

THE STATEMENT OF FAITH OF GRACE BIBLE CHAPEL

Section I - The Holy Scriptures

Although written by men, the Scriptures are divinely inspired and God-breathed. This inspiration is verbal (every word inspired) and plenary (all parts equally inspired) because God is its Source.¹ The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, infallible, and inerrant rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.

References

1. Psalm 119:151,160; Matthew 5:18, 24:35; John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16

Although the conscience of men, nature, the works of creation, and providence manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so that man is without excuse,² they are not sufficient to provide a saving knowledge of God for salvation.³ Therefore, it pleased the Lord at different times and in different ways to reveal Himself in special revelations to His chosen.⁴ Since the first century following Pentecost, it pleased the Lord to commit His revelations solely into writing in the completed canon of Scripture. Therefore, the Holy Scriptures are necessary for salvation since the previous ways God used to reveal Himself have now ceased.⁵

References

2. 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29,31; Ephesians 2:20
3. Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14-15; Psalms 19:1-3
4. Hebrews 1:1
5. Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19-20

The Word of God, or the canon of Scripture, contains all the 66 books of the Old and New Testament that have been internally verified in the Scriptures themselves and historically recognized by the church since the early centuries. These books and these only are the inspired Word of God.

Section II - God the Holy Trinity

The Lord our God is the only living and true God.¹ He is infinite in perfection and independent.² His essence cannot be comprehended by anyone but Himself.³ He is an immortal Spirit⁴ that dwells in a sphere of light that no man can approach.⁵ He is immutable,⁶ immense,⁷ eternal,⁸ incomprehensible, almighty,⁹ holy,¹⁰ all knowing, wise, free, and absolute. He works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable righteous will¹¹ and glory.¹² He is loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. He forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, and rewards those that diligently seek Him.¹³ He is just but uncompromising in His judgments,¹⁴ hating all sin,¹⁵ and will by no means clear the guilty.¹⁶

References

1. 1 Corinthians 8:4,6; Deuteronomy 6:4
2. Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12
3. Exodus 3:14
4. John 4:24
5. 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15-16
6. Malachi 3:6
7. 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23
8. Psalms 90:2
9. Genesis 17:1
10. Isaiah 6:3
11. Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:10
12. Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36
13. Exodus 34:6-7; Hebrews 11:6

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14. Nehemiah 9:32-33
15. Psalms 5:5-6
16. Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2-3

God, being sovereign over all life and having all ¹⁷ glory, ¹⁸ goodness, ¹⁹ and blessedness, is unique in being all sufficient both in Himself and to Himself. He does not need any creature He has made, and He does not derive any glory from them ²⁰ but manifests His own glory through them. He is the beginner of all creation, from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things,²¹ and He has absolute sovereign dominion over all creatures to do to them, for them, or with them as He pleases. ²² In His sight all things are manifest and understood. ²³ His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and not dependent upon any other source, so that nothing is for Him contingent or uncertain. ²⁴ He is holy in all His counsels, in all His works, ²⁵ and in all His commands. All creatures are obligated to Him for whatever He requires of them. All men owe Him complete allegiance, worship, ²⁶ service, and obedience.

References

17. John 5:26
18. Psalms 148:13
19. Psalms 119:68
20. Job 22:2-3
21. Romans 11:34-36
22. Daniel 4:25,34-35
23. Hebrews 4:13
24. Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18
25. Psalms 145:17
26. Revelation 5:12-14

In the one God there are three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ²⁷ All are the same in nature, power, perfection, and eternity. Each person of the Godhead has the same divine essence, and each has all the attributes of God. ²⁸ Each are equal and inseparably harmonious, yet they are distinct individuals and not just different manifestations of the same person. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father, ²⁹ and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. ³⁰ Each person of the Godhead is distinguished in the Scriptures by the design and exercise of their work, and by their order of procession.

References

27. 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14
28. Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6
29. John 1:14,18
30. John 15:26; Galatians 4:6

God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity who created all things and causes all things to work together according to His sovereign plan, a plan designed to bring Him ultimate glory. As the supreme Ruler of the universe, His sovereignty extends over all things including creation and redemption.³¹

References

31. Genesis 1:1-31; Psalm 103:19; Matthew 20:15; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 15:24,28; Ephesians 1:11, 3:9,11; Revelation 4: 11

Jesus Christ, the Son of God and second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the attributes of deity and is co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. ³² Although sharing equality with the Father, the Son is submissive to Him in the execution of the Father's

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will. The Father created all things through the Son, by whom all things continue in existence and operation.³³

References

- 32. John 5:17-18, 8:58, 10:30, 14:9-10; Colossians 1:19, 2:9
- 33. John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2-3

The Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, possesses all the attributes of deity and is co-equal, co-existent, co-eternal with the Father and the Son.³⁴ The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect,³⁵ eternity,³⁶ omnipresence,³⁷ omniscience,³⁸ omnipotence,³⁹ and truth.⁴⁰

References

- 34. Matthew 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; and Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17
- 35. 1 Corinthians 2:10-13
- 36. Hebrews 9:14
- 37. Psalm 139:7-10
- 38. Isaiah 40:13-14
- 39. Romans 15:19
- 40. John 16:13

The work of the Holy Spirit is to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. This includes His sovereign activity in creation,⁴¹ the incarnation of the Son⁴², the written revelation of God,⁴³ and the work of salvation.⁴⁴ In this present age, the Holy Spirit was sent forth from the Father and the Son to initiate and complete the building of the church, to speak of and glorify the Son, and to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment.⁴⁵ The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration who draws men to Jesus Christ and enables every believer to possess faith.⁴⁶ The Holy Spirit baptizes all believers into the Body of Christ at the moment of salvation, at which time He also indwells them with all fullness.⁴⁷ The Holy Spirit also sanctifies them, instructs them, empowers them for service, seals them unto the day of redemption, and transforms them into the image of Christ.⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher who guided the prophets and apostles to write God's special revelation, the Bible.⁴⁹ He administers spiritual gifts to the church but neither glorifies Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays. Instead, the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ by implementing His work of drawing the elect and building up believers in the most holy faith.⁵⁰

References

- 41. Genesis 1:2
- 42. Matthew 1:18,20; Luke 1:35
- 43. 2 Peter 1:20-21
- 44. John 3:5-8
- 45. John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7-11, 13-14; Acts 1:5, 2:4; Ephesians 2:19-22
- 46. John 6:44,63; 2 Corinthians 3:6
- 47. John 3:34; 14:17; Romans 8:9,11; 1 Corinthians 12:13
- 48. Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:6,18; Ephesians 1:13, 4:7-13,30; 1 John 2:20,27
- 49. John 16:13; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21
- 50. John 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Section III – Angels

Angels are created spirit beings who appear to be the first issue of God's creation.¹ They are a high order of creation² and greater in power than man,³ and fall into two categories: elect holy angels⁴ and fallen angels.⁵

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References

1. Genesis 1:1 with Job 38:6-7; Nehemiah 9:6
2. Psalm 8:5 with Hebrews 2:7-9
3. 2 Peter 2:11
4. Mark 8:38; 1 Timothy 5:21
5. Matthew 25:41

Holy angels serve God and worship Him.⁶ They presently are engaged in spiritual warfare with the demonic host and serve as ministering agents for believers.⁷

References

6. Psalm 103:20-21; Luke 2:9-14; Hebrews 1:6-7; Revelation 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9
7. Daniel 10:12-13; Hebrews 1:14; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7-8

Fallen angels were initially created perfect and enjoyed fellowship with God but rebelled against Him and were cast out of heaven.⁸ Salvation is not extended to them, as they are destined for a certain, eternal judgment.⁹

References

8. Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:13-15; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7-9
9. Matthew 25:41; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6

At the head of the demonic host is the devil, or Satan. As a created being, he possesses none of the attributes of deity and should not be treated as though he does. He is the author of sin and incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator,¹⁰ taking an apparent one-third of the angels with him in his fall¹¹ and introducing sin into the human race with his temptation of Eve.¹² Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man.¹³ He is also the prince, or god, of this present evil world system which opposes the true God¹⁴ and holds the entirety of unbelieving humanity under his control¹⁵. He violently opposes believers and their service to the Lord.¹⁶ However, he is powerless against God and is subject to the will of God. Satan has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,¹⁷ and he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire.¹⁸

References

10. Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19
11. Revelation 12:4
12. Genesis 3:1-15
13. Isaiah 14:13-14; Matthew 4:1-11; John 10:10; Revelation 12:9-10
14. John 12:31; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2
15. John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Timothy 2:26; 1 John 5:19
16. Job 1-2; Luke 22:31; John 17:15; Ephesians 6:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10
17. John 14:30, 16:11; Romans 16:20; Colossians 2:15
18. Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10

Section IV - Decrees

God has eternally predetermined all history¹ in such a way that He is not the author of sin, and He does not fellowship or counsel with anyone in the committing of sin.² He has also designed providence so man's will is not violated; and the liberty or contingency of man's accountability is not removed, but instead is established.³ In all of man's activities, God's sovereign wisdom is shown by how He accomplishes all His purposes to accomplish.⁴

References

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1. Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15,18
2. James 1:13; 1 John 1:5
3. Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11
4. Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5

Although God knows every future possibility under any and all conditions,⁵ He has not determined anything because He merely looked into the future. He has instead ⁶ determined everything by His own design.

References

5. Acts 15:18
6. Romans 9:11,13,16,18

By the decree of God some men and angels are predestined to eternal life. ⁷ Saved men are ordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ by His grace, ⁸ and the unsaved men are left to act in their sin to their just condemnation by His justice.⁹

References

7. Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34
8. Ephesians 1:5-6
9. Romans 9:22-23; Jude 4

The angels and men that are predestined for eternal life are particularly and unchangeably designed into His plan, and their number is so fixed that it cannot be either increased or diminished.¹⁰

References

10. 2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18

Those that are predestined to life, God has chosen before the foundation of the world to be in Christ out of His free grace ¹¹ and without any cause in them as a condition for moving Him to choose them.¹²

References

11. Ephesians 1:4,9,11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9
12. Romans 9:13,16; Ephesians 2:5,12

As God has appointed the elect for glory, so He has determined all the means of accomplishment. ¹³ Accordingly, all who are elect are redeemed by Christ.¹⁴ They are effectually called to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit and are justified, adopted, sanctified, ¹⁵ and kept by His power through faith. ¹⁶ Outside of the elect, there are none saved.¹⁷

References

13. 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13
14. 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10
15. Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13
16. 1 Peter 1:5
17. John 10:26; John 17:9; John 6:64

The doctrine of predestination is to be correctly understood so that men, investing themselves by faith in the revealed will of God, may derive assurance from the work of the Holy Spirit that is effectually being manifested in their lives. ¹⁸ This doctrine should be a cause for consolation, praise, ¹⁹ reverence, and admiration of God instead of despair; and it should cause humility, ²⁰ dependence, and diligence to all that are obedient to Christ.²¹

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References

18. 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; 2 Peter 1:10
19. Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33
20. Romans 11:5-6,20
21. Luke 10:20

Section V - Creation

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ¹ for the manifestation of His power, ² wisdom, and goodness to create the world and all things in it both visible and invisible in six literal days, and all very good.³

References

1. John 1:2-3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13
2. Romans 1:20
3. Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31

After God had made all other creatures, He created man (male and female) in God's image ⁴ with reasoning and with an immortal soul ⁵ to live life in communion with Him. Man was created in innocence ⁶ but was given the freedom of disobeying God's command.⁷

References

4. Genesis 1:27
5. Genesis 2:7
6. Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26
7. Genesis 3:6

Section VI - Providence

God in sovereignty upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all His creatures in all situations, ¹ from the greatest to the least, ² by His wise and holy providence, for the purposes they were created by His own will to the praise of His glory.³

References

1. Hebrews 1:3; Job 38:11; Isaiah 46:10-11; Psalms 135:6
2. Matthew 10:29-31
3. Ephesians 1:11

All things come to pass immutably and infallibly ⁴ by the purpose of God so that there is not anything that occurs by chance or without His providence. ⁵ He also, by the same providence, orders events to occur according to the nature of second causes, whether it be freely, contingently, or by necessity.⁶

References

4. Acts 2:23
5. Proverbs 16:33
6. Genesis 8:22

God, in His ordinary providence, uses common means,⁷ yet He is free to work outside,⁸ above,⁹ and contrary to common means ¹⁰ at His pleasure.

References

7. Acts 27:31,44; Isaiah 55:10-11

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8. Hosea 1:7
9. Romans 4:19-21
10. Daniel 3:27

The providence of God can be seen in the fall of man into sin and all other sinful actions of angels and men. ¹¹ His providence extends not just by permission, but by a form of permission that includes wise and powerful limitations restricting and controlling sin. ¹³ In all occurrences, the sinfulness of angels and men come only from them and not from God, who is holy and righteous, and can never be the author or approver of sin.¹⁴

References

11. Romans 11:32-34; 2 Samuel 24:1; 1 Chronicles 21:1
12. 2 Kings 19:28; Psalms 76:10
13. Genesis 1:20; Isaiah 10:6-7,12
14. Psalms 50:21; 1 John 2:16

God's providential wisdom often places His elect for a time in various trials in order to chasten them for sins they have committed, or to show them the deceitfulness of their own hearts so they may be purified. He further does so to arouse them to greater humility and dependence on God, and to make them alert against all opportunities of sin. ¹⁵ Therefore whatever happens to any of His elect is by His appointment for His glory and their good.¹⁶

References

15. 2 Chronicles 32:25-26,31; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9
16. Romans 8:28

Wicked and ungodly men are blinded and hardened providentially by God for their continued sin. ¹⁷ He withholds His grace that would give them understanding ¹⁸ and withdraws their opportunities. ¹⁹ He allows them to be exposed to sinful ideas and situations which pull them further into corruption ²⁰ and gives them over to their own lusts and the power of Satan. ²¹ So it happens the ungodly harden and condemn themselves by their continued rejection of the truth provided.²²

References

17. Romans 1:24-26,28; Romans 11:7-8
18. Deuteronomy 29:4
19. Matthew 13:12
20. Deuteronomy 2:30; 8:12-13
21. Psalms 81:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12
22. Exodus 8:15,32; Isaiah 6:9-10; 1 Peter 2:7-8

As the providence of God does in general extend to all creatures, so after a special manner it takes care of His church and accomplishes all things for their good.²³

References

23. 1 Timothy 4:10; Amos 9:8-9; Isaiah 43:3-5

Section VII - The Fall, Sin, and Punishment

God created man innocent and gave clear commands and threatening consequences for disobedience¹ yet man disobeyed God. Satan used subtlety to deceive Eve, and Adam willfully disobeyed God as a result of Eve.²

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References

1. Genesis 2:16-17
2. Genesis 3:12-13; 2 Corinthians 11:3

Our first parents, by their sin corrupted their innocence and fell from their communion with God, and all their offspring are thereby born into corruption as a result, since death came to all descendants;³ all being born dead in sin,⁴ and carrying the same corrupt nature as the parents.⁵

References

3. Romans 3:23
4. Romans 5:12-21
5. Titus 1:15; Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-19

Adam being the father of the entire human race, and standing in the place of all mankind, the guilt of his sin has been imputed to his descendants.⁶ All men by natural birth are conceived into sin⁷ and are by nature children of wrath,⁸ the servants of sin, the subjects of death,⁹ and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus sets them free.¹⁰

References

6. Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22,45,49
7. Psalms 51:5; Job 14:4
8. Ephesians 2:3
9. Romans 6:20; Romans 5:12
10. Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 1:10

From this original sin of our parents we are unable to spiritually help ourselves. Our very nature is totally depraved and incapable of doing good or choosing to do good in the sight of God. We are born spiritually dead and held captive by our sinful nature to do Satan's will. Our natural efforts are opposite to righteousness and inclined to evil¹¹ because our nature has been radically corrupted.¹²

References

11. Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21; Romans 3:10-18; Ephesians 2:1; 2 Timothy 2:26
12. James 1:14-15; Matthew 15:19

During this life the corruption of nature remains even in those who are regenerated;¹³ and although it is forgiven through Christ, and the tenor of the Christian life is righteousness, the performance of sinful actions continues to be sin even in the life of those saved.¹⁴

References

13. Ecclesiastes 7:20; 1 John 1:8
14. Galatians 5:17

Section VII - God's Grace

The distance between God and the creature is so great the creature could never attain to eternal life except through a voluntary condescension by God, which He has been pleased to express by a covenant of grace.¹

References

1. Luke 17:10; Job 35:7-8

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As man has brought himself under a curse by his fall, it has pleased the Lord to make a covenant of grace for salvation ² which He freely offers to sinners through faith in Christ;³ and to those ordained to eternal life He provides His Holy Spirit to incline their will and to enable them to believe.⁴

References

2. Genesis 2:17; Galatians 3:10; Romans 3:20-21
3. Romans 8:3; Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16
4. Ezekiel 36:26-27; John 6:44-45; Psalms 110:3; Acts 13:38

Grace is revealed progressively in the Scriptures first to Adam in the promise of salvation through His offspring, ⁵ and progressively by the promises of God and through history until it is fully revealed and completed in Christ. ⁶ Salvation by grace through faith was determined by God before the foundation of the world ⁷ and has always been the only means of salvation. Man is completely incapable of coming to God except by grace ⁸ through faith.

References

5. Genesis 3:15
6. Hebrews 1:1
7. 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2
8. Hebrews 11:6,13; Romans 4:1-2; Acts 4:12; John 8:56

Section IX - Christ as Mediator

It pleased God to ordain the Lord Jesus Christ to be the only mediator between God and man, and to be ¹ the Prophet, ² Priest, ³ King, ⁴ Head and Savior of His church, ⁵ the heir of all things, (6) and the judge of the world. ⁷ From all eternity He has been given a people for His own possession to be by Him redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified.⁸

References

1. Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 1:19-20
2. Acts 3:22
3. Hebrews 5:5-6
4. Psalms 2:6; Luke 1:33
5. Ephesians 1:22-23
6. Hebrews 1:2
7. Acts 17:31
8. Isaiah 53:10; John 17:6; Romans 8:30

The Son of God took upon Himself man's nature with all the essential properties and common characteristics, ⁹ yet without sin;¹⁰ and after being conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, ¹¹ two whole, perfect, and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, Jesus Christ, who is God and man.¹²

References

9. John 1:14; Galatians 4:4
10. Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14,16-17; Hebrews 4:15
11. Matthew 1:22-23; Luke 1:27,31,35
12. Romans 9:5; 1 Timothy 2:5

The Lord Jesus, in His human nature was set apart and uniquely anointed by the Holy Spirit ¹³ with all wisdom and knowledge. ¹⁴ It pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell ¹⁵ in Him, and He being holy, blameless, undefiled, ¹⁶ and full of grace and truth, ¹⁷ perfectly executed the

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office of Savior.¹⁸ He did so by the will of His Father,¹⁹ who also placed all power and judgment in His hand and gave Him authority to execute it.²⁰

References

13. Psalms 45:7; Acts 10:38; John 3:34
14. Colossians 2:3
15. Colossians 1:19
16. Hebrews 7:26
17. John 1:14
18. Hebrews 7:22
19. Hebrews 5:5
20. John 5:22,27; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36

Christ willingly accomplished the plan of God the Father.²¹ He placed Himself under the law²² and perfectly completed its requirement. He further endured the punishment for His elect²³ by taking their sin upon Himself.²⁴ He endured infinite sorrows and sufferings in His body.²⁵ He was crucified. He died and remained dead, yet saw no corruption,²⁶ and on the third day He arose²⁷ in the same body²⁸ and ascended into heaven as witnessed by many.²⁹ He now sits at the right hand of God the Father making intercession³⁰ and shall return physically to judge men and angels, and to establish His kingdom.³¹

References

21. Psalms 40:7-8; Hebrews 10:5-10; John 10:18
22. Galatians 4:4; Matthew 3:15
23. Galatians 3:13; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Peter 3:18
24. 2 Corinthians 5:21
25. Matthew 26:37-38; Luke 22:44; Matthew 27:46
26. Acts 13:37
27. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
28. John 20:25,27
29. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11
30. Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24
31. Acts 10:42; Romans 14:9-10; Acts 1:11; 2 Peter 2:4

The Lord Jesus has completely satisfied God's justice,³² procured reconciliation, and purchased an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all persons given Him by the Father.³³

References

32. Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans 3:25-26
33. John 17:2; Hebrews 9:15

Even though the price of redemption was not actually satisfied by Christ until His incarnation, yet efficacy was provided by faith to the elect from the beginning of the world. In Old Testament promises, types, and sacrifices, He was revealed and signified to be the One who would bruise the serpent's head³⁴ and to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,³⁵ because He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.³⁶

References

34. 1 Corinthians 4:10; Hebrews 4:2; 1 Peter 1:10-11
35. Revelation 13:8
36. Hebrews 13:8

Christ in His work of mediation acted according to His two natures and each nature performed and acted consistently. Yet because of the unity of His person, that which is appropriate to one nature sometimes appears in Scripture to be attributed to the other nature.³⁷

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References

37. John 3:13; Acts 20:28

Those Christ has redeemed are effectually drawn to Him. He intercedes for them.³⁸ He reveals Himself to them through His Word. He persuades them to believe and obey.³⁹ He governs their hearts⁴⁰ and overcomes all their enemies;⁴¹ and He does so without any reason within them, but only according to His grace.⁴²

References

38. John 6:37; John 10:15-16; John 17:9; Romans 5:10

39. John 17:6; Ephesians 1:9; 1 John 5:20

40. Romans 8:9,14

41. Psalms 110:1; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26

42. John 3:8; Ephesians 1:8

Christ is the only mediator between God and man. He is the prophet, priest, and king of the church of God; and His role may not be either in whole, or any part be transferred to any other person.⁴³

References

43. 1 Timothy 2:5

Because of our weakness in sin and alienation from God, all of Christ's offices are essential.⁴⁴ We need His priestly office to reconcile us acceptable to God;⁴⁵ and because of remaining sin and powerful spiritual adversaries, we need His kingly office to deliver and preserve us to His heavenly kingdom.⁴⁶

References

44. John 1:18

45. Colossians 1:21; Galatians 5:17

46. John 16:8; Psalms 110:3; Luke 1:74-75

Section X - Man's Will

God has given man a natural liberty and power to choose that is neither forced nor overpowered by any outside influence. His ability to choose is limited only by His own will and nature.¹ Because his will is bound by his nature, it is not free to choose that which is contrary to His nature.

References

1. Matthew 17:12; James 1:14; Deuteronomy 30:19; John 8:44

Adam, in his state of innocence, had freedom and power to will and to do spiritual good that was pleasing to God,² but he was unstable in and of himself, and as a result, he sinned against God and fell from innocence.³

References

2. Ecclesiastes 7:29

3. Genesis 3:6

Because of the fall of Adam, man is so corrupted in sin that he has completely lost all ability or will to do any spiritual good.⁴ As a natural man⁵ born into sin, he is not able by his own strength to convert himself or in any way help himself to be pleasing to God.⁶

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References

4. Romans 5:6; Romans 8:7
5. Ephesians 2:1,5
6. Titus 3:3-5; John 6:44

When God converts a sinner and places him under His grace, He sets him free from his natural bondage under sin. ⁷ By His grace, He enables him to will and to do that which is spiritually good. ⁸ But because of remaining corruption, the man under grace does not always act perfectly or only do those things that are good, but being still imperfect he may also choose that which is evil.⁹

References

7. Colossians 1:13; John 8:36
8. Philippians 2:13
9. 1 John 1:8

The perfection of the will of a redeemed man is not made free to perform immutable good until the saint enters a state of glorification where he is set entirely free from all corruption.¹⁰

References

10. Ephesians 4:13

Section XI - Effectual Calling

Those whom God has predestined to eternal life are in His appointed time effectually called to Himself. ¹¹ He calls them by grace out of their natural state of sin to salvation in Jesus Christ through the means of His Word and through the work of the Holy Spirit preparing the heart. ¹² In His calling, the Holy Spirit enlightens their minds to understand the things of God,¹³ taking away their heart of stone and giving them a heart of flesh, ¹⁴ renewing their wills, and by His power irresistibly drawing them to Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ and making them to delight in coming because they have been made willing.¹⁶

References

11. Romans 8:30; Romans 11:7; Ephesians 1:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
12. Ephesians 2:1-6
13. Acts 26:18; Ephesians 1:17-18
14. Ezekiel 36:26
15. Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekiel 36:27; Ephesians 1:19
16. Psalms 110:3; Psalms 1:4

The effectual call is by God's free and special grace alone, not from anything in man or any ability of man. ¹⁷ Man is passive until he is powerfully renewed by the Holy Spirit ¹⁸ and enabled to embrace the grace offered by God.¹⁹

References

17. 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 2:8
18. 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:5; John 5:25
19. Ephesians 1:19-20

Some non-elect persons may be called to a profession of Christianity by an interest in the Word and show some signs commonly associated with the work of the Spirit,²⁰ yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither will, nor can truly trust Christ, and therefore are not

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saved.²¹ Men that do not possess true Christian faith in Christ cannot be saved, no matter how sincere or diligent they are to frame their lives according to Christian values or moral ideals.²²

References

20. Matthew 22:14; Matthew 13:20-21; Hebrews 6:4-5
21. John 6:44-45,65; 1 John 2:24-25
22. Acts 4:12; John 4:22; John 17:3

Section XII – Justification

Those whom God effectually calls He also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them so they are made immediately holy in behavior,¹ but by pardoning their sins, and accounting and accepting them as righteous and not for anything they have done but solely by grace alone.² This righteousness involves the imputation of our sins to Christ³ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us.⁴ By this means God is enabled to "be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus".⁵ They then begin the life of faith by trusting in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This trust or faith is not of themselves. It also is the gift of God.⁶

References

1. Isaiah 55:6-7; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38, 3:19, 11:18, 16:31; Romans 2:4, 3:24-25, 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:3, 2 Corinthians 4:5, 7:10; Philippians 2:11
2. Romans 3:20, 4:6
3. Colossians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:24
4. 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21
5. Romans 3:26
6. Ephesians 2:8-9

The faith that depends on Christ's righteousness is the sole instrument of justification, yet this faith is not alone in the person justified, but is always accompanied by all the other saving graces, and is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love.

Christ, by His obedience on the cross, completely paid the debt of all those who are justified by undergoing on their behalf the penalty for their sin that was due them. His satisfaction of their debt was accepted entirely and therefore they are justified. Because of this act, the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

From all eternity God had determined to justify all the elect, and Christ, in the fullness of time, died for their sins and rose again for their justification. However, they are not personally justified until the Holy Spirit regenerates their heart and applies Christ to them.

God continues to forgive the sins of those who are justified, and although they can never fall from a state of justification, yet because of sin, can come under God's fatherly displeasure.

The justification of believers in the Old Testament period was in all respects exactly the same as the justification of believers of this age.

Section XIII - Adoption

All persons that are justified are for the sake of Christ adopted into the family of God¹ and will enjoy all the privileges of children of God.² They will bear His name,³ receive His Spirit of adoption,⁴ and have access to the throne of grace⁵ to find mercy,⁶ protection,⁷ and provision.⁸

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They will also be chastened by God as by a loving Father, ⁹ yet never cast off, ¹⁰ but sealed to the day of redemption ¹¹ when they will inherit everlasting promises.¹²

References

1. Ephesians 1:5; Galatians 4:4-5
2. John 1:12; Romans 8:17
3. 2 Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12
4. Romans 8:15
5. Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:18
6. Psalms 103:13
7. Proverbs 14:26
8. 1 Peter 5:7
9. Hebrews 12:6
10. Isaiah 54:8-9; Lamentations 3:31
11. Ephesians 4:30
12. Hebrews 1:14; Hebrews 6:12

Section XIV - Sanctification

They who are united to Christ are regenerated. Their new heart is sanctified ¹ through the reception of God's Word applied into the life by the indwelling Spirit ² so that captivity to sin is destroyed, ³ and the remnants of sin are more and more weakened. Instead of being dominated by the deeds of the flesh, ⁴ they are more and more demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit ⁵ and the pursuit of holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.⁶

References

1. Acts 20:32; Romans 6:5-6
2. John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:21-23
3. Romans 6:14
4. Galatians 5:24
5. Colossians 1:11
6. 2 Corinthians 7:1; Hebrews 12:1

Sanctification encompasses every part of the regenerated man. ⁷ But it is imperfect in this life because there continues to abide remnants of corruption in the saint; ⁸ and therefore a continual and irreconcilable war exists of the flesh against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.⁹

References

7. 1 Thessalonians 5:23
8. Romans 7:18,23
9. Galatians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:11

In the war against corruption in the regenerate man, corruption for a time may prevail; ¹⁰ yet, through the strength provided from the sanctifying Spirit, the regenerate man will overcome ¹¹ and grow in grace. God uses this inner war to perfect dependence, holiness, a more perfect fear of God, and a more committed obedience to His truth and commands.¹²

References

10. 2 Corinthians 3:18
11. Romans 6:14
12. Ephesians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Corinthians 7:1

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Section XV - Saving Faith

The grace of God that enables a person to have faith is the work of the Spirit in the heart ¹ and comes about through the ministry of the Word. Salvation occurs when the Holy Spirit works in the heart making it receptive to the Word of God, which then results in faith. ² The ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper do not save but follow saving faith with special purposes of demonstrating and supporting the faith of those saved.³

References

1. 2 Corinthians 4:13; Ephesians 2:8;
2. Romans 10:14,17; James 1:18
3. Luke 17:5; 1 Peter 2:2; Acts 20:32

By faith a Christian believes whatever is revealed in the Word as the very authority of God Himself ⁴ and esteems the Word above all other sources ⁵ knowing that it proclaims His glory and will. By faith he is enabled to believe the truth ⁶ and also act on it contrary to his natural tendency. By faith he is yielding obedience to its commands, ⁷ fearing its warnings, ⁸ and embracing its promises. ⁹ The Word when rightly understood reveals Christ, and saving faith is trust in Christ's work alone for justification, sanctification, eternal life; and this on the basis of grace alone.¹⁰

References

4. Acts 24:14
5. Psalms 19:7-10; Psalms 119:72
6. 2 Timothy 1:12
7. John 15:14
8. Isaiah 66:2
9. Hebrews 11:13
10. John 1:12; Acts 16:31; Galatians 2:20; Acts 15:11

The faith exemplified by each Christian is different by degrees, being stronger in some than in others, ¹¹ but it is in its nature a saving faith that is different from the faith of temporary believers;¹² and though true saving faith is assailed and weakened, yet it will prevail ¹³ and grow to attain full assurance through Christ,¹⁴ who is both the author and perfecter of true faith. ¹⁵

References

11. Hebrews 5:13-14; Matthew 6:30; Romans 4:19-20
12. 2 Peter 1:1
13. Ephesians 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5
14. Hebrews 6:11-12; Colossians 2:2
15. Hebrews 12:2

Section XVI - Repentance

All who are drawn to Christ turn from their previous manner of life and turn to Christ. ¹ This is repentance.

References

1. Titus 3:2-5

Even true Christians, because of the power and deceitfulness of inner corruption, may fall into sins.² Therefore God has mercifully provided that believers so sinning may repent and be forgiven and continue their walk of faith.³

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References

2. Ecclesiastes 7:20
3. Luke 22:31-32, 1 John 1:9

True repentance occurs ⁴ when a person is made aware of the wretchedness of their sin by the Holy Spirit, and then, by faith in Christ, they humble themselves, feel sorrow, detest their sin,⁵ and seek the Lord for pardon, with resolute intention to put away their sin and live well-pleasing to God.⁶

References

4. Zechariah 12:10; Acts 11:18
5. Ezekiel 36:31; 2 Corinthians 7:11
6. Psalms 119:6,128

Repentance continues throughout the life of believers because man continues to fail and fall into sin; and so because of the continued need of repentance, God has provided continued means to seek His forgiveness.⁷

References

7. Luke 19:8; 1 Timothy 1:13,15; 1 John 1:8-9

God has made through Christ a continuing provision of grace greater than our sin for the preservation of believers, that although there is no sin so small that it does not deserve damnation,⁸ yet there is no sin so great that it shall bring damnation on those who repent.⁹

References

8. Romans 6:23
9. Isaiah 1:16-18; Isaiah 55:7

Section XVII - Good Works

God alone has defined what is good and acceptable in His sight. He has shown man from the beginning those good works pleasing to Him and has commanded them in His Holy Word. ¹ Man in and of himself cannot determine what is acceptable to God or perform it no matter his zeal or sincere intention.²

References

1. Micah 6:8; Hebrews 13:21
2. Matthew 15:9; Isaiah 29:13

Good works produced in obedience to God are the fruits and evidences of true faith. ³ By good works believers manifest their love, obedience, thankfulness, ⁴ strengthen their assurance, ⁵ edify their brethren, demonstrate the truthfulness of the gospel, ⁶ quiet adversaries, and glorify God. ⁷ Good works are of God's origination and are produced only through a person who is regenerated. Since they are of God, man cannot boast in them. ⁸ The production of good works is part of God's glorious salvation plan for man.⁹

References

3. James 2:18,22
4. Psalms 116:12-13
5. 1 John 2:3,5; 2 Peter 1:5-11
6. Matthew 5:16

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7. 1 Timothy 6:1; 1 Peter 2:15; Philippians 1:11
8. Ephesians 2:10
9. Romans 6:22

The Christian's ability to perform good works is from the Holy Spirit, ¹⁰ who wills and does according to His good pleasure. ¹¹ Knowing this, the Christian is not to take an attitude of negligence, as if he were not obligated to action unless the Spirit moves on him in a manner undeniable, but he is commanded to initiate diligence while relying on the Spirit of God that is in him.¹²

References

10. John 15:4-5
11. 2 Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:13
12. Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 6:11-12; Isaiah 64:7

No man can do above or beyond what God requires of him so as to impress God. Ultimately, even if it were possible that a man had done something perfectly, it would only be his reasonable service to God, since he is still an unprofitable servant who is wholly relying on the grace of God. ¹³ If any man's works are good it is only because they proceed from the Spirit, ¹⁴ and when works are accomplished solely by men's fleshly efforts, they are defiled and mixed with so much imperfection they cannot endure the evaluation of God.¹⁵

References

13. Job 9:2-3; Galatians 5:17; Luke 17:10; Romans 3:20; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 4:6
14. Galatians 5:22-23
15. Isaiah 64:6; Psalms 143:2

Even though the Christian's good works are imperfect in this life, ¹⁶ they are accepted in God's sight through the grace provided in His Son, and He rewards those who are faithful to Him according to this grace.¹⁷

References

16. Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5
17. Matthew 25:21,23; Hebrews 6:10

Works done by unregenerate men may pattern things commendable by God, and they may be of good use in this life;¹⁸ but because they do not proceed from a renewed heart, ¹⁹ they are not done from correct motives ²⁰ to the glory of God ²¹ and therefore cannot please God in the sense of salvation. ²² Regardless, every man remains accountable to God, and his neglect of doing good is even more unfavorable to Him, for he will be judged by his deeds.²³

References

18. 2 Kings 10:30; 1 Kings 21:27,29
19. Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4,6
20. 1 Corinthians 13:1
21. Matthew 6:2,5
22. Amos 5:21-22; Romans 9:16; Titus 3:5
23. Job 21:14-15; Matthew 25:41-43

Section XVIII - The Security Of The Saints

Those whom God has saved can neither totally nor finally fall from God's grace but shall continue in the faith. ¹ Many difficulties, trials, and temptations can and will trouble them; but

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these things shall never be able to wrench them from the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor ultimately cause them to abandon their faith. These difficulties may confuse, trouble, and discourage the person, clouding the light and love of God for a time, ² but because God never changes, they shall be eternally glorified.³

References

1. John 10:28-29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19
2. Psalms 89:31-32; 1 Corinthians 11:32
3. Malachi 3:6

The continuance of the saints does not depend on their own determination but on the immutable decree of the election of God. This election purpose is supported ⁴ based on the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, ⁵ the promises of God, ⁶ the abiding of His Spirit within the saints, ⁷ and His work of grace.⁸

References

4. Romans 8:30; Romans 9:11,16
5. Romans 5:9-10; John 14:19
6. Hebrews 6:17-18
7. 1 John 3:9
8. Jeremiah 32:40

Because of remaining corruption in them, saints may fall into grievous sins. They may also for a time continue in their sin ⁹ where they will incur God's displeasure, grieve the Holy Spirit, ¹⁰ lose their joy, ¹¹ have callused hearts, ¹² hurt others, and bring chastising upon themselves. ¹³ Ultimately, if they are of the elect, they will be brought to repent and be preserved through faith in Christ to the end.¹⁴

References

9. Matthew 26:70,72,74
10. Isaiah 64:5,9; Ephesians 4:30
11. Psalms 51:10,12
12. Psalms 32:3-4
13. 2 Samuel 12:14
14. Luke 22:32,61-62

Section XIX - The Assurance of Salvation

Temporary believers and unregenerate men may deceive themselves with a false presumption of salvation that will fade away,¹ but those who truly believe in the Lord Jesus will grow in their maturity in Him and along the way will also have a growing sense of assurance.²

References

1. Job 8:13-14; Matthew 7:22-23; John 8:31
2. 1 John 2:3; 1 John 3:14,18-19,21,24; 1 John 5:13; Romans 5:2,5; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 2 Peter 1:19

The assurance of the saints is not grounded on presumption,³ but on the blood and righteousness of Christ as revealed in the Gospel, ⁴ the inward evidence of God's grace on the heart, ⁵ the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with the spirit of the saints that they are the children of God, ⁶ and the evidence of righteous fruit producing lives of humility and holiness.⁷

References

3. Hebrews 6:11,19
4. Hebrews 6:17-18

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5. 2 Peter 1:4-5,10-11
6. Romans 8:15-16
7. 1 John 3:1-3

This assurance does not always immediately accompany faith at the same time in every true believer. The believer may wait for some time and have inner doubts before assurance arises in the heart.⁸ Therefore, the saints are encouraged to pursue every opportunity of knowing Christ⁹ and to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, that the heart may be filled with peace, joy, and thankfulness in the Holy Spirit, resulting in assurance.¹⁰

References

8. Isaiah 50:10; Psalms 88:1-18; Psalms 77:1-12
9. 1 John 4:13; Hebrews 6:11-12
10. Romans 5:1-2,5; Romans 14:17; Psalms 119:32; Romans 6:1-2; Titus 2:11-12,14

True believers may have their assurance diminished by negligence in their spiritual life,¹¹ by falling into sin that grieves the Spirit,¹² by strong temptations,¹³ and by God's apparent withdrawal of His countenance;¹⁴ but they are never truly without God¹⁵ who provides the life of faith.¹⁶ Neither are they truly without the love of Christ, the love of brethren, and the operation of the Spirit that in time will revive them.¹⁷ This same Spirit in the meantime preserves them from complete despair.¹⁸

References

11. Titus 5:2-3,6
12. Psalms 51:8,12,14
13. Psalms 116:11; Psalms 77:7-8; Psalms 31:22
14. Psalms 30:7
15. 1 John 3:9
16. Luke 22:32
17. Psalms 42:5,11
18. Lamentations 3:26-31

Section XX - Christian Liberty

The liberty that Christ has purchased for His own consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, fear of the wrath of God, and the rigors of Old Covenant laws. Under the clarity of the new covenant, the true child of God is transformed from within having a law written on their heart.¹ The Old Testament commands given through Israel were intended to show man his inability and dependence on God, that he might be led to God for mercy, and by His promises, to faith in His redeemer. The law was a tutor to lead to Christ.² The covenant of works supporting the need for the law has been done away³ because those in Christ are no longer under law but under grace.⁴ The law written on a Christian's heart is summed up in the one commandment of love to God and love to one another.⁵ Those who come to Christ are given rest from the law and are free from the yoke and bondage of the law.⁶ However, saints must not presume since they are not under law but under grace that they have a license for sin; for love to God demands they walk in newness of life⁷ by being bond slaves to God in righteousness. Saints are no longer their own but are bought with a price⁸ and are to glorify God in their bodies, knowing that no unrighteous person shall inherit the kingdom of God⁹. They are to pursue holiness and Christ likeness with all energy.¹⁰ To enable the Christian, Christ has provided liberty from sin, greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and He has given His Spirit within every believer to guide and develop them into Christ likeness from glory to glory.¹¹

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References

1. Ezekiel 36:26-27
2. Galatians 2:23-25
3. Hebrews 8:13
4. Galatians 3:1-13; Romans 6:14
5. Matthew 22:37-40
6. Romans 8:2; Galatians 5:1
7. Romans 6; John 14:15
8. 1 Corinthians 6:20
9. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
10. Hebrews 12:14; Philippians 3:10-14
11. John 7:38-39; Hebrews 10:19-21; 2 Corinthians 3:18

God is Lord of the consciences of regenerate men ¹² and is able to work in such a way that it is not up to man to judge others in matters not specifically addressed in the Bible or matters of lesser importance. ¹³ Saints should not be pressured to obey or follow others outside of the bounds of their conscience. To do so is to betray the liberty of conscience ¹⁴ or to blindly follow worthless rules or ideas that are opposed to faith. ¹⁵

References

12. James 4:12; Romans 14:4
13. Acts 4:19,29; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Matthew 15:9
14. Colossians 2:20,22-23
15. 1 Corinthians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 1:24

On the other hand, they who on pretense of Christian liberty practice sin, or cherish sinful lust, pervert the design of the grace of the gospel to their own destruction ¹⁶ and destroy the purpose of Christian liberty. The Christian who has been delivered out of wickedness and corruption and is following the Word and his conscience will serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness. ¹⁷

References

16. Romans 6:1-2
17. Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 2:18,21

Section XXI - Worship

Common revelation tells us that God is to be worshipped. The light of nature shows that there is a God who is sovereign over all, just, good, and who is to be feared, loved, thanked, praised, and served. ¹ The acceptable means of worship has been explained and commanded in His Word ² so that He may not be worshipped according to the imagination or devices of men, but only by those means prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. ³

References

1. Jeremiah 10:7; Mark 12:33
2. Deuteronomy 12:32
3. Exodus 20:4-6

Worship is to be given to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit alone ⁴ and not to angels, saints men, objects, or any other creatures. ⁵ True worship can only be realized through the mediator ⁶ Jesus Christ ⁷ and by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

References

4. Matthew 4:9-10; John 6:23; Matthew 28:19
5. Romans 1:25; Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10

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6. John 14:6
7. 1 Timothy 2:5

Prayer with thanksgiving is a means of worship that is required by God of all men. ⁸ It is to be made in the name of the Son, ⁹ by the Spirit, ¹⁰ according to His will, ¹¹ and with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance.

References

8. Psalms 95:1-7; Psalms 65:2
9. John 14:13-14
10. Romans 8:26
11. 1 John 5:14

True worship must also consist of preaching, listening, ¹² and the reading of the Scriptures. ¹³ Saints are commanded to teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in the heart to the Lord. ¹⁴ It must also consist of the administration of baptism when appropriate ¹⁵ and the Lord's supper. ¹⁶ All parts of worship must be focused on Christ and be performed in obedience to Him in a dignified manner befitting His holy character with reverence.¹⁷

References

12. 2 Timothy 4:2; Luke 8:18
13. 1 Timothy 4:13
14. Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19
15. Matthew 28:19-20
16. 1 Corinthians 11:26
17. Joel 2:12

Worship is not tied to or made more acceptable by the place where it is performed, but God is to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth. ¹⁸ Whether He is worshipped in private residences ¹⁹ individually, ²⁰ or corporately in an assembly, ²¹ He must be worshipped consistently, righteously, and purposefully. ²²

References

18. John 4:21; Malachi 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8
19. Acts 10:2
20. Matthew 6:11; Psalms 55:17
21. Matthew 6:6
22. Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42

The Sabbath day was a specific day under the theocracy of the nation Israel for rest and worship. However, the Sabbath is nowhere imposed in Scripture on any other nation, or the children of God in the church under the new covenant of grace. The Sabbath as given the nation of Israel does provide an example of the trust and devotion appropriate to God, and not in eternal actions only, but of the heart. Instead of the Sabbath, the first day of the week was historically the day the church began meeting together after Pentecost.²³ This is fitting, as it coincides with the resurrection of Christ. That this day took on a special significance is understood, as it is called the "Lord's Day" by John.²⁴ There are directives throughout the New Testament concerning worship practices and the clear command to meet together in worship "not forsaking of the assembling themselves together." It is therefore historically and biblically contingent on the true believer to join other believers to worship and to give thanks to God on the "Lord's Day". However, this participation in worship must not be confused with the laws of Sabbath keeping. For outside the bounds of assembling together for worship, there is freedom to exercise righteous individual judgment regarding other "Lord's Day" activities. In whatever is done, including the great privilege of meeting together on the "Lord's Day", the elect are to do all

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to the glory of God. More than just the “Lord’s Day,” all saints are commanded to enjoy in their love and devotion to Christ each day of the week.

References

23. Acts 20:7
24. Revelation 1:10

Section XXII - The Church

The universe of all saints living and dead make-up the elect of God who are of His household. All saints from the beginning of time do belong, owe their salvation, and allegiance to Christ as the only Redeemer, Savior, God and King.¹ God has used stages of history or ages whereby He in various ways has revealed His plan and called His elect people to Himself.² In the previous age, God worked exclusively through Israel in the revelation of His self and plan.³ The church is the pillar and support of the truth in this age. It is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus being the Corner Stone.⁴ The church as a unique organism began on the day of Pentecost, and consists of both elect Jews and Gentles.⁵ The mixing of Jew and Gentile to form one new body in Christ called “the church” is a mystery previously undisclosed in Scripture.⁶

References

1. Matthew 22:32
2. Hebrews 1:1
3. Exodus 19:5; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 14:21-22
4. 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:20
5. Hebrews 12:23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:10,22-23; Ephesians 5:23,27,32; Acts 11:15; Acts 2:1-47
6. Ephesians 2:11-22, 3:1-6

God has ordained local assemblies of saints to become individual churches with governing officers in order to worship Him and carry out His ministry on earth.⁷ Local churches are not to be confused with “the church” (or universal church) whose members are known only by God. The universal church consists only of those who are saved, but each local church may consist of both saved and lost individuals. There is one universal church, but there are many local churches. Whereas the universal church has no earthly organizational structure, each local church does.⁸ The church universal has a fixed eternal membership, but each local church has a transient membership. In so existing, even the most spiritual local churches are imperfect and subject to error.⁹ Some have so degenerated as to lose their lamp stand and have become not churches of Christ at all.¹⁰ Despite the failure of some local churches, Christ has and will continue to build His church.¹¹

References

7. Revelation 2 & 3; 1 Timothy 3; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
8. Ephesians 4:11-13
9. Revelation 18:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12
10. Psalms 72:17; Psalms 102:28; Revelation 12:17
11. Matthew 16:18

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head and King of the church, and true believers are spoken of as His bride.⁷

References

7. Colossians 1:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 4:11-12; Ephesians 5:22-32

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The members of churches should be regenerated persons visibly manifesting and evidencing their relation to Christ.⁸ They should willingly and joyfully walk together according to the providence of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord and to one another, and living in obedience to church leaders and to one another.⁹

References

8. Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:29.
9. Acts 2:41-42; Acts 5:13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:13

To each local assembly called as His church He has given all the power and authority necessary for conducting worship and discipline. He has commanded each church bearing His name to honor Him by serving with a right heart, spirit, and motive.¹⁰ The church is to be the “pillar and support of the truth.”¹¹ Therefore to be effective, churches must be organized according to the mind of Christ and consist of officers and members so that the execution of the church will be orderly and respectable in keeping with the testimony of Christ and the purpose of its existence.

References

10. Matthew 18:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 1 Corinthians 5:13; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8
11. 1 Timothy 3:15; Acts 20:17,28; Philippians 1:1

Section XXIII - Baptism and the Lord's Table

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances appointed by the Lord Jesus to be continued in His church to the end of the age.¹

References

1. Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:26

The ordinances must be administered by church leaders or persons appointed by church leaders to act reverently and righteously on behalf of Christ and His church in accordance with the Scriptures.²

References

2. Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 4:1

Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the New Covenant ordained by Jesus Christ for a one time public profession by the person being baptized to show his trust in Christ and identification with Him. It is commonly called “believers baptism” because it is an ordinance for those who profess belief in Christ and His finished work. The act of baptism has no saving merit. Scriptural baptism is by immersion, signifying Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.³ The believer is being identified with Him for his remission of sins in Christ,⁴ for his testimony of giving of himself to God through Jesus Christ as Christ gave Himself, and for his commitment to live and walk in newness of life as Christ rose from the grave.⁵

References

3. Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27
4. Mark 1:4; Acts 22:16
5. Romans 6:4

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Those who genuinely profess repentance towards God and have faith in and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ are the only qualified subjects for this ordinance.⁶ Everyone who does profess a true relation with Christ based on faith alone should be baptized in obedience to Christ.

References

6. Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-37; Acts 2:41; Acts 8:12; Acts 18:8

The person being baptized is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.⁷

References

7. Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 8:38

The Lord's Table

The Lord's Table is an ordinance instituted by Christ on the same night He was betrayed. Although no specific instructions are given to how often it must be instituted, it is to be perpetually observed in His churches until He returns. It is a communion memorial to those saved by Him in remembrance of His great sacrifice unto death on their behalf.⁸ It further brings the focus of worship to Christ and serves as a confirmation of faith in Him. It is a reminder of the new covenant of grace, an opportunity for special thankfulness, for personal examination and the cleansing of forgiveness, and as a reminder of their personal union with Him and other saints.⁹

References

8. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
9. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17,21

By this ordinance Christ is not present in the elements, nor is He being offered up to His Father again. Instead, it points back to the one event where Christ died once for all¹⁰ and provides an opportunity for personal and corporate thanksgiving of the greatest significance.¹¹

References

10. Hebrews 9:25-26,28
11. 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26-27

As all persons outside of true faith in Christ cannot enjoy communion with Christ, so they are not fit to participate in the Lord's Table. Although the table has no saving merit, it is a table taken very seriously by our Lord. Persons participating in the table are communing with Christ in an act of worship. Therefore, as one would not go into the presence of God unwashed, so he should not participate in the Lord's Table without a clean or forgiven heart and a right relationship with Him.¹² The Scripture says, "whosoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Therefore, unworthy participators bring judgment on themselves.¹³

References

12. 2 Corinthians 6:14-15
13. 1 Corinthians 11:29; Matthew 7:6

Section XXIV - The Future

The bodies of men after death are corrupted and returned to dust,¹ but their souls are immediately subject to God who gave them.² The souls of the righteous are glorified and made

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perfect in holiness. They are received into paradise where they are with Christ awaiting the full redemption of their bodies. ³ The souls of the wicked are cast into torment where they are reserved to the judgment of the great day.⁴

References

1. Genesis 3:19; Acts 13:36
2. Ecclesiastes 12:7
3. Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1,6,8; Philippians 1:23; Hebrews 12:23
4. Jude 6-7; 1 Peter 3:19; Luke 16:23-24

At the end of the age all the bodies of the dead in Christ shall be raised and their souls and spirits shall be reunited with their bodies only into glorified bodies, and those saints that are found alive on the earth shall not die but shall be changed as they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air and all these will be with the Lord forever. ⁵ At the end of the great tribulation, and prior to His millennial reign, Christ shall return to the earth physically, literally, and bodily in the same manner as he departed the earth, only with power and great glory. He shall rescue Israel at Armageddon and reign over this earth from His father David's throne in Jerusalem for 1,000 years. ⁸ His eternal order will ultimately and finally be established, and every tear will be wiped from every eye. There will be no need of the sun, for Christ will be the light of the saints, and all the saints shall live in a state of inexpressible joy and bliss eternally with Him.⁹

References

5. Job 19:26-27; 1 Corinthians 15:42-43
6. 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; 1 Thessalonians 4:17
7. Revelation 20:48
8. Revelation 21 & 22

Section XXV - Judgment

As was granted to Him by the Father, ¹ Christ Jesus will be the judge of every man. ² All persons that have lived upon the earth shall appear before Him to give an account of their thoughts, words, deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.³

References

1. Acts 17:31; John 5:22; John 27
2. 1 Corinthians 6:3; Jude 6
3. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:10,12; Matthew 25:32-46

The purpose of the judgment of God is to manifest His infinite mercy in the salvation of the elect and to show His justice in the eternal damnation of the unrighteous. ⁴ Only then will the promises of God be fully realized as the righteous are viewed and judged not guilty through the blood of Christ and go into everlasting life and receive the fullness of joy and glory with everlasting rewards in the presence of the Lord. But the wicked who know not God, and who did not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be cast into everlasting torments ⁵ and punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.⁶

References

4. Romans 9:22-23
5. Matthew 25:21,34; 2 Timothy 4:8
6. Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

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Christ would have all men persuaded of God's judgment, both to deter them from sin, ⁷ and for the encouragement of the godly in their adversity. ⁸ For these reasons He has left the time of His return and judgment uncertain so that men may not have carnal security, but instead must always be watchful because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, ⁹ and so they must ever be prepared to say, "Come Lord Jesus; come quickly".¹⁰ Amen.

References

7. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
8. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7
9. Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40
10. Revelation 22:20

Before the eternal and final state of all saints, the bodies of the unrighteous will be raised for the judgment at the great white throne. All the unrighteous will be judged according to their deeds and then cast eternally into the lake of fire which is the second death of spiritual separation from God and all good.¹¹

References

11. Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; Philippians 3:21; Revelation 21:11-15