

# DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

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## SALVATION TESTIMONY

When I was 7 years old, my mother took my brother and me to the Anglican church where she had grown up. However, I stopped attending the church after around one year because I had to prepare for the year-end exams, and I never returned to that church after the exams. I was taught and had always believed that there was a God, but I was completely ignorant about how to have a relationship with that God.

It wasn't till I was around 9 years old when Pastor Ott and several other church members were giving out tracts at the Tampines N2 shopping area and he invited my family to attend Grace Independent Baptist Church. Seeing how the church provided free transportation and the services were in English (my English was poor), my mother thought it would be a good idea for us to attend. My brother and I started attending the Joy Club on Saturdays, Sunday School and Morning Worship Service. In these classes, my teacher taught me that sin had broken my relationship with God. God desires for men to be reconciled with Him and He provided the way for us to be at peace with God. That way is the way of salvation whereby the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again the third day from the tomb, conquering sin, hell, death, and Satan.

Additionally, I was given some Bible correspondence courses to work on at home. In these courses, the salvation message was very clearly presented. At age 10, I accepted the Lord Jesus as my personal Savior and Lord. After I was saved, I was burdened for the souls of my schoolmates. I told them that I was a Christian and found opportunities to witness to them. I had the privilege of attending Vacation Bible School and being involved in the Christian program, tracting, and the music ministry of the church. I also enjoyed attending church camps as a teenager. These times of learning and fellowship were used by the Lord to grow me as a believer. When I was 15 years old, I was baptized by immersion at Grace Independent Baptist Church and that gave me even greater avenues of service.

## CALL TO THE MINISTRY

I was determined to be as involved in the local church as much as possible. When the Lord opened the door to attend Bob Jones University, I chose Music Education as my major because I intended to be a music teacher and choir director after graduation. Furthermore, I intended to be as active as possible in the ministry of GIBC, especially the music ministry.

During the Christmas vacation of my freshman year at Bob Jones, Pastor Ott arranged for me to visit his eldest daughter's family in Wisconsin. While I was there, I also visited many of Pastor Ott's supporting churches, where many asked if I was the one to take over the church after Pastor Ott retires! That was news to me! I really had not thought about serving the Lord as a minister, but that was when the Lord planted the seed of ministry in my heart. I visited Mr. Ott's second eldest daughter during the Christmas vacation of my sophomore (second) year and I attended a preaching conference for men who desired to enter the ministry. I felt the conviction of the Lord upon me during the final message of the conference and the Lord burdened me to enter the ministry with that message.

When I returned for my spring semester, I adjusted my schedule of classes so I could take Greek and more Bible classes to prepare myself for seminary training. After I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Music Education in 2004, I continued at Bob Jones University Seminary for two more years and graduated with a master's degree in Bible at 2006.

When I returned after graduation, I served as Assistant Pastor of Grace Independent Baptist Church under Pastor Ott. A year later, I married the most wonderful woman in the world, Melanie! A month after we got married and returned to Singapore, Mrs. Ott discovered after a routine physical checkup that her cancer had come back in a very aggressive way. Pastor Ott decided to recommend me to the senior pastorate so that they could return to the United States should Mrs. Ott's condition deteriorate. They eventually returned to the United States a little over a month before she passed away.

During these four short years in the ministry, the Lord has taught me much through the experiences He has brought me through. I have been humbled many times and the Lord has taught me to depend on Him for everything. I pray that I would stay teachable and love our Lord more each day.

# BIBLIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

## *Revelation of the Word of God*

### **General Revelation**

I believe that God has revealed Himself through creation (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20), providence (Acts 14:17), and human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). Therefore, all men are responsible for the knowledge of God as He has revealed to all men His own existence, transcendence, and immanence (Exo. 3:14; Rom. 11:33-36; Acts 17:27). However, because this knowledge does not show how men can be reconciled with God, it is insufficient.

### **Special Revelation**

I believe God has revealed Himself in a more specific way. His character, requirements, and promises are revealed through special revelation. This happens when God directly communicates to man (Gen. 2:16-17; Acts 9:3-6), and it climaxes with the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1-5, 14-18; 1 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13). Today, God's complete special revelation is found exclusively in His written Word, the Bible (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

## *Inspiration of the Word of God*

I believe that every word of the Bible (*verbal*; Mt. 5:18; Lk. 16:17) and the totality of the sixty-six books of both the Old and New Testaments (*plenary*; 2 Tim. 3:16) are breathed out by God (*inspiration*). The original manuscripts (*autographa*) of both the Old and New Testaments were breathed out by God through His Spirit's influence over certain men in such a way that their writing constitutes the revelation of God (2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Sam. 23:2). Hence, the Bible reflects the personalities and backgrounds of the human authors, but is entirely the Word of God and free from error in the original manuscripts (*autographa* Ps. 12:6; 19:7; Dan. 10:21; Jn. 10:35). Because the Bible's divine Source is God, it is free from error or untruthfulness (*inerrant*; Ps. 12:6; Jn. 17:17).

## *Authority of the Word of God*

Because the Bible is inspired of God and therefore infallible (incapable of failing in purpose) and inerrant (wholly true; never false), it is also authoritative in our lives. The Bible claims inherent authority (Isa. 55:11; 2 Tim. 4:2). It contains all the guidance needed to be saved, sanctified, and equipped for service (*sufficiency* 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12); it is true (Jn. 10:35) and determinative for faith and practice (*authoritative*; Ps. 19:7-11; 119:9-11). The Bible is not subject to one's private interpretation (2 Pet. 1:20) and it warns against adding to or deleting from God's Word (Dt. 4:2; Pro. 30:5-6; Rev. 22:18-19).

## *Canonicity of the Word of God*

I believe that the canon (definitive collection of divinely inspired books) is limited to the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. The OT writers frequently expressed that their writings are divinely inspired (Lev. 1:1; Hos. 1:1) and God's people came to recognize that fact (Josh. 1:7-9; 1 Ki. 2:3; Dan. 9:2). Jesus affirmed the canonicity of the OT (Mt. 5:18; Lk. 24:44) and promised that His disciples as guided by the Holy Spirit would be agents of new revelation (Jn. 14:26; 16:13). Hence, the NT writers also recognized the divine inspiration of their own writings (1 The. 4:15; Rev. 1:3-4) and likewise regarded the writings of other authors of the Bible (2 Pet. 3:15-16).

Ultimately, the Word of God authenticates itself through the work of the Spirit in illuminating God's Word in a believer's inner man (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:14). I also believe that once the canon is completed, God ceased to give special revelation (Eph. 2:20; Rev. 22:18-19).

### ***Preservation of the Word of God***

I believe that the Word of God was written in the autograph in the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek and is preserved through the totality of extant manuscripts for subsequent generations of Christians (Ps. 119:89, 160; Isa. 40:8, Mt. 24:35, 1 Pet. 1:25). Scripture also affirms its permanence in a way that implies that it will continue to exist in written form (Ps. 119:152, 160; Matt. 24:35). I reject verbal, plenary preservation of one particular translation as there is no biblical warrant for such a position.

### ***Translation of the Word of God***

I believe that a translation that faithfully and appropriately renders the autographs into another language is the Word of God. This is clear from the frequent reference in the NT of the Septuagint (Greek OT) as authoritative (Mt. 1:22-23; Rom. 11:26-27). While there are various translation philosophies, I prefer translations based on formal equivalence (word-for-word translation) because the reader would have the most direct access to God's Word and there is greater accuracy in the rendering of the original languages.

### ***Interpretation of the Word of God***

#### **Perspicuity**

I believe that the central teaching of the Word of God, especially regarding salvation, is clear and can be easily understood by those who are seeking God and willing to obey God's commands (Ps. 119:105, 130; 2 Tim. 3:14-17).

#### **Illumination**

The believer is given a regenerated mind to understand and accept the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:14-15, Eph. 1:17-19, Ps. 119:18, 1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Illumination communicates the significance of the divine message to human recipients. This ability is not given to an unbeliever.

#### **Grammatical-Historical Interpretation**

Since all communication involves interpretation and is capable of misinterpretation, we ought to give careful attention to how we interpret Scripture. I believe that the literal, grammatical, and historical interpretation of Scripture is critical to right doctrine (2 Tim. 2:15, Neh. 8:8, Ezr. 7:10). This approach takes into account the inherent grammar of the language, the particular historical and cultural context of the text, as well as the genre in which the passage was written.

#### **Application**

The Word of God is written so that we might be changed into the image of God (2 Cor. 3:18; Jam. 1:23-25). Therefore, the interpretation of God's Word should result in application of God's Word in the lives of believers so that they might grow and become more like Jesus.

# THEOLOGY PROPER: DOCTRINE OF GOD

## *The Existence of God*

I believe in the existence of one God in three persons. Throughout Scripture, the existence of God is assumed (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:1; 1 The. 1:9; Heb. 11:6). Men deny God because they suppress their innate knowledge of God and as a result, they are judicially hardened (Rom. 1:18-32).

## *The Nature of God*

### **Triunity of God**

I believe that there is only one true and living God (Isa. 45:5-6; 1 Tim. 2:5) and His name is Yahweh or Jehovah (Exo. 3:15, Ps. 20:7). He is a personal (Gen. 1:26-28; 6:6; Acts 15:8), self-existent (Jn. 5:26; Acts 17:25), and indivisible (Dt. 6:4) spirit (Jn. 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17). Yet, each member of the Godhead (Father—1 Cor. 15:24; Son—Jn. 1:1; Holy Spirit—Acts 5:3-4) are identified as God and each is a distinct person (Mt. 27:46; Jn. 14:26; 15:26). Therefore God is one Being who exists in three co-equal Persons (Mt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14) and that the Persons have existed and related to one other as Father, Son and Holy Spirit from all eternity (Jn. 1:18; Heb. 9:14).

### **Attributes of God**

I believe that God is worthy of praise in every aspect of His character (1 Tim. 1:17). The term that describes God's character is His holiness. That term speaks of God's separateness and uniqueness as Creator over His creation (Exo. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 57:15).

God's attributes can be divided into two categories: God is **great** and God is **good**.

The **greatness** of God is shown in His ...

**Sovereignty**—God is in control and rules over all things as He pleases (Dan. 4:35; Ps. 115:3).

**Eternality**—God is not bound by time and has no beginning or end (Ps. 90:2; Rev. 1:8).

**Omnipotence**—God has limitless power to do anything He wills (Mt. 19:26; Isa. 43:13; Eph. 3:20).

**Omnipresence**—God is not limited by space but is continually present everywhere (Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23-24).

**Omniscience**—God knows everything (Ps. 139:1-4; 1 Jn. 3:20).

**Wisdom**—God knows the best objectives and the best way to achieve these objectives (Ps. 104:24; Rom. 11:33).

**Immutability**—God never changes but is constant (Mal. 3:6; Jam. 1:17; Ps. 102:26-27).

The **goodness** of God is shown in His...

**Righteousness**—God perfectly fulfils all obligations and standards of His own character (Dt. 32:4; Ps. 11:7).

**Love**—God willingly sacrifices and gives for the good of man by His choice (Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:7-10).

**Mercy**—God shows compassion and is tender-hearted towards sinners (Ps. 86:15; Lam. 3:22; Lk. 6:36).

**Grace**—God offers unmerited favour to sinners (Exo. 34:6; Eph. 1:5-8; 2:8-9).

**Patience**—God withholds punishment toward sinners for a long time (Ps. 103:8; Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

**Justice**—God is fair in all His dealings (Gen. 18:25), whether it be punishing the wicked (Rom. 1:18) or rewarding the righteous (Ps. 58:11).

### **The Works of God**

I believe that God acts for His own glory (Rom. 11:36), as displayed in the following works:

**Creation**—The triune God (Gen. 1:26) made the universe out of nothing (Heb. 11:3) in six twenty-four hour days (Exo. 20:8-11, Gen. 1:1-2:3; Rev. 4:11) by God's bare word (Ps. 33:6, 9).

**Providence and Preservation**—God upholds and sustains His creation (Neh. 9:6), His people (Jn. 10:27-30), and unbelievers (Ps. 104).

**Government**—God directs all things to fulfill His decreed purposes (Pro. 16:1, 4, 9, 33; Eph. 1:11).

**Existence of Evil**—God is sovereign over all, but He cannot be blamed for moral evil (Hab. 1:13; Jam. 1:13). While God has permitted evil to take place (Gen. 50:20; Exo. 7:3; Ps. 105:25), God sometimes uses evil to fulfill His purposes (Pro. 16:4; Acts 2:23; 4:27) and to display His own glory (Rom. 9:14-24).

**Prayer**—God works through prayer to bring about His perfect will. Therefore believers must pray for God's purposes to be accomplished in the earth (Jn. 16:24; Jam. 4:2-3; Mt. 6:10).

**Miracles**—God occasionally works through supernatural ways (Exo. 15:11; Jn. 20:30-31). The primary purpose of miracles is to confirm the authenticity of God's revelation. This purpose explains why miracles cluster around three short periods of biblical history where new eras of revelation start: the founding of Israel as God's covenant nation (Moses and Joshua; Exo. 4:1-9); the proliferation of prophets to warn Israel about idolatry and its consequences (Elijah and Elisha; 1 Ki. 17:23-24); and the inauguration of the New Covenant age and the founding of the church (Jesus and the apostles; Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3-4).

# CHRISTOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

## *Person of Christ*

### **Deity of Christ**

I believe that Jesus Christ is fully God. Jesus Himself claimed to be God (Jn. 8:21-23, 42; 14:9). Scripture contains explicit assertions about His deity (Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:1; Rom 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:19; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 1:3). These divine attributes demonstrate Christ's deity (eternality—Jn. 8:58; omnipotence—Mt. 8:26-27; omnipresence—Mt. 28:20; omniscience—Jn. 2:23-25; sinlessness—Heb. 4:15). Christ also accepted the worship others gave to Him (Mt. 28:17; Jn. 20:28; Rev. 5:12-13).

### **Humanity of Christ**

I believe that Jesus Christ is fully man. The Scriptures explicitly asserts Christ's humanity (Acts 17:31; 1 Tim. 2:5). Christ's experiences on earth are human. He had a body that grew and matured (Lk. 2:7, 40). He thirsted (Jn. 4:7; 19:28), hungered (Mt. 4:2), suffered fatigue (Jn. 4:6), and died (Heb. 2:9; Jn. 19:30-33). He experience a full range of human emotions (Mt. 8:10; 9:36; 26:38; Lk. 10:21; Jn. 11:35; 12:27; 13:21; Heb. 5:7) and He was tempted (Mt. 4:1-11; Heb. 4:15). People in His day regarded him as a normal man (Mt. 13:54-58).

### **Incarnation of Christ**

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who humbly condescended to become a man through the virginal conception (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:35). Therefore Christ exists as one Person with two natures (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:24) and each nature, though distinct, is inseparable from the other. The use of some of His divine attributes was laid aside for a time (Lk. 2:52) and although His human nature makes it theoretically possible for Him to sin, the union of that nature with the divine nature made it impossible for Him to sin (Heb. 4:15).

## *Work of Christ*

I believe that Jesus is the Christ (*Messiah*—Anointed One) and He fulfills His Messianic work by fulfilling the three OT offices perfectly. He is the perfect *Prophet* who reveals the Father and His will (Dt. 18:15-18; Jn. 1:18; 15:15; Acts 3:22-26; Heb. 1:1-2). He is the perfect *Priest* who represents us before God by offering Himself as a sacrifice in our behalf and interceding for us (Heb. 2:17; 7:24-27; 10:12-14). He is the perfect *King* who rules over the kingdom of God (2 Sam. 7:12-14; Lk. 11:20; Col. 1:13; Rev. 11:15).

### **Pre-incarnate Works**

I believe that Jesus has been eternally active. Before creation, the second Person of the Godhead enjoyed fellowship within the Trinity (Jn. 17:5). He was the Agent of creation (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16). During the OT period, He seems to have appeared as the Angel of the LORD (Yahweh) (e.g., Gen. 16:7-14).

### **First Advent Works**

I believe that Christ took on flesh as a man primarily to accomplish the substitutionary atonement (Mk. 10:45). Through that, Christ displayed His sovereignty in triumphing over Satan (Gen. 3:15; 1 Jn. 3:8), His love in rescuing sinners from His wrath (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8) and His justice in designing a just way to declare sinners righteous (Rom. 3:21-26).

**Method** of atonement:

Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to the law of God (Mt. 3:13-15; Gal. 4:4-5; Phil 3:8-9). He experienced physical and spiritual death as God's penalty for sin (Isa. 53:4-6; Mt. 27:46; Lk. 23:33, 46; 2 Cor. 5:21). He resurrected bodily from the dead to confirm that God accepted His work (Mt. 28:1-7; Rom. 4:24-25; 1 Cor. 15:1-8) and ascended to God's right hand to portray the completion of His work (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 1:3; 10:12).

**Nature** of the substitutionary atonement:

**Sacrifice**—Jesus' blood was sufficient to be the perfect sacrifice to wash away sins of all men (Mt. 26:28; Heb. 9:24-28).

**Propitiation**—Jesus' death on the cross satisfies God's righteous anger against sin (Rom. 3:25-26; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10).

**Expiation**—Through Jesus' death on the cross, God can forgive the sins of men (Heb. 10:18-22).

**Redemption**—Jesus' blood was the ransom paid (Mk. 10:45; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19) for those enslaved to sin (Eph. 1:7), Satan (Heb. 2:14-15), and the law (Gal. 3:13; 4:5) so we can be God's special possession (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Rev. 5:9-10).

**Reconciliation**—Sin has broken the relationship between God and man. Jesus' death restores the relationship by taking on the wrath of God for man and thereby brought peace between the repentant sinner and God (Rom. 5:1, 10; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).

**Extent** of the Atonement:

God desires the salvation of all people, and Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, for peoples of every age should they come to Him in repentant faith (Jn. 1:29; 3:16-17; 6:51; 12:46-48; Rom. 3:25; 2 Cor. 5:14, 19; 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 4:10; 2 Pet.3:9; 1 Jn. 2:2).

God decreed the salvation of certain people and thus secured their exercise of repentant faith so that they would enjoy the application of the atonement (Jn. 10:15; 15:13; Rom. 8:28-39; Eph. 1:4; 5:25; 1 Tim. 4:10; Rev. 9-10; 1 The. 5:10).

### **Present Works**

I believe that Jesus Christ, as the second Person of the Godhead, continues to minister in an active way. He sustains creation (Col. 1:17; Heb 1:3). He intercedes for His people (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:24-25). As the Head of the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23), He is building (Mt. 16:18), ruling (Eph. 1:20-23; Rev. 1:13-20), and perfecting His Body, the church (Eph. 4:7-16) through the ministry of the Spirit (Jn. 14:16-18; Acts 2:33). He is with us wherever we go (Mt. 18:20; 28:20) and is preparing the eternal dwelling place for the saints (Jn. 14:2).

### **Second Advent Works**

I believe that Jesus Christ will return bodily (Acts 1:11) to rapture His church (1 Thess. 4:14-17). He will then return to establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Rev. 20:6), judge the world (Jn. 5:22-29; Acts 17:31), conquer the powers of darkness (Rev. 20:7-15), and reign eternally with His saints (Rev. 22:5).

# PNEUMATOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

## *Nature of the Holy Spirit*

### **Person of the Holy Spirit**

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead, not a mere influence or force. He is called the Comforter and masculine pronouns are used in reference to Him (Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13-14). He is described as having a mind (1 Cor. 2:10-11), will (1 Cor. 12:11), and emotions (Eph. 4:30). His personal work includes teaching (Jn. 14:26; 16:13; Acts 15:28), convicting sin (Jn. 16:8), commanding (Acts 13:2, 4), and interceding for believers (Rom. 8:26-27). He can be sinned against by being resisted (Acts 7:51), lied to (Acts 5:3), quenched (1 The. 5:19), grieved (Eph. 4:30), and blasphemed (Mt. 12:31-32).

### **Deity of the Holy Spirit**

I believe that the Holy Spirit is fully God as the Father and Son are. He is synonymously referred to as God and Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4), Spirit of God and Christ (Rom. 8:9-11). He has divine attributes of eternality (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), and omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10-11). His divine works include creation (Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4), inspiration of Scripture (Acts 1:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), virginal conception of Jesus (Lk. 1:35), regeneration of men's hearts (Jn. 3:5-8; Tit. 3:5), and the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Rom. 8:11). The Holy Spirit is also recognized as co-equal with God the Father and God the Son (Mt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2)

## *Work of the Holy Spirit*

### **In The Old Testament**

The third member of the Godhead was involved in creation (Gen. 1:2). He exerted moral influence (Gen. 6:3; Ps. 143:10). He anointed individuals for specific divine tasks (Ex. 31:1-3; Num. 11:17; Judg. 6:34; Zec. 4:6) and was a purifying presence (Ps. 51:11; Neh. 9:20).

### **In the Life of Christ**

The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus during His earthly ministry (Lk. 4:1; 10:21; Isa. 11:1-2) and in fulfilling the Father's will (Mt. 4:1; 12:18). The Spirit anointed Christ at His baptism, thus identifying Christ as the Messiah (Mt. 3:16-17). The works of Christ were done through the Spirit's power (Mt. 12:24-27, 31). Christ rose from the dead by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:11).

### **In the Life of Believers**

**Conviction**—The Holy Spirit convicts the lost of sin (Jn. 16:7-11).

**Regeneration**—The Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life to a person (Jn. 3:5-8; Tit. 3:5).

**Baptism**—Baptism of the Holy Spirit was predicted by John the Baptist and Jesus (Mt. 3:11; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16) and fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 11:16). Today, the believer's baptism into the Spirit occurs at regeneration and is not a second work of grace (1 Cor. 12:13). It is distinct from the filling of the Holy Spirit.

**Indwelling**—The Spirit takes up permanent residence in the believer (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19).

**Sealing**—The Holy Spirit is the earnest (down-payment) of the believer's heavenly inheritance (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14).

**Illumination**—The Spirit will lead believers into all truth (Jn. 14:26; 16:13) and assist believers in understanding the Bible (1 Jn. 2:20; 27).

**Sanctification**—The Holy Spirit transforms the believer into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18) by producing godly characteristics (Gal. 5:22-23) as the believer yields himself to the Spirit's influence (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18) and mortifies sin (Rom. 8:13).

**Assurance**—The Spirit confirms to the believer that he is a child of God (Rom. 8:14-16; 1 Jn. 3:24).

**Intercession**—He prays for the believer according to God's will (Rom. 8:26-27).

**Empowering**—He enables the believer for spiritual service (Jn. 14:12; 16:7).

### ***The Gifting by the Holy Spirit***

#### **Verbal vs. Manual Gifts**

There are various passages in the NT about spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 4:11). The Holy Spirit sovereignly (1 Cor. 12:11) and graciously (Rom. 12:6) gives each believer at least one special ability to serve Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10). These gifts can be broadly categorized as verbal gifts and manual gifts (1 Pet. 4:11). The believer's responsibility is to faithfully use his gift(s) to build up the body of Christ for God's glory (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:14; 1 Pet. 4:10-11).

#### **Temporary vs. Permanent Gifts**

I believe that some spiritual gifts have ceased after the church was established in the first century. These include speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecy (foretelling). Speaking in tongues is the most widely misunderstood spiritual gift. It is not ecstatic speech or heavenly language but a miraculous empowering to speak in a known human language not previously learned (Acts 2:4-11). This and other miraculous signs and wonders were given for the purpose of confirming the preaching of the Gospel by the early church (Heb. 2:3-4). Even if the gift exists today, it would need to be practiced according to the guidelines established by Paul (1 Cor. 14:26-35). Furthermore, there has been no observable continuity of sign gifts in subsequent church history after the establishment of the early church. This gift should not be made a test of spirituality (1 Cor. 12:8-11; 14:1-4).

# ANGELOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

## *Nature of Angels*

I believe in the existence of angels. They are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14) that are innumerable (Rev. 5:11), personal (Lk. 8:28; 15:10; Heb. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:12), unable to reproduce themselves (Mt. 22:30), and immortal (Lk. 20:36). They were created by Christ (Col. 1:16) before the world was created (Job 38:4-7), and were all holy initially (Jude 6). Angels are not omniscient (1 Pet. 1:12), omnipresent, or omnipotent (Dan. 10:13), and they should not be worshipped (Col. 2:18). However, they do possess supernatural powers (Mt. 28:2; 2 Pet. 2:11; Rev. 12:7-8) and hence they are superior to man (Ps. 8:4-5; Heb. 2:6-10).

Angels differ in types and appearance (Isa. 6:2; Eze. 1:5-14; Rev. 4:6-9; 10:1). The seraphim (Isa. 6:2-3) have six wings; the cherubim (Gen. 3:24; Exo. 25:17-22; Ps. 18:10) minister near God's throne. Some appear as a wheel and full of eyes (Eze. 1:15-21; 10:16-17). As spirit beings they are invisible (Acts 23:8-9; Col. 1:16) but when revealed, they appear as men (Gen. 18:2, 16, 22; Lk. 1:11-20; 24:4). They are organized into ranks and functions and are described as thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, and powers (Eph. 1:21; 3:10; 6:12; Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15). They are subject to God's sovereign rule (2 Pet. 2:11; Jude 9).

## *Unfallen Angels*

I believe that majority of the angelic beings were faithful and obedient to God during the rebellion of Lucifer (Isa. 14:12). They are called holy (Mk. 8:38) and elect (1 Tim. 5:21) and worship God fervently (Job 38:7; Isa. 6:3; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-12). God used them to impart revelation (Lk. 1:26-38; Acts 7:53) and eventually they will also judge the wicked (Gen. 19:13; Mt. 13:39-42; Acts 12:23; 2 The. 1:7-8).

Some angels in Scripture are named: Michael the archangel (Dan. 10:13; Jude 9) and Gabriel the kingdom messenger (Dan. 8:15-16; 9:21; Lk. 1:19, 26). There are classes of angels: the cherubim guard the entrance to the Garden of Eden after the fall (Gen. 3:24) and serve in close proximity to God's throne (Ps. 18:10; Eze. 10:1-22). The seraphim are in constant worship of the Lord (Isa. 6:2-5).

Angels also minister to believers (Heb. 1:14) through their assistance in answering prayers (Dan. 9:20-27; Acts 12:5-11), physical protection and deliverance (Ps. 91:11-13; Mt. 18:10; Acts 5:19; 12:5-11); encouragement (Acts 27:23-25); guidance (Acts 8:26; 10:3, 22); carrying souls to heaven (Lk. 16:22).

## *Fallen Angels*

### **Satan**

I believe that Satan exists. He is a created angelic being (Job 1:6; 2:1) who chose to rebel against God in pride (1 Tim. 3:6). He was "Lucifer," the angel of light before the fall (Isa. 14:12) but rebelled against God and was thrown out of heaven (Isa. 14:12-15; Eze. 28:11-19). He then entered a serpent and presented the temptation that led to the first human sin (Gen. 3:1-6). Since then, he has displayed great influence over the fallen world (Jn. 8:44) as the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2) and god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4). But the sacrificial death of Christ ultimately renders Satan powerless (Gen. 3:15; Jn. 16:11; Eph. 1:19-21; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:8). Nevertheless, as the adversary, Satan continues to blind unbeliever's eyes to the truth (Mt. 13:19; 2 Cor. 4:4), counterfeits God's work (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 12:9), resists the advance of the gospel (1 Pet. 5:8; 1 The. 2:18); accuses believers (Job 1, 2; Rev. 12:9-10), and tempts men

to sin (2 Cor. 2:11; 1 The. 3:5). Satan will be especially active during the Tribulation (Rev. 12:7-9), bound during the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-3), released for a short period (Rev. 20:7-8) and eventually cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

### **Demons**

I believe one third of the angelic beings rebelled against God (Rev. 12:3-4; Mt. 12:24). They are referred to as demons (Jam. 2:19), unclean spirits (Mk. 1:23), and angels of Satan (Mt. 12:24). Some have already been sent to judgment (2 Pet. 2:4); others remain free awaiting eventual judgment for their sins (Mt. 8:28-29; Rev. 20:1). Meanwhile, these demons blind the eyes of men to idolatry (1 Cor. 10:20; Rev. 9:20) and deceive people through false doctrine (1 Tim. 4:1). They inflict physical illness (Lk.13:11) and can control people internally (Mt. 8:16). They hinder believers in various ways (2 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 6:12). However, they are controlled by God (Lk. 11:20; 2 Cor. 12:7-9), essentially defeated (Col. 2:15) and doomed to eternal punishment (Mt. 25:41; 1 Cor. 6:3; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

### **Spiritual Warfare**

I believe in the reality of spiritual warfare (1 Pet. 5:8), but I do not believe that a believer can be possessed by a demon since he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Jn. 4:4). Neither does the NT give us a mandate to rebuke, bind, or expel demons from others. Rather, it cautions believers in this regard (Jude 8-9). Still, we must not be ignorant of the schemes of the devil (2 Cor. 2:11). We are to defend ourselves from Satanic attacks with the gospel, the Scriptures, and prayer (Eph. 6:13-18). We must not give the Devil a foothold in our lives by tolerating sin (Eph. 4:26-27). We are assured that no angelic power can separate us from God's love (Rom. 8:38-39) and that Satan will flee from us if we resist him and obey God (Jam. 4:6-7).

# ANTHROPOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

## *Origin of Man*

I believe that God created Adam, the first man, on the sixth day of creation (Gen. 1:26-31) out of dust (Gen. 2:7). God made Eve from one of Adam's ribs, to be his companion and helper (Gen. 2:18-24). The entire human race traces its roots to this original couple (Gen. 1:28; 3:20; Acts 17:26).

## *Nature of Man*

### **Image of God in Man**

I believe that man is the climax of creation because he was the only creature made in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27). Every man in the human race carries that image (Gen. 5:1-3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jam. 3:9). The image encompasses every way in which man is like God. This includes elements of man's mind, will, and emotion. Man is also a moral (Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 2:14-16; Eph. 4:24), spiritual (Gen. 2:7), social (Gen. 3:8-9), and immortal (Ps. 23:6; Matt. 25:21; Rev. 21:1-4) being. Because man is made in God image, cruelty, discrimination, and murder are reprehensible (Acts 17:26; Jam. 3:9; Gen. 9:6). Also, since human life begins at the moment of conception, abortion is murder (Ps. 51:5; 139:13-16).

### **Composition of Man**

I believe that man is made of two basic parts: material and immaterial (Gen. 2:7; Mt. 10:28; 1 Cor. 7:34; 2 Cor 7:1; Jam. 2:26; 3 Jn. 2). The terms "spirit" and "soul" are used interchangeably in Scripture, so it is difficult to distinguish them meaningfully (Jn. 12:27; Lk. 1:46-47).

### **Genders of Man**

I believe that God created mankind as male and female. Both men and women are equal in nature, value, and spiritual status. This is also seen in marriage where believing spouses are fellow-heirs of salvation (1 Pet. 3:7) and have equal access to God (Gal. 3:27-28).

However, God has given men and women different roles and responsibilities. The husband is head over his wife (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23) and must lead his wife in a way that shows Christ's love for the church (Eph. 5:23-25; Col. 3:19; 1 Pet. 3:7). The wife must subject herself to her husband (Eph. 5:22, 24, 33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-6).

Male leadership applies in the church as well, where God prohibits women from teaching or having authority over men (1 Cor. 14:33-36; 1 Tim. 2:11-14; 3:2, 4-5; Tit. 1:6).

### **Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage**

Marriage is a covenant relationship (Pro. 2:16-17; Mal. 2:14-16) for the purposes of companionship (Gen. 2:20), procreation (Gen. 1:28; Mal. 2:15), and pleasure (Pro. 5:18-20; Ecc. 9:9; Heb. 13:4). Marriage is a beautiful picture of Christ's relationship with His church (Eph. 5:22-33).

A believer should marry a fellow believer (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-15). A Christian who is married to an unbeliever should strive to win the spouse to the Lord by means of a godly testimony (1 Cor. 7:12-14; 1 Pet. 3:1-2).

God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16) and it is not His will that a person divorce the spouse and remarry (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5-8; 1 Cor. 7:10-11; Rom 7:1-3). The exception clause allowing for divorce and remarriage (Mt. 5:32; 19:9-10) does not clearly identify the nature of the exception. The only clear warrant for remarriage is the death of a spouse (Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39).

As such, I will not encourage divorce, I will warn divorcees against remarriage, and I will not perform a wedding for a divorcee. A divorcee is allowed to serve in the church except as a deacon, elder, or teacher (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Tit. 1:6).

A divorcee should be willing to forgive the spouse (Mt. 18:21-22) and should make all efforts to be reconciled to him/her (1 Cor. 7:10-11). God forgives all sins that are repented of (Mk. 3:28; 1 Jn. 1:9), and the church should likewise embrace repentant divorcees (2 Cor. 2:7-8).

### ***The Fall of Man***

I believe man was created sinless but man chose to disobey the command of God and so the entire human race was infected with sin (Rom. 5:12). Man disobeyed God by eating of the tree of life (Gen. 2:8-9) and that resulted in death, both spiritual (Gen. 3:10) and physical (Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 5:12). Man would struggle with the created order because man would have to toil to provide for his family (Gen. 3:17-19); woman would experience pain and sorrow during childbirth and would struggle with submission to her husband (Gen. 3:16). Sin would severely mar the image of God in man (Gen. 1:31; Ecc. 7:29).

# HAMARTIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

## *Nature of Sin*

I believe that sin is failing to conform to God's will in terms of action, attitude, or nature (1 Jn. 3:4; 5:17; Gal. 3:10; Exo. 20:17; Mt. 5:27-28). Sin is described in various ways in the Bible. Sin is described as missing the mark of God's perfect standard (Rom. 3:23); rebelling against God's commands (1 Jn. 3:4); violating God's standards (1 Jn. 5:17); unbelief in God (Heb. 11:6). Sin is defined as transgression (crossing the line— Num. 14:41-42; Rom 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:14; Jam. 2:11); iniquity (deviation from a straight course, crookedness—Lev. 19:15); lawlessness and rebellion (1 Jn. 3:4; Rom. 1:30; 2 The. 2:3); and irreverence for God (Jude 15; Rom. 1:18)

## *Origin of Sin*

I believe that sin entered creation first by Satan when he sought to lift himself above God (Isa. 14:12-15; Jn. 8:44). When he was cast down into earth with a third of the angelic beings (Rev. 12:4), he sought to tempt man, who was created sinless, to sin against God. Deceived by Satan, Eve chose to eat of the fruit of the tree of life to satiate her personal desires in direct violation to God's command (Gen. 3:1-6). She ate the forbidden fruit and then Adam ate (Gen. 3:6; 1 Tim. 2:14). Thus, the essence of sin seems to be the satisfaction of personal desires in ways that are contrary to the will of God (Jam. 1:13-15).

## *Imputed Sin*

I believe that God imputed the guilt of Adam's sin to all men. As Adam was the divinely appointed representative for the human race, we all sinned in Adam in that sense. His disobedience was justly charged to us in the same way that Jesus' obedience is charged to believers (Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22).

## *Inherited Sin*

I believe that, as a result of Adam's fall, all men are themselves sinners (Rom. 3:10-23). We are sinners by nature (Eph. 2:3) from the moment of our conception (Ps. 51:5; 58:3). Every part of man's being has been corrupted by sin (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:18, 23), including the ability to understand spiritual things (Gen. 6:5; Eph. 4:17-19), affections (Jn. 3:19-20), and conscience (Tit. 1:15). Man has no ability whatsoever to please God (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 8:7-8). It is God's special work of grace that enables man to repent of his sin and to trust in Christ alone for salvation (Jn. 1:13; 6:44, 65).

## *Ultimate Result of Sin*

I believe that sin has to be justly dealt with and therefore God's just condemnation for sin is death (Gen. 2:17; Jn. 3:18-19; Rom. 1:18; 6:23). Man dies spiritually as he is separated from God and His life (Eph. 2:1-3; Col. 2:13). Man dies physically as his spirit is separated from his body (Rom. 5:12-21; Heb. 9:27; Jam. 2:26). If a man is not regenerated (Jn. 3:3), he will die eternally as he is separated from God forever in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:1-15).

## *Acts of Sin*

### **Degrees of Sin**

While I believe that sin has no degrees in relation to our legal standing before God (Jam. 2:10-11), I also believe some sins are more serious than others in God's eyes. This is seen in varying

legal penalties in OT law (e.g., Exo. 22), especially the distinction between unintentional and intentional sins (Num. 15:27-30); Jesus' prioritizing of the values of the law (Mt. 23:23); Jesus' statement that Judas' sin was greater than Pilate's (Jn. 19:11); the punishment of some sins with physical death (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:29-31). Sins against spiritual light are severely punished (Mt. 11:20-24).

### **Unpardonable Sin and Sin unto Death**

I believe that the most serious sin is the unpardonable sin, also called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mt. 12:31-32; Mk. 3:28-30). This sin is a decided and final rejection of Christ after a person has experienced strongly convincing manifestations of Christ's claims. This sin is unpardonable not because of any insufficiency in the atonement but because it precludes the repentance that is necessary for forgiveness. The sin unto death (1 Jn. 5:16-17) is not as serious as the unpardonable sin and in context, it likely refers to professing Christians who reject the orthodox doctrine of Christ. If they persist in this sin, they will experience eternal death under the wrath of God.

### **Infant Death**

I believe that God mercifully redeems those who die before they can mentally understand their moral accountability to God. The Scripture describes infants as morally ignorant (Dt. 1:39; Isa. 7:16) and delineates the comfort David had that he would see his deceased infant son again (2 Sam. 12:23). It also seems that God extends special redemptive mercy to people with severe mental handicaps as well as to infants who die.

### **The Christian and Sin**

I believe that while the believer is positionally in Christ and sanctified forever, his progressive and personal sanctification is a process and that he will persevere until glorification. Sin no longer has rule over the believer's life, but the believer could allow himself to be under sin's control if he fails to rely on God's grace (Rom. 6:14, 17-18).

## SOTERIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

I believe that God saves men ultimately for His glory (Rom. 8:28-30; 11:33-36; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). The grace of God, apart from human works, is the only source of salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). The atoning work of Christ is the only basis of salvation (Acts 20:21; Rom. 10:9-13). For man, salvation results in deliverance from sin and its effects (Eph. 1:7; Tit. 2:14), the restoration of God's image in man (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10), and eternal fellowship with God (Jn. 3:16).

### ***Election***

I believe God shows common grace to all men by providing for their material needs (Mt. 5:45; Acts 14:17), delaying judgment (Jon. 4:2; Rom. 2:4), convicting them of sin (Jn. 16:8-11; Rom. 2:14-15), and making provision for their salvation through the work of Christ (1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Jn. 2:2). However, God demonstrates special grace by unconditionally electing before the foundation of the world those who will be saved (Eph. 1:4; Acts 13:48). God's choice was not based on human works or decision (Rom. 9:6-18), but rather on God's predestination, His pre-determination of the destiny of His people to experience conformity to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29-30). Predestination itself is based on foreknowledge, God's intimate relationship with the elect (Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2). The fact that God chooses based on His sovereign pleasure and grace (Rom. 11:5-6) should move us to humble worship (Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 1:3-14) and fervent service (2 Tim. 1:8-12).

While the Scripture attests to God's divine, unconditional election, it also testifies to man's free will, his freedom to make a choice and to experience the consequences of the choices he makes (Gen. 2:16-17). Man has obligation to or guilt before God based on these decisions (Mt. 7:22-23; 23:37). Election far from discourages evangelism; in fact, election motivates evangelism because it guarantees that some will definitely be saved through the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 18:9-11; 2 Tim. 2:10).

### ***Effectual Calling***

I believe that God issues a general salvation call for people to be saved (Isa. 45:22; Acts 17:30) and that Christians must proclaim the gospel to all people (Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8). Man is unable to come to Christ for salvation because of his depravity (Jn. 6:44, 65). Thus God calls (in a way that guarantees salvation) on the elect to Himself (Rom. 1:6-7; 1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 24, 26; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9). This calling occurs through the preaching of God's Word and the work of His Spirit (Rom. 10:13-17; 2 The. 2:13-14). Besides conviction of sin (Jn. 16:8-11, Jude 15), this also includes illumination (1 Cor. 2:12-16; 2 Cor. 4:3-6), drawing (Jn. 6:44; 12:32), and ultimately repentance and faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

### ***Conversion***

I believe that a sinner is saved only when he willingly repents of sin and exercises faith in Christ. Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin of conversion and are both essential (Mt. 11:28-29; Mk. 1:15; Lk. 13:3, 5; 24:46-47; Acts 20:21).

### ***Repentance***

I believe saving repentance is a volitional changing of one's mind to turn away from sin and to submit to the lordship of Christ (Acts 26:20; Lk. 3:8-14). This leads to sorrow over sin (2 Cor. 7:9-10) and a desire to obey God (Isa. 55:6-7; Acts 3:19). Repentance is a gift from God (Acts 5:31; Rom. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25).

## **Faith**

I believe saving faith is a confidence in God's plan for our salvation through the work of His Son alone and a recognition that we are unable to save ourselves through human effort (Rom. 10:13; Eph. 2:8-9). True faith will evidence itself in a life of good works (Jam. 2:17-18; Lk. 3:8-14; Mt. 7:15-20; Eph. 2:10).

## ***Regeneration***

I believe that regeneration (new birth) is necessary for salvation. This occurs when God imparts His own life to the believer who once was spiritually dead because of sin and the curse (Gen. 2:17; Jn. 3:3; Eph. 2:1-6; 1 Jn. 3:9). The believer is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), a new man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), and a partaker of divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

## ***Justification***

I believe that justification is God's judicial declaration that the believer is righteous before Him (Rom. 4:5-8). God does this when he forgives us of all our sins (Acts 2:38; 2 Cor. 5:19; Eph. 1:7) and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 5:17-19; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). God can justly and righteously do this because His declaration is based on Christ's substitutionary atonement on the cross (Mt. 3:13-15; Gal. 4:4-5; Isa. 53:11; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Pet. 3:18). Justification is a gift received by repentant faith alone and cannot be earned by meritorious works (Rom. 3:24; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:8-9). Because believers have been justified, they escape eternal condemnation (Rom. 8:1), and are free from any accusation before the court of God's justice (Rom. 8:33-34).

## ***Adoption***

I believe that all believers have been predestined to receive the status as sons of God (Eph. 1:5). In principle the believer possesses this status upon conversion (Gal. 4:4-5); however, the adoption awaits consummation in the future when the effects of sin's curse on all creation are reversed and our bodies are glorified (Rom. 8:15-23).

## ***Sanctification***

I believe that sanctification is a process in which a believer becomes more like Christ and more separate from sin (Rom. 8:29; Tit. 2:14; 1 The. 4:7). A Christian is positionally sanctified at the point of conversion (1 Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11). At that point, a believer is as righteous as Christ is (Rom. 4:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; cf. "Justification" above). The power of sin has been broken (Rom. 6:14, 17-18). The believer will experience total sanctification upon seeing Christ (1 The. 3:13; cf. "Glorification" below). In the meantime, throughout his earthly life, the believer pursues progressive sanctification, which is an increasing conformity to the image of God as revealed in Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 2 Pet. 3:18). Believers are progressively sanctified as they feed on God's Word (Ps. 19:7-11; 119:9, 11; Jn. 17:17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), pray fervently (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 The. 5:17; Jam. 5:13-16), and participate in the ministry of fellow believers in the local church (Eph. 4:11-16, 29).

## ***Divine Role***

I believe sanctification is a work of God (1 The. 5:23) because God frees the believer from the bondage of sin (Rom. 6:1-10). He also enables the Christian to desire and to do what is pleasing to Him (Phil. 2:13). The Holy Spirit is the special Agent in this ministry, working to produce qualities of Christlikeness in believers (Eph 5:18ff; Gal 5:16ff). God has granted all believers all resources necessary for a godly life (2 Pet. 1:3).

### **Human Role**

I believe, on the other hand, that believers have active roles to play in sanctification through disciplined effort (Phil. 2:12; 1 Tim. 4:7). He must understand the reality of his union with Christ and resist sin (Rom. 6:1-14). He must put off the attitudes and actions of the old self which he has put off at conversion (Eph. 4:20ff; Col. 3:8ff). As he responds to the Holy Spirit's working in his life, he will be able to resist and mortify the inclinations of his flesh and develop Christlikeness (Rom. 8:12-14; Eph. 5:18ff; Gal. 5:16ff; 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

### **Separation**

I believe that the doctrine of separation plays an integral part in progressive sanctification. Believers are taught to separate from the world, an anti-God system that is controlled by the devil, driven by lust, and dominates unregenerate society (Rom. 12:2; Jam. 4:4; 1 Jn. 2:15-17). Believers are to separate from false teachers, those who promote erroneous teaching (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Jn. 9-11). Christians are also commanded to separate from professing Christians who continue unrepentantly in disobedience to Scripture (Mt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; 2 The. 3:6, 14).

### **Christian Liberty**

I believe great caution must be exercised in defining Christian liberty (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8-10). This refers to a small category of matters that are morally inconsequential. Believers must take into consideration how the exercise of liberty would affect (edify or tear down) other believers (1 Cor. 10:23-30). We should always exercise liberty out of love for other believers and not for a selfish agenda (Gal. 5:13).

### ***Security and Assurance***

I believe that genuine believers will never lose their salvation (2 Tim. 1:12). God promises to preserve all believers during their time on earth so they will experience eternal life in the presence of God (Jn. 3:36; 6:38-40; 10:27-29; 1 The. 5:23-24). This security cannot take place apart from the believer's divinely enabled perseverance in faith (Mt. 10:22; Jn. 8:31-32; Heb. 10:39; 1 Pet. 1:5) and obedience (Heb. 12:14; 2 Tim. 2:19). If a professing Christian renounces Christ, his renunciation reveals that he never was a true believer in the first place (1 Jn. 2:19).

Believers receive two kinds of personal assurances of salvation. The objective basis of assurance is in Christ's finished work on the cross as revealed in the Bible (Jn. 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 8:31-39; 1 Jn. 5:12-13). The subjective means of assurance comes from the Holy Spirit's internal witness (Rom. 8:14-16; 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13) and the believer's consistent progress in godliness (Jam. 2:14-26; 1 Jn. 2:3-6; 3:4-10).

### ***Glorification***

I believe that glorification is the consummation of our salvation where all effects of sin will be delivered from the believer (1 Cor. 15:42-44). The believer will be transformed into the image of Christ upon seeing Him (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Jn. 3:2). At the resurrection he will receive a new body (Rom. 8:23; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Phil. 3:20-21). This moment is what believers expectantly wait for (Rom. 8:23).

# ECCLESIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

## *Universal Church*

### **Nature of the Church**

I believe that the universal church is made up of all believers from all over the world and from all ages since Pentecost (Mt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 12:13; cf. Acts 1:5, 8; 2:17; 11:15). The Bible uses various images to convey the church's nature. The church is called the Body of Christ, with Christ as Head, and accomplishes God's will on earth (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19). The church as the bride of Christ is the object of Christ's sacrificial love, and she is to yield to Christ (Eph. 5:22-33). The church is the temple where God dwells and is built upon Christ as the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20). The Holy Spirit indwells believers since they are the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:18-19). The church is a priesthood where a believer has free access to God in interceding for self and others (1 Pet. 2:9; 3:18; Heb. 4:16).

### **Distinctiveness of the Church**

I believe that New Testament believers have the promise of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Num. 11:29; Acts 1:8; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16), while in the Old Testament, saints were occasionally filled with the Holy Spirit on an individual and temporary basis (Exo. 31:3; Num. 11:16-17; 1 Sam. 16:13).

I believe that the church is distinct from the nation Israel. The latter was recipient of the Old Covenant blessings when she submitted to the covenant requirements (Eph. 2:11-13; Rom. 9:2-5). The former is the recipient of the New Covenant blessings which consists of all people everywhere to put their faith in Christ (Rev. 5:9). Hence, the church differs from the nation Israel in that it is not bound by any geographical location or ethnic group (Rom. 11:17-33; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-3:10; Col. 3:11); the mission differs in that the church is commanded to evangelize and make disciples (Mt. 28:18-20), while Israel was called to lead a holy lifestyle in distinction from other nations (Dt. 4:5-8).

The church is part of the kingdom of God, which is the realm of God's rule over His people (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20). Christ came to commence the Messianic form of this kingdom (Mt. 4:17; 12:28; Lk. 17:20-21). When a person puts his trust in Christ, he is delivered from the kingdom of Satan into God's kingdom (Col. 1:13). Eventually, every creature will submit to Christ's rule (Eph. 1:22-23; Ps. 2:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:24-25).

## *Local Church*

I believe the local church is made up of a body of believers that regularly meets for Bible teaching, fellowship, administration of the ordinances, and prayer (Acts 2:42-46). The overwhelming references to the church in the NT are with regards to the local church (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 The. 1:1, etc).

### **Mission of the Local Church**

I believe that the ultimate goal of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:20-21). This is manifested when a church pursues the mission of making and maturing disciples of Christ (Mt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:11-16). Disciples are made as the church faithfully declares the gospel (Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 10:13-17; 1 The. 1:5-6). The church ought to be faithful in evangelism both corporately and individually (Acts 8:4; 1 Pet. 3:15). Disciples are matured through the teaching from the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:2-4; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:17), edifying the saints through the use of spiritual gifts (Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11), and fellowshiping (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:42).

All the above climaxes when believers gather for worship on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). Distinct from the Jewish Sabbath, the Lord's Day is to commemorate the resurrection of Christ (Jn. 20:1). As such, worship services should be characterized by reverence and order (1 Cor. 14). The music utilized should be doctrinally sound and accurately reflect the character of God and not of the world (Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16). Preaching should be largely expositional in nature (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:1-2). On this day, believers also have opportunities to use their spiritual gifts in service to Christ (1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16).

### **Membership in the Church**

I believe that membership serves as a visible identity and involvement in the local church for believers. As such, every believer should seek membership after he has credibly professed faith in Christ and been baptized by immersion (Acts 2:41, 47). While the NT does not use the term "membership," it is assumed when it discusses areas like church discipline (Mt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 The. 3:1-14); listing widows to be ministered to (1 Tim. 5:3-16); recognizing and submitting to church leadership (1 The. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17). The most important purpose of membership is to provide accountability (Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 5:21). Believers can also better make use of their spiritual gifts as members (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Cor. 12:14-30).

### **Government of the Church**

I believe that Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:18). Christ makes His will known through His Word and through the leaders and members of a local church as they declare His Word. I believe in a congregational polity which emphasizes the autonomy of the local church and the individual priesthood of the believer. In following the pattern of the early church, the local congregation should be directly involved in the decision-making process of the church in matters such as church discipline (Mt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:4-6; 2 Cor. 2:6-7), election of leaders (Acts 6:1-6), and discerning sound doctrines (Acts 15:3-4, 22). The church leaders, on the other hand, have considerable authority in guiding the flock (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17). A congregational polity with a plurality of leaders seems to accurately describe the early church government.

### **Leadership of the Church**

I believe there are three terms used to describe the primary offices of church leadership. "Elder," "overseer" ("bishop," KJV), and "pastor" are used interchangeably to describe the same office (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). Because of the gravity of this office, there are biblical qualifications that must be met by those considering this office (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9). The NT speaks of plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5) who should have the ability to teach the Word of God (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9) as well as a single elder who holds the primary position of leadership among the elders (Acts 15:12-13; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:6). Women are prohibited from holding this position in the church (1 Tim. 2:12; 3:1-2).

The second office is that of a deacon. His role is to care for the material needs of the congregation so that the pastors/elders can focus on prayer and the Word (Acts 6:1-6). Any man seeking this office must meet biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

### **Ordinances of the Church**

I believe that an ordinance is a specific command of Christ which is clearly practiced by the NT church as a symbol of redemptive truth. These ordinances are not means of obtaining saving grace (sacraments) but should be observed by participant who has placed repentant faith in Christ in obedience to Him. The two ordinances practiced by the local church are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

I believe that baptism is for those who have professed repentant faith in Christ (credobaptism—Jn. 3:23; Acts 2:41; 8:38; 9:18; 10:47-48). It is a symbolic act whereby a believer is immersed (*Baptizō*—to dip Mk. 1:5, 10; Jn. 3:23; Acts 8:38-39) in water to identify with Christ and His

saving work. It symbolizes union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12). Because the act of baptism does not save, I reject the teaching of baptismal regeneration. I also reject paedobaptism (infant baptism) as there is no biblical warrant for such a practice.

I believe the Lord's Supper was instituted and commanded by Christ; with this ordinance, the church corporately remembers the atoning work of Christ on the cross by eating and drinking elements that symbolize Christ's body and blood (Mt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Lk. 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25). As believers meditate on the gospel, they are also reminded of Christ's second coming to earth to establish His millennial kingdom (1 Cor. 11:26). Believers ought to properly prepare for the Lord's Supper by examining themselves to ensure that they are not disrupting the unity of the church (which the ordinance reflects) and are worthy recipients of the elements (1 Cor. 11:27-34).

### **Discipline in the Church**

I believe since the primary purpose of membership is the privilege of accountability, one aspect of that is the formal discipline which the church must exercise on members who persist in unrepentant sin against God. This process is outlined by Christ and ought to be adhered to closely (Mt. 18:15-20). The primary purpose of discipline for the one being disciplined is restorative in nature, never merely punitive; for the church, it is to remove corrupt influences (1 Cor. 5:1-13). A disciplined member who repents ought to be forgiven and reinstated (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

### **Ecclesiastical Cooperation and Separation**

I believe there are some productive benefits from relationships with other churches of like faith and practice and also para-church organizations. However, I am opposed to efforts to unify churches at the cost of orthodoxy (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; Gal. 1:8-9; 2 Jn. 9-11). I believe that the principles of ecclesiastical separation bear application to disobedient Christian outside one's local church as well as within it. I am convinced of and hold to the separatistic position of historic Fundamentalism.

# ESCHATOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

## *Individual Eschatology*

I believe that each individual has a spiritual and eternal destiny according to how he responds to the truth of the gospel of Christ in his earthly life (Jn. 3:18, 36).

### **Death**

I believe death is a result of sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12; 6:23). Physical death awaits every creature and results in the separation of the soul from the body, rendering the body lifeless (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23). Sin also brought about spiritual death whereby the spirit of man is separated from God because of man's sin and God's holiness (Eph. 2:1; 4:18; Ps. 130:3). Man experiences eternal death when he chooses not to put his faith in Christ and will spend eternity separated from God in the Lake of Fire (Mt. 25:41-46; Rev. 20:11-14).

### **The Intermediate State**

I believe that after physical death, man's spirit continues to exist and enters the intermediate state (Ecc. 12:7). The spirit of believers will enter into the presence of Christ (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23) while the spirit of unbelievers will enter into a place of fiery torment called *sheol* (Heb.) in the OT, *hades* (Gk.) in the NT, and commonly known as hell (Lk. 16:22-31). This place is where eternal, divine punishment for sin takes place after death (Dt. 32:22; Pro. 5:5; Mt. 11:23; 16:18; Lk. 16:23).

## *General Eschatology*

I believe God's kingdom will climax in God's consummation of His reign at the end times. It begins with the imminent return of Christ to rapture the saints, hence ushering in seven years of Tribulation, after which Christ will set up His millennial reign on earth. The Great White Throne Judgment then follows, and finally, the eternal state.

### **Covenantal Foundations of Eschatology**

I believe the plan for God's kingdom is revealed and fulfilled in the following covenants. In the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-16), God specifically promised Abraham that his descendants would possess the land with specific boundaries as delineated in Gen. 15:18-21. In the Davidic covenant, God promised David that he would rule Israel forever (2 Sam. 7:12-16). In the New Covenant, God promised that Israel will be restored in the land that the Lord has promised to them (Jer. 32:37, 41; Zec. 14:1-21). Some of the promises of the New Covenant do partially apply to the church because of its participation in certain aspects of Israel's covenant (Acts 2:22-36; 2 Cor. 3:5-8; Gal. 3:6-8; Eph. 2:11-19; Heb. 8:6-13). However, this does not annul the literal fulfillment of these covenants to the nation Israel.

### **Interpretive Framework for Eschatology**

I believe dispensationalism best explains God's plans and administrations during the different periods of history. Dispensationalism is an interpretive framework with which to understand God's dealings with men throughout history and its distinctive is a literal interpretation of Scripture and distinction between the nation Israel and the church as two groups in God's overall plan. With regards to eschatology, I believe that dispensationalism's premillennial and pretribulationist position best explains eschatological passages of Scripture. Premillennialism holds to the position that Christ will return to earth to usher His thousand year rule over earth while pretribulationism holds to the position that the Christ will rapture His church before the seven years of tribulation (1 The. 4:16-17). I believe these positions best account for a literal

interpretation of Scripture, doctrine of Christ's imminent return, and most clearly distinguish the church from Israel.

### **Chronological Events of Eschatology**

I believe the next eschatological event to occur will be the return of Christ to rapture the believers. The body of dead believers will rise first to be reunited with their spirits, followed by all living believers who will be caught up to meet Christ in the air and be united with Him forever (1 The. 4:16-17).

All believers will then appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ where the Lord will, on the one hand, reward believers for their service to Him (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:9-10); on the other hand, others will suffer the loss of their earthly work for Christ (1 Cor. 3:11-15).

The Marriage of the Lamb will be held next and it is the consummation of the relationship between Christ and His Church (Mt. 25:1-13; Eph. 5:26-27).

This is followed by seven years of Tribulation where there will be unprecedented divine judgment (Mt. 24:21ff; Rev. 6-18). This judgment is prophesied by Daniel and is also known as Daniel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27) and will to be used by God to judge Israel for the purpose of converting the nation through the New Covenant (Jer. 30:7; 31:31-34; Dan. 12:1; Zec. 13:8-9). God will also pour forth His wrath on human sin during this period (1 The. 5:1-3; 2 The. 2:12; Rev. 6:15-17; 14:7). Satan will have unprecedented control through the Antichrist and the False Prophet (2 The. 2:3-4; Rev. 13). The Antichrist will sign a peace treaty with Israel that will be broken halfway into the Tribulation (Dan. 9:27; Mt. 24:15ff). The Battle of Armageddon will take place towards the end of the seven years, where the nations will war against Israel (Rev. 16:13-16). Christ will then return to the earth with His saints to destroy His enemies and to cast the Antichrist and the False Prophet into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:11-21).

After the seven years of Tribulation, Christ will reign for one thousand literal years (Rev. 20:1-6) while Satan is bound and kept from deceiving mankind (Rev. 20:1-3). All of Israel will embrace Jesus as Messiah and experience the New Covenant (Jer. 30-33; Zec. 12-14; Rom. 11:25-32); tribulation martyrs will be raised to reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4); conditions will be restored to nearly how they were prior to the fall (Isa. 2:4; 11:6-9; 65:20). While those existing during the millennial reign of Christ will be believers, those born during this period will have a choice whether or not to believe in Christ. Satan will be released at the end of this period to deceive those unbelievers. Satan and other enemies of Christ will be destroyed in this final battle and cast into the Lake of fire forever (Rev. 20:7-10).

All the unregenerate of all ages will then be resurrected to appear before the Great White Throne Judgment (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11-15), where Christ sits as Judge (Jn. 5:22-29; Acts 17:31). Those whose names are not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). There will be physical and spiritual torment for all eternity (Mt. 8:12; 13:41-42, 49-50; 18:8; 25:41, 46; 2 The. 1:9).

Finally, God will destroy the old heavens and old earth, and create a new heaven and earth for His people to dwell in eternally (Rev. 21-22). Sin and all its effects will forever be totally eradicated (Rev. 21:4, 8, 27; 22:3). The New Jerusalem will descend from heaven and God will rule and fellowship with His people forever (Rev. 21:2-3, 9-10, 12, 14, 22-24; 21:1-4).