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# STATEMENT OF DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

Immanuel Bible Church

## SECTION I – THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

God's complete written revelation to man consists of the sixty-six books of the Bible. The Scriptures were given to us by the Holy Spirit<sup>1</sup> through verbal, plenary<sup>2</sup> inspiration<sup>3</sup> as objective, propositional truth.<sup>4</sup> God used human authors to compose and record His exact revelation to man through His superintendence of their unique personality, background, circumstances, and writing style as they composed the original manuscripts, and that every part of the Bible, in its original documents, is inerrant, infallible, the very Word of God.<sup>5</sup> The Scriptures were written in such a way that its teachings are able to be clearly understood by all who have a heart to follow what it says.<sup>6</sup>

Since the purpose of the Scripture is to instruct mankind, and is absolutely necessary for knowing the Gospel and God's will, it is the duty of every Christian to regularly and diligently search the Scriptures to understand their meaning.<sup>7</sup> This meaning is best discovered through use of a literal, grammatical, historical method of interpretation under the illumination of the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> Though there is only one true interpretation, there may be many faithful applications to life's varied circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Bible comprises the only authoritative and inerrant rule of salvation and a life pleasing to God, it is an entirely accurate and sufficient communication of God to mankind, and is the measure by which all men will be judged on the last day.<sup>10</sup>

## SECTION II – GOD

The Lord our God is the only living and true God.<sup>11</sup> He is infinite in perfection and self-existent.<sup>12</sup> His essence cannot be fully comprehended by anyone but Himself, and yet He has chosen to reveal Himself through His creation and His

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<sup>1</sup> John 16:12-13

<sup>2</sup> meaning equally inspired in all parts (see Matthew 5:18)

<sup>3</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21

<sup>4</sup> John 17:17

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 19:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:19-21

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

<sup>7</sup> Acts 17:11; Romans 10:13-17; Colossians 3:16

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:7-16

<sup>9</sup> Joshua 1:8; 2 Tim 2:15

<sup>10</sup> John 12:48; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12-13; 2 Peter 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14

Word.<sup>13</sup> He is a single,<sup>14</sup> simple,<sup>15</sup> immortal Spirit<sup>16</sup> who dwells in unapproachable light.<sup>17</sup> He is unchangeable;<sup>18</sup> and impassible.<sup>19</sup> He is infinite: omnipresent,<sup>20</sup> eternal,<sup>21</sup> omniscient and almighty.<sup>22</sup> He is perfect,<sup>23</sup> holy,<sup>24</sup> and wise.<sup>25</sup> He works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable righteous will.<sup>26</sup> He is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, and abounding in loving kindness and truth. He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, and rewards those that diligently seek Him, but will by no means clear the guilty.<sup>27</sup> He is just in all His judgments,<sup>28</sup> hating all those enemies of God who transgress His law.<sup>29</sup>

God is unique in being all-sufficient of Himself.<sup>30</sup> Though He is glorious in and of Himself, He has freely chosen to demonstrate His own glory through His creation, and yet His glory is in no way dependent upon His creation.<sup>31</sup> He is the Creator, from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things,<sup>32</sup> and He has absolute sovereign dominion over all creatures to do to them, for them, or with them as He pleases.<sup>33</sup> In His sight all things are open and laid bare.<sup>34</sup> His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependent upon any other source, so that nothing for Him is contingent or uncertain.<sup>35</sup> He is holy in all His words and in all His works.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, all creatures are obligated to Him for whatever He requires of them,<sup>37</sup> owing Him complete allegiance, worship, service, and obedience.<sup>38</sup>

#### A. The Trinity

The one God eternally exists in three co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial Persons (Trinity): the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup> Each is fully God and is the same in essence and substance, and yet they are distinct persons

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<sup>13</sup> Romans 1:20; John 12:49-50, 17:7-8 Hebrews 1:1-3

<sup>14</sup> Isaiah 44:6

<sup>15</sup> John 4:24; 1 Jn. 1:5; 1 Jn. 4:8; Rom. 11:36; 1 Tim. 6:16

<sup>16</sup> John 4:24; 1 Jn. 1:5; 1 Jn. 4:8; Rom. 11:36; 1 Tim. 6:16

<sup>17</sup> 1 Timothy 6:16; Deuteronomy 4:15-16

<sup>18</sup> Malachi 3:6 (immutable in His essence, attributes, knowledge, & plans)

<sup>19</sup> Acts 14:14; 17:25

<sup>20</sup> 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23-24

<sup>21</sup> Psalms 90:2

<sup>22</sup> 1 Jn. 3:20; Genesis 17:1

<sup>23</sup> Mt. 5:48

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 6:3

<sup>25</sup> Job 12:13; Romans 11:33

<sup>26</sup> Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:9-10; Ephesians 1:11

<sup>27</sup> Exodus 34:6-7; Hebrews 11:6

<sup>28</sup> Deuteronomy 32:4

<sup>29</sup> Psalms 5:5-6

<sup>30</sup> Acts 17:24-25

<sup>31</sup> Job 41:11; Psalm 50:12; John 17:5; Isaiah 43:7

<sup>32</sup> Romans 11:34-36

<sup>33</sup> Daniel 4:24-25, 34-35

<sup>34</sup> Hebrews 4:13

<sup>35</sup> Psalm 139:1-6; Isaiah 55:9

<sup>36</sup> Psalms 145:17

<sup>37</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:9-10, Acts 17:30-31

<sup>38</sup> Revelation 5:12-14

<sup>39</sup> Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14

and not just different manifestations of the same person. Each person of the Godhead is fully God because each person fully subsists in the single, *undivided* divine nature,<sup>40</sup> and therefore each person shares a single activity and power,<sup>41</sup> a single will,<sup>42</sup> and a single authority as the one Lord.<sup>43</sup> The persons of the Trinity are distinguished from one another *internally* only by their relative properties: The Father proceeds from none. The Son is the eternally begotten (not created) Son of the Father,<sup>44</sup> and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.<sup>45</sup> *Externally*, the persons of the Trinity work inseparably as the one God and in so doing generally display their relative properties: God's actions toward the creation are *from* the Father,<sup>46</sup> *through* the Son,<sup>47</sup> and *in/by* the Spirit.<sup>48</sup>

## B. GOD, THE FATHER

God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity who created all things and causes all things to work together according to His sovereign plan, and yet does so in such a way that He is neither the author nor approver of the sinful actions of men.<sup>49</sup> His identity as Father is inseparable from His eternal relation in the Godhead, having always existed as the eternal Father of His eternal Son.<sup>50</sup> His character is most profoundly and uniquely seen in the demonstration of His sovereign grace, in His choosing to redeem individuals from the due punishment of their sin and mercifully providing that redemption through His only Son, Jesus Christ.<sup>51</sup>

## C. GOD, THE SON

God the Son is the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the attributes of deity, and is co-equal, co-eternal, and consubstantial with the Father and the Holy Spirit.<sup>52</sup> Although sharing equality with the Father, the Son acts *from* the Father in his execution of the divine will. His identity as Son is inseparable from His eternal relation in the Godhead, having always existed as the eternal Son of His eternal Father.<sup>53</sup> The Father created all things through

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<sup>40</sup> Deut 6:4; Matt 28:19;

<sup>41</sup> Ps. 33:6; Is. 44:24, Jn. 1:3, Jn. 5:17-21, Rom. 11:36, 1 Cor. 8:6, Col. 1:17, Heb. 1:3

<sup>42</sup> Jn. 5:19, 21, 30; 1 Cor. 12:11, 18

<sup>43</sup> Mt. 11:25, 2 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 3:18

<sup>44</sup> John 1:14, 18

<sup>45</sup> John 15:26; Galatians 4:6

<sup>46</sup> 1 Cor. 8:6

<sup>47</sup> 1 Cor. 8:6

<sup>48</sup> Eph. 1:13-14

<sup>49</sup> James 1:13, 17; Job 1:22; Habakkuk 1:13

<sup>50</sup> Jn. 1:1-3

<sup>51</sup> John 1:12, Ephesians 1:4-6

<sup>52</sup> John 5:17-18, 8:58, 10:30, 14:9-10; Colossians 1:19, 2:9

<sup>53</sup> Jn. 1:1-3

the Son in six literal, 24-hour days, and the Son is the One by whom all things continue in existence and operation.<sup>54</sup>

The Son became incarnate man without diminishing anything of His deity by uniquely assuming to His person a complete and sinless human nature in an indissoluble union, forever becoming the God-man.<sup>55</sup> The means of the incarnation was through the Holy Spirit supernaturally overshadowing the virgin Mary, such that Jesus was virgin-born, fully God and fully man.<sup>56</sup> Jesus is also truly God and truly man, acting according to both natures simultaneously,<sup>57</sup> both of which retain their metaphysical properties in hypostatic union.<sup>58</sup>

Jesus lived out His earthly life in perfect righteousness<sup>59</sup> exactly as recorded in the Scriptures.<sup>60</sup> He was put to death by order of Pontius Pilate, buried, physically resurrected from the dead on the third day by the power of God,<sup>61</sup> appeared alive to disciples over a period of 40 days,<sup>62</sup> and then ascended into heaven as ruler over all.<sup>63</sup>

The Son is the only Mediator between God and man<sup>64</sup> (His physical life, death, burial, and resurrection providing the only means through which God justifies sinners),<sup>65</sup> and He is now seated at the right hand of the Father as advocate for all the redeemed.<sup>66</sup>

Jesus Christ is the Head of the church<sup>67</sup> and the promised Messiah who will reign on the throne of David as the universal King.<sup>68</sup> He is also the One through whom God will judge all mankind,<sup>69</sup> issuing reward to those who follow Him, and eternal punishment to those who do not.<sup>70</sup>

## D. HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, possesses all the attributes of deity and is co-equal, co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son.<sup>71</sup> The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, uncreated, possessing all

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<sup>54</sup> John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3

<sup>55</sup> John 1:1,14; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9; Revelation 5:6-9

<sup>56</sup> Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:23,25; Luke 1:26-35; Galatians 4:4-5

<sup>57</sup> Lk. 2:7; Col. 1:17

<sup>58</sup> Jn. 1:14; Jn. 8:58

<sup>59</sup> Hebrews 4:15; Mt. 3:15; Rom. 5:12-21

<sup>60</sup> John 21:24-25

<sup>61</sup> Luke 9:22, 18:33, 24:7, 19-24, 46-48; Acts 4:27-28, 10:40, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

<sup>62</sup> Acts 1:3; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7

<sup>63</sup> Acts 1:9; Ephesians 1:20-23 (cf. Psalm 2:7-9)

<sup>64</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 7:25

<sup>65</sup> Romans 5:9; John 1:29; John 14:6

<sup>66</sup> Philippians 2:9-11; 1 John 2:1-2

<sup>67</sup> Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23

<sup>68</sup> Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:31-33

<sup>69</sup> John 5:22-24; Acts 17:30-31

<sup>70</sup> John 3:36; 2 Corinthians 5:10

<sup>71</sup> Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:15-17.

the attributes deity including intellect,<sup>72</sup> eternity,<sup>73</sup> omnipresence,<sup>74</sup> omniscience,<sup>75</sup> omnipotence,<sup>76</sup> and truth.<sup>77</sup> His identity as the Holy Spirit is inseparable from His eternal relation in the Godhead, having always existed<sup>78</sup> as proceeding from the Father<sup>79</sup> and the Son.<sup>80</sup>

The Holy Spirit's unique work in the church age began at Pentecost, when He came from the Father as promised by Christ<sup>81</sup> to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church.<sup>82</sup>

The work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. This includes His sovereign activity in creation,<sup>83</sup> the incarnation of the Son,<sup>84</sup> the written revelation of God,<sup>85</sup> and the work of salvation.<sup>86</sup> In this present age, the Holy Spirit was sent forth from the Father and the Son to initiate and complete the building of the church, to speak of and glorify the Son, and to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.<sup>87</sup> The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration who draws men to Jesus Christ and enables every believer to possess faith.<sup>88</sup> Jesus Christ baptizes all believers with the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, at which time the Holy Spirit indwells them with all fullness.<sup>89</sup> The Holy Spirit also sanctifies them, instructs them, empowers them for service, seals them unto the day of redemption, and transforms them into the image of Christ.<sup>90</sup> The Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the prophets and apostles to write God's special revelation, the Bible.<sup>91</sup> He administers spiritual gifts to the church but neither glorifies Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays. Instead, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by implementing His work of drawing the elect and building up believers in the most holy faith.<sup>92</sup>

The Scriptures teach the calling of all saints to the work of ministry.<sup>93</sup> The Holy Spirit facilitates this by personally indwelling each believer and by providing differing spiritual gifts. First, He gives equipping gifts to men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for ministry,<sup>94</sup> and He also gives unique and special spiritual serving gifts to each

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<sup>72</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:10-14

<sup>73</sup> Hebrews 9:14

<sup>74</sup> Psalm 139:7-10

<sup>75</sup> Isaiah 40:13-14

<sup>76</sup> Romans 15:19

<sup>77</sup> John 16:13

<sup>78</sup> Heb. 9:14

<sup>79</sup> Jn. 15:26

<sup>80</sup> Gal. 4:6

<sup>81</sup> John 14:16-17; 15:26

<sup>82</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:13

<sup>83</sup> Genesis 1:2

<sup>84</sup> Matthew 1:18, 20; Luke 1:35

<sup>85</sup> 2 Peter 1:20-21

<sup>86</sup> John 3:5-8

<sup>87</sup> John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 1:5, 2:4; Ephesians 2:19-22

<sup>88</sup> John 6:44,63; 2 Corinthians 3:6

<sup>89</sup> Matthew 3:11; John 3:34;14:17; Romans 8:9,11; 1 Corinthians 12:13

<sup>90</sup> Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:6,18; Ephesians 1:13; 4:7-13,30; 1 John 2:20-27

<sup>91</sup> John 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21

<sup>92</sup> John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18

<sup>93</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:58; Ephesians 4:12; Revelation 22:12

<sup>94</sup> Ephesians 4:7-12

member of the body of Christ.<sup>95</sup> These gifts are sovereignly distributed to each individual believer for the common good of the body.<sup>96</sup> As believers serve in the local body they should begin to recognize, develop, and deploy their unique spiritual giftedness within the context of a local church.<sup>97</sup>

The Scriptures indicate that there were certain gifts given to the early church that are no longer normative for today. Gifts of divine revelation and miraculous wonders occurred during periods of the Old Testament (Moses, Elisha, Elijah), and during the Apostolic era of the early church. These gifts were given temporarily for the purpose of delivering direct divine revelation and confirming the authenticity of the revelation and those that revealed it. As the New Testament Scriptures were completed as the final revelation of God for the church, revelatory and confirmatory gifts were no longer necessary and were removed by the Spirit from use within the church.<sup>98</sup> Despite the cessation of the ongoing ministry of certain supernatural gifts by individuals in the church, God still sovereignly works in the world by whatever means He may choose. For instance, though the confirmatory spiritual gift of healing is no longer normative, God has promised to hear the prayer of faith and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will and His own glory for the sick, suffering, and afflicted.<sup>99</sup>

The Holy Spirit ministered in the world prior to the church age. He executed the divine work of creation,<sup>100</sup> He guided and protected Israel,<sup>101</sup> He spoke through the prophets to produce the OT Scriptures,<sup>102</sup> and He selectively and conditionally came upon and empowered certain people.<sup>103</sup> The Spirit's temporary residence upon OT saints was specifically related to enabling a certain task.

### SECTION III – MAN

Man was directly, immediately, and uniquely created by God in His image and likeness,<sup>104</sup> distinct from the beasts,<sup>105</sup> free of sin,<sup>106</sup> having a rational nature, intelligence, volition, and moral responsibility to God.<sup>107</sup>

God created man in two parts – the material part (body, members, flesh),<sup>108</sup> and the immaterial part (soul, spirit, heart, conscience, mind, will).<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Romans 12:1-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11

<sup>96</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:7,11; 1 Peter 4:10

<sup>97</sup> Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Timothy 4:14

<sup>98</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:8-12, 14:21-22; 2 Corinthians 12:12

<sup>99</sup> Psalm 115:3; Luke 18:1-6; James 5:13-16; 1 John 5:14-15

<sup>100</sup> Genesis 1:2; Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30

<sup>101</sup> Isaiah 63:10-14

<sup>102</sup> 1 Peter 1:11; 1 Peter 1:20-21

<sup>103</sup> Genesis 41:38; Numbers 27:18; 1 Samuel 10:6-10, 16:13, 16:14, Psalm 51:11

<sup>104</sup> Genesis 1:26; James 3:9

<sup>105</sup> Genesis 1:28-29; Psalm 8:6-8; Matthew 6:26

<sup>106</sup> Romans 5:12; Eccl. 7:29

<sup>107</sup> Genesis 2:7, 15-25

<sup>108</sup> Romans 7:18, 23-24

<sup>109</sup> Matthew 10:28; Luke 1:46-47; Eccl. 12:7

God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God,<sup>110</sup> enjoy God's fellowship,<sup>111</sup> live in dependent obedience to God,<sup>112</sup> and thereby accomplish his purpose as the pinnacle of God's creation in the world.<sup>113</sup>

In Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence,<sup>114</sup> incurred the penalty of physical and spiritual death,<sup>115</sup> became subject to the wrath of God,<sup>116</sup> and became inherently corrupt in all of his faculties, and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God.<sup>117</sup> This total depravity in unregenerate man does not mean that every man is as bad as he could be,<sup>118</sup> but rather every part of unregenerate man is so corrupted by sin that his heart,<sup>119</sup> mind,<sup>120</sup> will,<sup>121</sup> and emotions<sup>122</sup> will never cause him to seek God in and of himself. Enslaved to sin<sup>123</sup> with no ability to rescue himself, man is hopelessly lost<sup>124</sup> except by divine intervention.<sup>125</sup>

Adam's guilt has been charged (credited to one's account (imputed)) to all men of all ages, and to all of their faculties, Jesus Christ being the only exception.<sup>126</sup> All men are sinners by divine declaration,<sup>127</sup> by nature,<sup>128</sup> and by choice.<sup>129</sup>

Once redeemed, man is a new creation.<sup>130</sup> He has been born again,<sup>131</sup> indwelt by the Holy Spirit,<sup>132</sup> and no longer a helpless slave to sin.<sup>133</sup> The "old man" and his associated sin nature is crucified and gone, as the new man walks in newness of life.<sup>134</sup> Sin can only gain a foothold in a believer's life through the flesh (body or members)<sup>135</sup> which remains until our mortal body is transformed in glory.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:31; Isaiah 43:7

<sup>111</sup> Psalm 73:25-28, John 14:1-3

<sup>112</sup> Deuteronomy 13:4

<sup>113</sup> Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 6:3; Hebrews 1:14; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4:11

<sup>114</sup> Genesis 3:9-11

<sup>115</sup> Genesis 2:16-17, Romans 3:23, 6:23, 8:7-8

<sup>116</sup> John 3:36; Ephesians 2:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:10

<sup>117</sup> Romans 3:23, 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14

<sup>118</sup> Luke 11:13

<sup>119</sup> Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 1:21

<sup>120</sup> Romans 1:28; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Romans 8:5-8; Ephesians 4:17-18; Titus 1:15; 1 Corinthians 2:14

<sup>121</sup> John 8:44; John 1:12-13;

<sup>122</sup> John 3:19-20; 1 John 3:10; Romans 1:30

<sup>123</sup> John 8:34, 44; Romans 6:6, 17-18

<sup>124</sup> Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:1-3

<sup>125</sup> 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 19:25-26; John 8:36; John 1:12-13; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:4-5

<sup>126</sup> Romans 5:12 & 19; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 8:46

<sup>127</sup> Romans 3:9-18; Romans 5:18-19

<sup>128</sup> Ephesians 2:3

<sup>129</sup> Psalm 14:1-3; James 1:14-15; Ephesians 2:3

<sup>130</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>131</sup> John 3:3; 1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1,4,18

<sup>132</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Romans 8:9

<sup>133</sup> Romans 6:6-7, &14

<sup>134</sup> Romans 6:3-11

<sup>135</sup> Romans 6:12, 7:18, 23-24

<sup>136</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:50-57

We believe that God created mankind in His own image.<sup>137</sup> In two separate acts, He created only two distinct genders: male and female.<sup>138</sup> The genders of Adam and Eve were established by God and defined by their physiological sex at creation.<sup>139</sup> Subsequent to creation, God determines the gender of all other humans by their physiological sex at the time of birth.<sup>140</sup> Thus, all attempts to redefine human sexuality beyond the physiological male-female distinction (whether framed biologically or culturally) and all attempts to change one's birth gender (whether physiologically or socially)<sup>141</sup> – are sinful rebellion against our Creator. As our Creator, God explicitly stipulates in His Word that the only legitimate and acceptable sexual desires and sexual acts are those between a man and a woman within the context of marriage.<sup>142</sup>

## SECTION IV – SALVATION

Salvation is the work of God whereby a guilty sinner is made fit to be and finally brought into the presence of a holy God solely on the basis of God's grace through the finished work of Jesus Christ, and not on the basis of any human effort.<sup>143</sup> It is judicially accomplished by Christ's sacrificial death to absorb sin's penalty<sup>144</sup> and by the merit of Christ's righteous life<sup>145</sup> being applied to the account<sup>146</sup> of the one who comes to the Lord in humble repentance<sup>147</sup> and sincere faith or belief.<sup>148</sup> This work of God will necessarily result in a change of the recipient's life,<sup>149</sup> from one of willful rebellion<sup>150</sup> to one of growing in humble obedience.<sup>151</sup> Though the sinner receives the benefit, the purpose of salvation is to the praise of the glory of God's grace.<sup>152</sup>

Salvation can be broken down into many elements since they are separately spoken of in Scripture. Some of them can be placed in a definite order because Scripture is clear on the matter.<sup>153</sup> Other elements, however, are not as clearly delineated by God's Word as to their sequence. Some indeed, probably occur almost simultaneously as one comes to Christ in saving faith. We have placed our discussion of the various elements of salvation in the order that can most easily be supported by Scripture and fits best with a God centered process of salvation in which He and not man is glorified.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Gen. 1:27; 5:1; 9:6; James 3:9

<sup>138</sup> Gen. 1:27; 5:1-2; Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

<sup>139</sup> Gen. 1:27; 2:7, 22

<sup>140</sup> Gen. 18:10; Lev. 12:2, 5, 7

<sup>141</sup> Deut. 22:5; 1 Cor. 11:14-16

<sup>142</sup> Gen 2:24; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Matt. 5:28; 19:4-6; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 7:1-5; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Th. 4:3-8; 1 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 13:4

<sup>143</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; 2 Timothy 1:9; Isaiah 64:6

<sup>144</sup> 1 Peter 1:18-19; Acts 20:28;

<sup>145</sup> Romans 5:18-19

<sup>146</sup> Romans 8:3-4, 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21

<sup>147</sup> Luke 24:47-48; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20

<sup>148</sup> John 3:16, 3:18, Galatians 2:16, Ephesians 2: 8-9

<sup>149</sup> Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; Hebrews 12:14; James 2:14-26

<sup>150</sup> John 3:19-20; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:21

<sup>151</sup> Luke 9:23; 1 Peter 1:2

<sup>152</sup> Ephesians 1:6, 12 & 14; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

<sup>153</sup> Romans 8:29-30

<sup>154</sup> Ephesians 1:6, 12 & 14



## ELECTION

Before the foundation of the world God sovereignly and graciously chose in Christ those whom He would save.<sup>155</sup> God's election was not caused by any human initiative or will,<sup>156</sup> or in response to His anticipation of what man would do as He looked into the future (aberrant definition of foreknowledge). Indeed, foreknowledge means that God chose to have an intimate relationship<sup>157</sup> with certain individuals before time began.<sup>158</sup> God's election is based solely on His sovereign grace and mercy.<sup>159</sup> God's election is in perfect harmony with His attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, and wisdom.<sup>160</sup> Sovereign election does not contradict nor negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,<sup>161</sup> nor does it negate the Christian's responsibility to boldly proclaim the gospel to all men.<sup>162</sup>

## ATONEMENT

The atonement is the necessary<sup>163</sup> work that Christ accomplished in His life<sup>164</sup> (in that He showed Himself qualified to be the perfect sacrifice) and death<sup>165</sup> to earn the salvation of His elect. The atonement showed Christ's love<sup>166</sup> and justice<sup>167</sup> as He took the sins of His people upon Himself.<sup>168</sup> Christ's death was an actual atonement for the elect and not a potential atonement for everyone.<sup>169</sup> Four terms are seen commonly in Scripture that show how the atonement met the needs that we have as sinners. First, because we deserve to die as a just penalty for our sin,<sup>170</sup> Christ died as a *substitutionary sacrifice* for us.<sup>171</sup> Second, because we deserve to bear Christ's wrath against us,<sup>172</sup> Christ died as a *propitiation* (the sacrifice that appeased or satisfied the wrath of God) for our sins.<sup>173</sup> Third, because we are alienated from God and hostile to Him by our sins,<sup>174</sup> Christ's death *reconciled* His people to God.<sup>175</sup> Fourth,

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<sup>155</sup>1 Peter 1:1-2; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9

<sup>156</sup>John 1:12-13; Romans 3:10-12, 9:16

<sup>157</sup>Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 1:25, 7:23; John 10:27, 13:18; Romans 11:2, 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2

<sup>158</sup>Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9

<sup>159</sup>Titus 3:4-7; Romans 9:15; Ephesians 1:4-7

<sup>160</sup>Romans 9:11-14

<sup>161</sup>Ezekiel 18:23 & 32, 33:11; John 3:16, 18 & 36, 5:40; Acts 17:30-31 Romans 10:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12;

Revelation 22:17

<sup>162</sup>Romans 10:13-17; Matthew 28:19-20

<sup>163</sup>Luke 24:25-26; Hebrews 2:17, 9:23, 25-26

<sup>164</sup>Romans 5:19; Hebrews 4:15, 7:26 & 28

<sup>165</sup>John 3:16; Romans 3:24-25, 5:8

<sup>166</sup>John 3:16; Romans 5:8

<sup>167</sup>Romans 3:25-26

<sup>168</sup>Isaiah 53:6; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24

<sup>169</sup>Isaiah 53:4-6, 8b, 10-11, 12b; Matthew 1:21, 20:28; John 6:37, 39, 44, 10:11, 15, 25-30, 11:51-52, 17:6, 9, 20;

Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 10:28;

<sup>170</sup>Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 1:32, 5:12, 6:21 & 23, 8:13; Ephesians 2:1,4-5

<sup>171</sup>Isaiah 53:4-6, 12; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:10-13; Hebrews 9:26-28; 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18

<sup>172</sup>Psalms 7:11; John 3:36; Romans 1:18, 9:22; Ephesians 2:3, 5:6; Colossians 3:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:10

<sup>173</sup>Romans 3:24-25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10

<sup>174</sup>Isaiah 59:2; Ephesians 4:18; Colossians 1:21

<sup>175</sup>Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:19-21

because we are in bondage to sin and the kingdom of Satan,<sup>176</sup> Christ died to *redeem* His people out of that bondage,<sup>177</sup> and make us slaves to righteousness.<sup>178</sup>

## GOSPEL CALL

Scripture speaks of two types of “gospel calls.”<sup>179</sup> The “external/general call” to salvation and the “internal/effectual” call to salvation can be clearly discerned from God’s Word. Both calls are required for salvation to occur. They can be defined as follows:

**The external/general call** occurs when anyone hears the proclamation of the gospel message. All believers are commanded by God to evangelize everyone.<sup>180</sup> This general call was modeled by Christ,<sup>181</sup> the apostles,<sup>182</sup> and others,<sup>183</sup> and should be done at all costs<sup>184</sup> by believers as they are God’s instruments of spreading the gospel.<sup>185</sup> Many do not respond and in fact reject this gospel call.<sup>186</sup>

**The internal/effectual call** is a supernatural act of God in which He uses the verbal proclamation of the gospel<sup>187</sup> to summon His elect<sup>188</sup> to Himself in such a way that they will respond in saving repentant faith<sup>189</sup> as He builds His church.<sup>190</sup> This call is invincible in that all whom the Father calls will come in repentant faith,<sup>191</sup> and all who come in repentant faith the Father will receive.<sup>192</sup>

## REGENERATION

Regeneration is a supernatural work of God, primarily of the Holy Spirit, by which a new spiritual nature and life are given.<sup>193</sup> It is instantaneous and accomplished solely by the power of God, and not the human will,<sup>194</sup> through the instrumentality of the Word of God,<sup>195</sup> so that the believer is spiritually born again to be a new creation.<sup>196</sup> This work of the Holy Spirit combined with the effectual calling of the Father<sup>197</sup> secures voluntary obedience to the command

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<sup>176</sup>John 8:34 & 44; Romans 6:6, 17-18; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 3:8, 5:19

<sup>177</sup>Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24; Galatians 3:13, 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 Peter 1:18-19

<sup>178</sup>Romans 6:17-22; Titus 2:14

<sup>179</sup>Matthew 22:14

<sup>180</sup>Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; 2 Corinthians 9:19-23

<sup>181</sup>Matthew 7:13-28; 11:28; Mark 1:14-15

<sup>182</sup>Acts 2:14-41; 3:12-26;

<sup>183</sup>Acts 7, 8:4

<sup>184</sup>2 Timothy 2:9 & 10

<sup>185</sup>Romans 11:14-15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

<sup>186</sup>Matthew 7:13-14, 22:14; John 3:18-20;

<sup>187</sup>Romans 1:16, 10:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

<sup>188</sup>2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 9:15

<sup>189</sup>John 6:37; Acts 2:39; 13:48

<sup>190</sup>“Church” is literally “called out ones” – 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 1:5-6, Romans 8:28 (“the called” definite article); 1 Peter 2:9

<sup>191</sup>John 6:37, 44; John 17:12; Romans 8:29-30

<sup>192</sup>John 1:12, 6:37

<sup>193</sup>John 3:3-8; 1 Peter 1:3 & 23; Ephesians 2:5; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5; Ezekiel 36:26-27

<sup>194</sup>John 1:12-13;

<sup>195</sup>James 1:18; John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:23

<sup>196</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17

<sup>197</sup>John 6:37, 44 & 65; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

to repent and believe the gospel.<sup>198</sup> Regeneration is evidenced by man exercising repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (conversion), and a pattern of righteous living.<sup>199</sup>

## CONVERSION (FAITH/REPENTANCE)

Conversion occurs when an individual, after being regenerated<sup>200</sup> and having received the internal effectual call of God, willingly responds to that gospel call.<sup>201</sup> It involves one's repentance from sins<sup>202</sup> and placing one's faith or belief<sup>203</sup> in Jesus Christ alone<sup>204</sup> as Savior<sup>205</sup> and Lord<sup>206</sup> for salvation. Salvation, including the aspects of repentance and faith, is a gift from God.<sup>207</sup> Repentance is an acknowledgement of one's own sin against God,<sup>208</sup> a heartfelt sorrow for that sin,<sup>209</sup> a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to God to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.<sup>210</sup> True faith or belief is more than knowing the facts of the gospel or believing them to be true.<sup>211</sup> It is a complete trust in, reliance upon, or commitment to Jesus Christ as He is revealed in Scripture, receiving Him in all of His offices.<sup>212</sup> Christ is presented in God's Word as Prophet (the one whose words are true and tell us the way of salvation),<sup>213</sup> as Priest (the sacrifice for our sins),<sup>214</sup> and King (the one to whom we owe our allegiance as Savior and Lord).<sup>215</sup>

## JUSTIFICATION

Justification is a legal act of God in which He declares us to have a righteous standing before Him.<sup>216</sup> This verdict from God pardons us from the guilt and penalty of sin,<sup>217</sup> and imputes Christ's righteousness to our account.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>198</sup>Acts 16:14; Mk. 1:15

<sup>199</sup>1 John 2:29, 3:9, 4:7, 5:1-4

<sup>200</sup>Acts 16:14; 1 John 5:1 — John's reasoning throughout 1 John describes the actions of those that *have been* "born again". This includes a decreased pattern of sin (3:9); love for the brethren (4:7); the ability to overcome temptation (5:3-4); protection from Satan (4:4 & 5:18); and belief (5:1).

<sup>201</sup>Matthew 11:28

<sup>202</sup>Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 4:17, 9:14; Mark 1:4-5; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 8:22, 14:15, 17:30, 20:21; Revelation 9:20-21, 16:8-11

<sup>203</sup>John 1:12, 3:16, 3:18; Romans 10:9; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9

<sup>204</sup>Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24; John 10:1-9, 14:6; Acts 4:12

<sup>205</sup>Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; Ephesians 5:23; Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:10; Titus 3:4 & 6; 1 John 4:14

<sup>206</sup>Romans 10:9-10; Jude 4 ("Lord" here is gr. *despotes* – master, Lord, one with supreme authority – same in 2 Peter 2:1 – both passages are describing *false teachers* that deny the Lordship of Christ)

<sup>207</sup>Daniel 9:13; John 4:10; Acts 5:30-31, 11:18; Romans 2:4, 5:15-16, 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 6:4

<sup>208</sup>Psalms 51:1-4; Acts 3:26, 26:18

<sup>209</sup>Matthew 11:20-21; 2 Corinthians 7:10

<sup>210</sup>Isaiah 55:6-7; Matthew 3:8; Acts 14:15, 26:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:9

<sup>211</sup>James 2:19

<sup>212</sup>1 Corinthians 15:1-4;

<sup>213</sup>John 1:14, 6:35, 14:6; Acts 3:22-23

<sup>214</sup>Hebrews 3:1, 4:14-16, 10:11-14

<sup>215</sup>Mark 8:34-37; Luke 14:24-33; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4; Revelation 19:16

<sup>216</sup>There is a sense of "declared righteous" vs. "made righteous" in Deuteronomy 25:1; Proverbs 17:15; Isaiah 5:23; Luke 7:29; Romans 3:20, 26 & 28, 4:5, 5:1, 8:30, 33-34, Galatians 2:16, 3:6, 3:24

<sup>217</sup>Psalms 32:2; Romans 4:5-8, 5:1, 8:1, 33-34; 2 Corinthians 5:19

<sup>218</sup>Romans 4, 5:16-17

Justification comes to us entirely as a gift by grace to be received through repentant faith, completely apart from any works righteousness or merit on our part.<sup>219</sup>

## ADOPTION

Adoption is an act of God, that occurs in conjunction with our conversion (faith and repentance),<sup>220</sup> whereby He makes us His children.<sup>221</sup> Our resultant relationship from being adopted into God's family has many implications including:

- 1) We have the privilege of relating to God as a good and loving Father.<sup>222</sup>
- 2) We have the privilege of being heirs with Christ.<sup>223</sup>
- 3) We have the privilege of being led by the Holy Spirit.<sup>224</sup>
- 4) We have the privilege of being disciplined by a loving Father.<sup>225</sup>
- 5) We have the privilege of relating to fellow believers as brothers and sisters in Christ.<sup>226</sup>
- 6) We have the privilege of imitating our heavenly Father in His holiness,<sup>227</sup> and of honoring our heavenly Father to bring glory to Him.<sup>228</sup>
- 7) We are no longer children of wrath.<sup>229</sup>
- 8) Jesus is not ashamed to call us brethren.<sup>230</sup>

## SANCTIFICATION

At the moment of salvation, every believer is *positionally sanctified* by the Holy Spirit<sup>231</sup> (set apart to God, from sin to be His dedicated possession)<sup>232</sup> into union with Jesus Christ,<sup>233</sup> and is therefore identified as a saint ("holy one").<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>219</sup>Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:25-28, 4, 5:1; Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5

<sup>220</sup>John 1:12; Galatians 3:26

<sup>221</sup>John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; 1 John 3:1-2

<sup>222</sup>Psalms 103:13-14; Matthew 6:9, 32, 7:11; Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:7

<sup>223</sup>Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:4

<sup>224</sup>Romans 8:13-14

<sup>225</sup>Hebrews 12:5-6

<sup>226</sup>Matthew 12:50; Romans 1:13, 8:12, 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10, 6:8, 7:15; 1 Timothy 5:1-2; James 1:2, 2:15

<sup>227</sup>Ephesians 5:1; 1 Peter 1:14-16;

<sup>228</sup>Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-15; 1 Peter 3:7

<sup>229</sup>Ephesians 2:3

<sup>230</sup> Heb. 2:11

<sup>231</sup> 1 Cor. 12:13; 2 Thess. 2:13

<sup>232</sup>Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9

<sup>233</sup> Rom. 6:3-7

<sup>234</sup>John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 6:11; Hebrews 10:10, 13:12

There is also, by the believer's submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit and obedience to the word of God by faith<sup>235</sup>, a progressive sanctification by which the believer's life is continually brought into increasing conformity with the reality of his position in Christ – that is, becoming transformed into the image of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>236</sup>

Every saved person is involved in a daily conflict – the new creation in Christ doing battle with the flesh. The struggle stays with the believer and is never completely ended all through this earthly life. While the total eradication of sin (sinless perfection) is not possible in this life, we are no longer slaves to sin and adequate provision is made for victory in every temptation, by faith through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.<sup>237</sup>

## ETERNAL SECURITY

It is the privilege of God's children to be completely sure of their eternal security in Christ.<sup>238</sup> As we deal with the issue of our eternal security in Christ, it is important that we understand four terms – eternal security, preservation, perseverance, and assurance.

**Eternal security** means that all who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and granted faith and repentance by the Holy Spirit, cannot fall from grace and are eternally saved.<sup>239</sup>

**Preservation** is what God does through His almighty power as He “preserves” the faith that He has given us and causes us to persevere in the faith until the end.<sup>240</sup>

**Perseverance of the saints** is characteristic of believers. They persevere in trusting Christ as evidence of those who are truly born again – not only in *word*, but also in *deed* until the end of their lives or the rapture of the saints.<sup>241</sup> Scripture clearly teaches that *only* those who persevere to the end were ever truly born again.<sup>242</sup> When God saves an individual they are truly changed<sup>243</sup> and therefore it would be inconsistent with their new nature to use their liberty in Christ as a license for sinful living and carnality.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Gal. 2:20

<sup>236</sup> John 17:17 & 19; Romans 6:1-22; Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, 5:23

<sup>237</sup> Romans 6, 7:14-25; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:12; Colossians 3:9; 1 Peter 1:14-16;  
1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 1:8-10

<sup>238</sup> 1 Jn. 5:13; 2 Pt. 1:11

<sup>239</sup> John 3:16, 3:36, 5:24, 6:38-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5

<sup>240</sup> John 17:11 & 15; 1 Corinthians 1:6-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5;  
Jude 1:24-25

<sup>241</sup> Matthew 24:13; Mark 13:13; John 8:31-32, 15:6; Romans 11:22; Colossians 1:21-23; 2 Timothy 2:12; Hebrews 3:14;  
James 2:14-17

<sup>242</sup> 1 John 2:19

<sup>243</sup> Romans 6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9

<sup>244</sup> Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:11-14

**Assurance** means that we are able to know with confidence the reality of our salvation, and it can be discerned through the objective testimony of Scripture,<sup>245</sup> and the increasing fruit of righteousness observed in one's own life.<sup>246</sup> Through these realities the Holy Spirit produces confidence that the believer is indeed a child of God.<sup>247</sup>

## DEATH AND THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF THE BELIEVER

Physical death is the means (prior to the rapture) by which the believer is brought into the presence of the Lord, and therefore it is something that we should eagerly anticipate.<sup>248</sup> Death for the believer is not an expression of God's wrath or condemnation, but is the entrance into that which is truly life.<sup>249</sup> Our death does not result in any loss of our immaterial consciousness<sup>250</sup>, our soul will pass immediately into the presence of Christ,<sup>251</sup> and our corruptible body will undergo decay on the earth.<sup>252</sup> As our soul is separated from our body, all of the sinful propensities that are associated with our flesh (body, members) will be forever gone.<sup>253</sup> Until our complete glorification, our redeemed souls will remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>254</sup>

## GLORIFICATION

For believers, our glorification is complete when our redeemed souls are reunited with our new glorified bodies in the resurrection. These bodies are incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual. We will spend the rest of eternity in our glorified state worshipping and serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.<sup>255</sup>

## SECTION V – THE CHURCH

### UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL

All who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body,<sup>256</sup> the bride of Christ,<sup>257</sup> the church of which Christ is head.<sup>258</sup>

The formation of the Church, the Body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost<sup>259</sup> and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>245</sup>John 3:16, 3:36, 6:38-40, 10:27-30; Romans 8:38-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 5:13

<sup>246</sup>Matthew 3:8-15, 7:15-20, 13:3-23; John 14:21, 15:1-11; Romans 8:1; 1 John 2:3

<sup>247</sup>Romans 8:16-17

<sup>248</sup>2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23

<sup>249</sup>Romans 8:1

<sup>250</sup>Revelation 6:9-11

<sup>251</sup>Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23

<sup>252</sup>1 Corinthians 15:35-50

<sup>253</sup>Romans 6:11-19, 7:13-25, 8:23, 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 9:27, 15:50-57; Philippians 3:20-21; James 4:1;

<sup>254</sup>2 Corinthians 5:8

<sup>255</sup>John 6:39; Romans 8:10-11, 23-25; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:1-3

<sup>256</sup>1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5

<sup>257</sup>2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:23-32; Revelation 19:7-8

<sup>258</sup>Ephesians 1:22, 4:25; Colossians 1:18

<sup>259</sup>Acts 2:1-21, 38-47

<sup>260</sup>1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

The universal Church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age.<sup>261</sup> The church is distinct from Israel,<sup>262</sup> a mystery not revealed until this age.<sup>263</sup>

The New Testament Scriptures clearly teach that the universal Church is established and propagated through the agency of local churches<sup>264</sup> and that the members of this one spiritual Body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies that conform to Scripture.<sup>265</sup>

## LEADERSHIP

The one supreme authority for the Church is Christ,<sup>266</sup> and His authority is directly mediated via His Spirit and His Word.<sup>267</sup> The Biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders<sup>268</sup> and deacons,<sup>269</sup> both of whom must meet biblical qualifications.<sup>270</sup>

These leaders lead or rule as servants of Christ<sup>271</sup> and have authority in directing the church. The congregation is to submit to their leadership in all manners of church life.<sup>272</sup> In general the elders are to be involved in spiritual shepherding such as ministry of the word and prayer, whereas deacons are involved in the day to day ministry activities of serving the body in practical ways.<sup>273</sup>

Each local church is autonomous in its own government, free from any external human authority or hierarchy of persons or organizations, yet all are subject to Christ.<sup>274</sup> Autonomy is not meant to exclude interdependence among local churches as they cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the gospel.<sup>275</sup> The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well, under the guidance of God's Spirit and in accordance with the commands and principles in God's Word.<sup>276</sup>

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the church is to glorify God<sup>277</sup> by building itself up in the faith,<sup>278</sup> by making disciples through the proclamation of the gospel and the Word,<sup>279</sup> by fellowship with one another,<sup>280</sup> by doing these things showing the

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<sup>261</sup>Ephesians 2:11-3:6

<sup>262</sup>1 Corinthians 10:32

<sup>263</sup>Ephesians 3:1-6. 5:32

<sup>264</sup>Acts 14:23, 27, 20:17,28; Galatians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:1

<sup>265</sup>Hebrews 10:23-25

<sup>266</sup>1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18

<sup>267</sup>John 14:26, 15:26; 16:13, 17:14-21; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Peter 1:19

<sup>268</sup>Acts 20:28-32; 1 Peter 5:1-4

<sup>269</sup>Philippians 1:1

<sup>270</sup>1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-5

<sup>271</sup>1 Timothy 5:17-22

<sup>272</sup>Hebrews 13:7,17

<sup>273</sup>Acts 6:1-4

<sup>274</sup>Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

<sup>275</sup>1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:3-4

<sup>276</sup>Acts 15:19-31, 20:28; 1 Corinthians 5:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-4

<sup>277</sup>Ephesians 3:21

<sup>278</sup>Ephesians 4:13-16

<sup>279</sup>Matthew 28:19; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2

<sup>280</sup>Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3

wisdom of God to heavenly beings,<sup>281</sup> by standing for the truth of God's Word,<sup>282</sup> by maintaining the purity of the church<sup>283</sup> to provoke Israel to jealousy,<sup>284</sup> and by keeping the ordinances.<sup>285</sup>

## ORDINANCES

Two ordinances/sacraments have been perpetually committed to the local church: Baptism<sup>286</sup> and the Lord's Supper<sup>287</sup>. Both baptism and the Lord's supper serve as means of grace in the Christian life; they encourage and strengthen the faith of believers by reminding them of, and thereby freshly affecting them with, the grace of God to them in Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5-7; 1 Cor. 11:26). As visible signs of spiritual realities, the ordinances powerfully depict to believers the grace of their union with Christ (in Baptism) (Rom. 6:3-7) and grant the grace of a special communion with Christ (in the Lord's Supper) (1 Cor. 10:16).

**Christian baptism** by immersion in water<sup>288</sup> is an expression of the believer's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior. It is the solemn and beautiful visual testimony of our union with Christ in which we portray death to sin and resurrection to a new life.<sup>289</sup> It is also a sign of initial fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ.<sup>290</sup> While not necessary for salvation, water baptism is commanded and an act of obedience for all who come to saving faith.<sup>291</sup>

**The Lord's Supper** is the ongoing commemoration and proclamation of Christ's death until He comes, by eating bread, signifying His body broken, and drinking the cup, signifying His blood, shed on our behalf.<sup>292</sup> The Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination.<sup>293</sup> Whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the body and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper nevertheless is an actual communion with the believer and the risen Christ.<sup>294</sup>

## SECTION VI – THE SPIRITUAL REALM

### ANGELS

Angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. As a different order of being than man, they were created to serve and worship God in the spiritual realm and do not experience marriage, reproduction, or redemption.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>281</sup>Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12

<sup>282</sup>1 Timothy 3:15

<sup>283</sup>Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2

<sup>284</sup>Romans 11:11-12

<sup>285</sup>Acts 2:38-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

<sup>286</sup> Acts 2:38

<sup>287</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:23-29

<sup>288</sup> Acts 8:36-39

<sup>289</sup> Romans 6:1-11

<sup>290</sup> Acts 2:41-42, 8:12-17, 10:47-48

<sup>291</sup> Acts 10:47; 1 Corinthians 1:17

<sup>292</sup>Luke 22:19-20; John 6:53

<sup>293</sup>1 Corinthians 11:28-32

<sup>294</sup> 1Corinthians 10:16-17

<sup>295</sup> Mark 12:25; Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7, 2:6-7 & 16; Revelation 5:11-14, 19:10, 22:8-9



## SATAN AND DEMONS

Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He and numerous angels fell and incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against their Creator,<sup>296</sup> and by introducing sin into the human race by Satan's temptation of Eve.<sup>297</sup> Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man,<sup>298</sup> the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,<sup>299</sup> and shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire.<sup>300</sup> Although Satan and his minions are powerful beings, they are completely subservient to the sovereign will of almighty God.<sup>301</sup> Although the Apostles were given power to and did exercise control over demons,<sup>302</sup> believers have no power in and of themselves to do so. They have not been called to direct or order the activity of Satan and his demons, and should recognize that only God Himself is able to do so.<sup>303</sup> Rather, believers are called to resist the devil and rely on the Word of God to give them strength to do battle with Satan.<sup>304</sup> Since believers are called to resist Satan, we can say that believers can be *influenced and tempted* by Satan; however, believers cannot be *possessed* (or enslaved) by Satan to the point of having no ability to resist sin and temptation.<sup>305</sup>

## DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE OF THE UNBELIEVER

All mankind will undergo a bodily resurrection after death – the saved to eternal life in heaven,<sup>306</sup> and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment in hell.<sup>307</sup> The souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment in hell until the second resurrection,<sup>308</sup> when the soul and a resurrection body will be united.<sup>309</sup> They shall then appear at the Great White Throne for judgment, and shall be cast into the lake of fire, cut off from the life of God forever, as a just retribution and punishment for their sins.<sup>310</sup>

## SECTION VII – LAST THINGS

### THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH

The return of the Lord Jesus is imminent and will be a personal, bodily return to remove His church from the world prior to the period of the Great Tribulation.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Ezekiel 28:11-19

<sup>297</sup> Genesis 3:1-15

<sup>298</sup> 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10

<sup>299</sup> Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14

<sup>300</sup> Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10

<sup>301</sup> Job 1:6-12; Luke 22:31-32; Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 12:10-11

<sup>302</sup> Mark 6:7 & 13; Luke 10:1 & 17

<sup>303</sup> 2 Peter 2:10-11; Jude 8-9

<sup>304</sup> Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 6:4, 11, 14; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:11-16; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9;

<sup>305</sup> Luke 4:2; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 6:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8.

<sup>306</sup> John 6:39; Romans 8:19-23; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57; 2 Corinthians 4:14

<sup>307</sup> Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; Revelation 20:13-15

<sup>308</sup> Luke 16:19-26; Revelation 20:13-15

<sup>309</sup> John 5:28-29

<sup>310</sup> Isaiah 59:18; Daniel 12:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15

<sup>311</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, 5:9

## THE TRIBULATION PERIOD

Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth, the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world.<sup>312</sup> These 7 years are the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniels prophecy.<sup>313</sup> This period will also serve to purify the nation of Israel, and prepare her for entrance into the Millennial Kingdom, and Jesus Christ's literal reign on earth.<sup>314</sup>

## THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND HIS MILLENNIAL REIGN

These judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth, at which time He will strike down the unbelieving nations at the Battle of Armageddon.<sup>315</sup> Christ will occupy the throne of David,<sup>316</sup> tribulation martyrs will be raised and the living will be judged,<sup>317</sup> and Jesus will establish His Messianic kingdom for a literal thousand years on the earth.<sup>318</sup> During this time, all the resurrected and glorified saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth.<sup>319</sup> This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and the removal of Satan from the world.<sup>320</sup>

The kingdom itself will be the literal fulfillment of God's promise to Israel<sup>321</sup> to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience.<sup>322</sup> The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside,<sup>323</sup> but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing.<sup>324</sup> This time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life.<sup>325</sup>

## THE JUDGMENT OF THE LOST AND HELL

Satan will be released after the thousand year reign of Christ<sup>326</sup> and will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints. At that time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven.<sup>327</sup> Following this, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone<sup>328</sup> whereupon Christ, who is the judge of all men<sup>329</sup>, will resurrect and judge the unsaved dead at the Great White Throne of Judgment and they will be committed to an eternal, conscious punishment in the lake of fire.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 9:27, 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16

<sup>313</sup> Daniel 9:24-27; Matthew 24:15-31; 25:31-46

<sup>314</sup> Jeremiah 30:7; Ezekiel 20:33-38; Zechariah 13:8-9

<sup>315</sup> Matthew 24:27-31, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 16:16, 19:11-21

<sup>316</sup> Matthew 25:31; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11, 2:29-30

<sup>317</sup> Revelation 20:4-6; Matthew 25:31-43 (Note: the exact timing of the resurrection of Old Testament saints is not clearly specified in Scripture, but it will certainly be prior to the Millennial Kingdom – Daniel 12:2-3).

<sup>318</sup> Revelation 20:1-7

<sup>319</sup> Ezekiel 37:21-28; Daniel 7:18,22,27; Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:4-6

<sup>320</sup> Daniel 7:17-27; Revelation 19:20-21, 20:1-3

<sup>321</sup> Isaiah 65:17-25; Ezekiel 27:21-28; Zechariah 8:1-17

<sup>322</sup> Deuteronomy 28:15-68

<sup>323</sup> Matthew 21:43; Romans 11:1-26

<sup>324</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 20:33-38, 36:22-32; Zechariah 12:10, 13:8-9

<sup>325</sup> Isaiah 11, 65:17-25; Ezekiel 36:33-38

<sup>326</sup> Revelation 20:7-8

<sup>327</sup> Revelation 20:9

<sup>328</sup> Revelation 20:10

<sup>329</sup> John 5:27; Acts 17:30-31

<sup>330</sup> Romans 2:5-10, 3:19; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 20:11-15

## THE ETERNAL STATE

After the closing of the millennium and the judgment of unbelievers, the redeemed will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved<sup>331</sup> and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells.<sup>332</sup> The heavenly city will come down out of heaven,<sup>333</sup> and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another.<sup>334</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ, His redemptive mission coming to full fruition, will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father<sup>335</sup> that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever.

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<sup>331</sup> 2 Peter 3:10

<sup>332</sup> Ephesians 5:5

<sup>333</sup> Revelation 21:1-2

<sup>334</sup> John 17:3; Revelation 21-22

<sup>335</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:24-28