

Preamble to The Journey Church's Confessions of Faith

A Christian is to be a person who lives their life according to the truths revealed by the Bible. The Bible is the source from which we measure truth, understand the character of God, and learn about God's expectations of us. Every Christian and church should be entrenched in the habit of Bible reading because it creates and informs our theology. From the Bible, we can organize the truths of God which help us define the different issues of the Christian faith. This is exactly what a Confession of Faith is. A Confession of Faith is a collected group of topics and issues which find their explanation and definition from the Bible. A Confession of Faith lays out matters of faith in a systematic way that makes it easy for someone to read how a church or individual interprets issues found in Scripture. There is a long history of churches and Christians using Confessions of Faith. One of the earliest known Confessions is the Apostles' Creed. It is a simple and concise Confession which lays out the most basic truths of the Christian faith and gospel. This confession was used by Christians and repeated by them in private and public settings as early as the second century.

There are hundreds of Confessions of Faith that have been created throughout church history, many of which are adopted and used by churches still today. Here at The Journey Church, our elders have taken nearly a year to compile and study many of these old confessions as we began a process of creating a Confession of Faith of our own for The Journey. This Confession serves as a guideline by which we interpret Scripture, govern the Church, and counsel people on the things of God. Our study has led us to wrestle over important issues of theology (study of God), ecclesiology (study of the Church), missiology (study of the mission of the Church), and eschatology (study of the end times).

This finalized version of The Journey's Confessions of Faith is not the product of one man's beliefs; rather, it is a compilation by the elders of the church working through Scripture to set a direction for The Journey Church. While each elder has his own personal interpretations of certain doctrines and theological points, the purpose of this exercise is to lay the groundwork for the Journey's corporate beliefs. Here's what this means: as a member or attender of The Journey Church, we do not expect that you will agree with every sentence stated in this Confession of Faith, nor do you have to in order to call The Journey your church; however, this Confession of Faith exists to outline the beliefs of this church on many different subjects. While you may not agree on every point, the expectation is that your disagreement would not be a cause of dissension, division, and/or rebellious behavior against the direction of the Church.

Our prayer is that these Confessions will be a tool you can use to grow in your understanding of the Bible and the subjects therein. We do not want this to become a replacement for the Bible, for the greatest treasures and riches await us in the Word of God. As elders, our prayer is that this Confession will glorify Him and edify His Church for the purpose of godliness.

Soli De Gloria,
Elders of The Journey Church

The Journey Church

Confessions of Faith

I. The Scriptures

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God,¹ and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience.

The Holy Bible was written by divinely inspired men led by the Holy Spirit³ working through their individual personalities, experiences, talents, abilities and stations in life, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction.⁴ It has God for its author,⁵ salvation for its end,⁶ and truth without any mixture of error for its matter.⁷ It reveals the principles by which God will judge us,⁸ and therefore it is and shall remain the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be measured⁹ until the end of the world.¹⁰

II. God

There is one God,¹¹ eternally existing in three separate and equally divine Persons;¹² the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,¹³ who know, love, and glorify one another.¹⁴

God is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each sharing divine attributes with distinct roles, but without division of nature, essence or being.¹⁵ The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, nor is the Son the Holy Spirit or the Father. The Godhead is One, but is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹⁶

This one,¹⁷ true and living God is infinitely perfect both in His¹ Love and in His Holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore

¹ 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Luke 24:27

² Deuteronomy 4:1-2; Deuteronomy 17:19; Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119:11, 89, 105, 140; Romans 15:4
³ Jeremiah 15:16; Jeremiah 36; Romans 16:25-26; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Revelation 1:11, 19; Revelation 21:5; John 16:13-15

⁴ Psalm 119:105

⁵ Exodus 17:14; Exodus 20; Exodus 24:4; Exodus 32:16; Exodus 34:1, 27; Deuteronomy 10:2; Deuteronomy 27:8; Jeremiah 30:2; Habakkuk 2:2; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 1:1

⁶ 2 Peter 3:15-18

⁷ John 17:17

⁸ Deuteronomy 30:10-16; Psalm 1; Ezekiel 43:11

⁹ Romans 15:4; Hebrews 4:12

¹⁰ Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 21:33; 1 Peter 1:25

¹¹ Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:14; Exodus 6:2-3; Exodus 15:11; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Deuteronomy 32:6

¹² The Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1:1 is "Elohim" which is a plural proper noun. In Genesis 1:26-27, the narration changes from third person plural to first person plural.; The word "Persons" is used in this context to describe a mode of being in the Godhead. The use of "Persons" should not be interpreted to mean that God is a human person or has human qualities. The Scriptures state that God is not a man (Numbers 23:19). God is a Spirit (John 4:24) whose ways are indescribably higher than human ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). Mere words are inadequate to describe or communicate His true essence. We are, therefore, left with the less than perfect term "Persons" to describe the magnificent, glorious form of God.

¹³ Isaiah 64:8; Matthew 6:9; Matthew 7:11; Matthew 23:9; Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11

¹⁴ John 5:26; John 14:6-13; John 17:1-8; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6

¹⁵ Matthew 28:19; Mark 1:9-11

¹⁶ Matthew 3:13-17; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5

Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 22:31; Psalm 18:30; Matthew 5:48

worthy to receive all glory and adoration.² Immortal and eternal,³ He perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning,⁴ sustains and sovereignly rules over all things,⁵ and providentially brings about His eternal good purposes to redeem a people for Himself and restore His fallen creation,⁶ to the praise of His glorious grace.

III. The Trinity

God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God.⁷ The three persons of the Trinity are distinguished from each other in Scripture so that the Father is not the Son, the Father is not the Holy Spirit, nor is the Son the Holy Spirit or the Father. They are three distinct persons.⁸ Each person is fully God, meaning, each have the same character and attributes of God, equally.⁹ What distinguishes the Father, Son, and Spirit from one another is not their deity, but their roles and relationships to one another.¹⁰

A. God the Father

God the Father retains the place for which highest honor, worship, and glory is owed. The Father is the supreme authority in the Godhead. He is the Sovereign Lord who chooses things that will be hidden or revealed.¹¹ He alone is the Great Provider and answerer to prayer.¹² It is the Father's will that the Son comes to fulfill and accomplish. The Father is the One who hands over authority to the Son, signifying that it was His authority to give.¹³ The Son and Holy Spirit are equal in deity to God the Father, but they are subordinate in their roles. The role of the Father in creation and redemption has been to plan and direct and send the Son and Holy Spirit.¹⁴

B. God the Son

God the Son is the fully divine and fully human Jesus Christ.¹⁵ He was the Word who was with the Father from the beginning in Spirit form, the agent in which all of creation was made and through whom the Father's will is made known to man.¹⁶ He shares and has always shared an intimate and profound love relationship with the Father, and willingly accepted the mission to take on flesh and become the once and for all atoning sacrifice for sinners, where His righteousness is imputed to those whose faith is in His death and resurrection.¹⁷ God the Father has exalted His Son to the highest place of honor and position by making Him the rightful ruler and king over all the universe.¹⁸ The Son lives in a relationship of eternal submission to the Father but has authority over the Spirit.¹

¹ Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:16

² Revelation 4:11; Revelation 5:12

³ 1 Chronicles 29:10; Jeremiah 10:10; 1 Timothy 1:17

⁴ Revelation 1:8; Revelation 21:6; Revelation 22:13

⁵ Psalm 22:28; Psalm 55:22; Psalm 66:7; Psalm 103:19; Isaiah 40:13-17; Ezekiel 20:33

⁶ Galatians 4:4-7; Titus 2:14

⁷ John 1:1-2; Deuteronomy 6:4-5; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 45:5-6; 1 Timothy 2:5

⁸ Matthew 3:13-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14

⁹ Matthew 28:18-19; 1 Corinthians 8:6

¹⁰ John 14:26; Romans 8:27

¹¹ Matthew 6:7-13; Matthew 11:25-27; Ephesians 1:3-6; Jeremiah 29:11-12

¹² James 1:17; Matthew 7:9-11

¹³ John 6:38; Philippians 2:7-11

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:28; John 14:6

¹⁶ John 1:14

¹⁷ John 1:1-2; 1 John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:16-17; Ephesians 1:9; Hebrews 1:1-2

2 Corinthians 5:21; John 15:9-10; Luke 4:1-2, 14, 18-19; Acts 10:38; Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:14; Romans

⁵:10; Romans 8:9

¹⁸ Ephesians 1:15-23; Romans 14:9; Psalm 110:1

Spirit.¹ According to God's Word, He will return in glory to earth to bring an end to all things and firmly establish His kingdom for all eternity. He will judge the living and the dead, where those with faith in Him will be with Him in heaven with everlasting life, and those who did not believe upon Him will experience everlasting death, and eternity in hell.²

C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead.³ He is fully God and His role is to assist God the Father in carrying out His divine will. The Holy Spirit's desire is to bring honor and glory to the Son and to the Father, never seeking the spotlight or to be the center of attention. The Holy Spirit's task is to awaken the hearts of dead men to the truth of the gospel by convicting of sin, regenerating hearts, and growing believers in their faith.⁴ The Holy Spirit is a gift to Christians and the Church and serves to mediate the presence of Christ to the body and to build up⁵ the body in faith by giving of spiritual gifts used for the edification of the Church. The Holy Spirit dwells in those whose faith is in Christ helping them in their daily lives, ushering their prayers to the Father, and serving to encourage them in their trials and tribulations. As believers live by the Holy Spirit's leading, He will produce spiritual fruit in their lives.

IV. Sovereignty

God is the Creator of all things.⁸ He has infinite power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and mercy whereby He sustains, directs, governs, and brings judgment to all His creation from the least to the greatest.⁹ This power does not lie idle. God actively exercises this infinite power over His creation¹⁰ while employing His infinite wisdom and infallible foreknowledge to achieve the ultimate purpose for which all things were created.¹¹

God has and is fulfilling His perfect plan for His creation.¹² Everything happens in accordance with God's providence.¹³ Nothing happens by chance, luck or karma. God occasionally leaves His children to their own misgivings, temptations and corruptions for the purposes of disciplining them, to teach them the weakness of their own hearts, to demonstrate the necessity of dependence on Him, or to teach humility;¹⁴ but ultimately God allows this autonomy in order to bring His children into a closer relationship with Him.

V. Election

The Scriptures make clear that from all eternity¹⁵ God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation,¹⁶ not on account of any foreseen merit in them,¹ but only because of His

¹ 1 Corinthians 11:3; John 14:31; John 16:12-14; John 14:25-26; John 15:26; Isaiah 11:1-2; Philippians 2:5-11

² Revelation 20-21

³ Acts 5:3-4; Matthew 28:19

⁴ Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; John 16:7-8

⁵ Acts 1:8; Acts 4:33; Acts 6:8; Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 12

⁶ Romans 15:13; Titus 3:5; John 3:3-6; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30

⁷ Galatians 5:22-24

⁸ John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Job 38:4-13; Genesis 1:1

⁹ Hebrews 1:1-3; Psalm 135:5-6; Genesis 8:20-22; Genesis 9:8-17

¹⁰ Romans 8:26-27; Deuteronomy 32:36; Psalm 103:13; Matthew 10:29-30

¹¹ Romans 8:28-29; Isaiah 46:10-11; Ephesians 1:11

¹² Acts 2:23; Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁴ Proverbs 16:9; Proverbs 16:33; Jeremiah 11:23; Proverbs 19:21
¹⁵ 2 Chronicles 32:24-26, 31
¹⁶ Titus 1:1-2; John 17:24; 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:4-6; Revelation 17:8
Revelation 5:9; Revelation 7:9; John 10:16; Acts 15:14; Matthew 24:31

sovereign good pleasure.² To this end, He foreknew them and chose them³ to be His treasured possession⁴ and heirs in the kingdom of God.⁵ We believe that God The Father justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus,⁶ and that He will one day glorify them—all to the praise of His Glorious Grace. In love, God commands and implores all people to repent and believe. By the effectual call of the Holy Spirit,⁷ we are convinced of our sin and misery, our minds are enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and our wills are renewed.⁸ He persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ,⁹ freely offered to us in the gospel.¹⁰

We believe that salvation is available to all who respond to the gospel proclamation,¹¹ and that it is the immediate duty of all to accept Jesus Christ by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth¹² but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated offense toward God and certain condemnation for his sin.

VI. Creation

God's work made creation of all things out of nothing,¹³ by the power of His Word, in the span of six days, and all good.¹⁴ God created man—male and female—after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,¹⁵ to serve as God's agents with authority over creation.¹⁶

VII. The Fall of Man

Adam was created in holiness and in the image of God,¹⁷ but by voluntary transgressions,¹⁸ he fell from that holy and happy state and distorted that image by his disobedience and therefore forfeited his original holiness. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God,¹⁹ corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, and spiritually). This was by choice which condemned man finally and irrevocably to death apart from God's own gracious intervention.²⁰ The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled²¹ to God under whose just and holy wrath we stand.²² The only hope of all human beings is the gracious love of our God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to Himself.

¹ Deuteronomy 7:6-8; 2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 9:11-13

² Deuteronomy 10:15; Isaiah 45:1; Isaiah 45:4

³ Deuteronomy 4:37; Isaiah 41:8; Isaiah 65:9, 15, 23; Acts 13:48; 1 Peter 2:8-9; Matthew 24:21-22; Luke 18:7; Colossians 3:12

⁴ Deuteronomy 14:2; Psalm 106:4-5

⁵ James 2:5

⁶ Romans 11:7-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

⁸ Ezekiel 36:26

⁹ John 6:38-45; John 17:12

¹⁰ Acts 2:21; 2 Peter 3:9

¹¹ John 3:16

¹² Titus 2:11

¹³ John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Job 38:4-13; Genesis 1:1

¹⁴ Genesis 1:3

¹⁵ Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7, 2:18, 2:21-23

¹⁶ Genesis 1:28-30

¹⁷ Genesis 1:26, 2:7

¹⁹ Genesis 3:1-7
²⁰ Genesis 3:16-24
²¹ Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:12-21; Isaiah 53:11
²² Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21-22; Isaiah 53:11
Romans 14:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:10

Note:

Adam fell because of his disobedience.¹ The sentence for disobedience is twofold: first, spiritual death by which Adam's nature was corrupted and he himself spiritually separated from God by his sin; second, physical death, a penalty which was not immediately executed, but which made Adam mortal.

Adam was tempted by Satan² and he yielded to the temptation by his own free will. Consequently, Adam was banished from the Garden of Eden and condemned to a temporal death and was promised both labor and sorrow.³ God also imposed these same penalties on all of Adam's descendants.

VIII. The Gospel

The gospel is the good news that God, who is more holy and loving than we can imagine,⁴ looked upon with compassion, people, who are more sinful than we would possibly admit,⁵ and sent Jesus into history to establish His Kingdom and reconcile people and the world to Himself.⁶ Jesus, whose love is more extravagant than we can measure,⁷ came to sacrificially die for sinners so that, by His death and resurrection, we might gain through His grace what the Bible defines as new and eternal life.⁸

IX. Evangelism

Evangelism is the command given to all believers by the Great Commission⁹ to proclaim and live the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world; and the need of believers to respond to this command. It is not an imposition of religion or belief system but a command of Jesus Christ.

The Church obeys the Great Commission to evangelize and make disciples. The Church is an evangelistic community where the gospel of Jesus is consistently made visible through its proclamation of the gospel,¹⁰ the witness of the members' lives, and its Spirit-empowered life of love.

See also sections regarding Baptism and the Trinity to ensure an understanding of evangelism, the context of this Scripture and for further clarification and explanation.

X. Regeneration

Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus by responding to the gospel message in repentance and confession of Christ as Savior.¹¹ It is a permanent change of heart, which renews the whole person initiated by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner has responded in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.¹² Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. It is a work of God's free and special grace alone.

¹ Genesis 3:6-12; Romans 5:12-19

² Genesis 3:1-5; Revelation 12:9

³ Genesis 3:14-24

⁴ Exodus 34:29, Exodus 33:18-20

⁵ John 2:23; Romans 3:9-18

⁶ John 3:16

⁷ Ephesians 3:18-19; 1 John 3:16

⁸ 1 Corinthians 15; John 11:25-26; John 3:18; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:22-24

⁹ Matt 28:16-20; Mark 16: 15-18

¹⁰ The Book of Acts

¹¹ The Book of Acts

¹² The Book of Acts

¹² John 1:12-13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 10:9-13
¹³ Ephesians 2:1-5; Galatians 3:26; Acts 11:18; Acts 16:28-31; Acts 17:30
Titus 3:5

XI. Repentance

Repentance is a genuine turning away from sin and toward God.¹ Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of your whole being to Him as Lord and Savior. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon the truth of His righteousness of all sinners who turn from sin and believe in Jesus Christ. Justification brings the believer into a relationship of peace and favor with God. All of these are simultaneous events and are inseparably related to one another.

Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being filled by the Holy Spirit,² recognizes his or her sin and is genuinely humbled in sorrow and shame for the transgression. A commitment is made to God to endeavor to honor and walk before God with the purpose to please Him in all things.

We turn to God with genuine, sincere, and authentic contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.⁴

See also sections regarding faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, and regeneration for further clarification and explanation.

XII. Faith

Saving faith is the belief in God's authority of whatsoever is revealed in His Word concerning Christ. It is an acceptance and reliance on God alone for justification and eternal life. It is a work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of believers; it is accompanied by all other saving graces and leads to a life of holiness.⁵

Saving faith involves: 1) knowledge of the Gospel;⁶ 2) consent to the Gospel, e.g. being intellectually convinced that the gospel message is true; and 3) personal trust, appropriation and application of Christ and His promises. By knowing and agreeing to truth, the believer receives Jesus as his or her own.

It should be noted that intellectual consent to the Gospel alone is not sufficient to satisfy the scriptural definition of faith. Treasuring Christ and trusting in Him and His promises is essential.⁹ Believers are saved through faith alone; however, saving faith is always attested and demonstrated by good works simply because faith is alive and always finds expression through those works of righteousness which are the fruits of the faith. Biblical faith is a belief in the truth simply because God says so.

See also sections regarding repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, and regeneration for further clarification and explanation.

XIII. Justification

Justification is God's¹⁰ gracious and full acquittal of sinners, who believe in Jesus Christ, from all sin. God accepts them as righteous in His sight through the

¹ Acts 3:19; Luke 13:3-5

² Acts 2:38

³ Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 5:9-10

⁴ Psalm 51:1-17; Acts 2:37-38

⁵ Hebrews 11:1-39; Ephesians 2:8

⁶ Romans 10:14

⁷ Ephesians 1:17-18; Proverbs 23:12; Romans 12:2; Acts 26:28-29

⁸ John 1:12

⁹ Mark 1:24; James 2:19; Colossians 3:2

¹⁰ Romans 3:24; Psalm 103:11-12; Hebrews 8:12; Isaiah 1:18

satisfaction that Christ has made; not for anything wrought in them or done by them. By the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they receive and rest on Him and His Righteousness by faith.¹

XIV. Adoption

Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right of all the privileges of the sons of God. Adoption is linked to the act of salvation and is a one time act.

XV. Sanctification

Sanctification, which literally means to make holy or to purify, is a twofold process that begins in regeneration (which is entirely a work of God) and continues on in the heart of believers by the presence, power and continuing work of the Holy Spirit. Though it is a finished work in salvation, which sets us right with God, it is also a progressive work in the believer's life of setting himself apart by the power of the Holy Spirit to the things of God.

XVI. Stewardship

Stewardship is a genuine measure of one's relationship with God. According to the Scriptures, all believers are to give the entirety of their "heart, mind, soul, and strength" to God.⁶ It is everything a person does with what God has given him or her after receiving Christ as redeemer: the fruit that is produced by all areas of a believer's life. Stewardship is a product of the personal responsibility of faithfulness. While being a good steward of God's resources is an immense responsibility, great joy and reward can also be found through being good stewards of God's resources.⁷ All time, money, material possessions, talents, and spiritual gifts should be recognized as being entrusted to God's stewards to be used for His Glory—they are on loan from God.⁸ God's children are His stewards.

All that a believer has is nothing more than a gift of God; it all belongs to God. Stewardship is simply one's duty as a Child of God to learn how to become a responsible steward of the Lord's resources entrusted into his care.⁹

As believers trust Him for all things, He will give them the abilities and means to manage everything for His glory. This stewardship commitment has one purpose: to further the works of the Kingdom upon this earth until the return of Christ.

XVII. Spiritual Gifts

The Church should be utilizing all spiritual gifts as evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Church has been given the gifts for the purposes of glorifying God and of ministering to those within the Church and to the world at large.

Spiritual gifts can be separated into three categories:

¹ Isaiah 53:5; Romans 4:24-25; Romans 5:8; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2
² Romans 8:14-16; John 10:28-29; Galatians 4:4-6; Psalms 68:5-6; Romans 5:12-21; Ephesians 1:5-6
³ 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 2:5
⁴ John 17:17; Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
⁵ 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3,4,7; 2 Timothy 2:21
⁶ Mark 12:30; Matthew 22:37-38; Deuteronomy 10:12-13
⁷ 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Proverbs 3:9-10
⁸ Psalm 24:1
⁹ Luke 12:16-21, 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47, 5:1-11, 20:35; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 12, 16:1-3 (See also "Positional Statement: Tithing")
¹⁰ 1 Peter 1:16-19
¹¹ 1 Peter 4:10-11

1. Gifts of ministry given by Christ¹ to the Church (offices or titles): apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher.
2. Motivational gifts given by the Holy Spirit to believers: service, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy, helping and administration.
3. Demonstrative gifts given by the Holy Spirit to believers: wisdom, knowledge, discernment, prophecy, tongues, interpretation, faith, healing and miracles.

Spiritual gifts have never ceased throughout the history of Christendom. The knowledge of them and the use of these gifts of grace have always been before the Church but not always accepted because their nature is beyond the grasp of the human mind. It is not a human ability; it is a spiritual ability granted to an individual by the Holy Spirit through the grace of the Father. Every believer will have one or more spiritual gifts.⁴ However, one believer will not receive all gifts; rather the Church is to utilize the various gifts given to various believers in order to compose the whole body.⁵

XVIII. Assurance for the Christian Life

Assurance is found in the promises of God through the inspired writings of the Scriptures.⁶ Each and every follower of Christ finds rest and peace in regards to salvation, providential and spiritual care that God provides through the redemptive act of Christ.⁷

There is nothing that a person can do to obtain assurance through his or her own merit; it rests solely upon God's grace and mercy.⁸ This is why assurance is grounded in the unfailing promises that God, the Father, gives to His children.⁹

The key strength of assurance is that it is the groundwork of our eternal security. Since we cannot provide our own assurance, neither can we rest on our works for our eternal security. The Scriptures provide the ultimate proof of our permanence in salvation and His daily care for all of our lives as well.¹⁰

XIX. Eternal Security of the Saints

Those who truly believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, sincerely love Him, earnestly strive to live a Christ-like life and who have been adopted by God into His fold and sanctified by His Spirit will never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end and shall not perish.¹¹ This is an absolute assurance given through the Gospel and evidenced by the works of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the children of God.¹² This assurance does not depend on the free will of man nor can it be earned through works or deeds. The doctrine of eternal

¹ Ephesians 4:11-16

² Romans 12:3-7; 1 Corinthians 12:28

³ 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 28

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:7

⁵ 1 Corinthians 12:11, 14-18, 29-31 (See also "Positional Statement: Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Their Usage and Guidelines.")

⁶ John 5:24; John 14:26; John 16:13; Romans 5:1

⁷ Matthew 6:25-34

⁸ Ephesians 2:8-9

⁹ John 17:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:3

¹⁰ John 10:29; Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:30

¹¹ John 10:28-29; John 17:12; John 18:4-9; 1 John 5:4; 1 John 2:19; John 6:66-69; Romans 8:28-39; Jeremiah

32:40; Psalm 121:3; Psalm 91:11-12; Philippians 1:6; John 8:31; 1 Peter 1:3-5
Matthew 13:18-23; Job 17:9; 1 John 4:4

security of the saints stems from the free and unfathomable love of God and is a product of the doctrine of election (see Section V above).

Though believers may occasionally fall into sin because of neglect and temptation (which grieves God, impairs their ability to receive graces and comforts, brings reproach on the Church, and temporal judgment on themselves), they nevertheless shall be renewed again through repentance and shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.²

XX. Kingdom of God

At its simplest, the kingdom of God is the result of God's mission to rescue and renew His sin-marred creation.³ The kingdom of God is about Jesus our king establishing His rule and reign over all creation, defeating the human and angelic evil powers, bringing order to all, enacting justice, and being worshiped as Lord.⁴ The kingdom of God is an already and not yet reality. It is already here in the fact that Jesus launched it into motion with His earthly ministry, His death, and His resurrection.⁵ His followers today live in His kingdom, which is moving ever closer to its culmination.⁶ The kingdom of God is not yet in the fact that it is not entirely established in its fullness. Jesus tells us to pray for the kingdom to come.⁷ Its final establishment will only be realized upon the return of Christ as He will come to judge the nations and reign supreme as Lord of the world.⁸

XXI. The Church

The Church is the local community of regenerated believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord.⁹ In obedience to Scripture, they organize under qualified leadership,¹⁰ gather regularly for preaching and worship,¹¹ and observe the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion. The Church is unified by the Holy Spirit, is disciplined for holiness, and scatters to fulfill the Great Commission as missionaries to the world for God's glory and their joy.¹² The Church is also the universal collection of saints from all of history and geographic location, who by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, have been saved.¹³

XXII. Baptism

Baptism is an ordinance of the Church established by Jesus Christ and outlined in Holy Scripture.¹⁴ It is the immersion in water of a believer into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, the believer's faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in the believer's death to sin and resurrection to a new life.¹⁵ It is prerequisite to the privileges of Church membership. Baptism apart from a regenerated heart and

¹ Matthew 10:29-33

²

³ 1 John 3:9; 1 John 5:18; Jude 24-25

⁴ John 3:16; Luke 19:10; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Corinthians 5:21; John 3:36

⁵ Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:15-20

⁶ Matthew 4:23; Mark 1:15; Matthew 28:18;

⁷ Romans 8:18-30

⁸ Matthew 6:10

⁹ Revelation 20:22; Acts 1:9-11

¹⁰ Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 2:41-42; 5:13-14

¹¹ 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Acts 20:17, 28; Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 6:3-6; 1 Peter

¹² 4:10-11; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Galatians 6:6

¹³ Acts 11:19-21; Hebrews 10:24-25

¹⁴ Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

¹⁴ Hebrews 12:23; Ephesians 1:10, 22-23, 5:23-32; Acts 9:31; Revelation 5:6-14
¹⁵ Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:27; Acts 22:16
Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38

conversion has no value; rather, baptism is a visible symbol of an invisible spiritual reality, a born-again believer.

XXIII. Communion

Communion is an ordinance of the Church established by Jesus Christ and outlined in Scripture for believers. It is the sacred partaking of bread and wine by the members of the Church and is to be observed by His Churches as often as they gather until the end of the world.² The bread symbolizes the body of Christ and the wine symbolizes the blood of Christ.³ It is in no way a sacrifice, but serves as a commemoration of Jesus Christ's death, to confirm the faith and other graces of Christians, and to be a bond, pledge, and renewal of their communion with Him and of their church fellowship.⁴ The taking of communion should always be preceded by solemn self-examination. (Those undergoing some type of church discipline may be kept from communion as this ordinance is one of purity and holiness.⁵)

XXIV. Resurrection

We believe that Jesus' resurrection was a literal, factual event in which He physically died and, after three days, came back to life again⁶ just as He had prophesied about Himself and as Scripture foretold.⁷ His resurrection, confirmed by numerous eyewitnesses through many convincing manifestations,⁸ validated His claims about Himself and demonstrated His power over both life and death.

We believe that Jesus now physically exists in His resurrected, glorified body at God's right hand⁹ where He is constantly making intercession for us,¹⁰ preparing a place for the righteous to dwell with Him forever¹¹ and awaiting God's appointed day when He will come again to judge all persons, both living and the dead.¹²

We also believe in the future resurrection of all persons, both the unrighteous and righteous, who will appear before Jesus in judgment. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.¹³

See also section regarding Judgment for further clarification and explanation.

XXV. Judgment

We believe that God has appointed a day (known only to Himself) in which He will judge the world in righteousness,¹⁴ through Jesus Christ.¹⁵ Jesus has been given all power and judgment by the Father,¹⁶ and He will judge all persons. Every person that has ever lived upon the earth will appear before the judgment seat of Jesus to

¹ Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-37, 2:41, 8:12, 18:8

² 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 21

³ Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

⁴ Hebrews 9:25-28; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Matthew 26:26-27

⁵ 1 Corinthians 11:29; 1 Corinthians 10:21-22

⁶ Matthew 27:50-28:10; Mark 15:37-16:14; Luke 23:46-24:35; John 19:30-20:18; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

⁷ Matthew 16:21, 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34

⁸ Matthew 28:1-26; Mark 16:9-14; Luke 24:1-53; John 20:11-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:5-8

⁹ Matthew: 26:64; Mark 15:27; Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33; Acts 7:55-56; Romans 8:34; Ephesians 1:20;

¹⁰ Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 10:12; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22

¹¹ Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25

¹² John 14:1-3

¹³ Matthew 24:29-31; Acts 17:31; Revelation 1:18

¹⁴ Matthew 25:31-46

¹⁵ Matthew 16:27; Acts 17:31; 1 Timothy 6:15
¹⁶ John 5:22, 27
John 5:22, 27

give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds and to receive from Him according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil.

This coming day of judgment will be the ultimate manifestation of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect and of His justice in the eternal damnation of the unregenerated.

We believe the righteous will go into everlasting life and dwell in the presence of God forever. But, the unregenerate, who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus, will be eternally separated from the presence of God and condemned to a place called Hell, there to suffer punishment without end.³

Because a day of judgment is a coming certainty, all persons should, therefore, refrain from sin and solemnly commit themselves to prayer and obedience to Jesus' commands so that they may rejoice at His appearing and not be ashamed.⁴

We believe that the timing of the day of judgment is known only to God⁵ in order to deter persons from sin, to inspire hope in the godly who suffer adversity and to motivate believers not to rely on worldly security, but to watch and prepare for His appearance.⁶

XXVI. Restoration

We believe that Jesus' return to earth will herald the final restoration of all things.⁷ Jesus will assume His rightful place, as Lord and King and the Kingdom of God will be fully manifest.⁸ There will be a new heaven and a new earth. God and man will live together once again on the new earth in a city, prepared by God, referred to in Scripture as the "New Jerusalem."⁹

We believe the inhabitants of the new earth will only be those who have, by faith, trusted in Jesus during their earthly life and whose names are written in a heavenly record called "The Lamb's Book of Life." Those who have rejected Jesus will never experience the joy of God's restoration or live in His presence.¹⁰

We believe the restoration of all things will bring about the establishment of all things promised by God through the ancient prophets. God's true purpose for creation will be fully realized and a perfect way of life will be established.

¹ 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 12:36; Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 14:10; Hebrews 9:27; 2 Timothy 4:1

² Matthew 24:27, 30, 36-44; Isaiah 2:2-4

³ Matthew 25:21, 23; Matthew 25:31-46; Mark 9:47-48; Colossians 3:4; Philippians 3:20; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11; Revelation 21:7-8

⁴ Mark 8:38

⁵ Acts 1:7; Acts 17:31

⁶ Matthew 24:42-44; Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; Luke 21:27-28; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Titus 2:13-14; James 5:8-9; 1 John 2:28-29; 1 John 3:2-3; Revelation 3:11; Revelation 22:20

⁷ Acts 3:21

⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:24-28
⁹ Revelation 21:1-22:5

¹¹ Romans 8
Romans 8:20