

Statement of Doctrine and Position

David Matthew Minnick

Salvation Testimony

The Lord saved me from my sin and His wrath through Christ shortly before my sixth birthday. I recall hearing several sermons my father preached on heaven and hell that caused me to fear with regard to my eternal destiny. I spoke to my mother about my concern. She wisely discerned that I had no understanding of my own sinfulness before God. She explained to me the concept of sin and told me to consider my standing before God. For several weeks after our conversation, I remember coming to a growing understanding of my own sinfulness. I understood the implications and did not want anyone to know that I was a sinner. I can remember hiding away from the sight of others and trying to pray to God about my sin, but I didn't know what to pray or how to address God about my need.

My father asked to speak to me several weeks later. He showed from John 3:16 that Christ came to die for sinners and to deliver them from perishing. I refused to concede my own needy condition though I was aware of it. After some time discussing the fact of my sin from Scripture, God gave me the grace to accept its testimony and freely admit my sinful state and need of Christ. I called on Christ to save me and my father baptized me a couple of years later by immersion. I praise God that I have never experienced any real doubt about my salvation. It seems one primary reason for this is the steady spiritual growth I have seen in my life since my conversion.

Call to the Ministry

When I was about 14 years old, a desire to preach God's Word began to develop within me. I briefly considered several "secular" occupations but quickly concluded that my primary desire was to enter full-time pastoral ministry. My father encouraged me to ask the Lord to confirm that desire. I recall discovering 1 Timothy 3:1 in an unfamiliar translation of the New Testament (a friend had given me the Bible) where the verse read, "If a man desires the office of a pastor, he desires a good thing." It was as though God had highlighted that verse just for me. It confirmed that these desires were God-given. My father had told me that enrolling in the ministerial program at a Christian college would help me determine whether the Lord had gifted me for the ministry, and my time in the undergraduate and graduate programs at Bob Jones University abundantly confirmed to me God's call upon my life. It has been my privilege to preach God's Word since I was 15 years old, and the response God's people have given to the ministry of God's Word has further confirmed God's call on my life.

I grew up in Australia as the son of missionaries (serving under Gospel Fellowship Association). I desire to return to my country to serve the Lord through church planting and theological instruction and education. Recent changes to Australian immigration laws have rendered the entrance of missionaries nearly impossible. I hold full Australian citizenship and desire to evangelize, disciple, and train Australian men and women to carry out Great Commission work in that country.

Outline

Table of Contents

SALVATION TESTIMONY	1
CALL TO THE MINISTRY	1
OUTLINE	2
SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE AND POSITION	5
BIBLIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE	7
REVELATION	7
GENERAL REVELATION	7
SPECIAL REVELATION	7
INSPIRATION	7
CANONICITY	8
PRESERVATION	8
TRANSLATION	8
INTERPRETATION	9
THEOLOGY PROPER: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD	10
EXISTENCE OF GOD	10
NATURE OF GOD	10
TRI-UNITY	10
ATTRIBUTES	10
WORKS OF GOD	12
CREATION	12
PROVIDENCE	12
MIRACLES	12
CHRISTOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE MESSIAH	13
PERSON OF CHRIST	13
DEITY OF CHRIST	13
HUMANITY OF CHRIST	13
INCARNATION OF CHRIST	13
WORKS OF CHRIST	14
PRE-INCARNATE WORKS	14
FIRST-ADVENT WORKS	14
PRESENT WORKS	15
SECOND-ADVENT WORKS	15
PNEUMATOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	17
PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	17
PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	17

DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	17
WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	17
SPIRITUAL GIFTS	18
SIGN OR MIRACULOUS GIFTS	18
ANGELOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS	19
ANGELS IN GENERAL	19
UNFALLEN ANGELS	19
FALLEN ANGELS	19
SATAN	19
DEMONS	20
ANTHROPOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN	21
ORIGIN OF MAN	21
NATURE OF MAN	21
IMAGE OF GOD IN MAN	21
COMPOSITION OF MAN	21
MAN AS MALE AND FEMALE	22
HAMARTIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SIN	24
NATURE OF SIN	24
ORIGIN OF SIN	24
RESULTS OF SIN	24
IMPUTED GUILT	24
INHERITED CORRUPTION	24
DISHARMONY	25
DEATH	25
ACTS OF SIN	25
DEGREES OF SIN	25
UNPARDONABLE SIN	25
INFANT DEATH	25
SOTERIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION	27
SALVATION PREPARED AND PROVIDED	27
ETERNITY PAST	27
INCARNATION	27
SALVATION APPLIED	29
EFFECTUAL CALLING	29
UNION WITH CHRIST	29
REGENERATION	29
CONVERSION	30
JUSTIFICATION	30
SONSHIP	31
SANCTIFICATION	31
SECURITY AND ASSURANCE	32
SALVATION CONSUMMATED	32
GLORIFICATION	32
ADOPTION	32

ECCLESIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH	34
UNIVERSAL CHURCH	34
NATURE OF THE CHURCH	34
DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE CHURCH	34
LOCAL CHURCH	35
MISSION OF THE CHURCH	35
MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH	35
GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH	36
ORDINANCES OF THE CHURCH	36
DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH	37
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CHURCHES	37
THE CHURCH AND CIVIL GOVERNMENT	38
ESCHATOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS	39
INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY	39
GENERAL ESCHATOLOGY	39
ESCHATOLOGY AS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE COVENANTS	39
ESCHATOLOGICAL EVENTS AND PROGRESSION	40

Summary of Statement of Doctrine and Position

**For the purpose of more suitably serving those who wish to acquaint themselves in brief with the doctrinal position of the present author, the following two pages are a summation of the Statement of Doctrine and Position which follows and in which the reader may access further detail on each point of doctrine at the appropriate location.*

I believe in the **verbal, plenary inspiration** of the Scripture, and that in their original autographs, the Scriptures are **inerrant**. I accept the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments as the full and complete canon of Scripture. I believe in the absolute **sufficiency** of Scriptures for life and godliness. I reject any claim of continuing revelation today. I believe God has **preserved** His Word, and I am grateful for the rich benefit available to believers today in multiple conservative English translations of Scripture such as the ESV, KJV, NASB, and NKJV.

I believe in **one God** who exists eternally as a **tri-unity** of three co-equal persons: Father, Son, and Spirit.

I believe in the **creation** of the world by the direct act of God in six, literal, 24-hour days.

I believe in the **Lord Jesus Christ**, who, as the second member of the Godhead, took flesh, was born of the **virgin**, Mary, and, so, possesses two distinct natures in one person. I believe Christ executes His Messianic work in three offices: **prophet, priest, and king**. He is the agent of creation, and in His **first advent** made atonement for the sins of mankind. I believe in His **imminent** coming to raise and rapture His own and His **Second Coming** to rule this present earth from Jerusalem.

I believe in the **Holy Spirit** who possesses full personhood, is fully divine, and who works in behalf of Christ for the sake of Christ's own.

I believe in the existence of **angels**, both fallen and unfallen, and in the existence of the **Devil**, Satan, who works against the re-establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

I believe in the **creation of man** by the direct act of God, in the **image of God**, so that he possesses both a material (body) and immaterial (soul or spirit) part. God created man **male and female**. These two equal genders fulfill different roles. The woman is called of God to voluntarily subject herself to her husband. **Marriage** is the joining by covenant of one male and one female to become one flesh until parted by death. All deviation from this definition of marriage is an abomination in the sight of God.

I believe that **sin** is the transgression of God's law, and that all mankind lies under the **imputed guilt** of Adam's first sin. As a result, mankind is **totally depraved**, each day committing further acts of rebellion against God's rule that ratify Adam's original act.

I believe **salvation** occurs by the act of God of alone. His work to save fallen humanity began before the creation of the world in His **foreknowledge** of His own, His **predestination** of them, and His **election** (choice) of them in Christ. The **atonement** Christ provided rests upon His active and passive obedience. Christ's passive obedience to the will of God involved His suffering and death under the wrath of God as a **vicarious penal substitutionary** atonement. I believe the atonement Christ provided is sufficient for all mankind but effectual only for those to whom God applies it. God applies the salvation Christ effected by **effectually calling** His elect,

regenerating them, uniting them to Christ by faith, converting, **justifying**, sanctifying, and securing them in anticipation and hope of their glorification.

I believe in the **universal church** which is that body composed of all the redeemed in the present age. The church was inaugurated at Pentecost and consists of Jew and Gentile. Although the church has not replaced by national Israel, it nevertheless exists as a partial continuation of national Israel in the Old Testament inasmuch as the church exists on the basis of three covenants (Abrahamic, Davidic, and New) God made with His Old Testament people, Israel.

I believe in the **local church**. Local churches are localized manifestations of the body of Christ to which saints must join themselves voluntarily by covenant. The local church exists for the glory of God, and its mission is to make and mature disciples of Christ. The church possesses two **offices**: elder and deacon. The church observes two **ordinances**: baptism and the Lord's Supper. **Baptism** occurs upon confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and by mode of **immersion**.

I identify myself with the historic **fundamentalist** movement that holds to the fundamentals of the faith as the scripture reveals and seeks to guard the Gospel by **separation** when necessary. External manifestations of unity amongst the people of God must always be a display of internal realities.

I identify myself as a **dispensational premillennialist**, and I anticipate with joy the imminent **pretribulational** return of Jesus Christ to rapture His own. I believe in the existence of a literal **lake of fire** wherein Christ will cast all His enemies, including those members of the human race that persist in rebellion against Him. These who will inherit the lake of fire will go into hell in their bodies.

Bibliology: The Doctrine of Scripture

God has revealed Himself to mankind by many means throughout history. His primary means is His revelation through Scripture. Theologians identify six phases whereby man comes to know God through the Scripture: revelation, inspiration, canonicity, preservation, translation, interpretation.

Revelation

God has revealed Himself to humanity by two modes: general revelation and special revelation. These two modes differ in their (1) extent (what God revealed) and (2) recipients (who receives the revelation).

General Revelation

God has revealed himself to *every human being* through general revelation. God mediates that revelation through creation (Psalm 19:1–6; 33:6; Romans 1:19–20), the human conscience (Romans 1:32; 2:14–15), and His providence in history (Exodus 9:16; Isaiah 37:20; Matthew 5:45; Acts 14:17). General revelation is sufficient for man to understand God's existence and certain aspects of his nature, including His power (Romans 1:20), His goodness (Matthew 5:45), and His morality (Romans 2:14–15). Though mankind has willingly suppressed this revelation, God's provision of it renders every man responsible before Him (Romans 1:18–21; 2:1–2). General revelation is insufficient for salvation (Romans 1:21; 10:13–14; 1 Corinthians 1:21).

Special Revelation

God has revealed himself more fully and more specifically to mankind through various means, including visions (Acts 10:10–16), dreams (Genesis 20:3), miraculous signs (Psalms 77:14; Matthew 15:31), prophets (Ephesians 3:5), and theophanies (Exodus 3:2; cf. Mark 12:26; Numbers 12:8–9). The ultimate means whereby God has revealed Himself is **the incarnation of Jesus Christ** (John 1:1, 14–18; Colossians 2:2–3; Hebrews 1:1–2; Revelation 19:13). Although not all occurrences of special revelation are recorded in the Bible (Revelation 10:4), Scripture alone, which testifies of Jesus Christ, is the only source of special revelation for man today (Luke 24:27; 2 Peter 1:16–19).

Inspiration

Inspiration is the process whereby God breathed out His words through human authors. Inspiration was not wholly mechanistic (Luke 1:1–3; 2 Corinthians 10:10–11; certain passages were given by direct dictation but even then the human author was consciously aware of that fact [Exodus 34:27–28; Revelation 2–3; 14:13]). It occurred as the Holy Spirit exercised such control of the human authors that the documents they produced were the speech of God to man (2 Samuel 23:2; cf. Acts 4:25; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). I believe in the **verbal** (every word of Scripture; Matthew 5:18; 22:31–32; Luke 16:17), **plenary** (the entirety of Scripture; 2 Timothy 3:16) inspiration of Scripture. Inspiration extends to the **original autographs** alone.

The Divine origin of Scripture and process of inspiration guarantees that Scripture is **inerrant** (free from error or untruthfulness though not necessarily free of scribal error; Psalm 12:6; John 17:17), **authoritative** (determinative for faith and practice; Deuteronomy 4:2; Psalm 119:4; Acts 6:7; 2 Timothy 3:15), and **sufficient** (containing everything man needs for salvation and service; Psalm 19:7–11; 2 Timothy 3:14–4:2; 2 Peter 1:2–4).

Canonicity

Canonicity is the process whereby God's people came to **recognize** the definitive collection of divinely-inspired documents. The canon is limited to the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments. This process of recognition rests upon Scripture's own testimony concerning its divine source. The Old Testament authors regularly claim to be writing the words of God (Leviticus 1:1; Hosea 1:1), and God's people recognized that their claim was authentic (Joshua 1:7-9; 1 Kings 2:3; Daniel 9:2). New Testament authors quote from every Old Testament book but one and often refer to those books as Scripture or as from God and, therefore, authoritative (Luke 1:70; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 1:1-2; James 2:8; 1 Peter 1:10-12). Christ affirmed the authority of the Old Testament writings (Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-45) and anticipated that the New Testament apostles would convey new revelation from God through their writings (John 14:26; 16:13). New Testament authors consider their works to be Scripture and authoritative (1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 2 Peter 3:2, 16; Revelation 1:1-2). Ultimately, I accept the canon of the Old and New Testaments because it is self-authenticating; the Holy Spirit confirms the authority of the Scriptures in the heart of every believer for in them, the saints hear the voice of their Shepherd and King (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 2:14). The completion of the theological foundation of the church as laid by the apostles closed the canon and terminated any anticipation of further revelation (Ephesians 2:20; Revelation 22:18-19). Any person or organization tampering with the canon must expect eternal damnation (Revelation 22:19).

Preservation

The text of Scripture is complete in its present form (Proverbs 20:6; Revelation 22:18). Adding to Scripture makes one a false prophet (Deuteronomy 18:20). Although the *autographa* no longer exist, Scripture teaches that God has preserved His Word (Psalm 119:152, 160; Matthew 24:35). God's command that His saints preach His word assumes that He will preserve it for them to do so (2 Timothy 4:2). Nevertheless, Scripture does not indicate the method God would use to preserve His Word. The multiplicity of ancient copies of Scripture that are available today and the fact that no two agree exactly give rise to the question of whether God has favored any specific line or family of textual evidence over another as the means whereby He has preserved His Word. The absence of any such direction from God in Scripture means that any attempt to restrict the means of preservation to a particular family or line of manuscript evidence is arbitrary by definition. For this reason, I believe that the **eclectic method of textual criticism** best determines the original reading of the autographs. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that no textual variant affects the substance of Christian doctrine.

Translation

Christ's own quotation from the Septuagint set the precedent for faithful translations of Scripture that may be called the Word of God, and therefore, any modern translation of Scripture that accurately reflects the autographs may be called the Word of God. Responsible Christians recognize the need to use the best translations available in their language. Criteria by which to determine reliable translations include textual basis, translation philosophy, and understandability. The section "Preservation" above addresses the preferred textual basis, and the **formal equivalence** philosophy of translation (reproducing the exact wording of the original as much as possible) is superior. Trustworthy English translations of first choice are the KJV, NKJV, NASB, HCSB, and ESV.

Interpretation

Scripture is fundamentally clear (**perspicuous**), especially in regard to its teaching regarding the truth that leads to eternal life (Psalm 119:105, 130; 2 Timothy 3:14–17). Unbelievers can understand Scripture intellectually to a degree (Ezekiel 12:3), and God uses His Word to generate faith in them (Romans 10:17). Nevertheless, an unbeliever cannot grasp the meaning and significance of Scripture apart from divine assistance (1 Corinthians 2:14). The Holy Spirit is the primary agent of the Trinity whereby God illumines the mind of believer and unbeliever alike regarding the correct interpretation of Scripture (Luke 24:45; John 16:8–11; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 2:20, 27). Nevertheless, like all other communication, Scripture requires careful interpretation and can be misinterpreted.

The discipline of interpretation is called **hermeneutics**. The goal of interpretation is discerning the meaning with which the original author invested the text (**authorial intent**). In order to determine the meaning of the text, we must read it very carefully within its **context**. Four areas of contextual analysis circumscribe the reading of any biblical text.

- Linguistic Context (grammar, syntax, semantics)
- Literary Context (genre, structure)
- Historical Context (author, addressees, occasion)
- Theological Context (biblical, systematic, and historical theology)

Scripture must be interpreted literally (not literalistically) using the **historical-grammatical method**. I see the value and necessity of systematic theology (Matthew 22:23–33).

Theology Proper: The Doctrine of God

Existence of God

Scripture never argues for the existence of God; the existence of God is Scripture's fundamental presupposition (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1). Nevertheless, God gives evidence of His existence to man apart from Scriptural revelation (Romans 1:19–20; Psalm 19:1–6). These evidences include creation (Romans 1:20), the conscience and universal human standards of morality (Romans 2:14–15), and the goodness of God (Acts 14:17; Romans 2:4). Man suppresses this evidence, preferring to give his worship to creation rather than the creator (Romans 1:18–23). In view of Scripture's teaching, apologetics must proceed within the boundaries of **presuppositionalism**.

Nature of God

God is a spirit (John 4:24), infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. As such, He is ultimately incomprehensible (Psalm 139:6; Romans 11:3). Nevertheless, He has revealed Himself in His Word and in His creation (see section "Revelation" above).

Tri-Unity

I believe that God is a trinity, or more properly, a tri-unity. The doctrine of the Trinity rests upon three intellectually irreconcilable truths that Scripture teaches regarding the person of God. (1) There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5, 21; John 10:30). (2) God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16–17; 28:19; Acts 2:32–33; 2 Corinthians 13:14) who are each fully divine (John 6:27; Micah 5:2; 1 Corinthians 2:11). (3) Each person of the trinity is a distinct person (i.e., the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, and the Spirit is not the Father in any sense) (Matthew 3:16–17; 27:46; John 14:26; 15:26; Galatians 1:4; 4:6; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Peter 1:21 John 4:2). Thus, I believe that God is one Being who exists in three co-equal and co-eternal persons. These persons have existed in unity and fellowship from all eternity (John 1:1; 1:18; Hebrews 9:14).

Attributes

God is infinitely glorious and praiseworthy in every respect of His person and works (1 Timothy 1:17). He is holy, that is He is separate from His creation and unique in His person and works (Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 6:3; 57:15). Therefore, He displays each of His attributes to an unparalleled and perfected degree. Theologians divide God's attributes into two categories: God's greatness and God's goodness.

Greatness

God is **self-existent**—God exists necessarily of Himself and is uncaused (Exodus 3:14; John 5:26; Acts 17:24–25)

God is **invisible**—God cannot be seen by men (John 1:18; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17), though he has sometimes chosen to represent Himself physically (Exodus 13:21; Luke 3:22).

God is **immutable**—God is unchanging in His person (Psalm 55:19); 102:25–27), character (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17), purposes (Psalm 33:11; Isaiah 46:9–11), and promises (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29), though He does experience emotion, respond to people’s actions, and answer prayer (Exodus 32:9–14; James 5:16).

God is **infinite**—God’s being and attributes possess no limits (Job 5:9; 11:7–9).

God is **omnipotent**—God is capable of doing anything that is in keeping with His own nature (Genesis 18:14; Job 5:9; 42:2; Psalm 145:3; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 6:18).

God is **omniscient**—God knows all things actual (Psalm 145:5; Isaiah 46:10) and possible (1 Samuel 23:11–13; Matthew 11:21). I reject **open theism**, which denies God’s sovereignty and omniscience, as an aberration of Scripture’s teaching (Isaiah 37:26–29; 41:21–29).

God is **omnipresent**—God is present everywhere, at once, in the totality of His being (1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 139:7–12; Jeremiah 23:23–24).

God is **sovereign**—God is in complete control over all things (Genesis 50:20; Acts 2:23; Ephesians 1:11). There is no pure contingency in God’s universe—His control extends to both the means and the ends (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

God is **eternal**—God has always existed (Psalm 90:2; Micah 5:2) and always will (Romans 16:26; 1 Timothy 1:17).

God is **all-wise**—God possess the skill to choose the best goals and the best means to reach those goals (Psalm 104:24; Romans 11:33).

Goodness

God is **pure**—God is perfectly free of and hates all and sin and impurity (Leviticus 11:44–45; Psalm 24:3; Isaiah 6:3; Habakkuk 1:13; 1 Peter 15–16; Revelation 4:8).

God is **righteous**—God always acts according to His own standard of what His nature dictates is right (Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 3:26). He is **just**, faithful to punish wrongdoing (Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Ezra 9:15; Daniel 9:7, 14, Romans 1:18) and reward righteousness (1 Kings 8:32; Psalm 58:11; 89:14).

God is **true**—God is honest and free from error of any kind (Titus 1:2).

God is **faithful**—God keeps His word and is trustworthy (Numbers 23:19; Deuteronomy 7:9; Lamentations 3:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:24).

God is **love**—God gives of Himself for the world (John 3:16) and His people in particular (Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:8).

God is **merciful**—God grants favor and pardon to the miserable and condemned (2 Samuel 24:14; Luke 1:50; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 2:4).

God is **gracious**—God gives freely to those who are undeserving, showing favor that cannot be demanded and is uncoerced (Exodus 34:6; Psalm 145:8; Nehemiah 9:17; Romans 11:6)

God is **longsuffering**—God willingly withholds punishment toward sinners for a long time (Psalm 103:8; Romans 2:4).

Works of God

God acts in His own interest and for His own glory (Romans 11:36). A resulting correlative is that God acts for man's good (Romans 8:28). The primary sphere in which Scripture depicts God as acting is soteriology (see section "Soteriology"). Three subsidiary spheres of God's activity contribute to God's actions as Savior and require further explanation: creation, acts of providence, and miracles.

Creation

God created the universe directly (Genesis 1:31–2:4; Exodus 20:11), of nothing (John 1:3; Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3), in the space of **six, literal, 24-hour days** (Exodus 20:11), by the word of His power (Genesis 1:3, et. al.; Psalm 33:6; 2 Corinthians 4:6), for the sake of His own glory (Genesis 1:31; Revelation 4:11). The Son of God was the primary agent of creation (John 1:3; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16) though all the members of the Godhead participated (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6–9). God's original creation bore no evidence of the depravity and misery to which Adam's sin and God's resulting curse subjected it (Genesis 1:4, et. al.; 1:31).

I reject as unbiblical the secular theory of **evolution, progressive creationism** (God sequentially created the individual species, acting across thousands or millions of years), and **theistic evolution** (God created basic life, but biological diversity and complexity arose through the same process suggested by secular evolution). The **gap theory** relies upon no firm exegetical support and should be rejected.

Providence

God's providence is His acting directly in history, governing, superintending, and leading all things to His intended goal for them. God's providence includes His preservation of creation (Nehemiah 9:6; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). It also includes His government of the universe whereby He directs all things to His decreed purpose (Proverbs 16:1, 4, 9, 33; Ephesians 1:11). God typically works through secondary means (such as faith [Romans 10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13] or prayer [James 5:17]), in **concurrence** with man's choices, but ultimately in full control (Jeremiah 10:23; Romans 9:16). God's government extends even to seemingly chance happenings (Proverbs 16:33) and human choices (Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; Ephesians 2:10). Nevertheless, man remains fully accountable for his choices (Matthew 23:37; Romans 9:19–20; 10). God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Ephesians 1:11), according His own good pleasure (Isaiah 46:10), and for His own glory (Romans 11:36). God cannot be blamed for evil (Habakkuk 1:13) and no one can accuse God of seducing men to commit evil acts (James 1:13). Nevertheless, God's sovereign plan includes the existence of evil, and He uses it for His own glory (Genesis 50:20; Romans 5:20; 9:17, 22–23)

Miracles

At certain points in history, God has worked in supernatural ways that temporarily suspend natural law and evidence an extraordinary act of power. These miraculous acts of God occurred as a unique demonstration of God's sovereignty over creation (Exodus 9:16; 15:11; John 2:11; 20:30–31) and to certify new revelation (1 Kings 17:23–24; John 14:11; Acts 2:22, 32; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:4) (there are three periods in Scripture in which miracles occurred: the founding of the nation of Israel in the Exodus, the early prophets [Elijah and Elisha], and the founding of the church as God's new covenant people [Jesus and the apostles]).

Christology: The Doctrine of the Messiah

Person of Christ

Scripture teaches the full deity and full humanity of Christ (see statements on each below). As such, Jesus Christ is **one person**, but He partakes of two substances and thus possesses **two natures** (Romans 9:5). The Son of God has been equal with the Father from all eternity but only in time did He take flesh and thus become also man (John 1:1, 14–18; Philippians 2:5–8).

Deity of Christ

Scripture teaches the full deity of the Son of God and extends this ontology to the man, Jesus Christ. This doctrine appears throughout Scripture in several forms. Explicit assertions establish the deity of Christ (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:19; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3). He is called by God's name: Yahweh (John 8:85; John 12:41; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Hebrews 1:8, 10–12; Revelation 2:1, et. al.; cf. OT prophetic formula "Thus saith the LORD"). He called Himself the Son of God and the Son of Man, appellatives that each designate Him as divine (John 5:17–30; Daniel 7:13–14; Matthew 26:63–66). It was for this claim that He was crucified (John 19:6–7). He possesses divine attributes (Matthew 8:26–27; 28:20; John 2:23–25; 8:85; Hebrews 4:15), and He performs divine works (Mark 2:1–12; John 5:22–23; 20:30–31; Colossians 1:16–17). Jesus Christ accepts divine worship, marking Him as either a hypocritical blasphemer or fully divine (Matthew 28:17; John 20:28; Revelation 5:12–13).

Humanity of Christ

Scripture teaches the full humanity of Jesus Christ. Evidence for Christ full humanity includes the following. Scripture states He was and remains a man (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7). Christ's presence on earth included every element of a normal human lifecycle: birth, growth, and death. Christ possessed human attributes and expressed human needs (Matthew 4:1–11; 8:24; 24:36; 26:38; Luke 2:7, 52; John 19:30–33; Hebrews 4:15). His fellow human beings viewed Him as no different than themselves to the extent that they could not understand His statements that He had come down from heaven (Matthew 13:54–58; John 6:38, 41–42; 7:5).

Incarnation of Christ

The self-abasing act whereby the eternal Son of God took on human flesh and thus began also to be fully human is called the **incarnation**. The incarnation began at the point of the **virgin conception** of Jesus of Nazareth whereby the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary so that the child born from her womb was to be called holy and the Son of God (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18–24; Luke 1:34–37). Although Christ took on a second nature at the incarnation, this **hypostatic union** in no way confuses the two natures of Christ. Each nature retains its distinctive properties but is inseparable from the other. The intersection of these two natures in one person presents challenges to the finite human mind. Scripture does not fully resolve the challenges but does present the doctrine of the **kenosis** to explain some aspects of the incarnation (Philippians 2:5–8). This doctrine teaches that in the incarnation, Jesus voluntarily laid aside the full exercise of some of His rights, prerogatives, and privileges as the Son of God (John 5:19; 1 Corinthians 6:14). Nevertheless, the

incarnate Christ possesses attributes visible to man that mark Him as simultaneously divine and human (Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 8:24–27; 24:36; Hebrews 5:8). Christ's incarnation (as God in human flesh) continues to the present hour and will continue on into eternity (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:2–3).

Works of Christ

Christ executes His Messianic work in three offices: prophet, priest, and king. As Prophet, He is Himself the Word of God to man to reveal the Father and to make known His will (John 1:1, 18; 15:15; Acts 3:22–26; Hebrews 1:1–2). As Priest, Christ represents the saints before God as both the propitiatory sacrifice whereby God's wrath is assuaged and as our Advocate to make intercession for us (Hebrews 2:17; 7:24–27; 10:12–14). As King, Christ rules over the kingdom of God in its various forms, subduing it to the glory of God (Luke 11:20; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 11:15).

Pre-Incarnate Works

Prior to the incarnation, the second person of the Godhead was active from all eternity. He participated in the eternal fellowship of the Trinity (John 1:1; 17:5). In Him, the Father chose His own (Ephesians 1:4). He was the Agent of creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16) and has sustained creation throughout history (Colossians 1:17). He appeared throughout the Old Testament as the Angel of Yahweh (Genesis 16:7–14, etc.).

First-Advent Works

Scripture presents the **atonement** as the primary activity in which Jesus Christ engaged. He completed this work at His first advent, and this was the primary reason for the incarnation (Mark 10:45).

Cause of the Atonement

Scripture provides two causes that set in motion Christ's work of atonement. The first cause was the **love of God** for sinful mankind (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). The second cause was to demonstrate the **righteousness of God** (Romans 1:16–17; 3:25).

Method of the Atonement

Jesus completed the work of atonement in four historical events. First, Jesus Christ's **life** of perfect obedience to the law of God provides the foundation upon which God can impute to sinners the righteousness necessary for justification (Matthew 3:13–15; Romans 8:3–4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Galatians 4:4–5; Philippians 3:8–9). During His life, he experienced real and significant temptation (Matthew 4:1–11; Hebrews 2:18) and overcame through obedient reliance upon the Spirit of God (Luke 4:14). Jesus Christ experienced **death** as God's penalty for our sins (Isaiah 53:4–6; Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:33, 46; 2 Corinthians 5:21). The bodily **resurrection** of Jesus Christ from the tomb confirmed that God had accepted His work of atonement (Matthew 28:1–7; Romans 4:24–25; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8). The **ascension** of Jesus Christ to the Father's right hand signals the completion of His work (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12) and positions Him to make continuing **intercession** for the saints (Hebrews 7:24–27).

Nature of the Atonement

The atonement Jesus Christ provided was a **sacrifice** to God for sin (Hebrews 9:24–28) whereby Christ **substituted** Himself in the sinner's stead and fell under the wrath of God

(Romans 3:24–25). His work of sacrificial atonement resulted in **propitiation** (the satisfaction of God’s righteous wrath against sin; Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10) and **expiation** (the forgiveness and removal of sin; Hebrews 10:18–22). The atonement Jesus Christ provided was also **redemptive**, setting sinners free from their bondage to the Law (Galatians 3:13; 4:5), to sin (Ephesians 1:7), and to the Devil (Hebrews 2:14–15). The purchase price of this redemption was the life of Jesus Christ (Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6), and more specifically, the blood He shed (1 Peter 1:18–19). His work of redemptive atonement makes the redeemed sinner the special possession of God (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Revelation 5:9–10). The atonement Jesus Christ provided was a reconciliation whereby He removed the enmity between man and God and established a relationship of peace (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18).

Extent of the Atonement

Scripture teaches that the atonement Jesus provided was **sufficient** for all mankind (John 1:29; 3:16–17; 6:51; 12:46–48; Romans 3:25; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 19; 1 Timothy 2:1–6; 4:10; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:2). This accords with God’s desire that all mankind experience salvation (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; John 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Nevertheless, the **application** of the atonement is limited to certain people. The limitation of the application of the atonement rests on two interlocking criteria. First, experiencing the benefits of Christ’s redemption is contingent upon **man’s repentance and faith** (Mark 1:15; Romans 10:9–10). The world that God loved and for which He sent His Son is the world that loves the darkness rather than the light and *will not come* to the light (John 3:16–20). Were the application of the atonement to rest upon the condition of man’s repentance and faith alone, its application would extend to none. For that reason, the second criteria concerning the extent of the atonement’s application is determinative: **the election and effectual calling of God** (John 10:15; 15:13; Acts 3:16; 11:18; 18:27; Romans 8:28–39; 1 Corinthians 1:21–31; Ephesians 1:4; 5:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; 1 Timothy 1:14; 4:10; 2 Peter 1:1; Revelation 5:9–10). The application of the atonement extends to *every man* whom He chooses and calls (Romans 8:28–30). See “Soteriology” below. As a result, all men stand accountable to the One who purchased them in His self-sacrifice (Revelation 5:9). This also means the Gospel may freely be offered to all (Isaiah 45:22; Matthew 11:28; 22:14; Luke 14:16–24); John 3:16; 12:32) and that the preacher may freely call all men to Christ for redemption (Acts 2:38; 10:43; 13:39).

Present Works

Presently, Jesus Christ sits at the Father’s right hand, awaiting the subjugation of His enemies (Psalm 110:1). Nevertheless, Jesus Christ remains active. He continues to sustain creation (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). He intercedes for the saints (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:24–27). As the church’s head, He is building (Matthew 16:18), ruling (Ephesians 1:20–23; Revelation 1:13–20), and perfecting the body (Ephesians 4:7–16). He accomplishes all this through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–18; Acts 2:33).

Second-Advent Works

The work of Jesus Christ is not yet complete. In the future, He will return bodily (Acts 1:11) to raise and rapture the saints (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17; Revelation 3:10). He will execute the righteous wrath of God upon impenitent earth-dwellers (Revelation 5–19). He will return in glory to rule the world from a throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1–6). Following His millennial rule, He will judge the world from a great white throne (John 5:22–29; Acts 17:31; Revelation 20:11–15). He will defeat death itself (Revelation

20:14). At this point, the work of the incarnate Son of God, the man Jesus Christ, as the mediatorial ruler of God's kingdom, will be complete, and He will deliver up to the Father a subdued kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:20-28) and together, God and the Lamb will rule the new creation (Revelation 22:3; see "Eschatology" below) for all eternity.

Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

Person of the Holy Spirit

Personality of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, and as such, He is not a mere force or influence. Neither is He a third mode or expression of deity. Several lines of biblical evidence establish the personhood of the Holy Spirit. First, although the Greek noun that designates the Spirit of God (*pneuma*) is neuter, all pronominal references to the Spirit are masculine (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7–8, 13–14). Second, the Spirit possesses the three fundamental attributes of personhood: mind (1 Corinthians 2:10–11), will (1 Corinthians 12:11, and emotions (Ephesians 4:30). Third, the Holy Spirit performs personal works, such as teaching (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 15:28), convicting (John 16:8), and interceding (Romans 8:26–27). Fourth, the Holy Spirit relates to other persons, and can be resisted (Acts 7:51), blasphemed (Matthew 12:31–32), tested (Acts 5:9), lied to (Acts 5:3), quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and insulted (Hebrews 10:29).

Deity of the Holy Spirit

Scripture teaches the **full deity** of the third member of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. Several lines of biblical evidence support this claim. First, He is called God (Acts 5:3–4). Second, he possesses divine attributes including eternality (Hebrews 9:14), omnipresence (Psalm 139:7–10), and omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10–11). Third, He performs divine works, creating (Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4), inspiring the words of God (Acts 1:16; 2 Peter 1:21), overshadowing Mary so that the child she bears is called “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35), regenerating (John 3:5–8; Titus 3:5; cf. John 1:13), and resurrecting (Romans 8:11).

Works of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit of God is active in the Old Testament, exerting a **restraining** influence upon mankind’s descent into immorality (Genesis 6:3; Psalm 143:10) and **empowering** God’s representatives in the Israelite theocracy to accomplish their God-given roles (Exodus 31:1–6; Numbers 11:17; Judges 6:34; 14:6; Psalm 51:11). In the life of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God guided and empowered Jesus for His earthly ministry (Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1–2a; Matthew 12:18; Luke 4:1–18; 10:21; John 1:32; 3:34). The Spirit of God is the divine Author of Scripture, breathing out the words (2 Timothy 3:16) and guiding the human authors (2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Peter 1:21).

The Spirit of God retains His role of **moral restraint** in the world today and will do so until the rapture of the church (2 Thessalonians 2:7). He **convicts** unbelievers of sin and their fallen condition before God (John 16:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). He enables unbelievers to understand and embrace the Gospel (1 Corinthians 2:9–14; 2 Corinthians 3:14–17).

At conversion, the Holy Spirit **regenerates** (imparting spiritual life; John 3:5–8; Titus 3:5). **Spirit baptism** is Christ’s work whereby the Spirit unites the saints to Christ’s body at conversion (Matthew 3:11–12; Acts 1:5; 2:1–14; 11:15–16; 1 Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit of God comes to **indwell** believers at conversion (Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19). This permanent residence of the Spirit within the believer and His subsequent ministry to believers is a seal (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30), or down-payment (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:14), of his heavenly inheritance.

Throughout the life of a believer the Holy Spirit performs the following ministries to him.

Illumination/Teaching: The Holy Spirit enables believers to understand spiritual truth as found in the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 9–14; Ephesians 3:14–19) and to assess the truthfulness of religious teaching (1 John 2:20, 27).

Assurance: The Holy Spirit confirms to the believer that he is God’s child (Romans 8:14–16; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).

Intercession: The Holy Spirit prays for believers, aligning their prayers with His knowledge of the will of God (Romans 8:26–27)

Guidance: The Holy Spirit enables the believer to understand God’s will and make wise decisions (Luke 12:12; Acts 8:9; 13:2; 16:6–10; 20:22–23).

Empowering: The Holy Spirit enables the believer to minister effectively both to the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7–9, 11) and in evangelism (Acts 1:8; 4:31).

Sanctification: The Holy Spirit transforms believers into the image of Christ by degrees (2 Corinthians 3:18), convicting believers of sin (1 Thessalonians 4:8; Revelation 2:7), producing godly character qualities (Galatians 5:22–24), and counteracting the impulses of the flesh (Galatians 5:16–21) as the believer yields himself to the Spirit’s influence (Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:18) and mortifies sin (Romans 8:13).

Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit gifts the believer with grace to minister to the body of Christ. This gifting occurs at the Spirit’s discretion (1 Corinthians 12:11) and is a manifestation of the grace of God (Romans 12:6). The Spirit imparts at least one special ability to minister to the body of Christ to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Peter 4:10). Scripture divides these gifts into manual and speaking gifts (1 Peter 4:10–11). The purpose of the gifts is not self-exaltation but the glory of God and the edification of the church (Romans 12:3–8; 1 Corinthians 12–14; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

Sign or Miraculous Gifts

Scripture gives every evidence that the sign gifts of the New Testament perished with the death of the apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Corinthians 13:8). Speaking in tongues (known languages and dialects) occurred at Pentecost (Acts 2) and afterward as a sign to the Jews that the eschatological age spoken of in Joel 2:28–32 had been inaugurated at the ascension of Christ with the descent of the Spirit.¹ Scripture gives no reason to believers to expect to see any practice of these gifts today, and anyone who claims these gifts must utilize them in keeping with Paul’s rules in 1 Corinthians 14:26–35. This is not to say that God does not give providential help to those learning a foreign language, but Scripture gives no reason that we may expect such help to be miraculous. Tongues must never be made a test of spirituality (1 Corinthians 12:8–11; 14:1–4).

¹ What occurred at Pentecost was not a direct fulfillment of Joel 2 because the cosmic wonders of Acts 2:19–21 did not occur. Scripture states they will be fulfilled in the future Revelation 6:12). Nevertheless, the practice of tongues in Acts was a sign to Jews, limited to the first century (the death of the apostles), to validate to them that in Jesus, God had begun to fulfill His promise of sending the Spirit.

Angelology: The Doctrine of Angels

Angels in General

Scripture teaches that God is attended in heaven by the holy angels, each an individual creation of God (Nehemiah 9:6; Ps 148:2, 5) and thus not a race (Matthew 22:30). They are personal (Luke 8:28; 15:10; Hebrews 1:6; 1 Peter 1:12), non-corporeal, spiritual beings (Hebrews 1:14; Luke 24:39), and their company is innumerable (Revelation 5:11). They are the product of Christ's creation (Colossians 1:16) and originally, all were unfallen and holy (Jude 6). Angels possess great power but are not omniscient (1 Peter 1:12), omnipresent, or omnipotent (Daniel 10:13). They must never be worshipped (Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10; 22:8).

In many ways, the human race is superior to angels because (1) man alone is created in God's image (Genesis 1:26–28), (2) God does not redeem fallen angels (Hebrews 2:16; 1 Peter 1:12; Jude 6), (3) angels are man's servants (Hebrews 1:14), and (4) man will judge angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).

The angel of the Lord in the Old Testament is most likely the pre-incarnate Christ (Gen 16:10–13; 22:12; 31:11, 13; Exodus 3:2, 6). This allows for the variance between passages that identify the Angel as God and those that seem to identify Him as someone other than God (see 2 Samuel 24:16 where the angel of the Lord is the agent of God's judgment; cf. John 5:22–23 and Revelation 5).

Angels exist today in both unfallen and fallen states.

Unfallen Angels

The company of unfallen angels continues to be called holy (Mark 8:38). They worship God continuously (Isaiah 6:3; Hebrews 1:6; Revelation 5:11–12). God will make use of these angels in the eschatological judgment of the world (Genesis 19:13; Acts 12:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–8; Revelation 16). Unfallen angels function toward the saints to (1) assist in answers to prayer (Acts 12:5–11) and (2) guard and protect (Ps 34:7; 91:11; Hebrews 1:14). God effects redemption in order to showcase His wisdom and grace to the angelic company (Luke 15:10; 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Timothy 5:21; 1 Peter 1:12).

Fallen Angels

Satan

Scripture teaches the existence of Satan, a fallen angel (Job 1:6; 2:1), previously named Lucifer, who was cast out of heaven for his pride (1 Timothy 3:6) and now torments the children of God and will continue to do so until confined to the pit prior to the millennium (Isaiah 14:12–15; Ezekiel 28:1–10; 1 Peter 5:8 Revelation 12, 20:1–3). Ezekiel 28:11–19 and Isaiah 14:12–14 likely describe his fall. This fallen angel seduced Adam and Eve to commit the same sin he did: aspiring in pride to be like God (Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 14:14). The fall of man subjected humanity to the reigning influence of Satan so that he is now called "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4) and the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). As *Satan* ("adversary"), he opposes God and His saints. He blinds unbelievers to the truth (Matthew 13:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4), hinders God's servants in the

spread of the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:18), accuses believers (Revelation 12:9–10), tempts to sin (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 3:5), and seeks their destruction (1 Peter 5:8). In the death of Christ, the devil has been rendered ultimately powerless (Genesis 3:15; John 16:11; Ephesians 1:19–21; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14–15; 1 John 3:8). He will be confined to the abyss during the Millennial reign of Christ on the earth (Revelation 20:1–3) before being consigned eternally to the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41; 1 Corinthians 15:24; Revelation 20:10).

Demons

At his fall, Satan took with him one-third of the angelic company of heaven (Revelation 12:3–4) who joined him in his rebellion against God. These fallen spirits are referred to as “demons” (James 2:19) and as “unclean spirits” (Mark 1:23). Some of these fallen angels were incarcerated and will remain so until their final judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). Others remain on the loose and assist Satan in his battle against God. They work with him for the downfall of humanity, especially the people of God (2 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 6:12) and God’s Messiah (Revelation 12). They deceive people through false doctrine (1 Timothy 4:1). They can indwell the unregenerate to control them internally (Matthew 8:16). Like Satan, they are doomed to destruction (Matthew 25:41; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

Anthropology: The Doctrine of Man

Origin of Man

God created mankind on the sixth day of the creation week as sinless beings and in His image (Genesis 1:26–31; Ecclesiastes 7:9). God’s creation of man occurred as God took dust from the ground, formed the man, and breathed the breath of life into him (Genesis 2:7). God creation of woman occurred as God took a rib from Adam’s side and from it, he fashioned the woman (Genesis 2:21–22). The first couple enjoyed unbroken fellowship with God prior to the fall. God created man to have dominion over the earth, ruling and cultivating it to bring it to its maximum potential of bringing glory to God (Genesis 1:28; Psalm 8). The entire human race descended from this first couple (Genesis 1:28; Acts 17:26; Romans 5:12, 18).

Nature of Man

Image of God in Man

God created man in his own image, and therefore, man is the pinnacle of God’s creative work. The fall (see “Hamartiology”) corrupted the image of God in man, yet even after the fall, mankind still bears the image of God and transmits it to his descendants (Genesis 5:1–3; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9). God’s plan of redemption aims to restore the image of God to its original glory (Romans 8:28–30; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:20–24; Colossians 3:9–10; 1 John 3:2). Theologians have posited a number of suggestions regarding the meaning of the image of God in man. While it is true that man bears many similarities to God that the rest of creation does not (such as moral capacity, personality, a spiritual dimension, capacity for fellowship with God, immortality, and even physical functions) the only suggestion with direct exegetical support is the dominion mandate— God created man to rule over the earth as its king in the same way that God Himself is the governor of all creation. Thus, the restoration of the image of God in man climaxes in the reign of the saints with Christ over the world (Revelation 20:1–6). In this regard, redemption (specifically, in glorification) will not achieve less for Christ and His saints than Adam enjoyed in his original state.

Composition of Man

Man is a unity that consists of two parts: material and immaterial (Genesis 2:7; Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 7:34; 2 Corinthians 7:1; James 2:26; 3 John 2). The material part of man is the body, created by God, and thus, inherently good (Genesis 1:31; 2:25). God expects man to use his body for God’s honor (Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:13–20; Philippians 1:2). Nevertheless, man (even saints) can yield the members of his body to sin and unrighteousness (Romans 6:6, 12; James 3:6). The body perishes in death and both the bodies of both saved and the lost await resurrection (John 5:28–29).

The immaterial part of man is most commonly spoken of in Scripture as the *soul* or *spirit*. These two words are used interchangeably so that it seems impossible to conceive of them as two different elements of man’s immaterial being (Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 6:9). Scripture is unclear regarding the origin of the immaterial part of man. Certain passages seem to indicate that it arises through a creative act of God at the point of conception (Psalm 139:13; Isaiah 42:5; Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 12:9). Other passages indicate that

the immaterial part of man arises at conception through natural generation (Genesis 1:27; 5:3; Psalm 51:5; Hebrews 7:9–10). The immaterial part of man is composed of various faculties including the mind (Romans 8:5–7; Ephesians 4:23), the will (Ephesians 2:3; 2 Peter 1:21), the conscience (Romans 2:15; 1 Timothy 1:5; 4:2; Hebrews 10:22), and emotions (Romans 9:2). The New Testament speaks of the *flesh* as the unredeemable capacity for and disposition toward sin (Romans 7:18; 13:14). Believers retain the flesh until death (Galatians 5:17), but at conversion, God frees them from *bondage* to it (Galatians 5:24). At conversion, the old man perishes, and a new man comes to life (Romans 6:6–14; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:20–24; Colossians 3:9–10). This new man partakes of the life of God (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9) and is destined for eternal life (1 John 5:12).

Man as Male and Female

God created mankind as male and female (Genesis 1:27). Together, these two genders compose the human species.

Gender Roles

The creation of man as male and female means that they are **equal** in nature, value, and spiritual standing before God. This has been true since creation and persists after the fall (Genesis 1:27; 5:1–2; Galatians 3:27–28; 1 Peter 3:7). Together, the man and his wife form a unit (Genesis 2:24). Nevertheless, God has assigned different **roles** to the men and women. The husband is the “head” over the wife meaning that he possesses authority in the design of God (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23). The husband’s role as head follows the pattern of Christ’s headship over the church, and the example of kindness, love, and self-sacrifice that Christ displayed must characterize a husband’s disposition toward his wife (Ephesians 5:23–25; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7). The wife must voluntarily subject herself to the husband’s headship (Ephesians 5:22, 24, 33; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1–6). The fact that these requirements abrade modern humanistic sensitivities is expected; these two roles are fulfilled properly only as a result of Spirit-filling (Ephesians 5:18, 21, 23, 25) and the exercise of them answers to Christ’s example, not the world’s agenda. Male headship extends to the church as well. God prohibits women from teaching or having authority over men (1 Corinthians 14:33–36; 1 Timothy 2:11–14; 3:2, 4–5; Titus 1:6). This arrangement has existed since the creation; it is not the product of the fall (Genesis 2:18–23; Romans 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 11:9; 15:22; 1 Timothy 2:13).

Sexuality, Marriage, and Divorce

God instituted **marriage** as a life-long covenant relationship between one man and one woman (Proverbs 2:16–17; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Malachi 2:14–16). This relationship fulfills five purposes: (1) companionship and help (Genesis 2:20), (2) procreation (Genesis 1:28; Malachi 2:15), (3) pleasure (Proverbs 5:18–20; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Hebrews 13:4), (4) protection from immorality (1 Corinthians 7:2, 9), and (5) portrayal of the relationship of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:22–23).

The Bible explicitly forbids **homosexuality** as a violation of God’s original intent for human sexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; 1 Timothy 1:8–10). A society that indulges in or permits homosexuality evidences that it lies under the judgment of God (Genesis 19:1–11; Judges 19:16–24; Romans 1:24–28; Jude 7). Victory over these desires is possible in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

Divorce violates God’s original intention for marriage (Genesis 2:24–25; Malachi 2:14–16; Matthew 19:3–12).

The only **grounds for divorce** are the desertion of an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:10–16). Nevertheless, the desertion of an unbelieving spouse does not give warrant for pursuing a divorce but only for allowing the unbeliever to depart.

The only **grounds for remarriage** are the death of the spouse (Romans 7:1–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Jesus prohibited remarriage after divorce (Mark 10:11–12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:11). Matthew 5:31–32 does not present a situation in which divorce may be permitted; it only qualifies who is guilty of adultery in the case of a divorce and remarriage.²

I will not encourage divorce under any circumstances. I will counsel a deserted spouse to let the unbeliever depart (1 Corinthians 7:10–16). I will never counsel a divorcee to remarry unless the spouse has died. I will not perform a wedding for a divorcee (Romans 14:23). Divorced men must not hold the office of elder or deacon in the local church (1 Timothy 3:2, 10, 12).

² The inclusion of the exception clause in Matthew 5:31–32 is difficult to harmonize with other passages whose statements are absolute (Matthew 19:3–12; Mark 10:2–12) until the interpreter recognizes the unique context of Matthew 5. In Matthew 5, Christ is broadening and deepening the application of the law. Consequently, his audience came to understand that day that far more people were guilty of violating God’s laws than they might have concluded on the basis of the Old Testament alone. It is in this context that Christ’s statement that He has come to fulfill the Law shines most brilliantly. Thus, Matthew 5 addresses the question of who is guilty of adultery following divorce and remarriage while Matthew 19 and Mark 10 address the question of whether there is any legal basis for divorce. It seems impossible to see divorce in any way nullifying a marriage when the offense a divorced woman commits is said to be *adultery* (i.e., sexual sin committed by one who is *married* to another; after the divorce, the woman is *still married* so that her sin is called *adultery*). In Matthew 5, Christ assumes the divorced woman will remarry (cf. ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι in vs. 32); she would have to in order to survive in that period of time. Thus, the divorcing husband, in instigating the woman’s remarriage by his own divorcing of her (cf. ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι in vs. 32), is culpable of the adultery he forces her into (she also bears guilt for entering into it [see Matthew 19]). Matthew 5 is teaching that the only time in which the divorcing husband is not guilty of adultery is when the wife has already chosen to engage in immorality (*porneia*) and the husband divorces her subsequent to her choice. In this situation, the husband is guilty of divorcing his wife, but the husband is not also guilty of adultery for he did not force the woman into an adulterous or immoral situation; she chose it. Thus, the exception clause in Matthew qualifies whether the divorcing husband is guilty of the wife’s adultery and does not supply grounds on which a divorce is permissible.

Hamartiology: The Doctrine of Sin

Nature of Sin

Sin is transgressing God's law and will in act, attitude, or nature (1 John 3:4). Sin is failing to attain to the standard of God's perfection (Matthew 5:48; Romans 3:23). Unbelief is the fundamental sin and the root of all other sins (Hebrews 11:6). God's law is revealed in Scripture and in the human conscience, and violating either is sin (1 John 3:4; Romans 14:23).

Origin of Sin

In the sovereign plan of God, sin originated with Satan in heaven when he aspired to be like God, and for his pride, God cast him out of heaven (see "Satan"). God created a perfect world devoid of the presence of sin (Genesis 1:31), and sin would have remained outside of this cosmos apart from the act of one man, Adam (Romans 5:12). Satan's sin and corruption entered the world through the door Adam opened by his disobedience to God's single command regarding the fruit of the tree of life (Genesis 3:6-7). The serpent contradicted the promise of God regarding the consequence of partaking of the fruit of the tree, and Eve's own evaluation of the tree and its fruit seemed to corroborate the serpent's denial of God's warning. Thus, it seems the essence of sin is failure to reckon in faith upon the words of God and to choose instead what appears to the sight to be good.

Results of Sin

Imputed Guilt

Adam's sin negatively impacted all of subsequent humanity. Scripture teaches clearly that the entire human race participated in Adam's one act and is subsequently condemned before God (Romans 5:12-18). All of humanity participated with Adam in his sin not actually, but he, as the God-appointed **federal representative** of the race, sinned and his disobedience was justly charged to the entire race. To deny this imputation of Adam's sin and guilt to the human race in Adam is to likewise deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness and free gift to those of the human race who are in Christ (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22).

Inherited Corruption

Scripture teaches that Adam's sin corrupted the nature of the human race so that every human being descending from Adam inherits his corrupt nature. This corrupt nature means that all men are sinners as a result of Adam's sin (Romans 3:10-23). Apart from this doctrine, it seems impossible to explain the universal sinfulness of mankind (Romans 3:23). Every person born is a sinner by nature (Ephesians 2:3) from conception (Psalm 51:5; 58:3). This doctrine, often called **total depravity**, means that every part of man has been corrupted by the fall (Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 7:18, 23). This includes man's heart (Jeremiah 17:9), mind (Ephesians 4:17), will (Romans 8:7), emotions (2 Peter 1:4; 3:3; Jude 16), affections (John 3:19-20), conscience (Titus 1:15), body (Genesis 3:16, 19; Romans 8:23), and ability to comprehend and embrace spiritual truth (mind and will) (Genesis 6:5; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 4:17-19). Sin has corrupted man's ability and capacity to please God (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 8:7-8) and to believe in Christ (John 1:13; 6:44, 65).

People will always reject God's free offer of salvation unless God intervenes (Ephesians 4:18).

Disharmony

As a result of sin, the creation does not function as God intended and humanity does not enjoy harmony in its relationships with creation, other human beings, and God. Women experience pain in childbirth (Genesis 3:16). Man must toil to sustain his life (Genesis 3:17–19; Romans 8:19–22). Human relationships experience tension and strife (Genesis 3:3–16; James 4:1–3). Mankind is at enmity with God (Romans 8:7).

Death

The penalty for sin is death, and in view of Adam's sin and every man's subsequent decision to ratify Adam's act of rebellion through his own choice to sin, every man stands under the just condemnation of God and is subject to death (Romans 3:23; 6:23). There are three aspects of death to which fallen man is subject. (1) Spiritual death—separation from the life and knowledge of God (John 17:3; Ephesians 2:1–3; 4:17–19). (2) Physical death—the separation of the spirit from the body (Romans 5:12–21; Hebrews 9:27; James 2:26). (3) Eternal death—separation from God forever in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11–15).

Acts of Sin

Degrees of Sin

Scripture teaches that some sins are more serious than others. The varying penalties of the Old Testament legal code imply this (e.g., Exodus 22). The Old Testament law differentiates between unintentional and defiant sins (Numbers 15:27–30). Christ states that certain matters of the law are more weighty than others (Matthew 23:23). The sins of one man may be greater than the sins of another (John 19:11). Certain positions of responsibility render the bearer of that office more accountable (James 3:1). The most egregious kinds of sins are those in which the offender sins against spiritual light (Matthew 11:20–24). Nevertheless, the commission of one sin of any degree makes one culpable before God and worthy of eternal condemnation (James 2:10–11).

Unpardonable Sin

The most serious sin of which the Bible speaks is the unpardonable sin (Matthew 12:31–32; Mark 3:28–30). Commission of the unpardonable sin occurs in a context of unprecedented light and spiritual privilege empowered and provided by the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin involves the hardening of the heart against the Spirit's ministry and the blasphemous attribution of the Spirit's work and ministry to demonic forces. The sin is unpardonable because the offense precludes the repentance necessary for forgiveness. The sin can be committed today and the book of Hebrews warns against it (Hebrews 6:4–6; 10:26–31).

Infant Death

Scripture indicates that infants who die prior to their own ability to recognize and understand their accountability before God will be delivered from the curse of Adam's sin on the basis of Christ's atonement. Scripture indicates a certain level of moral ignorance in infants and young children (Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:15; Jonah 4:11). God reserves for Himself the ability to work salvifically in the life of the unborn and has demonstrated that

ability in Scripture (Luke 1:15, 41, 44). David found comfort in the confidence that he would see his infant son again (2 Samuel 12:23; cf. 2 Samuel 18:33; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). While God requires of man repentance and faith as a condition for salvation, these two are not the basis of salvation, and Scripture clearly teaches that both are gifts from God (Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 2:25). As such, the inability of the morally ignorant to repent and believe does not impede God's ability to extend the benefits of Christ's atonement to them. This would extend to those who experience severe mental handicap.

Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation

The answer God provides to the problem of universal human depravity and sin is the message of salvation known in Scripture as the Gospel. The Gospel is the message that God is saving sinners for His own glory and for the glory of His Son (Romans 8:28–30; 11:33–36; Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14). This salvation not a single event but a process stretching back to before the foundation of the world and reaching forward as far as the threshold of eternity future. The doctrine of salvation divides this process into three stages: salvation prepared and provided, salvation applied, and salvation consummated.

Salvation Prepared and Provided

Eternity Past

Salvation begins with the work of God. Long before God created the world, He was already at work for the salvation and eternal security of His own. In His foreknowledge,³ He set His love upon some (1 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2). He determined the save certain individuals by choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). These whom he foreknew, he predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, committing Himself to work every event in their lives for that good end (Romans 8:28–30). This work of predestination also includes the adoption of these individuals (Ephesians 1:5). This predestining resulted in God's calling in time of these foreknown individuals to receive the application of salvation (Romans 8:28–30; 1 Corinthians 1:21–28).

God's work of salvation began before the creation of the world in His work in Christ. Before the world began, God chose Christ as the anointed One through which He would bring justice to the nations (both in salvation and judgment) (Isaiah 42:1). God chose His own *in Christ* before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4).⁴

Incarnation

While the incarnation served many purposes (such as the revelation of the Father; John 1:14), from the standpoint of redemption, the incarnation of Christ was God's public display of Christ to humanity to establish the law (Romans 3:31), to demonstrate His righteousness

³ Scripture does not precisely define the foreknowledge of God but the following data give strong indication regarding its nature. First, the word for knowledge in Romans 8:29–30 appears in the Old Testament to denote intimate personal acquaintance and relationship, not the cognition of facts or events. Second, Romans 8:29 states that God foreknows "whom" not "what." The relative pronoun is masculine, not neuter, indicating that God foreknows individuals, not events. A systematic theological conclusion regarding the nature of God's foreknowledge rests upon one's understanding of the nature of fallen man and his moral capabilities.

⁴ Revelation 13:8 may teach that Christ was crucified from the foundation of the world. Obviously, this must refer to the atonement as occurring with the divine mind and not within time/space. Nevertheless, Revelation 13:8 may also teach that the names of earth dwellers were not written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the earth. In favor of this reading is the parallel in 17:8. In favor of the former is the word order in Greek. It seems best to follow the word order here; there is no compelling reason to import the reading of 17:8 into this context especially when the word order points otherwise. Thus, God's redemptive plan has been established and in place since the foundation of the world, specifically as it relates to the atoning death of Christ on the cross.

(Romans 3:25), to manifest His love (Romans 5:8), and to effect propitiation (Romans 3:25). Christ came to do the will of the Father (Hebrews 10:5–9), and His work of salvation in the incarnation divides into His active and passive obedience to the will of God.

Active Obedience

Throughout His earthly life, Christ always did those things that were pleasing in the sight of God (John 8:29). From the womb, Christ began a life of living within the favor of God (Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:7) by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1, 14; 5:17; cf. Acts 2:5–18; 7:55; 8:39; 13:8; Luke 23:34). Even in the matter of God’s requirement of fallen humanity regarding repentance of sins, Christ underwent John’s baptism of repentance in order to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). Christ faced temptation and suffering and manifested greater and greater obedience to the Father through it (Hebrews 5:7–9). This unbroken pattern of perfect obedience throughout His life in the face of suffering and temptation qualified Him to serve as the only truly sympathetic and effective high priest for mankind (Hebrews 2:17–18; 4:14–16). The climactic act of Christ’s obedience to the Father was His voluntary submission to the Father’s will in undergoing the cursed death of the cross (Mark 14:36; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 10:4–10). This was the “one act of righteousness” by which mankind may be justified (Romans 5:18–19). Nevertheless, Christ’s entire life of obedience to the Father predicates this “one act,” qualifying and giving it its substitutionary characteristics as the condemnation of the righteous One in the place of sinners (2 Corinthians 5:21).

The active obedience of Christ to the will of God throughout His life was God’s means of accomplishing in humanity what the law could not do (Romans 8:3–4). Fallen humanity is unable to satisfy the law of God, but Christ appeared in order to fulfill the law in its entirety (Matthew 5:17) and as its goal (Romans 10:4). This righteousness of Christ God imputes to men of faith (Romans 4:1–9) as an alien righteousness (Philippians 3:9) but which God nevertheless counts as a believer’s own righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30) before Him. The active obedience of Christ provides a righteousness that fallen man could never achieve.

Passive Obedience

The passive obedience of Christ refers to the pain and suffering he underwent as a result of the sin of mankind. This suffering falls into three categories. First, Christ experienced the pain and suffering associated with living in a sin-cursed world. He hungered (Matthew 4:2), he thirsted (John 19:28), he was despised by his enemies, ridiculed, perhaps even experiencing the pain of the death of an earthly parent (Joseph). He was abandoned and betrayed by friends (Matthew 26:49; John 13:18; 18:17), and he bore the grief of the death of a close friend (John 11:35). He suffered false witness against him (Matthew 26:59). He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).

Second, the passive obedience of Christ involved the physical pain and death of the cross. (Mark 15:24). This involved the agony of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:38), mistreatment by the high priest and Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:67; John 18:22), Roman torture (Matthew 27:26–31), and the pain of crucifixion and death (Matthew 27:35, 50).

Third, the passive obedience of Christ involved the pain of bearing sin and undergoing the wrath of God. From all appearances, Jesus was crucified because of His claim to be the Son of God (John 19:7), but Scripture reveals that He gave His body and shed His blood *in behalf of* the sins of fallen mankind (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19; John 6:51), and His primary antagonist was the Father (Isaiah 53:6, 10; Acts 4:27–28; 2 Corinthians 5:21). God made Him to be sin in our place (2 Corinthians 5:21). As a result, He suffered **the wrath of God**

and the penalty for sin (death; Romans 3:23) at the hand of God in place of sinners upon whom that same wrath might have justly fallen. This act whereby He satisfied the wrath of God upon sin is called **propitiation** (the appeasement of wrath) (Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10). Scripture speaks only of God as the object of propitiation (Luke 18:13) and of human sin as the reason for which God's wrath must be propitiated (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). The result of Christ's work of propitiation is the satisfaction of God's wrath against sinners (propitiation) and the forgiveness and removal of sins (**absolution** and **expiation**) (Hebrews 10:18).

The passive obedience of Christ provides propitiation of God's wrath and an expiation of man's sins through a **vicarious penal substitutionary atonement** that fallen man could never achieve.

Salvation Applied

Effectual Calling

God issues a general call to all mankind to look to Him for salvation (Isaiah 45:22; Acts 17:30). However, man's state of depravity before God has corrupted every part of his being so that he does not understand, value, nor will he ever choose the salvation God has provided in Christ of his own accord (John 6:44, 65). The only guarantee that man will respond to God's general call is God's gracious activity whereby He effectually calls the elect (and only the elect) to Himself (Romans 1:6-7; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 9, 24, 26; 2 Timothy 1:9). This effectual calling guarantees that the elect willingly respond to Christ with saving faith and thereby experience the benefits of salvation (John 6:37; Romans 8:28-30; cf. Acts 16:14; Ephesians 1:18; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Peter 1:3). God effectually calls the elect sinner to Himself through the proclamation of the Gospel and the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Romans 10:13-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). The Spirit of God grants conviction of sin (John 16:8-11), gives understanding of spiritual realities and the Gospel of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:12-16; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6), draws the sinner (John 6:44), and grants the repentance (2 Timothy 2:25; Acts 11:18) and faith (Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29) necessary for conversion.

Union with Christ

Those whom God effectually calls, He unites to Christ in real, actual, living union (1 Corinthians 1:30). Scripture uses a number of metaphors to describe the believer's union to Christ including a vine and branch (John 15:5), a building and foundation (Ephesians 2:20-22), a wife and husband (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 5:22-33), a body and head (Ephesians 4:15-16), a man and his legal representative, Adam (Romans 5:12-21), and the relationship of the members of the Trinity (John 17:21-23). Union with Christ is the means by which God actualizes all the other aspects of salvation including God's choice (Ephesians 1:4), predestination (Ephesians 1:5), bestowal of grace (Ephesians 1:6), regeneration (2 Corinthians 5:17), redemption (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7) justification (Romans 3:26; 8:1; Philippians 3:9), imputation (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9), reconciliation (Romans 5:1), sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:30), sealing (Ephesians 1:13), and glorification (Ephesians 1:10).

Regeneration

Regeneration is the act whereby God re-generates a man, recreating him (2 Corinthians 5:17) in Christ so that he is no longer bound by spiritual death but possesses new life (John

3:3; Ephesians 2:1–5; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5); 1 Peter 1:3; 3:18). God makes him to partake of the life and nature of God (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9) and grants him a new mind (Romans 8:6) and new heart (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26–27; Hebrews 8:10). The Holy Spirit accomplishes this work (John 3:5, 8; Titus 3:5) through the word of God (James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23). None other than God can re-generate a human being (John 1:13).

Conversion

Repentance

In Scripture, repentance is properly defined as a change of disposition.⁵ This change of disposition involves the entire person (mind, Psalms 51:3; affections, 2 Corinthians 7:9–10; will, Isaiah 55:6–7; Acts 3:19) and inevitably results in a change of action (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20). It is for this reason that Scripture can speak of repentance in connection with deeds (e.g., Revelation 9:20–21). God requires repentance of mankind as a prerequisite of salvation (Mark 1:15; Acts 17:30–31). Continual repentance is required of every true Christian and a sustained pattern of repentance throughout the life of a believer is evidence that he is an overcomer and destined to inherit the bliss of the New Jerusalem wherein dwells the presence of God (Revelation 2–3; 21:1–7). Repentance is a gift of God (2 Timothy 2:25).

Faith

Scripture teaches that saving faith is knowledge of, approval of, and personal trust in the facts and Person of the Gospel. Faith substantizes the invisible realm with which the truths of the Gospel deal so that a man of faith can see the unseen and is persuaded by it (2 Corinthians 4:16–5:7; Hebrews 11:1). Thus, faith is the soul's spiritual eyesight and engages every aspect of his person (mind, Romans 10:14, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; affections, John 20:30–31; Romans 10:9–10; Hebrews 11:1; will, John 1:12; 3:16; 6:37; Acts 16:31). Faith is a prerequisite for salvation (Romans 1:17; 10:9–10). Faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8–9; Acts 18:27). God has ordained that faith be the means whereby man embrace His gift of salvation so that salvation can be all of grace and so that any sinful man may partake of the Gospel (Romans 4:16). Faith's evidences itself inevitably in good works (James 2:14–26).

Justification

Justification is a **legal declaration** God makes whereby he righteously pronounces the ungodly to be righteous. Justification occurs in a **forensic** context (Deuteronomy 25:1). It is **not exoneration** (a determination the defendant is accused wrongly) for Scripture clearly teaches that all men are sinners (Romans 3:23) and deserve the righteous condemnation of God (Romans 1:18). Justification is **not absolution** (forgiveness of sins) for justification is a declaration of a judge, not a statement of absolution by a victim (though in the sinner's case, God is both his judge and the One against whom the crime has been committed). Justification is **not transformation** (alteration of the nature of its object) for even the justified may still commit sin (Romans 8:1, 13). Justification is **not imputation** (the crediting of righteousness to a sinner's account or the robing of the sinner in Christ's

⁵ To define repentance as a change of action places one in the difficult position of having to add works to justification because repentance would never be complete until one has ceased from committing acts of sin. Rather, God justifies the man who repudiates his sin in a change of mind or disposition. See Matthew 3:8.

righteousness). **Imputation** is the act of God whereby He credits a man's faith to him, credits the man's sin to Christ, and credits the righteousness of Christ to the man's account (Romans 4:1-16; 5:15-18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:7-11). Imputation is the grounds of justification so that justification is not a legal fiction but a declaration of righteousness made by God that is, in fact, justifiable (Romans 3:25). The opposite of justification is **condemnation** (Matthew 12:37).

Sonship

Those who have placed their faith in Christ for salvation and whom God has regenerated have the authorization to call themselves the sons of God (John 1:12-13).

Sanctification

Sanctification is the act of setting apart a thing or person for divine usage or favor. Scripture teaches three stages of sanctification. First, at conversion, God sanctifies the objects of His grace in **positional sanctification** (1 Corinthians 6:11; Acts 20:32). Second, throughout the saint's subsequent life on earth, God so energizes his will and ability that he is enabled to work out his salvation in all of its practical implications in his life (Romans 6:19; Philippians 2:12-13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15; 2 Peter 3:16). This results in an increase in sanctification throughout life for the believer, producing greater levels of holiness as the saint becomes conformed more and more to the image of Christ (Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:10). This is **progressive sanctification**. Scripture also teaches that God consummates a saint's sanctification in His presence. This is the third stage of sanctification and is commonly referred to as glorification (see below). Glorification is the final stage of sanctification (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 21:27). This is **permanent sanctification**.

Divine Role

Sanctification relies fundamentally upon the activity of God (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Depraved and unregenerate humanity cannot sanctify themselves. It is the work of the Spirit of God to sanctify sinners in Christ and to set them apart as the children of God (1 Corinthians 6:11). The believer's own cooperation with God in progressive sanctification is predicated upon His union with Christ (Romans 6:1-14). God is the one who works in the saints to will and to work for His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13). This progressive sanctification occurs as the believer walks in the Spirit, the agent through which the fruits of righteousness appear in the believer's life (Galatians 5:16-24; Ephesians 5:18ff.). The work of glorification or permanent sanctification is entirely the work of God (Philippians 3:20-21).

Human Role

While depraved humanity does not participate with God in positional sanctification, Scripture teaches that the regenerate are able to and must participate with God in progressive sanctification (Romans 6:1-14; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Timothy 4:7). The saint must reckon upon his union with Christ and deny his flesh and refuse to present the members of his body as the instruments of sin (Romans 6:1-14). To this end, God has invested every Christian with three means of obtaining grace in his daily struggle toward sanctification: Scripture (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:25), prayer (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:13-16), and the ministry of fellow believers to one another primarily in speech (Ephesians 4:11-16, 29).

Separation

Progressive sanctification is the process whereby the saint becomes less and less entangled in the world and more and more devoted to God. Therefore, the corollary of sanctification is **separation**. Scripture commands the saint to separate himself from three entities. First, the saint must separate himself from **the world** (Romans 12:2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15–17). The world is the evil system that expresses the desires of unregenerate society, that is opposed to God, and that Satan energizes and rules over. Second, the saint must separate himself from **false teachers** who deny God's truth contained in Scripture or teach error in its place (Romans 16:17–18; 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1; Galatians 1:8–9; 2 John 9–11). Third, the believer must separate himself from **persistently disobedient professing Christians** (Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5:4–5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14). **Associations** (opposite of separation), even as simple as table fellowship or a wish for God's blessing, can compromise the Gospel (Galatians 2:11–16; 2 John 11).

Security and Assurance

A true believer can never lose his salvation but will be preserved by the power of the Lord unto His coming (John 6:38–40; 10:27–29; Romans 8:28–39; 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4–5). Nevertheless, Scripture teaches that it is only those who hold fast the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end who are partakers of Christ (Hebrews 3:12–14⁶). Thus, perseverance is evidence, not the basis, of regeneration and identifies the one who will be finally saved (John 8:31–32; Colossians 1:22–23; 1 John 2:19).

God desires that every saint experience the joy of being certain of his salvation and has supplied the book of First John for that purpose (1 John 5:12–13). The **objective basis** for this assurance comes through the Scripture and the promises of God (John 3:16; 5:24; Romans 8:31–39; 1 John 5:12–13). The **subjective basis** for this assurance is the believer's constant progress in holiness. Peter exhorts saints to progress in their sanctification in order to make certain of their calling and election (2 Peter 1:10). God intends that every so-called saint whose growth in Christlikeness is stagnant be unsettled as a means of driving him again to the means of grace in Scripture for reproof and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Any man who repudiates Christ demonstrates he never was a true child of God (1 John 2:19).

Salvation Consummated

Glorification

Glorification is the activity of God at the rapture and resurrection of the saints whereby He eradicates all effects of sin and gives to the saints the capacity to enter into direct fellowship with Him. This involves entire transformation of the saints into the image of Christ (1 John 3:1–3) and reception of glorified bodies (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 15:35–57; 2 Corinthians 5:1–5; Philippians 3:20–21; see "Adoption" below).

Adoption

Scriptural adoption and the western concept of adoption (the act of taking a child who is not one's biological offspring to be one's legal descendant) must never be confused (Romans

⁶ The protasis ("if" clause) of this statement from Hebrews must be understood as denoting the evidence of any person's salvation ("partaking of Christ"). It expresses a condition of salvation and this condition is not regarded as causative.

8:23). Saints are not adopted into God's family; they are born into God's family inasmuch as God's *sperma* resides in them (1 John 3:9) and they can be said to be *born* from above (John 3:3). Scriptural adoption is the redemption of the body in glorification (Romans 8:23).

Ecclesiology: The Doctrine of the Church

Universal Church

Nature of the Church

The universal church is that body composed of all the redeemed in the present age (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 5:25). It is the place where God manifests His mediatorial kingdom (the reign of God) in the present age (Acts 2:22–36; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20; Ephesians 1:20–23; Colossians 1:13). The church was inaugurated at Pentecost (Acts 11:15) and incorporates both Jewish and Gentile believers during the present age (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). The New Testament uses four images to describe the church.

- (1) **The body of Christ**, emphasizing the headship of Christ, Christ's activity in the earth through His body, and the interdependence of the members upon the Head and one another (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27; Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:15–16; Colossians 2:19).
- (2) **The bride of Christ**, emphasizing the church's submissive relationship to Christ and His love for her (Ephesians 5:23–27; Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9).
- (3) **The temple of the Spirit and a priesthood**, emphasizing the church as the dwelling place of God by His Spirit upon earth, and therefore the church's holiness and mediatorial role to the lost (1 Corinthians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6).
- (4) **The pillar and support of the truth**, emphasizing the church's role in conspicuously displaying the truth to the world in affirmation, teaching, and conduct (1 Timothy 3:15).

Distinctiveness of the Church

The church is a distinct subset of the universal people of God of all ages (Romans 4:11–12; Galatians 3:29; Revelation 21:2–3, 9–10, 12, 14). The church began at Pentecost with the descent of the Spirit of God (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:5–8; 2:1–47; 11:15; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The church exists as a *partial* continuation of national Israel in the Old Testament inasmuch as the church exists on the basis of covenants God made with His Old Testament people, Israel. The church enjoys specific spiritual blessings that God made promised to Israel in the covenants (Romans 11:17–33; Ephesians 2:11–3:10; cf. Genesis 12:3). God has not replaced Israel with the church, but has instead extended the boundaries of the covenants to include Gentiles while still retaining the original force of the covenants for the ethnic descendants of Abraham through Jacob. The New Testament maintains a distinction between Israel and the church (Romans 9:3–5; 1 Corinthians 10:23). Nevertheless, the church is significantly discontinuous from Israel in two major respects. First, Israel and the church differ in their composition. One is composed solely of the ethnic descendants of Abraham through Jacob while the other is composed of both Jew and Gentile. A specific geographical subsection of the earth circumscribed ancient Israel while no geographic, ethnic, national, linguistic, or political boundaries circumscribe the church (Romans 11:17–33; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11–3:10; Colossians 3:11). Second, the mission of Israel and the church differ. God commissioned Israel to attract the nations to

God through her adherence to His law (Deuteronomy 4:5–8). The church is to go to the nations to disciple them (Matthew 28:18–20).

Local Church

The church universal exists throughout the earth but manifests itself in localized expressions of the body of Christ (Acts 13:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 4:15). The *sine qua non* of a local church include (1) regular gathering of regenerated people bound together by common confession and covenant (1 Corinthians 14:23–25; Hebrews 10:25), (2) the preaching of apostolic doctrine (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:2–3; Titus 2:1), and (3) the faithful practice of the ordinances as a proclamation of relationship to Christ and to one another (Acts 2:42; Romans 6:1–5; 1 Corinthians 10:15–22; 11:17–34).

Mission of the Church

The ultimate purpose for which the church exists is **the glory of God** (Ephesians 3:10, 20–21). God accomplishes this goal through the local church, a body of believers who have covenanted together to advance God’s mission for the church: the **making of disciples** and the **maturation of the body of Christ** for His glory and the glory of the Father (Matthew 28:18–20; Ephesians 4:11–16).

Making disciples occurs as the church proclaims the Gospel in the power of the Spirit so that the Spirit uses the message preached to regenerate individuals. Christ baptizes those who are regenerated into His body in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; cf. Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:16). Making disciples is the work of all believers (Acts 8:4; 1 Peter 3:15).

Maturing the body of Christ occurs through teaching, fellowship, the ordinances, and prayer (Acts 2:42). The maturation of the body of Christ occurs through the ministry of evangelists and pastor-teachers who are gifts to the church. They minister to equip the saints to serve one another and thereby to build up the body of Christ. In order to accomplish this, the church gathers weekly on the Lord’s Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10) to celebrate the foundation of her existence, the resurrection of Christ (John 20:1). This gathered time involves worship to God that must be orderly and reverent (1 Corinthians 14:1). The centerpiece of this worship involves pastoral exposition of Scripture and the humble response of all the saints to the Word of God (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:1–2). The church must exhort and encourage one another through music that includes singing the psalms and other hymns and spiritual songs (Ephesians 5:18–20; Colossians 3:16). The saints must use their spiritual gifts to contribute to the growth of the body (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

Membership in the Church

God expects every believer to visibly identify himself with the universal church through water baptism (Romans 6:3–4; 1 Corinthians 12:13) and a local church through church membership. Although Scripture does not specifically command believers or churches regarding the matter of church membership, there is sufficient evidence in the New Testament to conclude that the apostles expected and taught church membership and that the early church practiced it. Various New Testament commands imply church membership and cannot be properly obeyed without assuming and practicing church membership. For example, the practice of church discipline requires church membership (Matthew 18:15–20; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:1–14). Exhortations to pastors who watch for the souls under their charge require church membership to identify the extent of his responsibility (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17). Exhortations to

saints to edify the body of Christ through the regular exercise of their spiritual gifts require church membership to identify the extent of their responsibility (Ephesians 4:11–16; 1 Corinthians 12:14–30). Once visibly identified with a church, it is the responsibility of the saint to support that church with his faithful attendance (Hebrews 10:25), regular, cheerful, voluntary, and *sacrificial* giving (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 6:17–19), and exercise of his spiritual gifts. Requirements for church membership involve regeneration (Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 1:2), public confession of Christ and identification with Him in baptism (Romans 10:9; Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 2:41), and an ongoing orderly walk and growth in grace (1 Corinthians 5:9–13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–15; Jude 1:4). Renunciation of Christ in either word or conduct is grounds for dismissal from membership.

Government of the Church

Christ is the head of His church and He governs her through the Scriptures (Colossians 1:18). He also governs her subjectively through the individual members in a congregation and through the leadership He sets within her midst. The New Testament is clear that the congregation bears authority to act in matters such as church discipline (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:4–6; 2 Corinthians 2:6–7), the election of leaders (Acts 6:1–6), and doctrinal controversy (Acts 15:3–4, 22–23; cf. 1 John 4:1). Simultaneously, the New Testament teaches that the leaders of a church bear considerable authority in ruling and guiding the church (Acts 15:1ff; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17).

The New Testament speaks of two different offices in the local church. The first office bears three titles that describe the office differently (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1–2): elder, overseer, and pastor. The Scriptural pattern requires multiple elders in every church (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5). All who hold this office are involved in ruling the church and must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9), but some devote themselves solely to teaching and preaching the Word of God (Acts 6:3–4; 1 Timothy 5:17). These who preach the Gospel have a God-given right to live of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:1–12; 1 Timothy 5:17). Elders and their families must meet specific qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

The second office bears the title *deacon* (Acts 6:1; 1 Timothy 3:8). This office functions to alleviate the responsibility of administration from the elders so that they can concentrate on preaching and prayer (Acts 6:3–4). A deacon's responsibilities include caring for the material needs of the congregation. Deacons and their families must maintain an exemplary testimony (1 Timothy 3:8–13).

Ordinances of the Church

The ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christ appointed the church's ordinances which symbolize redemptive truth and were the practice of the New Testament church. The New Testament does not teach that the ordinances impart grace of themselves. Nevertheless, God in Christ through the Spirit imparts grace to each believer as he partakes of the ordinances through such means as self-examination and confession of sin, recourse to the death and blood of Christ, fellowship with the body of Christ, etc..

Baptism

Baptism occurs subsequent to conversion in a one-time ritual whereby the believer is immersed in water. The rite symbolizes (1) the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:12), (2) cleansing from sin (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21), (3) possession by the triune God (Matthew 28:19),

and (4) Spirit-baptism whereby Christ places the believer into His body through the indwelling Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:17–18, 38; 10:47–48; 11:16; 19:1–7; 1 Corinthians 12:13; cf. Matthew 3:12). Jesus commanded *disciples* to be baptized (Matthew 28:19), and the pattern in Acts shows that saving faith in Christ precedes baptism (2:41; 8:12; 10:47; 16:14–15, 32–33; 18:8). Baptism occurs only by **immersion** in Scripture (Mark 1:5, 10; John 3:23; Acts 8:38–39). Only immersion properly symbolizes the believers union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 8:3–4). Baptism is an ordinance of the *church* and should be administered only within that context.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper occurs as the gathered congregation remembers the redemptive work of Christ and partakes together of broken bread and the fruit of the vine together (Matthew 26:26–28; Matthew 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25). Thus, the Lord Supper is an **enacted memorial**. It depicts (1) the believer's union with Christ (John 6:51–56), (2) the believer's union with the rest of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 5:8; 10:16–17), and (3) the believer's partaking of Christ as the sole means of obtaining eternal life (John 6:51–56). It provides a regular time for self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:27–34), an opportunity to proclaim the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:26), and encourages the saints to expect His return (1 Corinthians 11:26). The table is open to any who profess faith in Christ and who have examined and judged themselves (1 Corinthians 11:27–28). Abuse of the table carries strict warnings (1 Corinthians 11:27–32).

Discipline in the Church

The congregation of believers bears responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of its members. Church discipline is a means whereby the church ensures its own purity and exercises oversight of its members through accountability and censure. The goal of church discipline is always redemptive, never punitive (Matthew 18:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:15). Christ outlines the procedure of church discipline (Matthew 18:15–20). The epistles expand Christ's teaching in certain circumstances. In the case of grossly sinful conduct or denial of Christ or the Gospel, the offender is immediately dismissed and regarded as an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 5:1–5; Galatians 1:6–9). Violations of lesser matters of Christian conduct require admonition (in the vein of Matthew 18) and eventual dissociation in cases of impenitence (Matthew 18:15–20; 2 Thessalonians 3:6–15). It is important to recognize that behavior as common as table fellowship may compromise the Gospel (even though the offender is theologically orthodox) (Galatians 2:11–21). In such cases, the offender must be rebuked and withstood within the company before whom the compromising behavior occurred. The New Testament gives direction regarding the discipline of false teachers in an assembly (Romans 16:17–18; 1 Timothy 3:9–10; Titus 3:10) and cases where a church leader sins (1 Timothy 5:19–25). In any case, where genuine repentance and sorrow over sin is shown, the offender must be forgiven (2 Corinthians 2:5–11).

Relationships between Churches

The unity of the body of Christ is a fact resulting from the working of God, not a human accomplishment. Scripture is clear that the basis of all **Christian unity** is the commonality of the indwelling Spirit who unites the saints into one body (Ephesians 4:3–4). While human activity can contradict it, this unity cannot be increased by human effort. As a result, *God* defines and has already set in place the essential basis and cause of Christian unity. This commonality is the foundation of personal unity with other members of the body of Christ.

Within these bounds, saints enjoy internal unity through the Spirit's work, and they must endeavor to maintain this unity externally (Ephesians 4:3).

Ecclesiastical unity (the unity that exists between local churches) is the product of the fundamental unity of the body of Christ through the indwelling Spirit. Thus, local churches should partner with each other to advance the cause of Christ and to display *externally* the unity that exists between them *internally*. These relationships allow for greater capability not present within a single congregation (2 Corinthians 8–9).⁷ However, because external manifestations of unity are the products of internal realities (spiritual commonality and shared doctrinal truth) (John 17:11, 17, 23; Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:4–6), these external manifestations of unity must never occur where the internal reality of spiritual unity and shared doctrinal truth do not exist. Therefore, any effort to unite churches (externally) at the cost of orthodoxy (internal reality) is unscriptural. Where external manifestations of ecclesiastical unity extend beyond internal unity, a contradiction arises that is at best pretentious and at worst disingenuous and dishonest. This principle extends to associations because associations can compromise the Gospel (internal realities) (Galatians 2:11–16).

The only recourse where internal unity does not exist is separation. Thus, I align myself with the separatistic tradition of **Fundamentalism**. Separation is a last resort in cases of clear violation of Scriptural commands or doctrine, and failure to recognize it as such jeopardizes the fundamental unity all saints share as members of the body of Christ. It is possible for saints to act in ways that contradict internal unity either by promoting external unity where actual internal unity does not exist (ecumenism) or by destroying external unity where internal unity does exist (schism and interpersonal conflict). *Internal and external unity must be coextensive.*

The Church and Civil Government

The church and the civil government must be kept separate since they operate in two different spheres (Matthew 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 5:29). The believer and the church bear certain responsibilities to the state. Saints must submit to civil law (Romans 13:1–5; 1 Peter 2:13–15; but see Acts 5:29), pay taxes (Matthew 22:17–21; Romans 13:6–7), honor his leaders (1 Peter 2:17), and pray for them (1 Timothy 2:1–2). The church must never become entangled in political affairs.

⁷ A “para-church” organization is simply a greater concentration of a particular spiritual gift to enable greater capacity to advance Christ's kingdom. For example, a mission board is a greater concentration of the gifts of administration and helps to facilitate the advancement of the Gospel in ways a single local church could not achieve. Similarly, a seminary is a greater concentration of the gift of teaching to facilitate the training of men for ministry in a way a single local church could not achieve.

Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things

Individual Eschatology

Physical death separates the material and the immaterial components of man (Ecclesiastes 12:7). At death, every person's body begins the process of decomposition, but the spirit continues to live and enters either immediately into *Hades* (Luke 16:22–23) or the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1–8; Philippians 1:23). In this intermediate state in which the spirit of every person awaits resurrection (John 5:25–29), the spirit possesses certain capacities that are analogous to the capacities of the physical body. For example, the disembodied spirit can be tormented in the flames of Hades (Luke 16:24). At the consummation of the present age, two resurrections occur (Daniel 12:2; John 5:25–29). The righteous dead are raised to be with Christ in the presence of God forever in glorified bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 5:9–10), and the wicked dead are raised and reunited with their bodies to stand before the Judgment Throne and to enter the lake of fire in their bodies (Revelation 20:11–15).

General Eschatology

Eschatology as the Fulfillment of the Covenants

The consummation of the ages in Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's program promised and enacted through three covenants: the Abrahamic, Davidic, and the New Covenant. The **Abrahamic Covenant** contains God's unconditional promise to Abraham that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan forever. From this land, they would be the means whereby God blesses all the nations of the earth (Genesis 12:1–3; 15:18–21; 22:15–18). The **Davidic Covenant** contains God's unconditional promise to David that his dynasty would occupy the throne over God's people perpetually and that from David's dynasty would come the ultimate ruler who would reign over the entire earth in peace and righteousness (2 Samuel 7:12–16; Psalm 89:1–4, 19–37; 110:1–6; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 11:1–10; Jeremiah 33:19–26). The **New Covenant** contains God's unconditional promise to the nation Israel of a spiritual restoration consisting of a new heart, a personal knowledge of the Lord, full forgiveness of sin, as well as a restoration of the nation of Israel to her promised land under a national kingdom ruled over by David (Jeremiah 3:31–40; Ezekiel 36:22–38; 37:24–28; 40:1–46:24; Zechariah 14:1–21; cf. Psalm 2, 110).

God will fulfill each of these unconditional covenants *fully* in the coming eschatological age. Nevertheless, God has inaugurated the fulfillment of these covenants in the church today, and they are the basis upon which the church enjoys spiritual blessings in Christ today (Acts 2:22–36; 2 Corinthians 3:5–8; Galatians 3:6–8; Ephesians 2:11–19; Hebrews 8:6–13). This inauguration is limited to certain aspects of these covenants (the "spiritual" aspects), and this inauguration in no way replaces the fulfillment of these covenants in the *eschaton* to a re-gathered national Israel. Replacement theology (commonly called *covenant theology*) is untenable because it fails to adequately account for the biblical data and the terms of these covenants in the following ways. (1) Replacement theology fails to account for the New Testament's anticipation of the universal salvation of all Israel *subsequent* to the period of Gentile salvation (Matthew 19:28; Acts 1:6–7; 3:19–21; Romans 11:25–32). (2) Replacement theology fails to account for the Old Testament designation of these covenants as unconditional and the statements that they will remain in force forever (cf. Jeremiah

31:35–27). (3) Replacement theology fails to account for the specification of referent evident in Old Testament covenants (e.g., Jeremiah 31:31–33). (4) Replacement theology fails to account for the hope God Himself nourished in pre-exilic Israel concerning a personal restoration to her land (Jeremiah 32:1–15). (5) Replacement theology fails to account for the differentiation the New Testament makes between fulfillment and the inauguration of a promise or a common principle the New Testament situation shares with God’s promised work on Israel’s behalf in the *eschaton* (Luke 4:18–19; cf. Isaiah 61:1–3; Acts 15:15; cf. Amos 9:11–12). (6) Replacement theology fails to account for the New Testament’s ongoing distinction between the nation Israel and the Church (Romans 9:3–5; 1 Corinthians 10:23).

The fulfillment of these unconditional promises to national Israel has not yet occurred in the terms in which God promised them. The Old Testament’s promise of the reign of David’s descendant in Israel following His coming to earth at which time Israel is regathered to her land and dwells in safety and prosperity as God’s covenant people (Ezekiel 37:24–28; Zechariah 14) matches the sequence of the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth followed by a 1,000 year reign of the Messiah with His saints upon the earth. Thus, both the Old and New Testaments agree with the theology of **dispensational premillennialism**. The following explains the events of eschatology in their chronological development.

Eschatological Events and Progression

Rapture and Judgment Seat of Christ

The next eschatological event will be the return of Jesus Christ in the clouds to raise and rapture His people. Dead believers will be raised first and reunited with their reconstituted and glorified bodies after which the bodies of living saints will be glorified instantaneously. Both groups of saints will rise to meet Christ in the air and be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18; 1 Corinthians 15:51–53).

Several lines of Scriptural evidence prove that the rapture precedes the tribulation. First, the only passage in Scripture that gives detail regarding the events that transpire at the rapture places the event prior to the Day of the Lord and the outpouring of His wrath (1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11). Second, Revelation 3:10 states explicitly that believers will be kept out of this *period of time* that God sends upon earth dwellers to test them. The means whereby God accomplishes this is the return of Jesus Christ (cf. Revelation 3:11). Third, the New Testament nourishes in the saints an expectation of the **imminent** return of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:7; Philippians 3:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 1:9–10; 4:16–17; Titus 2:13; Revelation 22:20). If the rapture is imminent, by definition, it must precede the tribulation. (4) It is the second coming of Christ, described in Matthew 24–25 and Revelation 19, which follows the Tribulation. Differences between this coming and the coming described in 1 Thessalonians 4 demonstrate that the coming in 1 Thessalonians 4 is not the coming that follows the tribulation (Matthew 24:29–31). One primary difference is the location of believers at the commencement of the return: on earth in 1 Thessalonians 4 and in heaven in Revelation 19.

Subsequent to the rapture and simultaneous with the tribulation occurring on earth, the saints appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ in heaven. At the judgment seat, Christ evaluates the believer’s service to Him (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:9–10) and issues rewards for the faithful while others will suffer loss of their earthly work for Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11–15; 1 John 2:28).

Tribulation

Subsequent to the rapture of the church, the Tribulation will commence (Revelation 6–19). These seven-year period of time goes by different names in Scripture including “the day of the Lord” and “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” This seven-year period of time is identical to Daniel’s seventieth week (Daniel 9:24–27). God acts during this period for two primary reasons. First, this period is an expression of the wrath of God as He brings righteous retribution upon mankind for their sin (1 Thessalonians 5:1–3; 2 Thessalonians 2:12; Revelation 6:15–17; 14:7). God pours out His wrath to test earth dwellers to reveal their recalcitrance and to justify His verdict of everlasting condemnation (Revelation 3:10). Second, this period brings pressure upon Israel as the precursor to her deliverance under the New Covenant through the return of Jesus Christ from her sin and the animosity of the nations (Jeremiah 30:7; 31:31–34; Daniel 12:1; Zechariah 13:8–9).

The tribulation divides into two segments each three and one-half years, 42 months, or 1260 days (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6; 13:5). During the first segment, the Beast, an individual who appears in the *eschaton* in whom culminates the animosity of human civilization and government against God (Revelation 13:2; cf. Daniel 4; 7) and who acts in accord with the will of Satan who exercises great power over the earth during the tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:8–10; Revelation 13:4), will effect a covenant with the nation of Israel that permits renewed sacrifice and a rebuilt temple on Mount Zion (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15). The effect of the covenant will be the perception of peace and safety on earth. Nevertheless, at the midpoint of the tribulation, the Beast will break that covenant with Israel, turn against her, and desecrate her temple by his own presence there as a self-proclaimed deity (Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3–4). His animosity will climax at the end of the second period of the tribulation (also lasting three and one-half years, 42 months, or 1260 days) when the Messiah appears from heaven at the Second Coming to deliver the nation of Israel and to destroy all her and His enemies (Zechariah 14:1–5; Revelation 19:11–21).

Second Coming and Millennium

The Tribulation will climax with the **Second Coming of Jesus Christ** in power and glory to rule the world with a rod of iron (Revelation 19:11–21), separating the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31–46), gathering His wheat into the barn and clearing the threshing floor of the chaff by fire (Luke 3:17). He will come literally and physically and will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4) which is in front of Jerusalem on the east. He will destroy the Beast and the False Prophet, casting them into the **Lake of Fire** (Revelation 19:11–21) and judging the surviving Gentile rebels who dwell on the earth. His judgment will focus particularly upon their treatment of the nation Israel (Matthew 24:31–46). Israel will embrace her Messiah and weep over her first rejection of Him (Zechariah 12:10–14). The righteous dead who have died or been martyred during the Tribulation will be raised (Revelation 20:4–6; Daniel 12:2; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 2:26–27; 3:21). Satan will be bound in the abyss (Revelation 20:1–3), and with His saints, Christ will commence a literal reign on earth lasting 1,000 years known as the Millennium (Revelation 20:4–6) in fulfillment of the Old Testament covenants as the climax of biblical prophecy.

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released for a short season and will deceive the nations to rebel against Christ. Christ will destroy His enemies and consign Satan eternally to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:7–10). Christ will raise the wicked dead subsequent to this final battle, and they will appear in their bodies before the Great White Throne to undergo His judgment (Revelation 20:11–15). Christ Himself will be the judge, and He will

consign them to the Lake of Fire (or *gehenna*; Mark 9:43–44) in their bodies (Matthew 18:8) for all eternity (Revelation 14:9–12). The Lake of Fire is a place of darkness where the wicked of all the ages will experience physical and spiritual torment eternally (Matthew 8:12; 13:41–42, 49–50; 18:8; 25:41, 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9). The last enemy Christ will destroy is death itself, and He will cast it along with *Hades* into the Lake of Fire (1 Corinthians 15:20–28; Revelation 20:14).

New Creation and Eternal State

Having conquered all His foes, Christ delivers a subdued kingdom to the Father (1 Corinthians 15:26–28), and God and the Lamb will reign through all eternity. The realm over which they rule is a new creation wherein are new heavens and a new earth. New Jerusalem is the centerpiece of the new creation. God’s people inhabit this new creation for all eternity (2 Peter 3:7ff; Revelation 21–22). Sin and its effects are banished (Revelation 21:4; 22:3). In the New Jerusalem, mankind enjoys direct fellowship with God (Revelation 22:1–4). The saints will rule the earth, fulfilling God’s original intent for creation (Genesis 1:26–28). All that Christ accomplishes in time and for eternity is for the glory of God the Father (1 Corinthians 15:28; Philippians 2:9–11).