atonement

a. The Gospel changes the way we relate to God.

*Due to the finished work of Christ, believers have been placed in a position of permanent favor before God. Thus, the gospel work of Christ eliminates the believer's need for both penance (John 19:30; Matt 27:46; Rom 8:1, 33–34) and self-righteous performance (Gal 2:20; 6:14).*

b. Believers appropriate the power of the gospel by faith.

*The power of the gospel for the believer's sanctification is appropriated by faith in the gospel (Gal 2:20; Heb 11:6; John 15:5; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 3:17).*

6. Addendum ~ Did Christ Descend into Hell?

*The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus did not descend into hell in order to suffer further for the sins of believers since the work of atonement was completed when He died (Luke 23:43, 46; John 19:30)*

D. Calling

1. Effectual Calling

*The effectual call of God in salvation is the sovereign act of God speaking through the proclamation of the gospel, whereby He effectually calls people to Himself to respond in saving faith (Rom 8:30; Acts 16:14; John 6:44).*

2. General Calling

*The general call of God is the proclamation of the gospel which invites all who hear without exception to come to God for salvation (Matt 11:28; 23:37; Acts 7:51).*

E. Regeneration

*Regeneration is the invisible act of God whereby He imparts new spiritual life to the dead soul and creates spiritual birth (John 3:7).*

1. Regeneration is a total work of God.

*Regeneration is a total and complete work of God alone and sinners have no part in this work (John 1:13; Jam 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3).*

2. Regeneration occurs before saving faith.

*Biblically and logically, regeneration occurs before saving faith, but the proximity between these two events are so close that it may seem they are happening at the same time (John 6:44; 1 Jn 5:1).*

3. Regeneration results in transformation.

The gracious and powerful act of God in regeneration will indeed bring a radical change of life since regeneration imparts a new heart and life (1 Jn 3:9; 4:7; 5:3–4; Gal 5:22–23).

#### F. Conversion

*Conversion is the very first act of the regenerated sinner—the conscious decision to believe in Christ and repent from sin for salvation (1 Thess 1:9; Jam 5:20; 1 Pet 2:25).*

1. Faith

*True saving faith contains three essential elements—knowledge of the gospel (1 Cor 15:3–4), affirmation of gospel truth (Rom 10:13–14; Heb 11:1), and personal trust in Christ for salvation (Rom 10:4; 2 Cor 5:21).*

2. Repentance

*Repentance is sincere sorrow over sin, a renouncing of it in the heart, and a sincere commitment to forsake it (2 Cor 7:10; 1 Thess 1:9; Luke 5:32).*

#### G. Union with Christ

*Union with Christ defines the believer’s spiritual union with Jesus Christ—Christ in us and we in Christ—the sharing of common spiritual life (John 15:4–5; 1 Cor 6:17; 1 Jn 3:24; Gal 2:20).*

#### H. Justification

*Justification refers to God’s judicial declaration upon the sinner as “righteous” as a result of the sinner’s faith in Christ. This righteousness is based on the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the sinner (Rom 3:23–24; 4:5; 8:33–34).*

1. Expiation

*Expiation refers to God’s complete forgiveness of sins based on the substitutionary death of Christ (Psa 32:5; Rom 4:5–8).*

## 2. Imputation

*Imputation refers to God's crediting of Christ's perfect righteousness to the sinner (Rom 4:2–5; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Cor 1:30).*

### I. Adoption

*Adoption is an act of God whereby He adopts us as His children and grants us the full privileges of family membership as a co-heir with Christ (1 Jn 3:1; Rom 8:14–17; Eph 1:5).*

### J. Sanctification

*Sanctification comprises two compatible doctrines—positional sanctification and progressive sanctification.*

#### 1. Positional Sanctification

*Positional sanctification is—upon his justification—the believer's one-time, permanent righteousness in God's sight based on the finished work of Christ (Rom 4:5; 1 Cor 6:11; Heb 10:14).*

#### 2. Progressive Sanctification

*Progressive sanctification is the ongoing process of the believer increasing in inward and outward holiness and righteousness (Rom 6:6; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Cor 1:30).*

### K. Perseverance or Eternal Security

*Perseverance means that all who are born again will persevere to the end by God's sustaining power and will never lose their faith in Christ (John 10:27–30; Phil 1:6; Rom 8:30).*

#### 1. The Securing Work of the Father

*The entire work of salvation is initiated, sustained, and brought to completion by the sovereign power and will of God; therefore, all who are predestined will be glorified (Rom 8:28–30; 5:7–10).*

#### 2. The Securing Work of the Son

*The believer is joined together with Christ in an inseparable union in Him. This union provides not only our justification, but also our ongoing sanctification as believers (John 15:4; Rom 6:5; 1 Cor 1:30).*

#### 3. The Securing Work of the Holy Spirit

*The Holy Spirit has sealed believers for the day of redemption, which is a “down payment” that guarantees our future inheritance (John 14:17; Eph 4:30).*



## L. Assurance

*The doctrine of assurance is the subjective side of the objective reality of eternal security (Rom 8:16 ; 2 Pet 1:10; John 15:9–10).*

## M. Death

*Although the old self was put to death upon conversion, sin remains in the believer's physical body and thus, is subject to decay and death (Rom 7:16–18; 8:23; 2 Cor 4:16).*

## N. Glorification

*Glorification is the final step of the believer's salvation whereby his redeemed soul is reunited with a perfect, glorified body fit for eternity in heaven (Rom 8:29–30; Phil 3:21; 1 Cor 15:51–52; 1 Jn 3:2).*

# IX. The Church

## A. The Nature of the Church

*The “church” is the New Covenant community of God as it exists between the events of the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and prior to the Day of the Lord (Matt 16:18; Eph 3:4–6; 1 Cor 10:32).*

### 1. The Distinctions of the Church

#### a. The Universal Church

*The universal church defines all those throughout the NT age who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13; 1 Pet 1:3, 22–25).*

#### b. The Local Church

*The local church defines local congregations of believers gathered together in a local area to carry out biblical purposes and with biblical governance (Acts 8:1, 16:5; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 1:2).*

### 2. The Names for the Church

*The church is described in a number of descriptive names which capture the richness of God's design for the church—“the people of God” (1 Pet 2:10), “the body of Christ” (Rom 12:4–5), “the temple of God” (Eph 2:21); “the priesthood” (1 Pet 2:5); “the bride of Christ” (Eph 5:22–23).*

## B. The Marks of a True Church

### 1. The Gospel

*The gospel is the message of salvation that saves sinners and brings them into the church. Without the gospel, there is no salvation and no basis for the church's existence (Gal 1:9; 1 Cor 15:3–4; Eph 3:6).*

### 2. Genuine Believers

*The church is defined specifically as those who are genuinely born-again by the Holy Spirit and baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 5:25).*

### 3. Biblical Ministries

#### a. Preaching and Teaching of God's Word

*The church is to be governed by the authority of God's Word; therefore it is to be marked by the faithful preaching and teaching of that Word. This is the primary means by which Jesus Christ's authority as "head" is carried out (Col 1:18; John 1:1, 14; Titus 2:15).*

#### b. Prayer

*The church is to be devoted to prayer so that God can be glorified (John 15:7–8), the Son can be proclaimed (Col 4:3), and the Spirit can empower believers (Acts 4:31).*

#### c. Fellowship

*The church shares Christ in common and thus, believers will seek to build each other up to become more like Christ (1 Jn 1:6–7; Eph 4:14–16).*

#### d. Evangelism

*The church is marked by a love for God and others, and therefore is called to have a passion to spread the gospel to those who do not know Him (Matt 28:19–20; Col 4:5–6).*

### 4. Church Government

*The biblical pattern for local church governance is through a plurality of qualified elders who provide oversight to the God-given priorities for the local church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).*

#### a. Church Offices

*A church office is a God-ordained role that is publicly affirmed by the local church. There are only two today—the office of elder and the office of deacon/deaconess (1 Tim 3:1–7, 8–13; 5:22).*

b. Office of Elder

*The local church is led and shepherded by a plurality of biblically qualified men who serve the church in unity in order to nurture the spiritual good of the flock for the glory of Christ, who is the Head (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).*

c. Office of Deacon & Deaconess

*Deacons and deaconesses are qualified servants appointed to serve under the oversight of the elders to free them up in a variety of different areas (1 Tim 3:8–13).*

5. Ordinances

*The ordinances—baptism and the Lord’s Supper—are Christ-ordained commands for believers as outward signs that point to the inward reality of Christ’s all-sufficient death and resurrection (Matt 28:19–20; Acts 2:38; Matt 26:26–29; 1 Cor 11:27–30).*

6. Church Discipline

*Christ gave the church instructions on how to deal with professing believers who refuse to repent over sins that cannot be overlooked (Matt 18:15–17). The purpose of church discipline is to lovingly restore those who are falling away from Christ and caught in sin (Gal 6:1) and to protect the reputation of Christ’s church (Matt 5:13–16).*

C. The Purposes of the Church

1. Exalt God

*The first purpose of the church is to love and worship the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, both individually and corporately (Matt 22:37–38).*

2. Edify the Saints

*The second purpose of the church is to build up God’s people to be more like Jesus Christ through loving encouragement and equipping in godly character, biblical understanding, and ministry skills (Eph 4:12).*

3. Evangelize the Lost

*The third purpose of the church is to passionately share the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to establish worshipers in His church locally and globally (Matt 28:19–20).*

## X. End Times

### A. The Kingdom of God

*God's design in creation was to establish an earthly kingdom whereby Adam and Eve would relate to God as their loving King and rule as co-regents (Gen 1:26, 28).*

#### 1. Kingdom Restoration Promised

*After the fall of mankind into sin and death, in the midst of delivering His judgments upon Adam and Eve, a promise was made to mankind that one day, Satan and his allies would be crushed and the kingdom would be restored (Gen 3:15). This restoration would take place throughout redemptive history through a nation (Gen 12:1–3), a king (2 Sam 7:16), and a people (Ezek 36:26–28).*

#### 2. A Preview of the Kingdom

*As a result of the death and resurrection of Christ, the kingdom of God has been restored, but there is both a temporal aspect of His kingdom along with a future aspect (Matt 21:43; Acts 1:6; Matt 23:39).*

#### 3. Kingdom Restoration Fulfilled

*At the second coming of Jesus Christ, the kingdom will be fully restored both spiritually and physically as Christ will return physically to rule and reign His universe (Jer 31:31–34; Rom 11:26–27; Gen 15:18–21; Rev 20:4).*

### B. Overview of Future Events

*The following order of events reflects the Bible's general chronology of eschatological events.*

#### 1. Death

*Death is the end of physical life through the separation of the body from the soul (Jam 2:26).*

##### a. New Testament Believers

*When a believer dies, there is a separation of the physical and immaterial. The soul of the believer goes immediately to heaven to be with the Lord, while his body remains on the earth (and decays) until the resurrection (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23; Luke 23:43).*

##### b. Old Testament Believers

*The OT gives scriptural evidence that the souls of OT saints went immediately to heaven to be with the Lord, just as NT saints (2 Kgs 2:11; Psa 17:15; Matt 22:32).*

c. All Unbelievers

*The souls of unbelievers immediately enter into hell upon death, while their bodies enter into the grave (Heb 9:27; Luke 16:23–26). At the second resurrection the soul will be united with the body, judged, and cast into the lake of fire to be separated from God forever (John 5:28–29; Rev 20:11–15; Dan 12:2).*

2. The Rapture

*Christ will gather up Christians from the earth and take them with Him (1 Thess 4:16; Titus 2:11–12; 1 Cor 15:50–51). The church is raptured at the very beginning of the period known as Daniel’s 70th week—the tribulation. Thus the Church will not be on earth during this seven-year period of divine wrath.*

3. The Judgment Seat of Christ

*After the rapture, believers will be rewarded according to their works (1 Cor 3:10–15). This is referred to as the “bema seat” judgment.*

4. Tribulation

*The Tribulation is a seven-year period immediately following the rapture of NT believers and prior to the second coming of Christ. This period is a time of judgment of the world through various “plagues” (Dan 9:27; Rev 6:1–17; 8:7–11:19; 16:1–18:24).*

5. The Second Coming of Christ

*Christ will return with glorified saints to the earth at the end of the Tribulation at which time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be resurrected, and the living will be judged (Dan 12:2–3; Matt 25:31–46; 2 Thess 2:7–12; Rev 6:9–11; 20:4–6).*

6. The Millennium

*The Millennium is the 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth whereby He rules, reigns, and restores all of creation and fulfills all of God’s promises made to the nation of Israel (Rev 20:1–5; Isa 42:6; Jer 31:31–34; 33:15; Ezek 36:24–28; 37:21–28; Rom 11:26).*

7. The Great White Throne Judgment

*This is the final judgment for all unbelievers. All unbelievers from all ages will be raised to life with a physical body, will be judged according to their deeds, and will be thrown into the lake of fire forever (Rev 20:11–15).*

8. Eternity—New Heaven and Earth

*The end of human history will transition into the eternal state. A new heaven and earth will be created and believers will be with the Lord forever (Rev 21:1; John 17:3; 1 Thess 4:17).*