

Doctrinal Statement and
Personal Testimony
For the Ordination of
Jonathan Eads

Calvary Baptist Church

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Personal Testimony

Jonathan- I am blessed to have grown up in a Christian home. My parents taught me the word and had me active in our local church from a young age. I learned Scripture and Biblical teaching as I grew up. I memorized John 3:16 in the beginning of December 1991 in AWANA. The verse stuck with me, and I remember trying to puzzle out the meaning. I

remember talking to my older brother after bedtime on Christmas Eve. He told me about my need of a Savior and the consequence of eternity in hell if I don't accept salvation. I went downstairs in tears feeling my need of a Savior. My mother sat with me and led me to the Lord.

I grew up learning service from my parents, who are to this day very active in their church. At Sr High Camp at Bass Lake, I was convicted by the Lord to use my life, which I was learning was not my own, for His service. I attended Faith Baptist Bible College in Ankeny, Iowa. I graduated and got married to my wife, Katheryn, that summer. I started the next year in Seminary at Faith where I began pursuing my MDiv. Because of family circumstances, I took a break from Seminary, while God led us to help a friend with a church plant in Woodbury, MN. We served there, helping with the ministry of our small church for 9 years when God made it clear that it was time for all those involved with the ministry to close the church and move on. I was called to the position of Associate Pastor at Calvary Baptist in Rochester where I am blessed to have the opportunity to serve the Lord.



Katheryn- I grew up in New Glarus, WI in a Bible believing home. My parents can tell of the time that I had prayed to accept Christ as Savior when I was 5 at a Vacation Bible School. I can remember bits and pieces of that Bible School, but I cannot remember praying for salvation. As I got older, I was content to believe that if my parents remembered



me getting saved, I must be. I attended a Christian school and between school and church, I was consistently taught that my salvation needed to be my own, and not based on what someone else told me or remembered. At the age of 10 that knowledge became real to me. While at a friend's house one night, we were under a tornado warning. 10-year-old Katheryn was deathly afraid of thunderstorms and tornados. I was convinced that the tornado would come, and my life would be over. God used my fear to make me realize that if that did happen, I had no assurance of salvation and eternity in Heaven. I prayed that night for God to forgive me for my sins and save me so that I could have a personal relationship with Him.

I was later baptized, and then eventually went to Bob Jones University for my nursing degree. I kept having doubts about my salvation, if I had said the right words when I prayed, if I had

enough fruit in my life. It wasn't until a college friend brought me to 1 John 1:9 and pointed out that what is required of me is to confess my sins. The rest of the verse is all about what Christ does in my salvation. It is His faithfulness and righteousness that forgives my sins and cleanses me. My salvation is dependent on my Savior and His faithfulness and not my own.

After college Jon and I were married, and God has since blessed us with four sons. We have had several more blessings in the last 15 years of marriage, but many trials have come during that time as well. In all of it, my God has continued to prove Himself faithful and righteous.

Doctrinal Statement

Bibliology- Doctrine of Scripture

God is revealed to man through Revelation. Revelation comes in the form of General Revelation and Special Revelation. The Bible is special revelation, it is the Word of God (Deut. 31:9-13; Josh. 24:26; Jer. 30:2; John 14:26). While in human language and written under inspiration by humans, the Bible carries the weight and authority of words spoken directly by God. To disobey Scripture is a severe offense (I Cor. 14:37; Jer.36:29-31; 2 Thess. 3:14). General Revelation is that which is revealed to man through natural means, including: through nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:18-21), through Conscience (Rom. 2:14-15) and through Providence (Matt. 5:45; Dan. 2:21). Special Revelation is the supernatural revelation of God to man, which is revealed through Scriptures (Jer. 36:27-28; Gal. 1:11-12) and through the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:17-18; Heb. 1:3).

Scripture is reliable because it is the Word of God. God is true (Rom. 3:4) and Scripture is God-Breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). The authors of Scripture were directed by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). The nature of Scripture as the inspired Word of God, written as led by the infallible Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:9-10), necessitates that it is accurate, and without errors in its original autographs (I Thess. 2:13; 4:8). Because Scripture was given by the Holy Spirit to unique, individual men, inspiration does not conflict with differences in style and perspective in parallel accounts (Rom. 2:16). The inspiration of Scripture is verbal (the words of Scripture) (Matt. 5:18; 22:41-44) and plenary (Scripture as a whole) (Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

The Bible is complete in the 66 books of the Old and New Testament as recognized by men led by the Holy Spirit. The

additional books of the Apocrypha are not recognized as inspired Scripture as they are inconsistent with the character and teaching of the rest of confirmed Scripture. This is shown by Jesus and His disciples referring to Old Testament Scripture over 295 times, but never referring to unique passages of the Apocrypha. Both Old and New Testaments are inspired and recognized as the Word of God (2 Pet. 3:15-16; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). To add to or subtract from God's word is an offense (Deut. 4:2; Gal. 1:8-9). We believe the Canon of Scripture to be complete, and while the Old Testament was delivered through the prophets, the New Testament was given to us in "these last days" by Jesus as the final needed revelation (Heb. 1:1-2; Rev. 22:18-19 (although in context referring to the prophecy of Revelation it shows the demonstrates the severity of adding to the inspired text)). Our loving God desires us to have a knowledge of Him and had provided us with what we need to know, and that Scripture is by necessity complete, so as to complete our needed knowledge (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 32:47). Based upon this confidence, the severity of the punishment of adding or subtracting tells us that our sovereign God would provide the knowledge we require.

Understanding of God's Word is unattainable by unredeemed man's sin-obscured mind (1 Cor. 2:14), and it is necessary for the mind to be illuminated by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12-13; Luke 24:44-45). Scripture is to be interpreted literally. In practice this means words are to be understood with their "regular" meaning. Literal fulfillment of prophesized events is evidence of the intent of literal interpretation (Psalm 22; Micah 5:2). The Bible is God's direct communication with man. God's word was given to man in Scripture, often in direct proclamation from prophets (1 Kings 14:18; Jer. 37:2). When prophets spoke in God's name, they were speaking the very

words of the Lord (1 Kings 13:21-26). Disobedience of the words of the Lord given through His prophets is disobedience of God Himself (Deut. 18:19). While not all words recorded in the Bible are the direct words of God, the New Testament says that all Scripture has the same weight as having come from God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). Even though the words of Scripture were written by various men, they still are recognized as the words of God (Mark 7:9-13). Because Scripture is the Words of God, it must comply with God's attributes. Therefore, God, who cannot lie only speaks truth (Titus 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Because of the reliability of God's Words, Scripture cannot be untrue, and is reliable (Ps. 12:6; Prov. 30:5). Not only does this give us supreme confidence in the accuracy of the Bible, but it demonstrates that Scripture is our objective measure of truth. Those statements that disagree with the Bible are therefore untrue (John 17:17).

Theology Proper- the Doctrine of God the Father

God has revealed himself to mankind through both general revelation (meaning that God reveals Himself and His existence to man through natural means. God's existence is proven through creation, only an all-powerful God could design and create the universe as we experience it (Psalm 19:1-6). God has given us enough evidence of His existence in nature, that those who deny God are without excuse (Rom. 1:18-21). God is evident to all man through His providential provision and control (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:15-17). Conscience is also proof to all people of God's existence and His desire that they follow Him (Rom. 2:14-15). Special Revelation is more specific, it is direct evidence of God given through miraculous means. This can include visions or theophany, but the most common occurrences are through Scripture and through the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:18).

- God's attributes are not aspects that make up God, but He is His attributes. Without any one of them He would not be God.
- God is Spirit (not a spirit) and He has no physical form (John 4:24). The examples of anthropomorphisms in Scripture are given to help us understand God, but they do not mean He has a physical body (Gen 3:8; 2 Kings 8:29; Ps. 34:15).
- God is self-existent, meaning He is not dependent on any other for His existence, and is independent of all others (Ex. 3:14; John 5:26).
- God is immutable, meaning that He is perfect and unchanging (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). Another attribute of God is Unity, He is One in opposition to the polytheism often found in the world, and among His persons, He is not modal or divided (Deut. 6:4; Ex. 15:11; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 Cor. 8:6).

- God is Truth, meaning not only that He is the True God, whom none are like (Isa. 44:8-10; 45:5), His words are also completely true and reliable (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:3-4).
- God is Love (John 4:8), which is not an emotional reaction or affection, but an affection based on His Truth and Holiness (1 John 4:10; Rev. 1:5).
- God's holiness is seen in His transcendence (Ex. 15:11; Isa. 57:15) and His separateness from sin (Lev. 11:44-45; Ps. 11:4-7).
- God is eternal, meaning not just that He has existed forever, but that He is removed from the laws of His creation, not beholden to change and time (Ex. 3:14; 1 Kings 8:27; Ps. 90:2; 102:12).
- God is omnipresent; God is in all places at all times and is not centrally located (Ps. 139:7-12; Prov. 15:3).
- God is omniscient; God knows all things, things as they are (Ps. 139:1-6; 147:4; Matt. 6:8), things that could have been (Matt. 11:21), and the things that are to come (History since fulfilled that has proven God's foreknowledge Isa. 44:28-45:1; Dan. 2:36-45; 7:2-8; future things as of yet unfulfilled Rev. 6-19).
- God is omnipotent: He can do all things that align with His character and purpose (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; Jer. 32:17; Joel 1:15; Matt. 19:26), meaning that question regarding God's ability to designed to degrade His purpose ("Can God make a stone so big He can't lift?") are not reasonable or applicable.
- God is Perfect, He is perfectly complete and completely perfect (Isa. 45:5) and He is true in His revelation (1 Peter 1:25; Matt. 5:18); God cannot lie (Titus 1:2).
- God is merciful, granting man's temporal needs (Ruth 1:8; Heb. 4:16) as well as salvation (Rom. 9:23; Eph. 2:4; Titus

3:5); His mercy is freely given and without obligation (Rom. 9:15-16, 18).

- God is Gracious, giving deliverance from enemies (Ps. 6:4; 31:7), forgiveness (Num. 14:19; Ps. 51:1), preservation (Ps. 23:6; 42:8) and guidance (Ps. 143:8).

The Trinity of God is a difficult to explain and understand concept, beyond complete understanding of our fallen minds. The word Trinity could be replaced with “Tri-unity” or Three-Oneness”. The Trinity is composed of three united Persons without separate existence- completely united, One God in three distinctions- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is One in regard to essence (Deut. 6:4; James 2:19), meaning that the Trinity among His Persons is undivided and all three Persons share the summation of the divine attributes, and do not act independently or in opposition to each other (John 5:19; 8:28; 14:10). The term “Persons”, though flawed (as all our terms are sure to be in defining God) emphasizes that each Person of the Godhead is of the same essence and possesses the fulness of God (Isa. 48:16). Each Person of the Godhead has a distinct relationship. The Father is not begotten, nor does He proceed from any Person of the Godhead (John 1:18). The Son is eternally begotten of the Father. The phrase “eternally begotten” is used to explain that Jesus was never created, and never became God’s Son (Heb. 13:8). Scripture does not describe a time when Jesus became God’s Son, but it instead explains that the Son was given (Isa. 9:6; John 3:16) and sent (1 John 4:9-10; Gal. 4:4), and one cannot give or send something that does not already exist. This is further explained in the comparison of Jesus to Melchizedek (Heb. 7:3) indicating that Jesus also had no beginning or end or generation of birth. The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Son and the Father (John 14:26; 16:7). These terms are used to designate relationship,

not to suggest inferiority amongst the Godhead (John 5:21-23; 1 Cor. 8:6; Matt. 12:31).

God's decree or His will is a single plan made in eternity past (Eph. 1:11) (understanding that God is not subject to time or our understanding of time). God is sovereign in His plan (Rom. 9-11) and wise in His Will (Prov. 3:19; Rom. 11:33-36). God's will is directive (Isa. 45:18; Dan. 4:35) but is permissive-meaning that God's will includes events that He has authored and directly controls, but God does not direct us in our sin. We are responsible for our own actions. The people of Israel sinned when they demanded a king from God (1 Sam. 8:5-9, 19-22), but God had already foreordained that kings would come from Abraham's lineage (Gen. 17:6). While our sin is included within the plan of God, we are responsible for our own actions. The purpose of God's will is to demonstrate His grace (Rom. 9:23) and to bring Himself glory (Ps. 19:1).

God created all things, visible and invisible, and is sovereign over creation (Gen. 1-2; Col. 1:15-16). God created the world from nothing in 6 literal days (Gen. 1-2). The history recorded in Scripture is consistent with a young-earth (6,000-10,000 years ago) creation.

Christology- the Doctrine of God the Son

Jesus is eternal (John 1:1; 8:58; Heb. 1:8). He existed before the beginning of creation (Mic. 5:2; Col. 1:17). Jesus is of the Godhead (John 12:41 (quoting Isa. 6:10 in description of Jesus)). While retaining His divinity Jesus took on human flesh (John 1:14; Phil. 2:7-8). Jesus was born in the flesh (1 John 4:2-3) so that His death would represent and allow for His substitutionary sacrifice for the sake of man. If He was anything but fully man, His death, and thus His redemptive works would not be true and therefore not redemptive. While being a man, and of flesh, He does not have mankind's sin nature (1 John 3:5). His genuine, flesh and blood body had the same needs and feelings as mankind (John 19:28; Matt. 4:2; Mark 14:33). His physical body and mind grew as a human's does (Luke 2:52). Jesus body was complete, having human emotions (John 11:33; 12:27) and physical needs. Jesus was born as a man with a physical genealogical connection to David, assuring that He is the heir of David (Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38). Jesus was born of Mary, a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23).

Christ is fully God, a person of the Godhead (Philippians 2:6). He is called "God" in Scripture (John 20:28; Heb. 1:8). Jesus is ascribed God's attributes: He is eternal (John 1:1; Heb. 1:10-11), omnipresent (in His incarnation He is localized, but He clearly is omnipresent in His indwelling ministry in believers (John 14:23; Matt. 28:20), omniscient (John 2:25; 4:18; 16:30), omnipotence (Matt. 28:18; Mark 2:5), immutability (Heb. 13:8; only God is unchangeable (Mal. 3:6)) and non-imparted life (John 1:4; 14:6). His divinity is also demonstrated in His works: creation (John 1:3; Col. 1:16), sustaining of creation (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3); forgiving sins (Mark 2:1-11; Isa. 43:25); working miracles and accepting worship (Matt. 21:14-16; John 9:38).

In His incarnation, Christ chose to limit the use of some of His divine attributes with the addition of His human nature. Instead of this being a loss of divine nature, this limiting known as kenosis, is instead a taking on of limitation (John 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 John 4:9).

Christ's death on the cross was for the purpose of substitutionary atonement, that by dying for our sins, He fulfilled the need of death to pay the price for our sins (Isaiah 53; 1 Pet. 2:24). The emphasis of the language in the New Testament regarding His death emphasizes the substitutionary nature of His sacrifice (Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 3:18). Christ's death provides redemption, picturing believers being saved from the slave market of sin (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Gal. 3:13; 4:5). As a result of redemption, believers who were once estranged from God are reconciled to Him (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Through Christ's sacrifice, believers are provided propitiation, as God's righteous demands are now met (Rom. 3:25-26). Forgiveness is given to those who accept God's free gift of salvation (Col. 2:13; 1 John 1:9). Through Christ's saving work we are justified, the legal act in which God the Judge declares the believer righteous (Rom. 3:24, 28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16).

Christ was raised from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. The resurrection is the guarantee of the acceptance of Jesus' saving work (Heb. 5:7-10). The resurrection assures the validity of our faith (1 Cor. 15:17), and through it facilitates the sending of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of indwelling believers (John 16:7). Christ ascended to heaven, where He sits on the right hand of God (Eph. 4:8) and intervenes for believers (Heb. 4:14-16).

Being fully God as well as fully man, Jesus is incapable of sinning, often referred to as "impeccable". Jesus was tempted

by Satan not to test His ability to resist temptation, but to show His incapability to sin. Jesus was led to the wilderness by the Spirit to be tested by Satan, and if it were possible for Jesus to be tempted to sin, this would have gone against the nature of God (James 1:13). The purpose of the temptation in the wilderness was to demonstrate the uniqueness of the Savior God had sent (Heb. 4:15; James 1:13).

Christ has the role of showing mankind the will of God as a prophet (Acts 3:22-26). Christ represents man to God as our Great High Priest (Heb. 7:11-28). In this office, He represents the believer continually because He is eternal (Heb. 7:24), unfailingly because His intercession never ceases (Heb. 7:25), perfectly because He is Himself without sin or flaw (Heb. 7:26-27) and His sacrifice was once for all (Heb 10:12). Christ fulfilled the prophecy of a Davidic ruler (Gen. 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:16) and will rule in Jerusalem (Ps. 110).

Christ's ministry today includes guiding His body, the Church. As head of the body, He rules over it (Col 1:18), He provides leadership and direction (Eph. 5:23) and He adds believers to its number (Acts 2:47). Jesus intercedes for us, guaranteeing our salvation (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). He advocates for us, restoring us to fellowship when we sin (1 John 2:1). He prepares us a home in heaven (John 14:1-3) and produces fruit in the lives of believers (John 15:1-7).

Pneumatology- The Doctrine of God the Spirit

The Holy Spirit as a person of the Triune Godhead is not a force or essence but possesses personality. His attributes support this understanding. He possesses intellect (1 Cor. 2:10) which is demonstrated in His investigation of truths. He demonstrates knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11) in understanding human spirits, but also understanding the thoughts of God. His mind, understood as His way of thinking is also a demonstration of His personality (Rom. 8:27). The Holy Spirit's emotions also indicate His personality (Eph. 4:30).

The deity of the Holy Spirit is clearly taught in Scripture. He is referred to as the Spirit of God, which clearly associates Him with God the Father (1 Cor. 2:11). He is referred to clearly in connection with the other persons of the Trinity (Rom. 8:9-11). The Spirit is also shown to possess many of the attributes of deity. The Holy Spirit is Omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10-12), Omnipotent (Job 33:4), Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), Eternal (Heb. 9:14) and Holy (Matt. 12:32).

Scripture identifies several works of the Holy Spirit that confirm His divinity and explain His role in believers' lives.

- The Holy Spirit teaches believers (John 14:16, 26), helping us to remember the words and teaching of Christ.
- The Spirit testifies, bearing witness of Christ (John 15:26).
- The Holy Spirit ministers to believers by guiding (John 16:13) and convicting (John 16:8).
- The Spirit participates at the time of salvation, regenerating the believer (Titus 3:5).
- He ministers to the believer in their time of need by interceding for him while he prays (Rom. 8:27).

Many of the works of God in history and creation are attributed to the Holy Spirit. He was involved in creation (Gen. 1:2) and the incarnation of Jesus (Matt. 1:20). He is actively involved in the lives of believers by His ministries. He inspired Scripture (2 Pet. 1:21). He is critical at the timing of salvation as He is the enactor of regeneration (Titus 3:5). He also works in the lives of believers through intercession (Rom. 8:26), sanctification (2 Thess. 2:13) and helping saints (John 14:16-17). The Spirit as a person of the Trinity proceeds from the Father (John 15:26) and Son (14:26). The Spirit has eternally proceeded from the Father and Son (Ps. 104:30). This is a description of the relationship of the Trinity but does not indicate any idea of hierarchy among the Godhead.

The Spirit is the agent of revelation. Revelation is the unveiling or disclosure of information, in the case of Scripture, it refers to the disclosure of knowledge regarding the things of God that man would not have known otherwise (Ez. 2:2, 8:3). The Holy Spirit led prophets in what they revealed (2 Pet. 1:21). The Holy Spirit led the authors of Scripture to write the Word of God (2 Sam. 23:2-3; Mark 12:36; Acts 28:25; John 16:12-15).

In the life of Christ, the Holy Spirit was involved in several ways. He enabled the virgin birth (Matt. 1:20), He anointed Christ (Luke 4:18), He filled Christ (Luke 4:1), He guided Christ (Mark 1:12), He led Jesus in His sacrifice (Heb. 9:14) and was involved in the resurrection (Rom. 1:4, 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18).

Another of the Spirit's ministries is the baptism of the Spirit. This is not a second or miraculous blessing as some would teach but is the work where the Spirit places believers into union with Christ and into union with believers in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). The baptism of the Spirit is unique to the Church age which is evident in its prophesized coming in Acts

1:5 versus its description in Acts 11:15 which points to the occurrence at Pentecost in Acts 2. All believers in the Church age are baptized by the Spirit (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27-28). All believers are brought into union with each other (1 Cor. 12:13) and with Christ (Rom. 6:3; 6:5). The baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at the time of salvation and therefore is not experiential or accompanied by miraculous happenings. The believer is also indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a gift without conditions (John 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 1:22; 1 Thess. 4:8), a process which occurs at the moment of salvation (Eph. 1:13). Unbelievers do not possess the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9; Jude 19), while even believers living in sin are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor 1:22); the indwelling of the Spirit is permanent (John 14:16; Eph. 4:30).

The Holy Spirit grants Gifts to believers. They are supernaturally given (1 Cor. 12:11), they are not naturally developed, but supernaturally given (Rom. 12:3,6 ; 1 Cor. 12:4). There are some gifts that were given specifically for the founding of the church, particularly since the canon was not yet complete, and therefore required miraculous support from the Spirit's gifts (1 Cor. 13:8; Eph. 2:20). These were sign gifts, meant to verify the Gospel, and with the establishment of the church and completion of canon are no longer required. The gifts of Apostleship (Eph. 4:11), which was a special position requiring one to have walked with Christ (Acts 1:21-22); prophecy (Rom. 12:6), with the establishment of the church completed, this gift has ceased (Eph. 2:20); miracles (1 Cor. 12:10), specifically those intended to verify the teaching of the Word of God; healing (1 Cor. 12:9) which God used to miraculously heal a person by through a particular agent to promote the Gospel (Acts 9:34) which should not be confused with God working

miracles of healing in answer to prayer (Acts 9:40); tongues (1 Cor. 12:28), this was the miraculous use of a language that the speaker was not familiar with, allowing those he was teaching to understand the Gospel (Acts 2:6, 8, 11), they served as authentication of the message (1 Cor. 13:10-11; 2 Cor. 12:12); interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10) was given so that the words of the tongue-speaker would be interpreted into the vernacular; discerning spirits (1 Cor. 12:10) was a miraculous gift allowing the hearer to discern if new teachings were indeed from God (1 Thess. 5:20-21).

Several of the gifts described in the New Testament still apply to the church to the day and are given for various reasons. Evangelism (Eph. 4:11) is a special gifting of certain believers to excel in an accurate and passionate sharing of the Gospel, this does not mean that those not gifted in this way are not to be sharing the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:5); Pastor-Teacher (Eph. 4:11), is a man who is gifted to be a shepherd, and to do so humbly and in a godly manner (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-5), he is also one gifted in teaching (1 Tim. 1:3); Teacher (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28), all pastors should be teachers, but not all teachers are pastors, and some are gifted to teach specifically; Service (Rom. 12:7), this is a less conspicuous gift that enables one gifted to minister to the church in general ways (Acts 19:22; Rom. 15:25; 2 Tim. 1:18); Helps (1 Cor. 12:28), helpful deeds or assistance (1 Tim. 6:2); Faith (1 Cor. 12:9), not saving faith, but faith to aid in one's spiritual walk (Heb. 11); Exhortation (Rom. 12:8), someone so gifted can encourage others to act (2 Tim. 4:13).

Angelology- The Doctrine of Angels

The word angel means “messenger” and can refer either to human messengers (1 Kings 19:2), or divine messengers (Gen. 28:12). The words in Old and New Testament only refer to human messengers 6 times, so divine messengers are much more frequently referred to when one reads about angels.

Angels are referred to by other names as well, they are called Sons of God (Job 1:6, 38:7), Holy Ones (Psalm 89:5) and Hosts of Heaven (1 Sam. 17:45).

Angels are of a different order of creation than other created beings. They were created by God (Ps. 148:2-5) for the purpose of glorifying God (Col. 1:16). It is understood that they do not reproduce (Matt. 22:30), therefore, their number does not change. They seem to be uncountable in number (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11). They are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14), and while they can appear in form as human beings (Gen. 18:2), they are not physical and do not die (Luke 20:36). They are of a higher order than man (Heb. 2:7), having greater wisdom (2 Sam. 14:20 but it is still limited (Matt. 24:36)) and greater, though still limited (Dan. 10:13) power (Matt. 28:2, 2 Pet. 2:11).

Angels have performed specific ministries in their set-apart role as messengers of God. In their specific ministry to Christ, they were His herald (Luke 1:26-38). Angels also protected Jesus in His infancy (Matt. 2:13, 20), ministered to Him after His temptation (Matt. 4:11), strengthened Him at Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), announced His resurrection (Mark 16:6-7, John 20:12), attended His ascension (Acts 1:10) and they will attend His second coming (Matt. 25:31).

Angels also had specific ministries to believers in Scripture. They are referred to as ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14). They

ministered by providing physical protection (Psa. 34:7; 35:5-6; 91:11-13), physical provision (1 Kings 19:5-7), encouragement (Acts 27:23-25), direction (Acts 8:26; 10:3-6), assist in answering prayers (Acts 12:1-11) and carrying believers home (Luke 16:22).

In relation to unbelievers, angels in Scripture also are seen to inflict judgment on individuals (Acts 12:23) and groups of unbelievers (Gen. 19:12-13); they judged Israel for idolatry (Ezek. 9:1-11). They will be heavily involved in the end times, announcing the destruction of the evil world powers (Rev. 14:6-9), delivering the Lord's judgments on the world (7 trumpets (Rev. 8) and 7 bowls (Rev. 16)), and will be involved in the final punishment for non-believers as the end of the age (Matt. 13:49-50).

In Scripture, there are several prominent angels who are named. Gabriel is a prominent messenger of God, who has shared special news regarding Messiah and God's Kingdom plan (Dan. 8:15-26; 9:21; Luke 1:11-20, 26-27). Michael seems to be the highest-ranking angel. He is the only angel called archangel (Jude 9) and he is called the great prince (Dan. 12:1). Because of his role in aiding the messenger to Daniel, in defending Israel from the Dragon and in defending the body of Moses, many believe that he is a special guardian of Israel (Jude 9; Dan. 10:13; Rev. 12:7-9).

Angels in Scripture perform many roles for God. The most prominent of these is as God's messenger. Our culture puts an emphasis on guardian angels, using verses like Acts 11:15 as evidence that believers have a specific assigned angel to protect them. It is important to note in that passage that those who believed Peter's angel to be visiting were in fact wrong, and we should not take that as evidence for a guardian angel. I

do not believe it to be unreasonable to assume the role of angels in the protection and preservation of believers based on the examples of Scripture, but I believe it to be more important to focus on the God who sends angels to perform his will. I don't see scriptural evidence that we are assigned an angelic protector, but if God chooses to use an angel to achieve His will, or some other method, God's will is done.

Those fallen angels who rebelled and set themselves in opposition to God are known as demons. The foremost and leader of the demons is Satan. He has been at enmity with God and is an enemy of God's people from as far back as the fall of man (Gen. 3). Because of the potential eschatological interpretation of passages in reference to his previous role, it is difficult to know for certain, but it seems likely that before his own fall, Satan was a cherub (Ezek. 28:11-19) named Lucifer (Isa. 14:12-17) whose sin of pride in his own beauty led him to seek to supplant God. He was cast from heaven and brought his followers with him (Rev. 12:7-9). Satan is not a force, or comparable to God, but he is an individual entity with personality. He displays intellect in his schemes (Eph. 6:11), he is skilled in deception (Rev. 12:9), he knows and interprets Scripture (Matt. 4:5-6). He displays emotion through his pride (Isa. 14:12-17) and his anger (Rev. 12:12). His will is displayed in his attempt to tempt Jesus (Matt. 4:3) and his desire to be like God (Isa. 14:13-14). Satan is an adversary (1 Pet. 5:8) who seeks to accuse believers (Job 1:6-12) and seeks to make them fall (Eph. 6:11).

Likewise, demons were angelic servants of God that appear to have followed Satan (Matt. 12:24; 25:41; Rev. 12:7) in his sin and were cast out from heaven. Demons are spirit beings, they do not possess fleshly bodies (Matt. 8:16; Luke 10:20), but they are localized (Acts 16:16-18). They are intelligent (Mark 1:24)

even to the point that they are aware of their coming fate (Matt. 8:29). Demons are strong (Mark 5:3-5), and when they possess humans can give them supernatural abilities (Acts 16:16-18), but their power is insignificant when compared to God's (John 10:21). Demons can inflict disease (Luke 13:11), influence the mind (2 Cor. 4:4; James 3:15), deceive (1 Thess. 3:5) and corrupt the nations of the world (Rev. 16:14).

Demonic possession is addressed in the Bible (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; Acts 16:16-18). The warnings found throughout the rest of the New Testament warn us of the continued danger of demon influence. Since the believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, I do not believe he can be demonically possessed, but demonic influence and oppression still need to be guarded against (James 3:15; 1 Thess. 3:5). In the Gospels, Jesus gave His disciples authority over demons (Luke 10:17-20; Matt 10:1) along with other miraculous gifts that were given to be signs of their authority as well as protection on their missions. In Scripture there is not a command given to the church to seek out opportunity for confrontation with demons, or a mandate given to exorcise and cast out demons. The power to do so seems to be given to the Apostles and those sent out specifically by Christ to do so. But the Bible does provide instruction for the believer in cases of spiritual warfare, and the emphasis on prayer, faith and scripture (Eph. 6:10-20). This is not to say that confrontation with demonically possessed is not provided for, but that one is to approach these scenarios through prayer, asking Christ to cast out the demon on His own authority, not on the believer's.

Anthropology- The Doctrine of Humanity

Humanity was created on the 6th day of creation (Gen. 1:27; Deut. 4:32) out of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7). God created Eve from the rib of Adam, so that man would have a companion fit for him (Gen. 2:18-23). God created only two distinct sexes: male and female which are determined at conception (Matt 19:4). The two sexes that God created in humanity at the time of creation were man and woman and while terminology is ever-changing and has made distinction between sex and gender, God still only created two distinct categories among mankind, which are definable physically. God established marriage between one man and one woman (Matt. 19:4-6; Eph 5:31) to be a partnership for companionship and procreation to establish the race of humanity (Gen. 1:28). God's intention for men and women is not a system of oppression but a complimentary role of leadership for man (1 Tim. 2:12-13) and helper and partner for woman (Gen. 2:18). Both men and women have the same promise of inheritance in Jesus (Gal. 3:28).

Humanity is unique among God's creation, as we were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) as His appointed rulers of creation. We were made unique from angels as our bodies were created from the dirt (Gen. 2:7) and return to such when we die (Ecc. 12:7). Our bodies give us the unique responsibility and blessing of using them for the glory of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20) by submitting our bodies to God for His service (Rom. 12:1) and honoring Him through our lives (Phil. 1:20). The Bible teaches that we were created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). As God is spirit (John 4:24), this is not a reference to physical image, but instead our spiritual make-up. It is important to acknowledge that in certain passages, God is described in physical terms (Isa. 6:1; Eze. 1:26) This is an

anthropomorphism, giving us an understandable reference for our limited nature.

The image of God in man is represented by the aspects of man that make us unique from the rest of creation. God created us with personality (Gen 1:28) so we could be stewards of creation, a spirit (Job 32:8; Prov. 20:27; Ecc. 12:7) to discern the things of God and a moral nature. Though altered by the fall, it is restored in the lives of believers (Col. 3:1; Eph. 4:24). The fall of man effected the image of God in man, separating us from God and altering our spiritual aspect, but the image of God is still seen in man (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9; 1 Cor. 11:7).

Man was created with two aspects, the material and the immaterial (2 Cor. 5:1-5). The body is the aspect of man that interacts with creation. The body is the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20) and is the means of glorifying God. The body is not to be the master of man, and we are told to submit it to God to be used for His will (Rom. 12:1) and for His glory (Phil. 1:20). At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we will be rewarded based on what we do in our body (2 Cor 5:10).

At creation, God created man in His image (Gen. 1:26-27), which requires that there is an aspect of immaterial nature to man, as God is Spirit (John 4:24). As the immaterial aspect of man is part of our being, it comes about as a part of conception, meaning the immaterial aspect is a natural thing. Along with the natural aspects of our immaterial side comes the inheritance of the sin nature and depravity that is passed from one generation to the next (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12; Heb. 7:12). The components of non-material aspect of man are up for debate. Whether man is simply material and immaterial (dichotomy) or made up of body, soul and spirit (trichotomy) is up for discussion. Personally, the distinctions between the soul

and spirit in man seem to be used in a variety of different ways, soul and spirit used interchangeably (Gen. 41:8 vs Ps. 42:4; and Heb. 12:23 vs Rev. 6:9). While I do not hold fast to either view, distinguishing between material and immaterial seems sufficient.

Hamartiology- The Doctrine of Sin

Sin is failure to conform to the standard of God (Rom. 3:23). Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4) and it is a part of our nature (Rom. 7:14; Gal. 3:22; Heb. 3:13). Sin entered into the world in Genesis chapter 3, which was a literal, historical event. Adam's guilt was passed on through successive generations, while the sacrifice of Jesus offers freedom from sin's condemnation (Rom. 5:12-21). Adam and Eve sinned in the garden when they gave in to temptation and ate of the fruit as they were tempted by Satan. Their sin led to numerous consequences.

- Satan and his followers were punished (Gen. 3:15; Col. 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14).
- Woman (Gen. 3:16) received greater pain and difficulty in childbirth.
- Man (Gen. 3:17-19) received a punishment of greater effort required to provide as well as the pronouncement of death as the reward for sin.
- The human race received the punishment of sin nature and death (Rom. 5:12).
- Creation received judgment in the form of wildness and enmity with man as well as death and corruption (Gen. 3:17-18).

Soteriology-The Doctrine of Salvation

The punishment of death and eternal judgment is due each person because of our sin, our lawless rebellion toward God (Rom. 5:12-14; 6:23). God offers man a way to salvation, rescuing us from our own sin and deserved eternal punishment (Rom. 3:23; 5:12-21). Salvation is freely offered to all mankind by a general call to salvation (Matt. 11:28; Luke 14:16-24; Rom. 10:13) but extends a specific or efficacious call to the elect (Rom. 8:30; 1 Cor. 1:2).

Election is the act of God whereby He chose certain people before the creation of the world (2 Tim. 1:9, 1 Pet. 1:20) to receive salvation, not based on any merit of their own (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4-6). Election is not merit based, and it comes down to a selection of an individual (Eph. 1:4 states that “He chose us” from Greek *εκλεγω* meaning “to call out,” referring to the selection of individuals from the masses). God’s election of individuals is not based on a knowledge of our future choice or faith (Rom. 9:11) but is God’s choice based only on His own purpose and grace (2 Tim. 1:9) and is an example of God’s mercy and grace and cannot be claimed to be an injustice on God’s part (Rom. 9:14-20).

God made the offer of salvation available to all people, but it is effective only in the elect. It is not a frustration or failure of God’s will that some would accept the offer of salvation while others would not. Scripture is clear that Christ died for all (John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:6; 4:10; Heb. 2:9). It is clearly stated in Scripture that Christ died for the world (John 1:29; 3:16; 4:42; 1 John 4:14) and though some would argue “world” in these passages means something other than its literal translation, Scripture also does not limit Christ’s sacrifice to those who have accepted it (2 Pet. 2:1; 1 John 2:2).

The Bible teaches the concept of total depravity. This is the understanding that because of sin at the fall of man (Gen. 3:6), man has been corrupted, so that every part of man is tainted by sin (Isa. 64:6; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 7:17-18; Eph. 2:1-5). Because of this, every act of man would be corrupted by the taint of sin. The order of salvation or *Ordo Salutis* is not necessarily a temporal concept, most of the steps occur simultaneously but it is the logical understanding of what order God works in a person at salvation. The *Ordo Salutis* is:

- election (Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:9)
- calling- the working of the Spirit in the life of a believer to see His need for salvation (Rom. 8:30)
- regeneration- the impartation of new life (this is necessarily before conversion, paving the way for man to act in faith) (John 3:3; Titus 3:5)
- conversion- repenting of sin and placing faith in Christ for salvation (Acts 26:18)
- justification- the legal act by which Christ declares us righteous (Rom. 5:9)
- adoption- the act of God placing us into His family (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5)
- sanctification- the lifelong process by God and man of becoming more like Christ (John 17:16-17; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:15)
- perseverance- the guarantee of security of salvation (John 10:29) and perseverance until our glorification (Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 1:6)
- glorification- the final freedom from the temptation of sin and the gifting of a resurrection body (Rom. 5:2; 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17)

Man's only responsibility in salvation is faith (John 1:12; 3:16, 18; Acts 16:31). Faith is not simply intellectual assent to a truth. Included in faith is knowledge of Jesus and His death and resurrection for our sins (John 8:24; 20:30-31), conviction, which is an inner emotional belief in our need of a savior (John 16:8-11) and a settled trust in the saving work of Jesus (Rom. 10:9).

Ecclesiology-The Doctrine of the Church

The church is the “called-out” assembly of believers prescribed in the New Testament. The term church refers both to the local church (Acts 8:1; 16:5; Rom. 16:5; I Thess. 1:1) and the universal church (I Cor 12:13). The local church is an assembly in a designated location. This local assembly meets for the purpose of worship (Acts 2:47), fellowship (Acts 2:45-46), instruction (Acts 2:42; 11:26; I Cor. 4:17), observance of the ordinances (I Cor 11:33-34; Acts 2:41) and serving together to fulfill the church’s ministries (Acts 13:2-3; I Tim 5:3).

The Universal Church is made up of all believers from the founding of the Church onward (I Cor. 12:13). The Church began at Pentecost (Acts 2). The Church at the time of its formation was a new program, unique from Israel (Matt. 16:18 (I will build my Church emphasizes a future plan)). Scripture teaches that Christ is the head of the body (Col. 1:18-20), which is the Church (Col. 1:24). Entrance into the body of Christ is dependent on Spirit Baptism (1 Cor. 12:13), meaning that only those who have placed their faith in Christ and received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit are members of the Universal Church. Spirit Baptism was not instituted until the ministry of Christ (Luke 3:16) which came at the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4). This unique new and unique relationship between the believer and the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39) indicates that the new function of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer initiated the new institution of the Church (John 14:16-17; 16:7). Peter’s statement regarding the formation of the Church shows us that he saw the beginning of the Church at Pentecost (Acts 11:15-16). The Church is also not a replacement for Israel as both have specific roles in God’s plan and are not equated as the same in Scripture. Israel, even after the founding of the church is continually

referred to distinctly from Gentiles and the Church (Acts 3:12; 4:8).

In Scripture, the Church is referred to in several specific ways. Each of these figures of speech are used often as euphemisms for the Church, but also teach specific truths regarding the Church. One of the most common of these the Church as the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The metaphor of the body expresses Christ as Head of the Church, showing His leadership and direction of the Church, as well as His primacy. The body of Christ demonstrates the equality of all in the body (1 Cor. 12:13) as well as the unity found amongst believers in the Universal Church (Eph. 2:16). Christ as the head of the church also provides leaders for the church, that it may grow in maturity and but built up (Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 2:19). The church is also the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23). This evidences Christ's love for the Church (Eph. 5:2, 25) as well as a promise of future blessing in keeping with the marriage customs in New Testament times (John 14:1-3) while we await His return to rejoice with Him at the Marriage Supper after which we will live with Him forever (Rev. 19:7-9).

Another notable analogy for the church in scripture is that of a building. He refers to the church, made up of both Jews and Gentiles as a building, built on the foundation of the teaching of the Apostles and Prophets and whose cornerstone is Christ (Eph. 2:19-21). The Church is not to be equated with the Kingdom. Christ came and offered the Kingdom to the Jewish nation (Matt. 4:17) but after the rejection of the Kingdom, which is to come at the end of our current dispensation (Matt. 13; Rev. 20:1-5). After this rejection, the establishment of the church was taught (Matt. 16:18).

The church is Scripture is taught to have certain functions that it is intended to fulfill. Worship is a function of the church that sees the believer offer an inward submission as if we were bowed prostrate (1 Cor. 14:25). This is an act of service by the believer toward God (Rom. 1:9 (serve can be translated worship)). In contrast to the priestly service of Israel's priests, we are not to bring an animal to be slain in worship to God but rather a living sacrifice, our own lives which we commit to being set apart (Rom. 12:1). Therefore, worship is not just the singing of words or an expression of feelings, but instead a believer's decisive presentation of his whole self to God (Rom. 12:1-2). This necessitates that our worship needs to accurately reflect God's character and the truth that He reveals to us, and our songs and readings in worship should be chosen with that in mind (John 4:24). Hymn singing was a part of the church in Scripture and is an important aspect of worship (1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Instruction is also a key function of the church, which in our modern church takes the form of both teaching and preaching. The purpose of preaching is to equip believers for service to God and bring them to maturity (2 Timothy 3:16-17), produce love amongst believers (1 Tim. 1:5), provide spiritual nourishment (1 Tim. 4:6), godliness (1 Tim. 4:6-16), submission to God and humility (1 Tim. 6:17), to be an opposition to false teaching (1 Tim. 1:3) and to replicate and teach more preachers (2 Tim. 2:2). Another important function of the church is fellowship. Fellowship as a word refers to sharing, which is an important aspect of togetherness for the church. The early church met together to break bread, to share the blessings of food (Acts 2:42) as well as prayer (Acts 4:24-31; 12:5, 12; Phil. 1:3-4). Another crucial function of the church is ministry. This includes sharing the Gospel to the lost (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 8:4; 16:13-14; 17:12). Included in this is ministry to those who are of the church. Aspects of church ministry

include exercising one's spiritual gifts for the blessing of the body (Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:8-16), by serving others (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28), giving to others' needs (Rom. 12:8) and showing mercy (Rom. 12:8).

An important aspect of the church is its membership. We are not commanded in Scripture to remove ourselves from building relationships with the world (1 Cor. 5: 9-11) but we are not to be formally associated with the world (2 Cor. 6: 14-15) but to be separate (2 Cor. 6:17). So in our separation, we are join together with a church of like-minded believers. The Bible speaks in special ways for the gathered church, indicating that each church is an entity with responsibilities and blessings when it is gathered (1 Cor. 5:4) and is recognized as a whole-made up of parts that come together (1 Cor 11:18). And as a specifically associated group, there is a group to which each member is responsible (1 Cor. 5:13 (if there is no membership to be amongst, how can one be expelled from it?))1 John 2:19). In Scripture it is clear that congregations were numbered and their people were seen as a part of the whole (Acts 2:41; 4:4) as well as there clearly being a list of membership kept (1 Tim. 5:9). It is also clear that each church has its own leaders, as the membership is commanded to submit to their own (Heb. 13:17) and it would clearly be impossible for each believer to submit to every various leader that is out there. Pastors as shepherds are also called to attend to their specific flocks (1 Pet. 5:2; Acts 20:28). Membership is required for these functions to be carried out.

A church is responsible for dealing with issues of discipline amongst its members. This process is to begin with dealing with the one who sins individually (Matt. 18:15-17). Scripture calls for a church to exclude from its membership those who practice adultery (1 Cor 5) and those who teach a false

doctrine (2 Thess. 3:14; 2 John 10-11). It is desirable that exclusion from the church would not be the only process of dealing with sin. If other sin is recognized amongst the congregation, we are to minister to that person, helping to bear their burden so they can be restored (Gal 6:1-2).

The church is to be governed by the congregation, under the leadership of its pastors. In Scripture we see the congregation electing deacons (Acts 6:3-5), choosing representatives (Acts 15:1-2, 22) and dealing with issues of discipline (1 Cor. 5:3-5, 12-13). Each church is autonomous and responsible before the Lord (Acts 6:1-7; 2 Thess. 3:14-15). There are two appointed offices of the church in Scripture: Pastor and Deacon (Phil. 1:1). Elder (Acts 20:17), Pastor/shepherd (Eph. 4:11) and overseer (Acts 20:28) refer to the same office. Pastors are to be wise men (1 Tim 2:12), who pursue an understanding of Scripture, live a life of self-control and are skilled teachers (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Deacons are to be servants of the church who aid in the ministry of the church and in advising and supporting the pastor (Acts 6:2-7; 1 Tim 3:8-13).

There are two ordinances which are maintained by the church. The first is the celebration of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34). This is done as a memorial (1 Cor. 10:16-17) and not a method for distributing God's grace or favor. Baptism is commanded by Jesus (Matt. 28:19) and is a testimony of one's salvation and declaration of association with Christ (Acts 2:38, 41). It is only to be performed on those who make a clear profession of faith and is to be done as immersion (Mark 1:9-10; Acts 8:38) (baptism translated literally means to dip or immerse)).

Eschatology-The Doctrine of Last Things

A key component of the study of future things is an understanding of death. Death is a reality for everyone, both the redeemed and the lost (Heb. 9:27; Gen. 3:19). Because of Adam's sin, death entered the world (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:19). Death when discussed in Scripture describes the death of the physical body (John 12:25; 13:37-38), but at the time of death, the soul of the dead continues (James 2:26). Because of Adam's sin, which spread to all mankind (Rom. 5:12), the dead body returns to dust (Gen. 3:19), which is the reward for sin (Rom. 6:23). Upon death the soul's future depends on the deceased spiritual state, the soul of the redeemed goes home to Christ (2 Cor. 5:8) while the soul of the lost is to carry-on in torment (Luke 16:19-31).

The eternal destiny of the lost is one of shame and torment (Ps. 31:17; 49:14; 55:15). The term commonly given in the Old Testament to describe the destination of all who die is Sheol (Gen 37:35). It is used to refer to the grave, the physical place of death for the body (Job 17:13; Isa. 38:10), but it also seems to be used to describe the destination of the soul for both the guilty and righteous (Gen. 37:35; 42:38; Prov. 9:18). Upon death, before the coming of Christ, it appears that believers were rescued from Sheol to be in the presence of God (Ps. 16:9-10; 17:15; 49:15). Jesus' account of the rich man and Lazarus describes the separation between the place of torment for those opposed to Christ, versus the comfort and rest for the redeemed who enjoy the presence of God (Luke 16:19-31). The eternal state for those who have not placed their faith in Jesus for salvation is to be one of torment (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; Mark 9:43-44, 47-48; Rev. 14:10) in hell.

The eternal state for believers, however, will be eternal fellowship in the company of Christ (John 14:2-3). The promise of heaven for the believer is one of peace and celebration, banqueting in the presence of God and those who came before (Matt. 8:11). After the completion of the Millennial Kingdom, a New Heaven and New Earth will be established (Isa. 65:17) and will be the place of rulership for God on earth, where the believers of history will live with the angels in the presence of God (Heb. 12:22-24). The location of God's rulership will be the New Jerusalem, a literal, visible city from which God will rule and will illuminate with His Glory (Rev. 21:9-27). The most blessed aspect of this future reign of God will be that believers are blessed with direct fellowship with God (Rev. 22:3-5) in an eternity without sorrow and suffering (Rev. 21:4-5).

Regarding God's plan for the future of creation, the next event to come is the Rapture of the Church (1 Thes. 4:13-18). The Rapture is the calling up of the Church through the ages to be with the Lord (John 14:3). The Rapture will occur before the start of the Tribulation period, meaning that believers will not enter the Tribulation period (1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9; Rev. 3:10). The first to rise will be the dead in Christ (1 Thes. 4:14-15). The Rapture will occur without warning, and suddenly (1 Cor 15:52). In perfect bodies to replace what remains of their dead, fallen bodies, those who died will be caught up into the sky and be gathered with living believers (1 Thes. 4:17) who will receive new bodies, incorruptible and immortal (1 Cor. 15:53-54). After the Rapture, believers from all time will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and our works will be tested as to whether they were done for the glory of God or for ourselves (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

These events lead up to the most severe time of catastrophe foretold by Scripture, known as the Tribulation

period (Matt. 24:21). This is a literal period of seven years (Dan. 9:24-27) that as a time of judgment prepares the world for the culmination of the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 24:29-31). The length of the Tribulation period can also be understood in the 2 distinct periods of time given, adding up to a total of 84 months, or 7 years (Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 7, 14; 13:5). The period of seven-year judgment is divided into 3 sets of Judgments: the Seven Seals (Rev. 6:1-8:5), the Seven Trumpets (Rev. 8:6-11:19) and the Seven Bowls (Rev. 15:1-16:21). Scripture tells us that the reason for the Tribulation is to conclude the saga of sin that has been a part of creation since the first sin (Dan. 9:24) which will prepare the way for the Millennial Kingdom by removing the legacy of corruption that has come before. Of crucial use in this process is the work of Antichrist, also known as the Man of Sin (2 Thes. 2:3) the Profane Wicked Prince of Israel (Ezek. 21:25-27). He is to be a gentile (Rev. 13:1; 17:15) ruler who is the great adversary of Israel (Dan. 7:21,25). His power will come from Satan (Rev. 13:4) who comes to power by subtlety and deceit (Dan. 8:25) until he rules over all nations (Rev. 13:8). After he comes to power early in the Tribulation (2 Thes. 2:3), he will make a seven-year treaty with Israel that he will break after 3 and a half years (Dan. 9:27). He will set himself up as a god (Dan. 11:36-37) and blaspheme God (Matt. 24:15; Rev. 13:5). He will make war against the saints and receive the worship of the world for the second half of the tribulation (Rev. 13:5-10). While appearing to be a normal man, who is open and fair to all, in the second half of the tribulation, his true alignment with Satan will be revealed and he will be an enemy of the people of God who live in the time of the Tribulation (Dan. 7:25). (Those who have come to faith since the start of the tribulation, as the Church will be removed before it begins (1 Thes. 1:10).

At the conclusion of the seven-year tribulation, Antichrist will assemble his armies to make war on his remaining enemies at Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16; Joel 3) and then to finally destroy Israel (Zech. 12-14). While Antichrist's forces besiege and destroy Jerusalem (Jer. 49:12-13), the time for Christ's return will come as the remainder of Israel repents (Rom. 11:25-27; Zech. 12:10). Christ's second coming will occur in time to thwart the ambition of Antichrist to destroy the remnant of Israel (Isa. 34:1-7; 63:1-3; Joel 3:12-13). At the time of the Glorious Appearing of Jesus, there will be signs and cosmic wonders such as a darkening of the sun and moon (Matt. 24:29-30). Christ will appear on a white horse (Rev. 19:11) arrayed for war (Rev. 19:12-16); He will descend with the armies of heaven (Rev.19:14), prepared to judge the ungodly (Jude 14-15). Jesus will return to stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:3-5). The armies of Antichrist will confront Him, and those who deny Him will be destroyed, while Antichrist and the False Prophet will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 19:19-21). Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-3) and He will gather the resurrected Old Testament and Tribulation saints to Himself (Matt. 24:31; Rev. 20:4); at which time Christ will begin His Millennial reign on Earth (Matt. 25; Rev. 20:5).

The Millennial Kingdom will be a literal reign of Christ over the span of 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-7), initially populated by those believers who come to faith during the Tribulation and survive that period (Matt. 24:13). During the Millennial Kingdom Israel will be restored (Jer. 31:31-34); Israel will possess the promised land (Ezek. 20:42-44) and Jesus will reign (Isa. 2:3-4). The 1,000 reign of Christ will be a time of prosperity as poverty, injustice and disease will cease (Jer. 31:12-14), the earth will be restored from its fallen state (Isa. 35:1-2) and God's

creatures will return to their original state and live in harmony (Isa. 11:6-7). The Kingdom will be a fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1-3) by fulfilling the promise of prosperity and blessing and the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:4-17) by the establishment of an everlasting Kingdom for Jesus, the descendant of David. At the end of the thousand years Satan will be released from His imprisonment and he will lead away the non-believers (the children of believers born during the Millennium who have not followed Christ) in rebellion, which will be destroyed by fire from heaven and Satan will be cast into the Lake of Fire for eternity (Rev. 20:7-10). After this rebellion, God will establish a new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1), on which a new Jerusalem will stand (Rev. 21:9-27). From here God will rule in person and light the world with His presence for eternity (Rev. 21:23).

Philosophy of Ministry

In the Christian life and in application Christian Ministry, the Gospel is central. It reveals the righteousness of God to all, leading us to live by faith and demonstrate God's power to all that we interact with (Rom. 1:16-17). Salvation is found exclusively in the saving work of Jesus (John 14:6; Acts 4:10-12) and is revealed in the form of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:23; 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9) and therefore should not be compromised (Gal. 1:6-8). Gospel teaching is then central to the ministry of the pastor and the church (Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 10:10-15). It is also a priority of the preacher to keep the importance of the Gospel before the eyes of His congregation, encouraging them to grow in Christlikeness (Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:14-15).

The pastor is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12). This is to be done through preaching (Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:2), teaching (1 Tim. 4:11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17), discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:1-8), leadership in the following of the two ordinances (Acts 2:41-42) and leadership. The ministry should be done not for worldly gain or self-promotion, but for the glory of God (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:31; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet.2:9). Colossians 1:28-29 says that we are to preach Christ, "warning every man and teaching everyman in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."