

Steven P. Gatdula
Pastor-Teacher
Email: stevengatdula@gmail.com
Cell: (443) 514-7582

Objective: To serve the Lord and shepherd His flock in a church for a lifetime of ministry through faithful expository preaching and teaching of the Word, biblical counseling, prayer and discipling (1 Peter 5:2-3). I believe that every pastor should “proclaim [Christ], admonishing everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that [he] may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col 1:28), for the pastor is a gift from the Lord to the church “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12).

Education:

May 2014 – Master of Divinity, The Master’s Seminary, Los Angeles CA

May 2009 – Bachelor of Science Business Administration, Towson University, Towson MD

Key Skills:

- Expository Preaching
- Church Leadership
- Competency in Systematic Theology, Biblical Hermeneutics, Biblical Greek, Biblical Hebrew
- Old Testament and New Testament Introduction
- Biblical Counseling: Marriages, Adults, Teens, Parenting, Hospitalization
- Hospital visitations, Home visitations, Weddings, Funerals
- Leading / Teaching Bible Studies and small groups,
- Proficient in Music Theory: Able to play Guitar and Sing in Worship Service settings

Ministry / Work Experience:

- August 2017 – September 2018 at Valley Bible Church, Merced CA
- Position: Lead Pastor
- September 2014 – August 2017 at Valley Bible Church, Merced CA
- Position: Associate Pastor
- September 2012 – May 2014 at Grace Community Church, Los Angeles CA
- Position: Pastor-Teacher for Children’s Ministry
- August 2006 – August 2009 at American General Financial Corporation
- Position: Financial Representative
- September 2002 – August 2006 at Enterprise Rent-a-Car, Baltimore MD
- Position: Management Assistant

Certificates:

- August 2017 – Certificate of Ordination for Pastoral Ministry

Hobbies:

- Guitar and Piano
- Photography

References: Available Upon Request

BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Steven P. Gatdula
Pastor-Teacher

CONTENTS

Philosophy of Ministry - Introduction	4
Foundations of a Biblical Philosophy of Ministry	4
A. Founded on the Authority of Scripture	4
B. Founded on the Attributes of God	5
C. Founded on an Accurate View of Man	5
D. Founded on the Gospel.....	5
The People in the Church.....	6
A. The Elders	7
B. The Deacons	7
C. The Congregation.....	7
The Agenda of the Church.....	7
A. The Ministry of the Word	7
B. The Ministry of Fellowship	8
C. The Ministry of Prayer	8
D. The Ministry of the Lord's Supper & Baptism	9
E. The Ministry of Outreach	9
F. The Ministry of Missions.....	10
Conclusion	10
Bibliography	11
Doctrinal Statement of Steven Gattula	12
About the Scriptures	12
A. Revelation	12
B. Canonicity and Completeness	13
C. Inspiration.....	13
D. Inerrancy & Infallibility	13
E. Authority and Sufficiency	14
F. Interpretation.....	14
About God.....	15
A. The Holy Trinity	15
B. God the Father	15
C. God the Son	15
D. God The Holy Spirit.....	17
About Man	18
About Sin	19
About Salvation	20
A. Regeneration	21
B. Election.....	21
C. Justification	22
D. Faith and Repentance	22
E. Sanctification	23
F. Security	23
About The Church	23
About Angels & Demons.....	26
A. Angels	26
B. Satan and Demons	26

About Last Things	27
A. Death	27
B. The Second Coming and Millennial Reign	28
C. The Judgment of the Lost	29
D. Eternity	29

Philosophy of Ministry - Introduction

What is a philosophy of ministry? It is essentially a blueprint of guidelines for accomplishing the ministries of a local church. “A philosophy of ministry is a set of *principles* that determines how you will function in your ministry. It is a set of NON-NEGOTIABLE *biblical principles* that guides all the choices and decisions in your ministry. Simply stated, your philosophy of ministry defines *why* you do what you do.”¹

The goal of a biblical philosophy of ministry is to fulfill the purpose of a local church. A biblical philosophy must fulfill the purpose of the local church to glorify God². Before we create or adapt to a biblical philosophy of ministry, we must quickly address the purpose of the church. **The biblical purpose of the church is a three-fold purpose: exalting the Lord (Matt 22:37; John 14:15), evangelizing the world (Matt 5:13-16; 28:19-20), and edifying the church’s members (Matt 28:20; 1 Cor 14:26).**³ Good, biblical guidelines for accomplishing these goals can be found in Ephesians 4:7-16 and Colossians 1:28-29. Understanding the purpose of the church is not enough. Thus, we must have a means of accomplishing this purpose and this is where the biblical philosophy of ministry becomes necessary.

Foundations of a Biblical Philosophy of Ministry

A philosophy of ministry needs to have a solid foundation. This foundation must be strong enough that it cannot and will not be moved when the church encounters multiple and opposing challenges throughout time (Matt 7:24-25). Furthermore, the foundation must be able to stand and transcend through the rigors of time. People, nations, environments and culture change over the course of time, but a strong philosophy of ministry must be consistent and must never change according to the needs and wants of mankind⁴. This is important as man needs to change and conform to Scripture – not the other way around. Therefore, this philosophy needs to be a *biblical* philosophy of ministry. Essentially, the Word of God must be the source of the philosophy of ministry for the Church. The Word of God is perfect; it restores the soul...and it endures forever, that is to say, it is appropriate for every generation (Psalm 19:7-9). This brings us to our first foundation for our biblical philosophy of ministry: The Authority of Scripture.

A. Founded on the Authority of Scripture

A biblical philosophy of ministry must be founded on the authority of Scripture. Grudem defines the authority of Scripture this way: “The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to

¹ Irv Busenitz, *A Biblical Philosophy of Ministry: The Non-negotiable Pillars of Effective Ministry*
<http://audio.gracechurch.org/sc/2005notes/BusenitzPhilosphyofMinistry.pdf>

² Henry Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949, 330.

³ For a more in-depth explanation on the three-fold purpose of the church, please refer to the following source: Alex D. Montoya, “Approaching Pastoral Ministry Scripturally” in *MacArthur Pastor’s Library on Pastoral Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 47.

⁴ More of this will be discussed in the upcoming sections *Authority of Scripture* and *Accurate View of Man*.

disbelieve or disobey God.”⁵ The character of God can only be made known to us by the revelation of God Himself through His Word. Only through God’s revelation, the Bible, can His will be known (Deut 29:29). Therefore, the Bible as the Word of God is both authoritative and relevant to the church. Simply stated: what Scripture says, we must do (Psalm 119)! If we are to have a biblical philosophy of ministry, it must seek its sole authority from Scripture.

B. Founded on the Attributes of God

A philosophy of ministry must be founded upon the moral character or attributes of God. For example, God is righteous, holy and just. “[These] moral attributes of God are generally regarded as the most glorious of the divine perfections”.⁶ Men can only experience and encounter the true character of God in a church when God’s attributes are rightly established in its philosophy of ministry. We the church must seek to express his communicable attributes. When this philosophy of ministry encompasses the moral attributes of God, it will then have a high view of God. This will lead to a God-centered ministry. The failure to have a high view of God leads to a toleration of sin and a high focus on man. The result then will be a man-centered ministry. Therefore, we must have a reverence for the character of God and never compromise the truth to please people or to maintain the favor of man.

C. Founded on an Accurate View of Man

A biblical philosophy of ministry must have a correct view of man. The only correct view of man is the biblical perspective. As stated earlier, the philosophy of ministry adheres to the authority of Scripture as the foundation of faith and practice. The Word of God helps us understand the nature and condition of man. Scripture clearly tells us that man is totally depraved and cannot do good (Psalm 14:1-3; Rom 3:10-12). The Bible even tells us that the heart of man is deceitfully wicked (Jer 17:9) and man’s goal in life is selfishness and only evil continually (Gen 6:5). Man is not to be lifted up high as a self-sustaining, independent creature. The proper view of man is to see him consist of two parts – one spirit and the other physical.⁷ God supplies life to both components of man (Acts 17:28; Gen 2:7). Furthermore, both spiritual and physical components of man have been entirely corrupted by sin. Scripture tells us that, apart from God, man is spiritually dead (Eph 2:1) and his physical body is decaying and wasting away towards inevitable death (2 Cor 4:16).

D. Founded on the Gospel

The message of the Gospel must be the core of our expositional preaching and the center of our right doctrine. Essentially, this foundation cannot be carried out unless there is a biblical understanding of God and man. The church exists because of the Gospel. Only in the power of the Gospel, brought about by God’s own volition, are we able to gather together as an assembly of believers in Jesus Christ, and rightly worship God through our praise, prayers, and service to others inside and outside of the church body. Therefore, the Gospel must be the center of church ministry. Any other center will not do, or else the church’s efforts will be sidetracked into

⁵ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004), 73.

⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing co., 1938), 70.

⁷ Anthony Hoekema, *Created In God’s Image*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 203-226).

other duties, missions, and concerns. If the Gospel is not the center of church ministry, then the church leaders would no longer be running a church, but a social club or some sort of charity house. The Gospel must therefore be central to my ministry, determined by proper exposition of the Scriptures, in light of sound doctrine, and presented in its pure, unadulterated form to the people of the church as their very breath and life. The church must be united in understanding on what the gospel is before it can do any form of ministry. What is the Gospel? The word “gospel” simply means good news. It is the good news of Jesus Christ that you can be saved from your sin and its ultimate penalty which is eternal death in hell!

The following points⁸ are the essential points of this good news that God graciously gives in the Bible:

- God created everything and owns everything, including you – Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1.
- God is perfectly holy – Matthew 5:48.
- God requires your perfect obedience to His law – James 2:10.
- You have broken God’s law – Romans 3:10, 23.
- You will pay the eternal penalty for your sin – Romans 6:23.
- You cannot save yourself by doing good works – Titus 3:5
- Christ came to earth as both God and sinless man – Colossians 2:9
- Christ demonstrated His love by dying on the cross to pay sin’s penalty – Romans 5:8; II Corinthians 5:21.
- Christ rose from the grave and is alive today – I Corinthians 15:14.
- You must repent of all that dishonors God – Isaiah 55:7; Luke 9:23
- You must believe in Christ as Lord and Savior and be willing to follow after Him – Romans 10:9.

The People in the Church

Although the church is one body it has several parts that have differing roles (1 Cor 12:12-26). A biblical church recognizes each individual part and provides allowance for its operation according to role and giftedness. The local church body is divided into three parts: the elders,

⁸ Used by permission from Grace Community Church of Los Angeles gospel tract.

the deacons and the congregation. It is necessary that these parts of the church body have a unified understanding on the foundations of the biblical philosophy of ministry that was mentioned above.

A. The Elders

Biblical church eldership consists of a plurality of leaders. The titles elder, pastor, bishop and overseer are one and the same office (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; Tit 1:7 & 1 Pet. 2:25). Paul in his letter to Timothy described the elder's call (v 1), character (vv 2, 3), and conduct (vv 4-7). The office of elder is not a professional office but requires spiritual leadership.

B. The Deacons

The second group of people in the church is the office of deacons. They are to fall under the leadership of the pastors. Their specific task is to handle the finance of the local church and care for the material and physical needs of the members (Act 6:2). Paul also lays out a high moral qualification for this office (1 Tim 3:8-12). The text describes the personal (v 8) and spiritual character of the deacon (vv. 9-10, 12-13).

C. The Congregation

The third group of people in the church is the congregation. Their task is to be Spirit-filled, to learn the Bible and to go out into the world and apply what they have learned (Eph 4:12-16). As believers grow, elders, deacons, and evangelists and pastor-teachers will be produced by God.

The Agenda of the Church

As discussed earlier, the three-fold purpose of the church can be accomplished through a solid, biblical philosophy of ministry. The purpose of the church is realized through several ministries or programs. Only several of the many existing church ministries have been selected to delineate a biblical philosophy of ministry. They are not exhaustive in covering all the ministries of the church; however each one is essential for the life of the church. They are the following: The Ministry of the Word, the Ministry of Fellowship, the Ministry of Prayer, the Ministry of the Lord's Supper and Baptism, the Ministry of Outreach, and the Ministry of Missions.

A. The Ministry of the Word

Of all the ministries of the Church, this is perhaps the most important ministry. This ministry includes the expository⁹ preaching of the word and biblical counseling. The Word is essential for the life of the church. Without the Word of God being ministered, it is no longer a church but rather a "social club" or a "talk show". The priority of the Word is of utmost importance. Dever writes, "If you get the priority of the Word established, then you have in place the single most important aspect of the church's life, and growing health is virtually assured, because God has

⁹ For a more in-depth study of expository preaching, the following volumes are helpful: John MacArthur, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992); Stephen Olford's *Anointed Expository Preaching*, (Nashville Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998); Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix's *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999); Steven J. Lawson's *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 2003); and Bryan Chappell's *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 1994 reprint 2005).

decided to act by His Spirit through His Word.”¹⁰ God saves people, strengthens the church, and sanctifies the church through the faithful preaching of His Word. It is through the proclamation of the gospel that draws forth saving faith (Rom 10:14). Knowledge of the truth comes through the preaching of the Word. This knowledge of truth results in godliness (John 17:17; Rom 16:25; Eph 5:26). Thus, the preaching of the Word is perhaps the most important element of a pastor’s ministry.

Biblical Counseling has been a natural function for the church since the days of the apostles. This is a primary role of the pastors; however, biblical counseling is not to be done only by the pastors or leaders in the church. The Bible commands every Christian to admonish one another with the Word (1 Thess 5:11), to admonish one another (Rom 5:14), to encourage one another (Heb 3:13), and to comfort one another (1 Thess 4:18). The apostle Paul addressed the church with these words: “We who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves” (Rom. 15:1). And, “Even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:1–2). All of these instructions apply not only to church leaders but also to every member of the church. Therefore, biblical counseling is the type of counseling that skillfully employs and applies the Word of God. This type of counseling is a necessary duty for Christian life and fellowship. The ministry of the Word is necessary for the life and growth of the Church.

B. The Ministry of Fellowship

The Ministry of Fellowship is also essential to the life of the local church.¹¹ The Bible never describes or teaches that a Christian is to be a “lone ranger” Christian. A Christian must not neglect or avoid fellowship. The Bible commands that we are not to be “forsaking our own assembling together” (Heb 10:25). The church exists to provide a milieu of loving fellowship with one another for the purpose of mutual edification (Eph. 3:16–19; 4:12–16). Members who neglect such fellowship will devoid themselves of edification and encouragement. The Bible describes the early church as people who were “continually devoting themselves...to fellowship (Act 2:42). Church members are encouraged to open their homes for fellowship and Bible studies. Another good example would be lunch after church service. Sharing meals is conducive for fellowship (Acts 2:46). Fellowship entails not only sharing meals but also sharing each other’s properties and possessions as anyone might have need (Acts 2:45). Fellowship is not an option. The ministry of fellowship among Christians was a priority in the early church (1 John 1:3) because they fellowshiped with God. Finally, spending time together as a body of believers can make excellent opportunities to apply the “one another” commands mentioned in Scripture.

C. The Ministry of Prayer

God’s people need to understand the importance of prayer. Just like every ministry in *The Agenda of the Church*, prayer is non-negotiable. The Bible commands all believers to pray (Col

¹⁰ Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004).

¹¹ The Biblical Greek word “koinonia” means fellowship, a close mutual relationship; participation, sharing in; partnership; contribution, gift. It paints a picture of close family ties that encourages growth through various activities.

4:2; Phil 4:6; 1 Thess 5:17; Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:8; Jam 5:16; 1 Cor 7:5). Prayer by the pastors, the church leaders, the corporate body of the church and all men are necessary. A pastor must use practical means that will stimulate prayer in the church. He can utilize the pulpit to motivate and demonstrate prayer. He can also organize and teach others to lead prayer meetings. These prayer meetings are excellent for getting to know one another, encouraging and edifying one another, and even learning how to pray. The pastor can also use prayer at fellowship gatherings, small groups, Bible studies, individual and group discipling, counseling, men's ministry, women's ministry, children's ministry, youth ministry, various church meetings, and virtually in every aspect and ministry of the church. Every area in the church should be bathed with prayer.

Before all of these things can take place correctly, the pastor needs to first have a faithful and fervent personal prayer life before he can demonstrate and motivate prayer among the church.¹² Furthermore, the content of prayers should focus ultimately on spiritual matters and spiritual battles rather than on the small and temporal things in life (Eph 6:12). If the leaders are not praying, how much more will the congregation pray? Ultimately, the leaders of the church must model the importance of prayer in their lives as examples to the congregation of the church.

D. The Ministry of the Lord's Supper & Baptism

The Ministry of the Lord's Supper and water baptism are both biblical mandates and vital to the life of the church (1 Cor 11:23 cf. Matt 28:18-20 cf. Act 2:38, 41). The Lord's Supper reminds the church their spiritual union with Christ and each other. The frequent observation of the Lord's Supper is an opportunity for each believer to examine his/her own heart, to encourage one another to walk in holiness and faithfulness, and to worship our Lord and Savior for His redemptive work on the cross.

Baptism is an ordinance that is to be obeyed according to Christ's mandate in Matt 28:19. This is part of the great commission in making disciples of Jesus Christ. This water baptism neither saves a person from his sins nor does it guarantee a person's salvation. Water baptism is 1) obedience to Christ's mandate 2) Symbolic of a person's salvation and 3) a public declaration made by that person to the rest of the church that he is identified with Christ and no longer dead in his sins (2 Cor 5:17). The act of baptism will be complete immersion of the believer in the water. The best times to perform water baptism are Sunday morning services, evening services, and even church family retreats. Observation of the Lord's Supper and Baptism is a time of worship and celebration; however, it must be done in reverent way that is glorifying to God, and is edifying and uplifting to the saints.

E. The Ministry of Outreach

This ministry is the first response to Christ's great commission as a church. The church will be involved with its surrounding community for the purpose of evangelism. This ministry must take place before any type of ministry of missions. Failure to do this ministry, even though the church may be fulfilling the ministry of missions, still results in disobedience to Christ's mandate of the great commission. In Acts 1, Jesus last words to his disciples were a continuation of His great commission from Matt 28:18-20. Notice he stated that they are to be his witnesses in Jerusalem (which is where they reside), and then they are to reach out to all of the surrounding

¹² An excellent resource on a pastor's personal prayer life is by James E. Rosscup, "The Pastor's Prayer Life – the Personal Side" in *MacArthur Pastor's Library on Pastoral Ministry*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 131-160.

geographical areas, viz. Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth. Therefore, the purpose of this ministry is an evangelistic ministry where each able member is to reach out to the lost starting with the local community of the church and going outward from there. Members will be encouraged to do outreach in their own homes, schools, workplace, foster homes, prisons, and even door to door in their communities and other local places such as malls and shopping centers. Weeknight Bible studies are conducive for the congregation to reach out with the gospel even to their loved ones, friends and neighbors. Desire for outreach is of importance; but ability is also important. Thus, formal training must also be implemented for this ministry. This formal training will be provided by qualified leaders to equip and prepare members for this ministry. This ministry is the first part of obeying Christ's great commission to make disciples of all the world.

F. The Ministry of Missions

The ministry of missions is the second part of obeying Christ's great commission (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)¹³. If and when the church is faithfully reaching out and evangelizing to its surrounding community through the ministry of outreach, then the church should prayerfully send some of its members as overseas missionaries. This ministry goes beyond the community and nation of the church. This is essentially taking the gospel to foreign countries to evangelize the lost. Just like the ministry of outreach, desire is important for one to participate, but desire alone is insufficient. Formal training is required and will be provided. Church members will either "go" or "send". Both are partaking in obedience of the great commission. Those who "send" will support those who "go" with faithful prayer, finances, and essential materials for living and evangelizing. Foreign missions will also involve training indigenous believers and leaders to maintain the work of the ministry in the host country. With the ministry of missions, the local church is to establish a missions program that will promote missions in the life of the church by prayer, raising finances and monies, sending long-term and short-term missionaries, sending mission teams and keeping continuous contact with the missionaries.

Conclusion

The philosophy of ministry presented in this document is a substantial set of principles for accomplishing the purpose of the local church. Although this philosophy of ministry is fallible and man-made, its development and source has been drawn entirely from the Word of God and is not an opinion from man.

As we have seen in Scripture, these six ministries mentioned above are a mandate from God. These ministries are not an exhaustive list of all the ministries in a church. Nevertheless, they are primary ministries and are vital for the life and growth of the church. The author of this paper is open to make any amendments to this philosophy of ministry just as long as he is shown in Scripture the reasons that demonstrate a need for change. Finally, the author believes that if this philosophy of ministry is followed correctly, it will result in healthy and maturing believers.

¹³ For a good introduction on missions, see the book by John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad!*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2010).

Bibliography

- Azurdia, Arturo G., III. *Spirit Empowered Preaching: Involving the Holy Spirit in Your Ministry*. Geanies House, Great Britain: Mentor, 1998.
- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1941.
- Culver, Robert Duncan. *Systematic Theology*. Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2005.
- Dever, Mark, and Joshua Harris. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998.
- Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 2004.
- Hoekema, Anthony, *Created In God's Image*, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986.
- MacArthur, John F., Jr. *MacArthur Pastor's Library on Pastoral Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005.
- _____, *MacArthur Pastor's Library on Counseling*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005.
- _____, *MacArthur Pastor's Library on Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005.
- Piper, John, *Let the Nations Be Glad!*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2010.
- Thiessen, Henry, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, rev. by Vernon D. Doerksen, Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949.

Doctrinal Statement of Steven Gatlulaⁱ

About the Scriptures

A. Revelation

1. I believe the Bible is God's written revelation to man. God uses *special revelation* when He reveals Himself directly and in greater detail than *general revelation* (see below). God has done this through direct acts, dreams and visions, Christ's incarnation, and Scripture. Therefore, the Bible is a type of *special revelation*. [Genesis 2:16-17; Deuteronomy 5:4; Exodus 3; Isaiah 6:1-4; Matthew 3:17; 17:5; John 12:28; Hebrews 1:1-2]

Special revelation is called special for two reasons:

It is propositional (it is given through human language). [2 Chronicles 36:22; Isaiah 55:11 with 1 Kings 17:24; Acts 2:4-11; Revelation 1:1-3,11,19; 22:6]

It is specific in content; namely, it provides knowledge (about God, man and the Gospel) that makes one wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. [2 Timothy 3:15-17]

2. I believe special revelation is necessary for man to understand God, himself and his world properly. [Genesis 2:15-17; 3:14-19]

3. In contrast, *general revelation* is the means where God reveals Himself indirectly through creation (nature and conscience). Thus, this revelation is limited to conveying His existence, His power, and His glory. It is general because it is not propositional (it cannot be read like a book) and it does not contain the specific content that is revealed in special revelation. [Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 1:19-20].

4. I believe special revelation interprets the meaning of general revelation. General revelation does not interpret the meaning of special revelation. [Psalm 19; Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-31]

5. I believe that special revelation is found nowhere else today other than Scripture. God has spoken finally and definitively in His Son. Therefore, we look for special revelation nowhere but in Christ. This does not mean we look only to the actual words that Christ spoke during his earthly ministry. We also receive as special revelation that which Christ affirmed as special revelation, which is "the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms." This threefold designation of special revelation is coterminous with the thirty-nine-book Old Testament canon. [Hebrews 1:1-4; Luke 24:44]

6. I believe that we receive all twenty-seven books of the New Testament also as special revelation because of the uniqueness of the Apostolic office. The apostles were commissioned by Jesus Himself and He gave them authority. Jesus' Apostles were His official spokesmen who bore His full authority¹⁴; therefore, their writings are as much the words of Jesus as any other portion of Scripture. [Matt 10:1-4; 1 Thess 4:2, 8; 1 Cor 14:37; 2 Cor 10:8; 13:10;]

¹⁴The NT apostles were Christ's authoritative revelatory agents. In the upper room, the Lord Jesus promised that, even after he was no longer physically present with them, he would continue to reveal his truth to them through the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:12-15). Accordingly the early church recognized the apostles' teaching as having Christ's very authority. Because the apostolic writings were inspired, they were accorded the same weight as the OT Scriptures.

B. Canonicity and Completeness

1. I believe God the Holy Spirit inspired all 39 books of the Old Testament and all 27 books of the New Testament equally and completely. Only these 66 books belong in the canon of Scripture. Other writings may be useful in understanding the Bible, but they are not inspired by God. The Apocrypha is not the word of God¹⁵. [Luke 11:49-51; 24:44; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16]
2. I believe the Bible is complete. It contains all of God's revelation necessary for the Church in this present age. No new normative revelation is being given to the Church today. The Church is to reject any teaching from claims of new revelations. [Ephesians 3:5; Hebrews 1:1-4; Jude 3,17; Revelation 22:18-19]

C. Inspiration

1. I believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture. Every word of Scripture and the entirety of the original documents was God-breathed. The Bible does not simply contain the word of God. It is the inspired word of God. The Bible does not convey to us inspirational thoughts but actual inspired words from the breath of God. Since God is the ultimate source of Scripture, it is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction. [Matthew 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21]
2. I believe God spoke in His written word by a process of dual authorship. Both God and man are the authors of Scripture. The Holy Spirit so superintended the writing through the individual personalities and different styles of writing of the human authors that they composed and recorded God's word to man without error in the whole or in the part. [1 Corinthians 2:7-14; Hebrews 1:1; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15]
3. I believe the Bible does not become the word of God as it is understood and accepted by man. Rather, it is the word of God whether or not man understands and accepts it. [John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 4:2-4]

D. Inerrancy & Infallibility

1. I believe the Bible is absolutely inerrant in the original documents. It is true without any errors of fact or any statements that contradict in the whole or in any part. [Matthew 5:18-19; John 10:35; 17:17]
2. I believe the Bible is completely true in all it asserts, including matters of doctrine, Christian living, ministry, history, geography, and science. [Matthew 19:4-6; 22:29-32; Romans 3:4]

¹⁵ A Few Reasons why the Apocrypha is not the Word of God: 1) It contains doctrine that contradicts with the NT i.e. Sirach 3:3 states that a person can atone for his sins by giving of alms & honoring his parents while Lev. 17:11 states "it is the blood that makes atonement for your souls" and 1 John 1:7 tells us "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." Also in Tobit 12:9, it states, "For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life" but Eph 2:8-9 teaches that salvation is by grace through faith. Also in 2 Maccabees 12:45, Judas prays for the dead and it states that by doing so "he made propitiation for the dead that they may be released from their sin." 2) Jesus and the Apostles never quoted the Apocrypha. 3) the Apocryphal books do not claim inspiration: not once do any of them say "thus says the Lord" or "the word of the Lord came to me saying", etc. 4) Jews have always rejected the Apocrypha as Scripture (in all their writings). 5) The Apocrypha was written during the 400 silent years / intertestamental period where there was no divinely inspired prophetic utterances.

3. I believe the Bible is completely infallible, that is, the Bible is completely trustworthy as a guide to salvation and the life of faith and will not fail to accomplish its purposes. Thus, it will never lead a person astray in matters of faith and practice. As the Christian church has traditionally taught, this doctrine is based on the perfection of the divine author, who cannot speak error. [Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 12:35-37; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 119:160]

E. Authority and Sufficiency

1. I believe the Bible is the only infallible rule for faith and for Christian practice. The Bible is the final standard of authority by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be evaluated. [Matthew 5:18-19; 24:35; John 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; Hebrews 4:12]

2. I believe the Scriptures are powerful and effective in transforming the believer into the image of Christ; God's words applied by The Holy Spirit are sufficient for life and for godliness. [Psalm 19:7; Proverbs 8; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-9]

3. I believe since the Bible is the word of God, it is eternal. God's words will never pass away. [Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18-19; 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24, 25]

F. Interpretation

1. I believe the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the diligent application of the literal grammatical-historical method¹⁶ of interpretation as the believer is illuminated by the Holy Spirit. [John 16:12-15; 1 John 2:20, 27; 1 Timothy 4:13-16; 2 Timothy 2:15;]

2. I believe there is only one true interpretation of any passage of Scripture, but there may be several applications. [Matthew 22:23-33; Romans 4:4-10; 2 Peter 3:15f]

3. I believe it is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. [Joshua 1:8; Nehemiah 8:8; Matthew 22:29; Luke 20:34-44; 24:44-45; John 5:39-40; 2 Timothy 2:15]

4. I believe there is a progression of revelation within Holy Scripture. The New Testament completes the Old Testament and anticipates no other revelation until the second coming of Christ. [Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:5; Hebrews 1:1-4; 1 Peter 1:9-12; Revelation 22:10 compared with Daniel 12:4]

¹⁶ 3 components of this hermeneutic: 1) primary of the original language 2) content / context 3) literary genre.

About God

A. The Holy Trinity

1. I believe there is but one true and living God who eternally exists in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three persons; One God—The Holy Trinity. [Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10; 45:5-7; 48:16; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21]

2. I believe these three persons of the Godhead equally have the same nature, attributes, and perfections, each deserving worship and obedience. [2 Corinthians 3:18; Hebrews 1:3,6,8; Revelation 5:13]

B. God the Father

1. I believe the Father is the first person of the Holy Trinity and has all the attributes, perfections, and powers of God. [Luke 10:21-22; John 5:17-23,26,36-37,43; 17:1-5]

2. I believe He is designated as Father to show both His relationship in the Holy Trinity and His relationship to mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men, but He is spiritual Father only to believers. [Ephesians 4:6; Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18]

3. I believe the relationship He has within the Trinity of God is not one of superiority in essence. Rather He is Father according to His role and function within the Godhead. [John 10:29-30; 17:1-5; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 3:14; Colossians 1:3; 1 John 1:2]

4. I believe that in the Holy Trinity, the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding. [Luke 11:13; John 5:19; 10:29; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 John 1:2]

5. I believe He orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace. [Psalm 145:8-9; 1 Corinthians 8:6]

6. I believe He is the Creator of all things As the only absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption. [Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9; Psalm 103:19; Romans 11:36]

C. God the Son

1. I believe the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father [John 10:30; 14:9; Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 28:18; John 10:17-18; 11:25; Colossians 2:10; Hebrews 1:5-6,8-10; Revelation 1:17;22:13 cf. 22:16]

2. I believe our Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. It was necessary for Him to be virgin-born to fulfill prophecy as a sign, and to not be born with a sin nature. [Isaiah 7:14-16; Matthew 1:16-18,23; Luke 1:26-35,38-56; 2:1-21]

3. I believe all the fullness of deity dwells in Christ in bodily form. He is worshipped by all the angels of God, given the titles of Lord and God and is the Creator of all things. [John 1:1-3; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Colossians 1:16; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:5-6,8-10]

4. I believe that in the incarnation (God becoming man), Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. He laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes¹⁷. [John 1:1,14; Romans 1:3; 8:3; 1 Corinthians 15:47; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:9,14,16; 10:5; 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 7]

5. I believe that in His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man. [Matthew 1:16-18,23; Luke 2:1-21; John 1:1,14; 7:42; 20:27; Acts 3:22; Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:5; 3:16; 1 John 5:7-9; 2 John 7]

6. I believe Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness. [John 1:1,14; 20:28; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Timothy 2:5]

7. I believe the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom. Thus, Christ in His incarnation is The Prophet, our High Priest, and The King of Kings. [Matthew 2:2,6; 18:11-14; 21:5; Mark 10:45; Luke 1:32-33; 2:11; 24:19; John 1:29,49; 3:16-17; 6:14; 7:40; 9:17; 12:47; 18:37; Acts 5:31; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3]

8. I believe since Christ being truly human, He experienced all the things associated with true humanity. He grew and developed as a child. He experienced fatigue, hunger, thirst, pain, and even temptation¹⁸. Jesus Christ truly suffered, truly bled, truly died, and was truly buried. He was not a phantom, spirit or ghost. His agony and death included real physical torment.

¹⁷ In truth, Jesus emptied Himself of all His glory, privilege, and exaltation. In the incarnation, He made Himself of no reputation. He allowed His divine, exalted standing to be subjected to human hostility, criticism, and even denial. He took the form of a bondservant and came in the likeness of a man (v. 7b). It is amazing enough that Jesus came as a man, but He also came as a slave. He came in a station that carried no exaltation or dignity at all, only indignity. In that state, "He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (v. 8). - R.C. Sproul "The Work of Christ."

¹⁸ Scripture argues for the *impeccability* (unable to sin) of Christ. Arguments for this viewpoint include the ff: 1) The deity of Christ – Since Christ is God and since God cannot sin (Jam 1:13), it follows that Christ cannot sin either. Since the "wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), God would have to die if he sinned – but God cannot die and, by implication, cannot sin. 2) The Divine Attributes of Christ – We could argue from the immutability of Christ (cf. Heb 13:8). If Christ could have sinned while he was on earth, then he could sin now; however, since he cannot sin now, and since he is immutable, then it follows that he could not sin while on earth. Other attributes appeal to his omnipotence. The ability to sin implies weakness and Christ has no weakness. 3) The Trinitarian Relationship – Being "full of the Holy Spirit" (Lk 4:1), Jesus could not fail the testing. The Holy Spirit could not fail in what he had been sent to do for Jesus. Even though Jesus could not sin, the temptations he faced were genuine – their reality did not depend on his ability to respond.

[Matthew 4:2; Mark 14:33-34; 15:37; Luke 2:40,52; 8:23; John 4:5-8; 19:28-29,33-37; Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15]

9. I believe the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, propitiatory, and redemptive [John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24].

10. I believe the Lord Jesus Christ literally and physically resurrected from the dead for our justification and He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest [Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 4:25; 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1]

11. I believe that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection life for all believers [John 5:26-29; 14:19; Romans 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23].

12. I believe Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. Christ, being the infinite God-man and being fully adequate as High Priest, is the only mediator God recognizes. [1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 6:19-20; 8:1-2,6; 10:11-12,19-21; 12:24; 1 John 2:1-2]

13. I believe Jesus Christ will return physically to receive the Church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture and, returning with His Church in glory, will establish His millennial kingdom on earth. [Matthew 19:28; John 14:1-3; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 5:2-3; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6]

D. God The Holy Spirit

1. I believe the Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of personality and deity. He is coequal and consubstantial and coeternal with the Father and the Son. [Genesis 1:2; 2 Samuel 23:2-3; Psalm 139:7; Matthew 28:19; Luke 11:13; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; Romans 8:2; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4; Hebrews 9:14]

2. I believe the Holy Spirit is a person and not an impersonal power. He has intellect, emotions, and a will. [Mark 3:29-30; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 5:3-4; 13:2,4; 15:28; 16:6-7; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11; 12:11; Ephesians 4:30]

3. I believe it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to mankind. Thus, the Holy Spirit sovereignly acted in creation, in the incarnation, and in inspiring the written revelation. [Genesis 1:2; Matthew 1:18,20; 22:43; Luke 1:35; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 2 Peter 1:20-21]

4. I believe the Holy Spirit sovereignly acts today in the work of salvation. He draws man to Christ, convicts him of his sin, regenerates man, seals him for eternity, and then sanctifies him. [John 3:5-8; 16:7-11; Acts 2:4,37; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Titus 3:5]

5. I believe the baptism of The Holy Spirit is not a second work of grace given only to some believers who seek it. It is given to all the moment they receive Christ as Lord and Savior. [Acts 10:44-47; Romans 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:4]

6. I believe the Holy Spirit indwells every believer permanently from the moment of salvation. This indwelling is the seal of the Holy Spirit guaranteeing our eternal inheritance and sealing us unto the day of redemption. [Psalm 51:11; John 7:39; 14:17; Romans 8:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Galatians 4:6; 1 John 3:24; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30]

7. I believe the Holy Spirit works in the believer to transform him into the image of Christ. The believer must submit to the Spirit and cooperate with Him in this process of sanctification. [Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22; 4:22-24; 5:18]

8. I believe the Holy Spirit illuminates regenerate people, whose minds are filled with God's word, to the application of righteous and wise living in all settings and circumstances and phases of life. In this way, He is the divine teacher working with—not outside—His inspired word. [John 7:17; 1 John 2:20,27]

9. I believe the Holy Spirit today is convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He uses the lives and prayers of believers, the words of Scripture, and various circumstances of life to convince unbelievers of the truth of the gospel. [John 16:7-11; Acts 2:37; Rom 1:16; 10:17]

10. I believe only the Spirit of God can awaken a spiritually dead person to his sinful condition and to the truth of the gospel. Left to himself, man does not seek God. It is the grace of God that sends the Spirit to convince man of his desperate need for Christ. [Romans 3:10-18; Ephesians 2:1-5; 2 Timothy 2:26]

About Man

1. I believe man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man did not evolve from the animals but was created by a special act of God on the sixth day of creation as recorded in the book of Genesis. [Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7; 5:2; 9:6; Deuteronomy 4:32; Job 33:4; Psalms 8:5; 100:3; 119:73; Acts 17:28; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9]

2. I believe man and woman were created free from sin. Both man and woman had an original holiness and righteousness given to them by the Creator before the Fall. [Genesis 1:28,31; Psalm 8:5; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Isaiah 42:5; 1 Timothy 4:4]

3. I believe mankind was created with a rational nature, a self-volition, emotions, and moral responsibility. Therefore, God holds mankind responsible for their own choices, actions, and attitudes. [Genesis 2:18-20; 3:6; 3:16-19; 4:7; Proverbs 12:14; Isaiah 1:18; 3:10-11; Jeremiah 17:10-11; Zechariah 1:6; Matthew 8:12; 11:20-24; Mark 6:11; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 2:5-12; 2 Corinthians 7:10-11]

4. I believe a person is a two part being having both a material part (body) and an immaterial part (soul or spirit). The spirit, soul, heart, mind, and conscience of man are not separate parts of man but are different aspects of the one immaterial part of man. [Genesis 2:7; Matthew 10:28; 26:41;

Luke 23:46; compare Acts 7:59 with Revelation 6:9; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 6:20; James 2:26]

5. I believe mankind was created for the purpose of glorifying God and enjoying God's fellowship forever. Mankind was not created for self-indulgence, self-glory, self-satisfaction, or self-fulfillment. [Genesis 6:5-7; Isaiah 43:7; Acts 17:26-28; Romans 11:36; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11]

6. I believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man and woman lost their innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. Having absolutely no ability or any powers to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-19; John 3:36; Romans 3:23; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14; 1 John 1:8]

7. I believe both man and woman were created in the image of God and are thus equal in God's sight. Man is not greater than woman, neither is woman greater than man. [Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Proverbs 31:10-30; 1 Corinthians 11:11-12; Galatians 3:27-28; 1 Timothy 5:1-16]

8. I believe man and woman were created equal; however, they were not created identical. The Creator endowed man with a male body intending man to act with masculine traits and to fulfill his distinct role as a man. The Creator fashioned woman with a female body intending woman to act with feminine traits and to fulfill her distinct role as a woman. Male and female together reflect God's image. [Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 11:14; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; Titus 2:1-6; 7 1 Peter 3:1-7]

9. I believe since man was made first, he is the wife's head and her servant-leader. This role was established at creation—before the fall into sin. [Genesis 2:21-24; 1 Corinthians 11:3-16; 1 Timothy 2:11-14]

10. I believe since woman was made from the man, therefore, woman was made for man to complement and complete him. This role also was established at creation—before the fall into sin. [Genesis 2:18-25; 1 Corinthians 11:3-9; Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Timothy 2:12-14; 1 Peter 3:1f]

About Sin

1. I believe sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in thought, word, or deed. Sin involves both sins of commission (when man does what God forbids), and sins of omission (when man fails to act the way God commands him to act). [Deuteronomy 29:18; 2 Chronicles 12:14; Psalm 95:10; Proverbs 24:8-9; Jeremiah 7:24; Matthew 5:28; 12:31-35; Mark 7:20-23; Luke 10:25-37; Romans 1:26-32; James 4:17; 1 John 3:4]

2. I believe that sin is believing a lie and doubting the truth of God. It is living pridefully rather than for the glory of God. It is living selfishly rather than as a reflection of God's love. It is the loving of the things of the world rather than the things of God. [Exodus 20:1-17; Romans 14:23; Hebrews 11:6; James 4:6-8; 1 Peter 5:5-6]

3. I believe sin is disobedience to the revealed will of God. It is lawlessness—breaking the commands of God. [Deuteronomy 29:18; Romans 5:13; 7:12-14; James 2:10; 1 John 3:4]

4. I believe that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and word of God (the Fall), man lost his innocence, incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death, became subject to the wrath of God, and became inherently corrupt. [Genesis 3:1-19; 6:5-6; Psalm 51:1-5; 53:1-3; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3]

5. I believe Adam's sin was transmitted to the entire human race because when he sinned the whole human race was in Adam. Hence, every child of Adam is born into the world with a sinful nature. [Genesis 3:19-20; 4:1-5; Matthew 12:31-35; Romans 3:10-18; 5:12-21; Ephesians 2:1-3]

6. I believe man now is utterly incapable of choosing or doing what is acceptable to God, apart from divine grace. In this state man is totally depraved. [Genesis 6:5-6; Psalm 58:3; Jeremiah 7:24; Romans 3:10-18; 8:6-8; Ephesians 2:1-3; Hebrews 11:6]

7. I believe every person is a sinner by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration—Jesus Christ being the only exception. [Genesis 6:5-7; Psalm 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; John 3:19-20; Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; 7:5; Ephesians 2:1-2; James 1:14-15; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 4:3]

8. I believe everyone has broken God's expressed law and have proven themselves unworthy of God's blessing and kingdom. [Psalm 53:1-3; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 16:17; Romans 6:23; Luke 23:40-41; Romans 3:9-20; Galatians 3:10; 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:5-8; 1 John 3:4]

About Salvation

1. I believe salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His precious shed blood at Calvary, and not on the basis of human merit or works of any kind or degree. [Luke 18:9-14; Acts 16:31; Romans 3:18-24,28; 4:1-8; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6]

2. I believe salvation in Christ is complete, forgiving all our sins, providing for the resurrection of our bodies, and the restoring of the world to paradise. [Romans 8:11,18-25; Hebrews 10:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 3:1-2]

3. I believe salvation is received as a gift by personal repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. [Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; 3:36; 20:30-31 Acts 2:38; 16:31; 17:30; Romans 6:23]

4. I believe there is salvation in no one besides Jesus Christ. All those who die without Christ die in their sins and without salvation. [Matthew 10:32-33; John 3:36; 8:24; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2 Corinthians 6:1-3]

A. Regeneration

1. I believe regeneration is a secret act of God the Holy Spirit where He imparts new spiritual life to a person. It is the new birth, which results in a change of heart leading to a growing obedience to the will of God. It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the word of God [John 3:3-8; 1 John 2:29; 3:8-10; 5:18; John 3:3-8; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:5; Titus 3:4-5; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:9]

2. I believe man does not contribute to his own regeneration but receives it entirely by the undeserved favor of God in Christ. [Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 2:29-3:2]

3. I believe genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit. [Matthew 3:7-8; John 5:28-29; 15:1-6; Romans 6:1-5,17; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-24; Ephesians 2:10; 1 John 2:29; 3:9-10]

B. Election

1. I believe election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies. [Daniel 12:1; Acts 4:28; Romans 8:29; 9:11; 11:5; 1 Corinthians 2:7; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 1:4-5,11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9]

2. I believe sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord. Salvation is thus withheld from some because of their refusal to accept Christ as Savior and Lord. [Matthew 7:26-27; 10:14-15,33; Mark 16:16; Luke 13:34; 14:16-24; John 5:38,40,43; 12:37,48; Acts 13:46; 17:30; Romans 2:4-5]

3. I believe since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. [Matthew 11:25; 16:17; Mark 9:24; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:14-16; Galatians 1:15; Ephesians 2:8-9]

4. I believe that the unmerited favor which God grants to totally depraved sinners is not related to any initiative of their own part nor to God's anticipation of what they might do by their own will, but is solely of His sovereign grace and mercy. Thus election excludes any possibility of boasting on the part of man and promotes humility and eternal gratitude. [Deuteronomy 7:6-7; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:14-16; Galatians 1:15-16; Titus 3:4-5]

5. I believe election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises this sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love. This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Deuteronomy 7:6-11; John 12:37-41; Romans 2:5-8; 9:14,19-23]

6. I believe election does not discourage evangelism, but establishes its successfulness. Without divine election, no man would turn to Christ of his own will and thus evangelism would not result in the salvation of people. [John 6:44; Acts 13:48; Romans 11:1-15]

C. Justification

1. I believe justification is an act of God by which, based on the death of Christ and motivated from His own love, He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ, repent of their sins and confess Him as Sovereign Lord. [Romans 3:18-22; 28; 4:5; 5:8-10; Galatians 2:16]

2. I believe justification is not a process of becoming righteous but is an instantaneous act of God whereby He declares the sinner to be righteous based upon the righteousness of Christ. Justification does not happen to a believer after he dies but at the moment he believes in Christ. [Romans 3:24; 4:5; 5:1; 8:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:2,21; 2 Corinthians 5:21]

3. I believe from the moment of justification, there is no condemnation for the believer because all the believer's guilt has been removed. Justification brings the believer into a permanent state of most blessed peace and favor with God. [Romans 4:6-8; 5:1; 6:23; 8:1]

D. Faith and Repentance

1. I believe repentance and faith are sacred duties and inseparable graces brought about in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. [Luke 22:31-32; John 1:12; 3:36; 6:44; Acts 11:18; 13:48; 16:14; 17:30-31; Romans 12:3; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Timothy 2:25; 3:15]

2. I believe repentance and faith mean that one is convinced of his guilt, danger, and helplessness, and the way of salvation in Christ, and therefore turns to God for mercy while at the same time heartily trusting and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as his king. [Psalm 32:10; 147:11; Matthew 3:7-8; 11:28-30; John 16:7-11; Acts 2:36-38; 16:29-31; Romans 1:16-17; 10:9-13; 1 Peter 2:25]

3. I believe repentance and faith are not works performed to earn salvation. They are the appropriate response of a sinner who is moved by God to come to Christ. [Matthew 4:17; Luke 24:46-47; Romans 3:28; 4:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10]

4. I believe saving faith involves more than a mere intellectual assent to the truths of Christianity. It involves a personal trust in the person and work of Christ. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not yet seen. [John 2:23-25; 3:16; 7:17; 8:31-32; 14:1; Acts 9:5-6; 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; Galatians 5:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 11:1]

5. I believe repentance is required for salvation. Repentance is part of the gospel preached by Jesus and the apostles both to Jews and to Gentiles. [Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Luke 5:32; 13:1-5; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 17:30; 20:21; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 1 Peter 2:25]

6. I believe repentance is the desire within the heart and mind of the sinner to turn away from a life of sin and independence from God, and to turn toward the true and living God—all the while recognizing that this can only be accomplished by God's regenerating work in his heart.

[Psalm 51:10; Matthew 3:7-8; Luke 23:40-42; 18:10-14; Acts 14:15; 26:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10]

E. Sanctification

1. I believe every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification, is therefore declared to be holy, and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition. [1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11; 1 Peter 2:9-10]

2. I believe there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the believer is brought into greater obedience to the word of God and is characterized by growing empowerment by the Holy Spirit. The believer is thus able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ. [Romans 6:12-14; 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; Galatians 5:16; Colossians 2:6-7; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 John 1:6-7]

3. I believe every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh—but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. [Matthew 26:41; Romans 8:12-13; 1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Galatians 5:16-17; Ephesians 4:22-24; James 1:13-17]

F. Security

1. I believe all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever. No truly saved person can or will lose his or her salvation. [John 10:28-29; 17:12; Romans 8:30,35-39; 11:29; Ephesians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 2:1; 5:13,18]

2. I believe all real believers endure in their faith to the end. Their continuance in the Christian walk and Christian doctrine is the mark that distinguishes them from those who merely profess Christianity. [Matthew 24:13; Luke 22:31-32; John 15:1-6; Romans 8:17; Galatians 5:4; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Hebrews 10:38; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 1 John 2:18-19,28]

3. I believe a special providence of God cares for the saved and keeps them from falling away permanently. Therefore, perseverance of the Christian is guaranteed by God's provision of new life in Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the intercessory work of Christ at the right hand of the Father. [Luke 22:31-32; John 17:9-12; Hebrews 1:3; 4:14; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 John 2:1; 5:13]

About The Church

1. I believe all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the Church, the bride of Christ of which Christ is the head. [Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12,27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:23-27; Colossians 1:24]

2. I believe there is but one true universal Church comprised of all true believers. These believers are one spiritual brotherhood having God as their Father. [Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:1-4,12; 5:23-24; Hebrews 12:23]
3. I believe that the formation of the Church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (soon after Christ ascended into Heaven) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture. [Matthew 16:18; Acts 1&2; 10:44-48; 11:17-18; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18]
4. I believe the Church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age, both those in heaven and on earth. [Romans 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:5-7; 4:1-4; Revelation 19:7-8]
5. I believe the Church is distinct from Israel, a mystery not revealed until this age. [compare Acts 1:5 with 11:15-16; Romans 11:25-29; 1 Corinthians 10:32; Ephesians 2:15; 3:4-6; Colossians 1:24-27]
6. I believe the local church is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant, sharing in the common faith and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. [Acts 2:37-47; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1]
7. I believe the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament. [Acts 5:11; 8:1; 9:31; 13:1-3; 15:4,22; 1 Thessalonians 1:1]
8. I believe the one supreme authority of the Church is Christ. Christ is the sole head of the Church. [Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23-24; Colossians 1:18]
9. I believe all church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are appointed through God's sovereignty as found in the apostles' teaching, which are found solely in the Scriptures. [Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 14:37]
10. I believe the local church is autonomous, free from any external human authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations. [Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3]
11. I believe the biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders, who are also called overseers, pastors, and teachers. These terms do not describe different offices in the church but refer to the same elders revealing their different roles in the body of Christ. [Acts 15:2; 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-6; 1 Peter 5:1-5]
12. I believe all elder/pastors must meet biblical qualifications, including the ability to teach sound doctrine and refute those who contradict. They must be blameless¹⁹. They must be one-woman men whose children believe and are under control. They must be characterized as uncontentious, free from the love of money, and under self-control. They must desire the work

¹⁹ What about the wife of a pastor? How much affect does she have on his qualification as being a pastor?
A: Note, there is no set of qualifications for the elder's wife in 1 Tim 3 or Titus 1. Does she inhibit him or affectively make him not meet any of those qualifications in 1 Tim 3 or Titus 1? What if the wife is not a Christian or an immature Christian? The Bible doesn't tell us. Those things are not preferable, yet the Bible doesn't mention that those things disqualify the man to be an elder. We should leave that up to the decision of the elders.

of an elder and hold its position in high honor. They must not be new in the faith. [1 Timothy 1:6-8; 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5-9; 3:10; James 3:1]

13. I believe elders/pastors have God-given authority to lead and oversee the church as servants of Christ directing the church. They are not to lord their position over the flock but are to shepherd them with eagerness and humility. The congregation is to submit to their leadership. [Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-3]

14. I believe the main duties of elder/pastors are to minister the word through preaching and teaching, to pray for the church, to oversee the church's spiritual health, to set an example to the flock of godly living, equip men who will be able to teach others, and to equip the congregation for ministry. Elders must not let themselves become distracted with the everyday business of the church. [Acts 6:4; 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 5:17; Titus 1:9; James 5:14; 2 Timothy 2:2; Ephesians 4:11-12]

15. Elders should strive to be of one mind in their decision-making in order to preserve the unity of the faith. [1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 1:27; 2:2]

16. I believe deacons serve under the elders, assisting the elders in the ministry by caring for the physical needs of the local church, working for the unity in the body, and supporting the ministry of the word; thus, freeing the pastors to focus on prayer and the ministry of the word. Likewise, deacons must meet biblical qualifications. It is not necessary for deacons to be in a position of teaching or ruling. [Acts 6:1-7; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13]

17. I believe the Church's mission is to carry out the Great Commission to the ends of the earth. [Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-49; John 15:1-17; Acts 1:6-8]

18. I believe worship by the Church is to be directed to the triune God alone. Worship must be enthusiastic and sincere, and it must be based upon the great truths found in Holy Scripture. The primary focus of worship is not what we get out of it, but rather what God gets out of it—for example: praise, thanksgiving, honor, glory, reverence, and submission. [1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 19:14; 100; John 4:23-24; Revelation 4:8,11; 5:9-10]

19. I believe discipleship is accomplished in the church by the mature exercise of all the spiritual gifts, by the ministry of the word, by prayer, by providing mature examples to follow, by mutual accountability, and by training for ministry. [Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 15:40; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 2 Timothy 2:2; Hebrews 10:24]

20. I believe evangelism is to be accomplished by prayer, by the godly lives of believers, by the proclamation of the word, and by the loving outreach of the church. Evangelistic methods must be based upon sound theology and godly principles. [John 13:35; 16:8-11; Acts 17:30; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:1-3; 7:14; 14:23-25; Colossians 4:3; 1 Peter 3:1-3]

21. I believe the church is responsible to seek to do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith. In this way, Christian love is to be shown to the orphaned, the aged, the helpless, the sick, and the widowed. [Psalm 9:18; Isaiah 41:17; Matthew 25:42-45; Galatians 6:10; 1 Timothy 5:3-4]

22. I believe two ordinances have been committed to the local church by the Lord: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. [Matthew 26:26-29; 28:16-20; Luke 22:14-23; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26]

23. I believe Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. [Matthew 3:16; 28:16-20; Mark 1:9; Acts 2:38; 8:38; Rom 6:3-6]

24. I believe Christian baptism by immersion is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life. Baptism also symbolizes the washing away of sins. Therefore, it cannot rightly be offered to children who are too young to understand and believe the gospel resulting in forgiveness of sins, nor have been united to Christ. [Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-6]

25. I believe baptism is the sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ and is not salvific. [Acts 8:12-24; Romans 6:3-6; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 3:21]

26. I believe the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes. It is both a time of solemn self-examination and a time of joy. [Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:27-31]

27. I believe the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ. Nevertheless, believers share in communion with Christ and with one another in a real way of which the elements are symbolic. [Matthew 26:26-29; Luke 22:14-20; John 6:52-64]

About Angels & Demons

A. Angels

1. I believe angels are a class of spiritual beings created by God to worship and serve Him. They proclaim God's holiness, execute His judgments, carry His messages, and war against evil. [Psalm 103:20; Daniel 10:12-13; Matthew 13:41-42,49; 28:5-7; Colossians 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Hebrews 1:13-14]

2. I believe angels are not to be worshipped or prayed to, and they exercise no mediation in human salvation. [Colossians 2:18; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:5-6; Revelation 22:8-9]

3. I believe a vast number of angels exist who are ordered by ranks and classifications. [Daniel 7:10;10:13; Matthew 25:31; 26:53 Luke 2:13; Ephesians 1:21; Revelation 5:11; 12:7]

4. I believe angels are finite, intelligent beings who study the works of God and continue to learn. [Matthew 18:10; 1 Peter 1:12; Revelation 5:11-12]

B. Satan and Demons

1. I believe Satan is a created being possessing all the attributes of personality. He is also called Lucifer, the Devil, the Dragon, the Evil One, Beelzebub, our Accuser, the Serpent of Old, Abaddon, Apollyon, and the Prince of the power of the air. [1 Chronicles 21:1; Matthew 4:1;

10:25; Mark 3:22; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 2:13; 5:18-19; Revelation 9:11; 12:9; 20:2]

2. I believe Satan is the author of sin, the father of lies, and a murderer from the beginning. As such, he is active in the world opposing the work of the Church, making sin seem appealing, introducing destructive teachings into the Church, and instigating hatred against God's people. [John 8:44; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; 1 John 3:8,12]

3. I believe Satan incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator, by taking numerous angels with him in his fall, and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve. [Genesis 3:1,14; Matthew 12:24-28]

4. I believe Satan is the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire. [2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 20:2-3,10]

5. I believe Satan has a vast host of evil angels who followed him in rebellion against God. These angels are called demons and evil spirits in Scripture. [2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 12:9]

6. I believe demons work in this world to afflict people with sicknesses, to introduce lies, to propagate false religion, and to oppose the work of the Church. [1 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 4:1-4]

7. I believe demons can and sometimes do possess the bodies of unbelievers bringing upon the unbeliever self-destruction. True believers cannot be possessed by demons²⁰. [Matthew 8:28-29; 12:28;15:22]

About Last Things

A. Death

1. I believe physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness. At death, the soul of the redeemed is separated from the body and passes immediately into the presence of Christ. [Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1-6; Philipians 1:23; James 2:26]

²⁰ Reasons why Christians cannot be demon possessed: 1) There is no clear example in the Bible where a demon ever inhabited or invaded a true believer. 2) Never in the NT epistles are believers warned about the possibility of being inhabited by demons. Neither do we see anyone rebuking, binding, or casting demons out of a true believer. 3) The epistles never instruct believers to cast out demons, whether from a believer or unbeliever. 4) Christ and the apostles were the only ones who cast out demons, and in every instance the demon-possessed people were unbelievers. 5) The collective teaching of Scripture is that demons can never spatially indwell a true believer. A clear implication of 2 Corinthians 6, for example, is that the indwelling Holy Spirit could never cohabit with demons. [See also Col 1:13; 1 John 2:13; 4:4; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14]

2. I believe all mankind will have a bodily resurrection: the saved to eternal life; and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment. [John 5:28-29; Revelation 20:11-15]
3. I believe the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection when the soul and the resurrection body will be united. [Luke 16:19-31; John 8:24]
4. I believe unbelievers shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment and shall be cast into Hell, the lake of fire, cut off from the life of God forever. They shall not be annihilated, but shall suffer everlasting conscious punishment in Hell. [Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:10-15]
5. I believe in the present age, the attitude of either reconciliation or enmity toward God is eternally fixed at death. There is no hope for salvation after death. Prayers for the dead are unscriptural and go unrecognized by God. [Luke 16:19-31; John 8:24; 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 9:27]
6. I believe Jesus Christ will return personally and bodily before the seven-year tribulation to translate His Church from this earth. [John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17]
7. I believe between the rapture and the second coming, Christ will reward believers according to their works of faith. [2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:8]
8. I believe immediately following the removal of the Church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God (The Tribulational Period) will be poured out upon an unbelieving world over a period of seven years. These judgments are the judgments from God, not from Satan. Thus, believers will not experience these judgments. [Isaiah 24:21-22; Daniel 9:24-27; Revelation 3:10; 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:19; 15:1; 16:1,19]
9. I believe these tribulation judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth. [2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 19:11-21]

B. The Second Coming and Millennial Reign

1. I believe after the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David and establish His Messianic kingdom for a thousand years on earth. [2 Samuel 7:12-16; Revelation 19:11-21]
2. I believe during this time, the resurrected saints will reign with Him over all the nations of the earth. [1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 3:21; 5:9-10; 20:4-6]
3. I believe this reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world, being cast into the bottomless pit for a thousand years. [Revelation 20:1-3]
4. I believe the millennial reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life, and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan. [Isaiah 11:1-10; Revelation 20:1-4]

C. The Judgment of the Lost

1. I believe Satan and his angels will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and brimstone to be tormented forever and ever, whereupon Christ, who is the judge of all men, will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment. [Matthew 25:41; John 5:22; Revelation 20:10]

2. I believe the resurrection of the unsaved dead will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire in varying degrees of torment according to their works. [Matthew 24:41; Romans 14:10-13; Revelation 20:11-15]¹⁶

D. Eternity

1. I believe after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers, the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells. [2 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 21:1,3-7]

2. I believe, following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will forever enjoy fellowship with God and with one another. Life will be lived in joy without pain, sorrow, or death. [John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 15:26; Revelation 21:27; 22:1-6]

3. I believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, so that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever. Amen! [1 Corinthians 15:24-28]

ⁱ As of June 21, 2017. The sources that helped the wording of this doctrinal statement came from the Holy Bible and the following creeds and statements of faith (partial use of a creed or statement of faith does not necessarily mean agreement with the whole): What We Teach by Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California; Articles of Biblical Faith of the IFCA International; The Westminster Confession of 1646 in the Puritan tradition; Statement of Baptist Faith and Message of The Southern Baptist Convention of 1925; The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion according to the American Revision of 1801 in the Anglican tradition; The Augsburg Confession of 1530 in the Lutheran tradition; The Second Helvetic Confession of 1566 in the Reformed tradition; The Schleithem Confession of 1527 and The Dordrecht Confession of 1632 both in the Anabaptist tradition; The Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 from 150 eastern church fathers; The Creed of Nicaea of 325 a creed of 318 eastern church fathers; The Articles of Religion of 1784 in the Methodist tradition; and “What We Teach” of Hope Bible Church in Columbia, Maryland.