

Statement of Faith

Lighthouse Baptist Church

Arlington, Tennessee

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The Scriptures

The Nature of Scripture

The Holy Scriptures are the very words of God.¹ They are inspired, meaning they are “God-breathed,” written by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.² They are infallible, meaning that when the Scriptures are properly interpreted, they cannot lead astray.³ They are inerrant, meaning that the Holy Scriptures, as they were written by men moved upon by the Holy Spirit, were written without error.⁴ - (1Gal. 3:8; cf. Gen. 12:1-3; Acts 1:16; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:19,20; Zech. 7:12; 3Ps. 119:9-11; 4Mt. 5:17-18; Lk. 16:17; Jn. 10:35)

Since the Holy Scriptures are the word of God, the character of God is reflected in them. The Scriptures are eternal,¹ light,² truth,³ powerful,⁴ pure,⁵ and effectual.⁶ - (1Ps. 111:7-8; 119:152; Is. 40:8; 2Ps. 119:105; Prov. 6:23; 3Eccl. 12:10; John 17:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4Is. 55:11; Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; 5Ps. 119:140; 6Is. 55:11)

The Necessity of Scripture

God has revealed Himself in the works of creation and providence so that all men are left without excuse.¹ Nevertheless, such revelation of God is insufficient to give the knowledge of God and His will which is necessary to lead to salvation.² - (1Rom. 1:19-21; 2:14,15; Ps. 19:1-3; 2Rom. 10:17)

The Scriptures are necessary because they are the sure word of God¹ and are able to lead a person to salvation through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the means of preaching.² All this is true because the Scriptures bear witness to the person of Christ.³ - (2 Pet. 1:19; 2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 10:13-15,17; Acts 8:30-38; 17:2,3; 18:28; 3John 5:39-40,46-47; Luke 24:25-27,45-47)

The Scriptures are further necessary because they are one of the means God has given to His church to sanctify and cleanse her.¹ All of the Scripture is profitable for doctrine, correction of error, reproof of sin, and instruction in a life of godliness.² The examples from the lives of other people, as presented in the Scriptures, are given for the instruction of God’s people.³ - (1John 17:17; Eph. 5:25-27; 2 Tim. 3:16; 31 Cor. 10:11; Rom. 15:4)

The Scriptures are also necessary because they are the sword by which we defeat the temptations of the evil one.¹ The Scriptures also make the preacher of the Word ready for the work of God and enable him to safeguard or rescue the people of God from all manner of grievous error.² - (1Eph. 6:11-18; Matt. 4:1-11; 2 Tim. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:13-16)

The Authority of Scripture

The authority of Scripture does not come from any man nor does it come from the church, but it comes wholly from God, the Author of all Scripture.¹ For this reason, it is to be received for what it really is, the word of God.² - (2 Peter 1:19-21; Ps. 138:2; 1 Thess. 2:13)

Our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Scripture is the result of an inward work of the Holy Spirit who bears witness with our hearts. - (John 16:13,14; 1 Cor. 2:10-12; 1 John 2:20,27)

We believe that when there is a question about the true sense of any text of Scripture, the remainder of the Scriptures must be searched out to ascertain the proper interpretation of the text in question. - (2 Pet. 1:20; Acts 15:13-17)

The Holy Scriptures are the absolute authority by which we settle all controversies of religion and by which all human creeds and confessions are validated. To magnify the opinions and doctrines of men above the words of Holy writ is to be led into error. Thus, all teachings of preachers and religious groups must to be examined in light of the Holy Scriptures. - (Eph. 2:20; Matt. 22:29,31; Acts 17:11)

The Sufficiency of Scripture

The Holy Scriptures are the only written rule for the people of God.¹ All things necessary for God's own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, are either expressly set down or implicitly stated in the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, we are to reject any attempt to add to the Scriptures or pervert the Gospel of Christ.² - (1Is. 8:20; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Gal. 1:8,9; Rev. 22:18,19)

Even though the Scripture is sufficient for the belief and practice of the church, we acknowledge the necessity of the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit for the saving understanding of what is revealed in Scripture. - (John 6:45; 1 Cor. 2:9-12)

We also acknowledge that the Scriptures are not the full revelation of all God is, because God is infinite and can never be fully revealed. (John 21:25)

The Public Ministry of Scripture

We believe that both the lost and saved are greatly benefitted by the public ministry of the word of God. The Bible contains many examples of such a ministry.¹ The public preaching of the word is used by the Holy Spirit to save sinners.² The public ministry of the word is a means of God to strengthen the church for her task.³ For this reason, the ministers of the Gospel are exhorted to preach the word.⁴ - (1Neh. 8:1-12; Acts 8:30-38; 17:2,3; 18:28; 2Acts 8:30-38; Rom. 10:13-17; 1 Cor. 1:18,21; 1 Thess. 1:5; 3Rom. 16:25; 41 Tim. 4:13-16; 2 Tim. 4:2)

God

The Attributes of God

The Lord our God, whose name is Jehovah,¹ is the only living and true God.² His existence is in and of Himself³ and His essence, which is pure spirit,⁴ is incomprehensible to all but Himself.⁵

- (¹Ex. 6:3; ²Dt. 6:4; Jer. 10:10; ³Ex. 3:14; Is. 48:12; ⁴Jn. 4:24; ⁵Job 11:7)

God is infinite,¹ eternal,² and immutable (unchangeable),³ holy,⁴ ever-present,⁵ all-wise,⁶ all-powerful,⁷ just,⁸ good,⁹ faithful,¹⁰ and love.¹¹ - (¹Job 11:7; ²Ps. 90:2; 1 Tim. 1:17; ³Mal. 3:7; Jms. 1:17; ⁴Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; ⁵Ps. 139:7-10; ⁶Ps. 147:5; 1 Tim. 1:17; ⁷Ps. 147:5; Jer. 32:17; Lk. 1:37; ⁸Is. 45:21; Ro. 3:25,26; ⁹Ps. 119:68; ¹⁰Lam. 3:23; Rom. 3:4; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Tim. 2:13; ¹¹1 Jn. 4:7,8)

The Tri-Unity of God

Although our God is one God,¹ He eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.² All three are of the same essence, being co-equal and co-eternal in all attributes and power. The Father is neither begotten nor proceeding,³ the Son is eternally begotten of the Father,⁴ and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.⁵ - (¹Dt. 6:4; ²1 Jn. 5:7; Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; ³Is. 48:12; ⁴Jn. 1:14,18; ⁵Jn. 15:26; Gal. 4:6)

The Relationship of God to His Creatures

God is all-sufficient in Himself and needs none of His creatures to sustain Him. He derives no glory from them but rather manifests His glory in, by, unto, and upon them.¹ God has sovereign dominion over all His creatures, including men and angels, to do by them, for them, and upon them whatsoever He pleases.² God's knowledge of His creatures is perfect³ and to Him is due whatever worship, service and obedience He requires as their Creator and Sovereign Lord.⁵ - (¹Job 22:2,3; Rom. 11:33-36; ²Dan. 4:34,35; ³Ps. 139:1-6; ⁵Dt. 6:5; Rev. 5:12-14)

The Decrees of God

General Teaching Concerning the Decrees of God

The decrees of God are His eternal purpose according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. - (Dan. 4:34,35; Rom. 11:36; Eph. 1:11)

Even though God has decreed all things, He does not become in any sense the author of sin, nor does He share responsibility for sin with sinners.¹ Neither, by reason of His decree, is the will of any creature whom He has made violated; nor is the free working of second causes put aside; rather it is established.² In all these matters the divine wisdom appears, as also does God's power and faithfulness in accomplishing that which He has purposed.³ - (¹Gen. 18:25; James 1:13; 1 Jn. 1:5; ²Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27,28; ³Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17)

None of the decrees of God will fail.¹ All classes of events are included in the decrees of God, including good and bad events,² sinful acts,³ free acts of men,⁴ things that appear to be by chance,⁵ the affairs of the nations,⁶ the details of individual lives,⁷ and the final destruction of the wicked.⁸ - (¹Prov. 21:19; Is. 14:24-27; 46:10-11; Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Rom. 9:19; ²Is. 45:7; Amos 3:6; Job 1:21; ³Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27,28; ⁴Prov. 16:1,9; 21:1; Rom. 8:28, 35-39; ⁵1 Kings 22:28-

34; Prov. 16:33; Jonah 1:7; ⁶2 Kings 5:1; Ps. 75:6-7; Prov. 21:31; Dan. 2:21; ⁷Ps.139:16; Matt. 10:29,30; James 4:5; ⁸Prov. 16:4; Rom. 9:17; Jude 4)

The eternal decrees of God are executed in His works of creation and providence. - (Rev. 4:11; Dan. 4:35)

Foreknowledge and the Decree of God

Only that which is certain to happen may be foreseen or foreknown. Since, however, God's decree makes certain all that shall occur, nothing can be foreseen as certain unless it was first of all decreed by God. The foreknowledge of God, then, does not refer to God's act of looking ahead in order to ascertain the actions of His creatures or the events of history. Rather, it refers to His act of foreordaining all that should come to pass. - (Acts 2:23)

We thus affirm that God's decrees are unconditional, meaning that He took no other will into consideration except His own when He decreed all things.¹ Furthermore, God's decrees are not based upon any foreseen act of man or historical event, but rest firmly upon the counsel of His own will.² - (Is. 40:13-14; Rom. 11:34; 1 Cor. 2:16; ²Acts 2:23; Eph. 1:11)

The Specific Decree of Predestination unto Life

In accordance with His eternal purpose, God decreed before the foundation of the world to permit the sin of Adam, and thus, the ruin of the entire human race.¹ From the human race, viewed by Him as fallen, God chose, in Christ, certain to everlasting glory. This choice was not made on the basis of any foreseen condition (including the exercise of faith by the elect), but was entirely of God's free grace and mere love. This decree to elect some unto life was for the praise of His glorious grace.² The rest of mankind was left to act in their sin and are justly condemned, though God patiently endures them with much longsuffering. This is done to the praise of His glorious justice.³ - (Rom. 5:15; ²Mt.25:34; Rom. 8:30; 9:13,16,22,23; Eph. 1:4-6,9,11; 1 Tim.5:21; Jude 4; Jn. 13:18; 2 Tim. 2:19; ³Rom. 9:6-24)

Not only has God foreordained the elect to glory in accordance with the eternal and free purpose of His will, but He has also foreordained the means by which His purpose will be accomplished.¹ Since His elect are children of Adam and therefore among those ruined by Adam's fall into sin, He willed that they should be redeemed by Christ² and effectually called to faith in Him by the working of His Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.³ Though the elect are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, yet in time they are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by God's power. None but the elect partake of any of these great benefits.⁴ - (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; ²1 Thess. 5:9,10; Tit. 2:14; ³Rom. 10:14-17; 2 Thess. 2:13; ⁴Jn. 6:64,65; 8:47; 10:26; 17:9; Rom. 8:28; 1 Jn. 2:19)

The high mystery of predestination unto life needs to be handled with special prudence and caution, so that believers may become assured of their eternal election through the certainty of their effectual calling. By this means the doctrine of election will promote the praise of God, and reverential awe and wonder. It will encourage humility and diligence, and bring much comfort to all who sincerely obey the gospel. - (Rom.11:5,6,20,33; Eph. 1:6; 1 Thess.1:4,5; 2 Pet. 1:10)

Election and the Proclamation of the Gospel

God's decree to elect guarantees the success of the Gospel, since all whom the Father has given to the Son by way of election will without fail come to Christ.¹ God calls the elect to faith by the preaching of the Gospel,² which He has ordained should be preached to every creature. Thus, those who are engaged in the preaching of the Gospel do so, not because they know the identity of the elect, but in obedience to the command of Christ.³ - (¹Jn. 6:37; ²2 Thess. 2:13,14; ³Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47)

Creation

The Creation of the Universe in General

In the beginning it pleased the Godhead - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - to create the heavens and the earth¹ and all things in them in six days.² All things were created good,³ out of nothing,⁴ and for the glory of God.⁵ Through creation, God glorified His eternal power, wisdom and goodness.⁶ - (¹Gen. 1:1,2; Jn. 1:2,3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; ²Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; ³Gen. 1:31; ⁴Heb. 11:3; ⁵Rev. 4:11; ⁶Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12; Ps. 104:24; Acts 14:15,16)

The Creation of Man in Particular

God created man and woman after His own image¹ in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.² He gave to them dominion over all other creatures on the earth.³ God gave man and woman immortal souls and fitted them in every respect for a life in harmony with Himself. The divine law was written in their hearts and they possessed power to obey it fully. However, they were left to the liberty of their own mutable wills, thus making the transgression of the law a possibility.⁴ - (¹Gen. 1:27; ²Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; ³Gen. 1:28; ⁴Rom. 2:12-15; Eccl. 7:29)

The law of God in general was written in the hearts of the first human pair,¹ but at the same time they were placed under a special prohibition not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Their happiness in this world and their fellowship with God depended upon complete obedience to His will, as also did the continued exercise of their dominion over the creatures.² - (¹Rom. 2:12-15; ²Gen. 1:26,28; 2:17)

Divine Providence

The Providence of God in General

God's works of providence are His most holy,¹ wise,² and powerful preserving and governing of all His creation³ and all their actions from the greatest to the least.⁴ His providence is always in accordance with the free and immutable decisions of His will.⁵ Through His acts of providence, God fulfills the eternal purposes for which He created all things, so that His wisdom, power and justice, together with His infinite goodness and mercy, might be praised and glorified.⁶ - (¹Ps.

145:17; ²Is. 28:29; ³Heb. 1:3; ⁴Ps. 103:19; Mt. 10:29-31; ⁵Ps. 33:10-11; Eph. 1:11; ⁶Eph. 3:10; Rom. 9:17; Gen. 45:7; Ps. 145:7)

The Relationship of Providence to Means

Nothing happens by chance or outside the sphere of God's providence. God is the First Cause of all events, either in action or by permission. All events happen immutably and infallibly according to His decree to which they stand related. Yet by His providence God so controls them, that second causes, operating either as fixed laws, or freely, or in dependence upon other causes, play their part in bringing the events about. - (Gen. 8:22; Prov. 16:33; Acts 2:23)

The Relationship of Providence to the Existence of Sin

God's infinite power and wisdom are so far-reaching and all-pervading, that both the fall of the first man into sin, and all other sinful actions of angels and men, proceed according to His sovereign purposes.¹ It is not that He simply gives permission, for in a variety of ways He wisely and powerfully governs sinful actions, so that they achieve His holy plans.² Still, the sinfulness involved in the actions proceeds only from angels and men and not from God who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author of sin.³ - (¹Rom. 11:11-36; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28; ²Acts 14:16; Gen. 50:20; ³Jms. 1:13; 1 Jn. 2:16; Ps. 50:21)

God allows His own people to fall for a time into a variety of temptations and to experience the sinfulness of their own hearts. His purpose is at least threefold: to teach them humility by exposing them to the hidden strength of evil and corruption remaining in their hearts, to cause them to realize their need to depend fully and at all times upon Him, and to help them to safeguard against sin in the future. In these and other ways His just and holy purposes are worked out, so that all that happens to the elect is by His design, for His glory, and for their good. - (2 Chron. 32:25,26,31; Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:7-9)

God, as a righteous judge, deals otherwise with the wicked and ungodly. He blinds and hardens their hearts because of their sins. He withholds from them the grace which might have enlightened their minds and exercised their hearts, and in some cases recalls the gifts He had bestowed upon them.¹ He abandons them to their own innate corruptions, to the temptations of the world, and to the power of Satan with the consequence that they harden themselves by the use of the very means which God employs for softening the hearts of others.³ - (¹Exod. 8:15,32; Rom. 1:24-26,28; 11:7,8; Deut. 2:30; Matt. 13:12; ²Rom. 1:24-26,28; 2 Thess. 2:10-12)

The Relationship of Providence to the Care of the Saints

God's general providence reaches out to all creatures, but in a very special way it is directed to the care of His church. All things are controlled providentially for the good of the church. - (Isa. 43:3-5; Amos 9:8,9; 1 Tim. 4:10)

The Fall of Man

The Nature of the Fall

Man, as he came from the hand of God, his Creator, was upright and perfect.¹ The Lord commanded Adam and Eve not eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. This righteous law spoke of life as conditional upon obedience, and threatened death upon disobedience.² Satan used the cunning serpent to draw Eve into sin. She then seduced Adam who, without any compulsion from without, willfully broke the law of God.³ To fulfill His own wise and holy purposes God permitted this to happen, for He was directing all to His own glory.⁴ - (¹Eccl. 7:29; ²Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-7; ³Gen. 3:12,13; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14; ⁴Eph. 1:11)

The Result of the Fall

By this sin our first parents lost their former righteousness, and their blessed fellowship with God was severed. Their sin involved us all, and by it death came upon all.¹ All men became dead in sin, and totally polluted in all parts and faculties of both soul and body.² - (¹Gen. 3:22-24; Rom. 5:12-14; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; ²Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-19,23; 5:12-21; Titus 1:15)

The family of man is rooted in the first man Adam. As he stood in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of his sin was imputed to the account of all his descendants,¹ who also from birth derived from him a polluted nature.² Conceived in sin³ and by nature children subject to God's anger,⁴ the servants of sin⁵ and the subjects of death,⁶ all men are now given up to spiritual, temporal and eternal death unless the Lord Jesus Christ sets them free.⁷ - (¹Rom. 5:12-19; ²Gen. 5:3; Job 14:4; ³Ps. 51:5; ⁴Eph. 2:3; ⁵Rom. 6:20; ⁶Heb. 2:14-15; ⁷Rom. 6:23; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 42-43, 55-58; Rev. 20:11-15)

The Reign of Sin

The actual sins that men commit are the fruit of the corrupt nature transmitted to them by our first parents. By reason of this corruption, every man is wholly inclined to all evil. Sin has disabled every man so that they are utterly indisposed to, and, indeed, rendered opposite to, all that is good. - (Matt. 15:19; John 8:33-34; Rom. 3:10-12; 8:7; Col. 1:21; James 1:14)

God's Covenants

The Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic covenant is the agreement between God and Abraham and his seed. God promised to give Abraham many descendants, the land of Canaan, and to make him a blessing to others.¹ The fulfillment of these promises function as a picture of God's redemptive work. Believers are the spiritual seed of Abraham and are elect in Christ, who is the unique seed of Abraham.² The promised land of the spiritual seed is rest in the finished work of Christ³ and an eternal home in heaven.⁴ The spiritual seed is a blessing to all the earth as they take the Gospel

into all the world and bring in the elect from every tribe, nation, and tongue.⁵ - (¹Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-7; 17:1-8; 22:15-18; ²Gal. 3:16, 29; Eph. 1:4; ³Heb. 4:1-11; ⁴1 Pet. 1:4-5; ⁵Mt. 28:19-20)

Old Covenant

The Old Covenant was a covenant which God established with the Nation of Israel only. The terms of this covenant were the Ten Commandments or Tables of Stone.¹ Thus, the Ten Commandments were only the essence of the Old Covenant (or first covenant) and not the essence of all of God's law. In addition, the Old Covenant was a legal covenant with Israel that demanded perfect obedience in order to receive the promised blessings.² The primary function of the Old Covenant was a ministry of death³ and was a tutor to lead the Israelites to Christ.⁴ - (¹Ex. 34:27-28; Dt. 5:1-3; ²Ex. 19:3-6; ³2 Cor. 3:6-9; ⁴Gal. 3:24,25)

The New Covenant

The New Covenant is a new and better covenant. Jesus Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant which is founded on better promises.¹ Unlike the Old Covenant, the New Covenant is made up of totally regenerate membership.² The Old Covenant has been perfectly fulfilled in Christ.³ This does not mean that those in the New Covenant live lawlessly, for God's righteous standards are contained in the Law of Christ,⁴ which have been written on the hearts of those in the New Covenant.⁵ - (¹Heb. 8:6; ²Heb. 8:10-12; ³Mt. 5:17; Rom. 10:4; Heb. 8:6-7,13; 10:1-18; ⁴Gal. 6:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; ⁵Heb. 8:10; 10:16)

The Law

The Essence of All Law

The essence of all Law is summed up in these two commandments, "Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." - (Matthew 22:37-40)

The Moral Law

The Moral Law is the law that is applicable at any particular period of time. The Moral Law is more than the Ten Commandments, though the Ten Commandments do reflect the righteousness of the Moral Law.

The First Law

God, the Creator and Lawgiver, gave Adam the law that he must not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for disobedience to this law was death, while the promise for obedience was life. - (Gen. 2:15-17)

The Law of the Conscience

The law of the conscience is the result of man being made in the image of God. Even with the sin of Adam and the resulting distortion of the image in man, the conscience still testifies to that which is right and wrong. This law is not exact and can be distorted. Yet, the law of the conscience condemns all men, for no one is able to live up to its expectations. - (Rom. 1:26-32; 2:12-16)

The Mosaic Law

God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai a law for the nation of Israel. This law is commonly called the Ten Commandments.¹ The Mosaic Law was a legal covenant with Israel that demanded perfect obedience in order to receive the promised blessings.² In addition, the Mosaic Law was given that sin might be revealed and restrained until the seed should come to whom the promises of God were made,³ which seed was Christ.⁴ The activities of the Mosaic Law reflect the Moral Law in an Old Covenant setting. - (¹Ex. 19:3-6; 20:1-17; 34:27-28; Dt. 4:12-14; 9:7-10; ²Ex. 19:3-6; ³Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19; ⁴Gal. 3:16)

The Law of Christ

Through Jesus and the Apostles came a law that is directly applicable to believers today. This law, called in the New Testament the Law of Christ, is the Moral Law in a New Covenant setting. - (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Gal. 6:1-5)

Christ our Mediator

Christ's Ordination to the Office of Mediator

To achieve His eternal purpose in saving a people, God chose and ordained the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, in accordance with the covenant into which they had entered, to be the Mediator between God and man.¹ Christ was ordained to be Prophet, Priest, King, Head and Savior of His church, the heir of all things and the judge of the world.² From all eternity God had given to His Son those who were to be His seed, and the Son engaged in time (as distinct from eternity) to redeem, call, justify, sanctify, and glorify them.³ - (¹Is. 42:1, 53:10; 1 Pet. 1:19,20; ²1 Tim. 2:5; Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:5-6; Ps. 2:6; Lk. 1:33; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Heb. 1:2; Acts 17:31; ³Rom. 8:30; Jn. 17:6; Is. 53:10; Ps. 22:30; 1 Tim. 2:6; Is. 55:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:30)

The Incarnation of the Mediator

Jesus Christ, the Son of God and second person of the Trinity, is God. He is of the same essence as the Father and equal to Him, for in Him was all the fulness of the Godhead.¹ At just the right time, according to the predestined plan of God, the eternal Son became a man.² He was made like us in every way, except for his sinlessness.³ He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary. This union of the divine and human made Jesus forever both God and man in

one person. He is fully God and fully man. His divine and human natures are neither altered, blended, or confused.⁴ - (1Jn. 1:1-14; Rom. 1:1-4; Col. 1:19; 2:9; ²Gal. 4:1-7; ³Heb. 4:14-16; ⁴Lk. 1:26-38; Matt. 1:18-24; Heb. 2:5-18)

The Qualifications of the Mediator

The two natures, divine and human, being thus united in the person of God's Son, He was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit to an unlimited extent, and in Him are found all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.¹ He is replete with all that is pleasing to the Father, being holy, harmless, untouched by sin, and full of grace and truth.² Thus He has become thoroughly qualified to execute the work of a mediator and surety. He did not take this work upon Himself uncalled, but was commissioned by His Father so to act. His Father also conferred upon Him full powers of jurisdiction and commanded Him to pass judgment on all.³ - (1Ps. 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34; Col. 2:3; ²Heb. 7:26; Jn. 1:17; ³Heb. 7:22; 5:5; Jn. 5:22-27; Mt. 28:18; Acts 2:36)

The Humiliation and Exaltation of the Mediator

The Lord Jesus most willingly undertook the office of mediator, and in order that He might discharge it He became subject to God's law, which He perfectly fulfilled.¹ He also underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have borne and suffered, for He bore our sins and was accursed for our sakes.² He endured sorrows in His soul severe beyond our conception, and most painful sufferings in His body during His death by crucifixion.³ He was buried, and remained under the power of death for three days, without seeing corruption.⁴ He rose from the dead on the third day.⁵ He ascended into heaven, where he sat down at the Father's right hand and intercedes for his people.⁶ From the Father's right hand he shall physically return at the end of the world to judge all men and angels.⁶ - (1Ps. 40:7-8; Heb. 10:5-10, Jn. 10:18; Gal. 4:4; Mt. 3:15; Rom. 10:4; ²Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; ³Mt. 26:37,38; Lk. 22:44; Mt. 27:46; ⁴Acts 2:29-31; 17:34-37; ⁵1 Cor. 15:4; Mt. 20:19; Mk. 9:31; 10:33,34; ⁶Rom. 8:34; Heb. 9:24; ⁶Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9-11)

The Satisfaction Made by the Mediator

By his perfect obedience (active obedience) and sacrifice of himself to God (passive obedience), the Lord Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit, satisfied fully the justice of God and purchased for his people their complete salvation. - (Rom. 3:21-26; Heb. 9:11-15; 10:1-18)

The Offices of the Mediator

Christ, and Christ alone, is fitted to be mediator between God and man¹ as a prophet, priest and king. These offices answer the various needs of the lost. Because of our ignorance we stand in need of His prophetic office;² because of our alienation from God and the imperfection of our services at their best, we need His priestly office to reconcile us to God and render us acceptable to Him;³ because we have turned away from God and are utterly unable to return to Him, and also because we need to be rescued and rendered secure from our spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly office to convince, subdue, draw, sustain, deliver and preserve us, until we finally enter His heavenly kingdom.⁴ - (1 Timothy 2:5; ²Luke 1:78,79; John 1:18; ³Ps. 110:3; Heb. 2:17; 7:20-8:2; 9:11-15; ⁴Rev. 19:11-16; 1 Tim. 6:14,15; Luke 1:74,75; Col. 1:14, 21-22)

The Will of Man

The Natural Liberty of Man's Will

In the natural order God has endued man's will with liberty and the power to act upon choice, so that it is neither forced from without, nor by any necessity arising from within itself, compelled to do good or evil. - (Deut. 30:19; Mat. 17:12; James. 1:14)

Man's Will in the State of Innocency

In his state of innocency, man had freedom and power to will and to do what was good and acceptable to God. Yet, being changeable, it was possible for him to fall from his uprightness. - (Gen. 3:6; Eccl. 7:29)

Man's Will in the State of Sin

As the consequence of his fall into a state of sin, man has lost all ability to will the performance of any of those works, spiritually good, that accompany salvation. As a natural man he is dead in sin and altogether opposed to that which is good. Hence he is not able, by any strength of his own, to turn himself to God, or even to prepare himself to turn to God. - (Jn. 6:44; Rom. 5:6; 8:7; Eph. 2:1,5; Titus 3:3-5)

Man's Will in the State of Grace

When God converts a sinner, and brings him out of sin into the state of grace, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin and, by His grace alone, He enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good. Nevertheless certain corruptions remain in the sinner, so that his will is never completely and perfectly held in captivity to that which is good, but it also entertains evil. - (Jn. 8:36; Rom. 7:15,18,19,21,23; Phil. 2:13; Col.1:13)

Man's Will in the State of Glory

It is not until man enters the state of glory that he is made perfectly and immutably free to will that which is good, and that alone. - (Eph. 4:13)

The Call to Salvation

The General Call

Even though men may be called upon to embrace salvation by the preachers of the gospel,¹ and may be the subjects of some common operations of the Spirit,² they cannot be saved apart from the effectual calling of God.³ Much less can men, who do not receive the Christian religion, be saved, no matter how diligently they frame their lives according to the light of nature and the teachings of the religion which they follow.⁴ - (1Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2Matt. 13:20-22; Heb.

6:4-8; 1 John 2:19; ³John 6:44,65; ⁴John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 2:23)

Effectual Calling

Effectual calling is the work of God.¹ In this work, His Spirit reproves or convinces men of their sin, their lack of righteousness, and the judgment they deserve.² This calling is a holy calling according to God's own purpose,³ is extended to those whom God has predestinated,⁴ is accompanied by hope,⁵ and comes through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.⁶ The genuineness of this call is evidenced by godly fruit. Saints are instructed to make sure they know they are recipients of this type of calling.⁷ - (¹John 6:44,65; ²John 16:8-11; ³2 Tim. 1:9; ⁴Rom. 8:29,30; ⁵Eph. 1:18; 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:24; ⁶2 Thess. 2:13,14; ⁷Matt. 13:23; Phil. 2:12; 1 Thess. 1:5-10; 2 Pet. 1:5-11)

Repentance

The Nature of Repentance

Repentance that leads to salvation is a gift of God¹ by which a man is caused to change his mind about his sin, himself, and about God.² Repentance brings a man to see his self-efforts as dead works and therefore unable to save him.³ Repentance is characterized by godly sorrow, a detestation of sin, self-loathing, and a zeal to be right with God.⁴ Genuine repentance will lead to life.⁵ - (¹Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25; ²Ezek. 18:30; Job 42:6; Acts 14:15, 17:22-31; ³Heb. 6:1; 9:14; ⁴2 Cor. 7:9-11; ⁵Acts 11:18)

The Necessity of Repentance

God requires all men everywhere to repent.¹ Without repentance, a man will perish.² Repentance is necessary because it prepares the heart for faith in Christ Jesus by turning the sinner from sin and self-effort and causing him to cast himself completely upon Christ Jesus.³ - (¹Acts 17:30; ²Luke 13:3-5; ³Acts 20:21)

The Source and Effect of Repentance

Repentance finds its first cause in the goodness of God.¹ It is effected in the heart as the Spirit of God reproves of sin and creates godly sorrow in the sinner.² Repentance will lead the reprovved sinner to faith in Christ³ and will continue to bring forth fruit after conversion.⁴ - (¹Rom. 2:4; ²John 16:8-11; 2 Cor. 7:9-11; ³Acts 20:21; ⁴Matt. 3:8; 2 Cor. 5:17)

Regeneration

Regeneration is essential in order for a man to be saved.¹ Although the new birth is a mystery and is effected in a manner above our comprehension and calculation,² we know that no man is regenerated apart from the incorruptible seed of the Word of God.³ In regeneration, the Holy Spirit

quicken those who are dead in trespasses and sins,⁴ enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the Word of God,⁵ and renews their whole nature, so that they love and practice holiness.⁶ Regeneration is in no way dependant upon any work of righteousness but is solely the work of God alone.⁷ - (1 John 3:3,5; 2 John 3:8; 3 James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23-25; 4 Eph. 2:1,4-5; 5 John 3:5; 6 2 Cor. 5:17; 7 Titus 3:5; John 1:12,13)

Saving Faith

Saving faith is a gift of God¹ which enables a sinner to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of his soul.² Saving faith brings one to totally rely on God with no admixture of doubt,³ ceasing from all self-effort.⁴ It is a heart action, produced by a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.⁵ The object of saving faith is the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning work.⁶ - (1 Eph. 2:8,9; 2 Rom. 10:9; 3 Rom. 4:18-21; 4 Rom. 4:4,5; 5 John 1:12,13; 6 John 5:39-40,46-47; 14:1; Acts 20:21; Rom. 3:22-26)

Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification

Justification

Justification is the act of God's free grace¹ wherein He pardons all our sins,² and accepts us as righteous in His sight,³ only for the righteousness of Christ (His active and passive obedience) imputed to us⁴ and received by faith alone.⁵ - (1 Rom. 8:33; 3:24; 2 Acts 13:38,39; Eph. 1:7; 3 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 1:6; 4 Rom. 5:18-19; 5 Rom. 4:4,5; 23-25; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9)

Adoption

Adoption is the act of God's free grace and love¹ wherein believers are received into the number of the sons of God and are granted access to all the rights and privileges of sonship.² These privileges include the believer having God's name put upon him,³ receiving the Spirit of adoption, and being enabled to come boldly to God as "Abba, Father."⁴ As adopted children, believers are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by God as their Father.⁵ They are never cast off, but are sealed unto the day of redemption and will one day experience the redemption of their physical bodies.⁶ - (1 1 John 3:1; 2 John 1:12; Rom. 8:17; 3 2 Chron. 7:14; 2 Cor. 6:18; Eph. 3:15; James 2:7; 4 Gal. 4:4-6; 5 Ps. 103:13; Prov. 14:26; Ps. 37:25; Heb. 12:6; 6 Eph. 1:13; Rom. 8:19-23; 2 Tim. 2:19)

Sanctification

Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, believers are made partakers of His holiness.¹ Sanctification is a progressive work² that is begun in regeneration³ and carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.⁴ The believer's sanctification has its appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.⁵ - (1 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 13:9; Eph. 1:4; 2 Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; Phil. 3:12-16; 3 Rom. 8:5; John 3:6; 4 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 15:16; 5 Phil.

The Perseverance of the Saints

Those whom God has accepted in the Beloved, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but have been given eternal life and shall certainly persevere to the end.¹ Though they may fall, through disregard and temptation, into sin, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring embarrassment on the Church, and temporary judgments on themselves, yet the elect shall be renewed again unto repentance,² and be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.³ - (1 John 10:28,29; 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 5:18; ²2 Sam. 12:14; Ps. 32:3,4; Ps. 51:10-12; Luke 22:31,32; Matt. 26:69-75; ³1 Peter 1:4-5; Col. 1:5)

The Church

The Nature of the Church

The church is a local congregation of regenerated persons who have been baptized after believing.¹ The evidence in Scripture is that each local group of baptized believers was considered to be a church.² There is without question a common faith among all those who are born again, making them all members of the family of God.³ Nevertheless, not all saved persons belong to the same local church, though all saints will make up the church in glory, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which also will be a local, visible assembly.⁴ (1 Acts 2:41-47; ²Acts 15:41; 16:5; 1 Cor. 7:17; 14:33; 16:1; Gal. 1:2; 1 Thess. 2:14; Rev. 1:4; ³Eph. 3:15; ⁴Heb. 12:23)

The church is referred to in the New Testament by many metaphors. The church is the body of Christ with members in particular which have been joined together and made mutually dependant with Christ as its Head.¹ The church is the bride of Christ.² The church is a building of God.³ The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.⁴ - (1 Rom 12:4,5; 1 Cor. 12:12-21; Eph. 1:22,23; 4:16; 5:23; Col. 1:18; ²Eph. 5:23; ³1 Cor. 3:9; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Pet. 2:5; ⁴1 Tim. 3:15)

The church is built upon the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, and has been guaranteed victory by her exalted Head. - (Matt. 16:18; 28:18; Eph. 1:22; 3:21)

The Purpose of the Church

The purpose of the church is to display God's wisdom,¹ glorify God,² be a place of spiritual sacrifices,³ exhibit the characteristics of Christ,⁴ take the Gospel to the lost under the authority of Christ Jesus,⁵ and judge all spiritual matters among believers.⁶ - (1 Eph. 3:10; ²Eph. 3:20,21; ³1 Pet. 2:5; ⁴Eph. 4:12-15; ⁵Matt. 28:18-20; ⁶Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 2:15; 6:1-4)

The Leaders of the Church

The ascended Christ has given gifts to His church so that she might fulfill her purpose.¹ By the appointment of Christ, the officers of the church are pastors and deacons.² - (1 Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Phil. 1:1)

Pastors are to give their attention to the service of Christ and His churches by being engaged in the ministry of the Word and in prayer.¹ They are to seek the welfare of men's souls as those that must give account to the Lord.² They are to tend to the needs of the people of God as a shepherd.³ Thus, it is imperative that the churches to which they minister should give to them, according to each church's ability, not only due honor, but such abundance of this world's material goods as will enable them to live in comfort without the need to entangle themselves in secular employment. Such an arrangement is sanctioned by the express command of Scripture.⁴ - (1 Acts 6:4; 2 Heb. 13:17; 3 Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-4; 4 1 Cor. 9:6-14)

Deacons may be chosen by the congregation for the sole purpose of seeing to the various physical needs of the church. These chosen men must be men full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, and must have a good reputation among those outside the church.¹ They should be able to give an account of their hope in the Gospel, as did Stephen, and should be able to point men to the Savior, as did Philip.² - (1 Acts 6:1-4; 2 Acts 7:1-60; 8:26-40)

The requirements for pastors and deacons are given in the epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus. - (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

The Behavior of the Church's Members

All who are admitted to the privileges of church fellowship also become subject to the discipline and government of the church in accordance with the rule of Christ.¹ All members of the church are to abide by the command of Christ when dealing with problems between members.² All members of the church are to be faithful to the assembling of the church.³ - (1 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; 3 Matt. 18:15-17; 4 Heb. 10:25)

The Ordinances of the Church

The two ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost to show forth his calling as a disciple of Jesus Christ and, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in his death to sin and resurrection to a new life. It is prerequisite to the privileges of a Church relation and to the Lord's Supper.¹ The Lord's Supper involves the sacred, symbolic use of bread and fruit of the vine to commemorate together the dying love of Christ. The Lord's Supper should always be preceded by solemn self-examination. - (1 Acts 2:41; 8:36-39; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:4; 2 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; 1 Cor. 11:28)

The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day.¹ It is to be kept sacred for spiritual purposes by abstaining from all secular labor and recreations, by the faithful observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, and by the assembling together with the people of God.² Keeping the Lord's Day holy is attended by the blessing of the Lord.³ - (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2Is. 58:13,14; Heb. 10:24-25; 3Is. 58:13,14)

Civil Government

Civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society. Civil leaders are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed except when their orders oppose to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. - (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Acts 5:29; 1 Tim. 6:15)

Marriage

The Nature and Purpose of Marriage

Marriage is between one man and one woman. God instituted marriage for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind in accordance with His laws, and for the prevention of immorality. - (Gen. 2:24; 1:28; 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:2,9)

Christian Regulations in Marriage

Christians are instructed to marry only "in the Lord." In consequence, those who profess the Christian faith should not marry unbelievers. - (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14,15)

The Intermediate State

The bodies of men after death return to dust and suffer decay, but their souls do not die immediately but return unto God who made them.¹ The souls of the righteous, whose holiness at death is perfected, are received into heaven where they are with Christ where they await the full redemption of their bodies.² The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and await the final judgment.³ Souls separated from their bodies are either in heaven or in hell, for the Scripture does not speak of any other abode for the soul. - (1Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:1,6,8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23; 3Luke 16:23,24)

The Resurrection

The Resurrection of the Righteous

At the return of Christ, all those who have died in the Lord shall be raised up in glorious resurrection. The bodies of believers at the resurrection will be made completely healthy, strong, incorruptible, immortal, and glorious, like unto Christ's glorious body.¹ Being raised in glory, they will be perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God through all eternity.² - (1 Phil. 3:21; 1 Cor. 15:42-44, 53,54; ²1 John 3:2; 1 Thess. 4:17)

The Resurrection of the Unrighteous

The resurrection of the unrighteous will take place in the day of final judgment. Their bodies will be raised from their graves, together with their souls, to unspeakable torments with the devil and his angels forever. - (Dan. 12:2; John 5:28,29; 2 Thess. 1:9; Mt. 25:41)

The Return of Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ will one day return in great power and glory.¹ At His return, He will raise from the dead all those who died in faith. At the same time, he will change the bodies of those who remain alive, so that all of His people will have bodies like unto His and enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God.² At His coming, Jesus Christ will destroy the wicked who have not obeyed His gospel.³ No man knows the time of His coming;⁴ therefore are we always to be watchful and purify ourselves so that when He comes He will find us faithful.⁵ - (1 Matt. 25:31; 26:64; ²1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-58; ³2 Thess. 1:6-10; ⁴Matt. 24:36; ⁵1 John 3:2)