



Living Out  
**LIFE**

# A Personal Doctrinal Statement

Grant Kaul

## 1. THE DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

I believe God has supplied humanity with both general and special revelation. General revelation is based on creation and addressed to humans as intelligent creatures, with the purpose of providing people with a knowledge about God that is sufficient to hold all individuals responsible and guilty before Him. This type of revelation is manifested in the consciousness of individuals (Acts 17:28; Rom.2:14-15), in the entire framework of nature (Ps.19:1-6; Acts 14:17; Rom.1:18-20), and the providential course of history and government (Acts 14:16; 17:26-27). General revelation gives witness to God's glory (Ps.19:1), power (Rom.1:19-20), benevolence (Deut.11:14; Ps.65:9-10; 147:8-9), and ordering and governing of the universe (Col.1:16-17).

Special revelation is complementary to and builds upon general revelation. Special revelation is addressed to people as sinners with a view to redemption and can only be fully understood by the spiritual person. Its purpose is to develop maturity in God's people and to bring glory to God, by manifesting His character (1Pet. 2:2-3). This type of revelation is sourced both in the living Word, Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:1, 14; Heb.1:1-2), and in the written word of God, the Holy Scriptures.

Throughout history, God has used a variety of means to disclose His special revelation, such as theophanies (especially the Angel of Yahweh, Gen. 16:7-12; Ex. 3:2-6; Jdg. 6:11-24), direct communication (Gen. 2:16; 3:9-16; 1 Sam.3:4), Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21), visions (Gen. 46:2; Is. 1:1; Dan. 10:7), dreams (Gen. 15:12-21; 37:5-11), miracles (Jn. 2:11; 20:30-31), and an inexplicable method of inner communication to the prophets and writers of Holy Scripture (1 Pet. 1:10-11; 2 Pet.1:21). Special revelation communicates God's power (Jn. 3:2, miracles; Eph. 1:19-20, resurrection), His glory (Jn. 1:14), His wisdom (Lk. 11:49; 1 Cor.1:24), His life (Jn. 1:1-4), and His love (Jn. 3:16; Eph. 2:4; 1 Jn. 4:10). The supreme demonstration of special revelation is found in God's saving grace, which is manifested and brought to bear in Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life (Jn. 1:17; 14:6; 18:37).

I believe the Bible is God's written revelation to humanity. The sixty-six books that are given by the Holy Spirit, are fully inspired, composed by inspiration that is both verbal (the actual words are inspired Ex. 20:1; Jn. 6:63; 17:8:) and plenary (inspired equally in all parts and genre of Scripture 2 Tim. 3:16). God spoke His written word through the process of dual authorship (confluency), whereby the Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and distinct styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's word to humanity (Acts 4:24-25; 2 Pet.1:20-21).

I believe every word of Scripture is God-breathed, infallible (completely trustworthy and reliable), and inerrant (they are wholly true, exempt from the liability of mistake, and incapable of error) in the original documents (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; 2 Tim. 3:16). The sixty-six books that constitute Scripture are sufficient, in that they are complete, final and the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Jn. 10:35; 17:17; Heb. 4:12). They also are perspicuous, being fully comprehensible in all things essential to faith and practice (Ps. 19:7-8; 119:105). Because these books are inspired by God and, therefore, fully authoritative, they are canonical and were recognized and acknowledged as such.

Although there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is found by the diligent application of the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpretation (Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:15). Illumination is that work of the Holy Spirit that clarifies, enlightens, and teaches the truth of written revelation (Eph. 1:17-18). Thus, the Spirit of God takes the word of God, and brings to light the significance and personal implications of a given passage (Eph. 5:18; Col. 3:16). The believer's responsibility is to carefully ascertain the true intent and meaning of Scripture, coupled with the illumination and conviction of the Holy Spirit, which constitutes the singular and final authority for the believer (Jn. 12:48; Jn. 17:17-19; 1 Cor. 2:12-14).

## 2. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

I believe there is but one true, living, and personal God who is both immanent, being present and active within nature, human nature, and history (Jer. 23:24; Acts 17:27-28), and transcendent, in that He is independent, separate, and superior to His creation (Ps. 113:5-6; Is. 55:8-9; 57:15). The essence of God is revealed only through His attributes, which are His permanent qualities, the essential and inherent dimensions of His very nature.

The attributes of God that are incommunicable, and thus not true of man, are His aseity (His self-existence Ex. 3:14-15), His immutability (He is not subject to change Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Jas. 1:17), His infinity (He is free from all limitations other than self-limitation, He is perfect Matt. 5:48, eternal Ps. 90:2, and omnipresent Ps. 139:7-12), and that He is numerically and uniquely one (Deut. 6:4; Jn. 10:30; 1 Cor. 8:4).

The communicable attributes of God, and thus the attributes that are to some limited degree shared with people, are that He is a spiritual being who possesses life and personality (Jn. 4:24; 5:26), and that He is knowledgeable and truthful (Ps. 139:4; Heb. 6:18).

God is the source of all that is good, which includes His benevolence (Ps. 145:9; Matt. 5:45), eternal love (1 Jn. 3:1; 4:8) grace (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:8; 1 Tim. 1:14), mercy (Lk. 1:50; 2 Cor. 1:3), and patience (2 Pet. 3:9,15). God is also completely holy (Hab. 1:13; 1 Pet. 1:14-16), righteous in all of His ways (Ezra 9:15; Jn. 17:25), and the absolute sovereign ruler in the universe (Rom. 9:18; Eph. 1:11).

I believe that God is perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three co-equal Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who individually possess the whole undivided essence of Deity (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2). The ontological relationship of the Trinity recognizes the order within the Godhead, where the Father is the First Person, who is neither begotten by nor proceeds from another. The Second Person is the eternally begotten Son, and the Holy Spirit is the Third Person, who eternally proceeds from both the Father and the Son (Jn. 20:21; 1 Jn. 4:9; Jn. 14:26).

The economic relationship of the Trinity indicates the administration of God's eternal purpose. It is an acknowledgment that the Scriptures represent all things as being out of and according to the purpose of the Father (Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6), being placed into effect by the Son (Jn. 1:3; Eph. 1:5; 2:18) and are made known and applied by the Spirit (Eph. 2:22; 3:5).

I believe creation of the complete universe is the work of the Triune God (Gen. 1:1-2:3; 1 Cor. 8:6), whereby the entirety of reality has come into being, including matter, space and time, for the purpose of glorifying God and manifesting His character (Is. 43:7; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16). Without the use of preexisting materials, *creatio ex nihilo*, God called into existence that which did not originally subsist (Mark 13:19; Heb. 1:10; Rev. 3:14), thus giving the world a distinct yet continually dependent existence upon Himself (Eph. 4:6).

### 3. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD THE FATHER

I believe God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8,9; 1 Cor.8:6). His Fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with humanity. As Creator He is Father to all people (Eph. 4:6), but He is the Spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14-15; 2 Cor.6:18). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom.11:36).

I believe God has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass. The decree of God is His eternal purpose, which is established by the counsel of His own will whereby according to His own pleasure and for His own glory He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. The decree includes all things (Is. 14:26-27; 46:10-11; Dan. 4:35), incorporating the stability of the universe (Ps.119:89-91), the circumstances of nations (Acts 17:26), the length of human life (Job 14:5), and the free acts of people, including both good acts (Is. 44:28; Eph. 2:10) and allowing evil acts (Gen. 50:20; Lk. 22:22; Acts 2:23).

The decree also includes election, that phase of God's eternal purpose whereby He certainly, graciously, and eternally predestines and determines by means of unconditional loving choice who will believe (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9). Before the foundation of the world, God chose some for salvation, and allowed others to remain reprobate, by simply passing them by and not electing them (Rom. 9:18-22; 1 Pet. 2:8; Jude 4). He saves from sin all those who come to Him by faith (Rom. 4:5), at which time He becomes Father to His own upon this adoption into His family (John 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5-6; Heb.12:5-9).

In the providence of God, the Creator preserves the existence of the things He created (Ps. 104:24-30; Col. 1:17), through the cooperation of His divine power with all subordinate powers, and the pre-established laws of their operation, which causes them to act precisely as they do (Prov. 21:1; Acts. 17:28; 1 Cor. 12:6). As a result of His providence, God the Father secures the accomplishment of His divine purposes of His decree, bringing to pass the redemption of His elect, and the government of His creation, and the direction of every event that comes to pass (1 Chron. 29:11; Ps. 66:7; 103:19).

### 4. THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

I believe Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, exists eternally and equally with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit (Ps. 2:7; Micah 5:2; Jn. 1:1,14). God the Father created the heaven, the earth and all that is in them through His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the sustainer of all that is in existence (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

In the incarnation, God the Son entered into humanity, by taking on human form, and accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity while continually existing as the eternal Second Person of the Trinity (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9; Gal. 4:4). At the time of His incarnation until His death, Jesus Christ, in obedience to His Father, temporarily laid aside the full prerogatives of His divinity and took on an existence appropriate to a servant, while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes. The deity and humanity of Christ were united forever without any mingling of the attributes, and with no loss of the identity of the two natures (Jn. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5).

I believe the Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin (Matt. 1:23,25; Lk 1:26-35), and was tempted in all things as a man, yet was without sin (Lk. 4:1-14; Heb. 4:14-15). His coming to earth was motivated by love for humanity and obedience to the Father (Jn. 3:16; Lk. 22:42; Phil. 2:5-8).

I believe the Lord Jesus Christ provided atonement for all people's sins, and redemption for all believers through the shedding of His blood and His sacrificial death on the cross (Acts 20:28). His voluntary death was vicarious, in that Christ suffered the deserved penalty of humanity for them (Is. 53:6,12; Jn. 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:24). The Lord's atoning death was also substitutionary, in that Christ bore people's penalty as a substitute sacrifice for sins (Mark 10:45; Rm. 5:8).

I believe Christ's atoning death was also an expiatory sacrifice that atoned for and paid the penalty for sin and guilt which believers are liable for (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:11-14). Christ's death was also a propitiatory sacrifice that appeased God's righteous wrath against sin (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10), thereby removing the believer's liability to suffer punishment.

Christ's death also redeemed people, purchasing believers from their enslavement to sin, their lawless deeds, and their futile way of life (1 Cor. 6:20; Titus 2:14; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). Jesus Christ's atoning death also provided the reconciliation of the relationship between God and humanity, through the removal of that which caused alienation (Rm. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-19).

I believe Christ's death was sufficient to be a payment for the sins of all people, but the application of the atonement is only efficient for the elect as manifested by their saving faith in Christ (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; 1 Jn. 2:2). Based on the death of Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day from the very presence of sin. Such a one is declared righteous, given eternal life, eternal security, and adopted into the family of God (Jn. 10:27-29; Rm. 3:24-26; 8:15-17).

I believe Jesus Christ's literal, physical resurrection from the dead secured the justification of all believers, and that now Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, mediating as a believer's Advocate and faithful High Priest (Rm. 4:23-24; Heb. 7:25; 1 Jn. 2:1). I believe that Christ's resurrection from the grave confirmed the deity of the Son, gave proof that God has accepted Christ's atoning work on the cross, and guarantees a future resurrection life for all believers (Rm. 6:5-10; 1 Cor. 15:20,23).

I believe after His resurrection, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, and will one day return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture. After a seven-year period of tribulation, He will return with His church in glory, and will establish His millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Rev. 20:1-6).

I believe the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all humanity. Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and people (1 Tim. 2:5), the head of His body, the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King (Lk. 1:31-33). Christ will judge all believers in terms of rewards (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10), as well as all who fail to place their trust in Him, in righteousness, truth, and justice (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

## **5. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

I believe the Holy Spirit is the divine Third Person of the Godhead. He possesses all the attributes of deity and personality including intellect (1 Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph. 4:30), will (1 Cor. 12:11), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Is. 40:13-14), and omnipotence (Rm. 15:13). He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14).

In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit was not only active in creation (Gen. 1:2), but He also enabled particular individuals for service (Ex. 31:3; Jud. 14:5-6). Furthermore, He performed miracles (1 Kings 18:12; Ezek. 3:12) and moved men to write Scripture (1 Pet. 1:10-11; Mark 12:36; Heb. 3:7).

The Holy Spirit's work can also be seen in the life of Jesus. In both Christ's incarnation (Matt. 1:18; Lk. 1:35) and His earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit is noted for His close and instrumental relationship with Jesus, the Son of God (Lk. 4:1, 14; Matt. 12:28).

A unique work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the apostles began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as Jesus had promised (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26; Acts 2:1-4). He empowered the apostles' ministry (Acts 4:8; 13:9), performed miracles (Acts 2:43; 5:12), and guided them into all truth as they wrote God's revelation, the Bible (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Also, since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has been convicting unbelievers of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:7-11), yet many fail to respond to the call to salvation (1 Cor. 2:14). Believers in Christ,

however, universally receive the benefits that come from the Holy Spirit and are, baptized into the body of Christ (1 Cor.12:13), permanently indwelt with His presence (Jn.14:16-17; Rom. 8:9), instructed and sanctified by His guidance (Jn. 14:26; Rom. 15:16) and individually receive the seal of the Spirit of promise, which is the Spirit Himself (Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

I also believe the Holy Spirit uniquely gives each believer a combination of spiritual gifts that are to be used in serving and building up one another (1 Pet. 4:10-11; Rom.12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16). Believers are commanded to be continually filled and controlled by His presence in their life (Eph. 5:18), whereby the Spirit of God takes the word of God and through obedience to both, empowers them to bear fruit in their lives (Jn. 14:23; Col. 1:9-10).

## **6. THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS**

I believe angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped (Ps. 148:2-5; Col. 1:16). Holy angels are separated unto God, without sin, and are designed for the special purposes of God (Mark 8:38; Rev. 14:10). Although they are spirit beings, they can assume bodily form (Gen.19:1-3). Angels do not propagate after their kind, and they do not die (Matt. 22:30; Lk. 20:36). Angels have great knowledge, but they are not omniscient, and have great power, but they are not omnipotent (Matt. 24:36; 1 Pet. 1:12; Ps. 103:20).

I believe that angels continually praise and glorify God (Matt. 18:10; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-12). They function as revealers and communicators of God's message to humanity, and minister to believers (Luke 1:13-20, 26-38; Heb. 1:14). Angels also execute judgment upon the enemies of God, and they will be involved in the second coming of the Lord (Matt.13:39-42; 25:31; Rev. 8:6-9:21).

## **7. THE DOCTRINE OF SATAN**

I believe Satan is a created angel, who incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator and taking numerous angels with him (Matt.25:41; 1 Tim 3:6-7, Rev. 12:7-10). He also incurred God's wrath for introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve to disobey God's word (Gen. 3:1-15).

In relation to the unsaved, Satan blinds their minds to the gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Eph. 2:2), snatches away the truth of God's word (Matt. 13:4, 19), uses people to advance false religion (2 Cor. 11:13-15), and places evil in the hearts of the unbelieving (Jn. 13:2).

Regarding believers, Satan opposes spiritual progress both individually and corporately (2 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Thes. 2:18), seeks to corrupt doctrine (2 Cor. 11:2-3), and leads believers into sin (Acts 5:3; 1 Cor. 7:5; 1 Tim. 3:6-7).

As Satan's subjects, the demons who aligned themselves with him in his initial angelic rebellion are now his subordinates who carry out his work in this world (Matt. 12:22; Mark 9:25; Acts 8:7). Though a demon may possess a non-believer, there is no New Testament account of a believer, who is now in the Kingdom of Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:13-14; 1 Cor. 6:19; Jn. 10:10-15), being possessed by a demon. Satan is the prince of this world who is the declared enemy of God and humanity (Matt.4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10), who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom.16:20), and who, along with his demon subjects, shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

## 8. THE DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY

I believe humanity was directly and immediately created by God (Gen.1:27; 2:7). Humanity's creation is the climax of creation week and was preceded by divine counsel amongst the Persons of the Godhead (Gen. 1:26). This distinct creative act of God distinguished people from the lower creatures that had been previously created, and after humanity's creation, he was given dominion over the rest of the natural creation (Gen. 1:28; 2:19-20; Ps. 8:5-8). I believe God created people with the intention that they should glorify God, enjoy His fellowship, and live their lives according to the revealed will of God (Is. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).

I believe each individual is a complex creature composed of a material and immaterial aspect (Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:6-7; Matt. 10:28). Humanity is created by God in His image and likeness (Gen.1:26-27; Jas.3:9). This image consists of those communicable attributes of God which are to a certain, limited degree represented in each person, such as a rational nature, intelligence, volition, love, compassion, etc. This image of God was thoroughly corrupted by sin (Ps.14:1-3; Rm. 3:9-18; 3:23) but will exist in perfection when believers are glorified in their final state (1 Joh. 3:2-3).

## 9. THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

I believe Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and word of God in the Garden of Eden resulted in the loss of humanity's innocence (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19). As humanity's representative, Adam's sin resulted in the penalty of spiritual and physical death of all people (Rm. 3:23; Eph. 2:1-3). Because all people are in Adam, his original sin has caused the entire race to be guilty before God and has subjected all people to the wrath of God (Jn. 3:36; Rm. 5:8-19). Furthermore, because of Adam's original sin, from the time of conception, all humanity is inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace (Ps. 51:5; Ps. 130:3; Rm. 3:23).

Because of humanity's state of total depravity, whereby corruption extends to all aspects of the material and immaterial aspects of the individual, the salvation of a person is wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rm. 6:12-13; 6:23; 8:7).

I believe that because all people are in Adam, to all people throughout the ages has been transmitted a nature corrupted by Adam's sin, the only exception being Jesus Christ. All people are thus sinners by nature, by actual choice in deed and thought, and by the divine declaration of God (Ps. 14:1-3; Rom. 3:9-18).

## 10. DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

I believe all who receive by faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become the children of God (Jn. 1:12-13; 3:14-18; Eph. 2:2-10). These same people are identified as the "saved" (Rom.10:9-10,13); which indicates their eternal relationship with God, who alone preserves them from the condemnation of sin (Rom. 8:1). This salvation is completely of God, is based upon the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and is obtained by God's grace alone.

The common grace of God is experienced in some measure by all humans as it restrains the devastating effects of sin (2 Thes. 2:6-8), delays judgment as He calls for repentance (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9), and maintains a degree of morality, truthfulness, and rationality among mankind (Acts 17:26-27). Common grace also provides abundant natural blessing to all people (Matt. 5:44-45; Acts 14:16-17).

Although God's common grace is experienced by all, His special grace is bestowed only upon those whom He has elected to eternal life through faith in his Son. Election is that work of God by which He lovingly chose, before the foundation of the world, who will through Christ, be regenerated, saved, and sanctified (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph.1:4-11; 2 Thes. 2:13).

As an act of His general/verbal calling, God graciously invites all sinners to accept the salvation which is found in Christ. This general calling is universal, not necessarily efficacious (that which assures salvation), and is genuine, because it is God's just offer in which He will judge the world (Matt. 22:14; Mark 16:15-16).

The effectual call of God is efficacious (1 Pet.2:9) and irrevocable (Rom. 11:29), and is that call whereby the atoning work of God in Christ is savingly applied to the sinner by the Holy Spirit, through the proclamation and acceptance of the gospel (Rom. 9:23-26; Acts 10:38-44). It is God's grace alone that prepares a lost and totally depraved sinner to hear and respond to the gospel (Acts 16:14).

Regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit, by which individuals are born again into God's kingdom. At the moment of salvation, the new believer receives the divine nature and life (Jn. 3:3-7; Titus 3:5). Accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the word of God (Jn. 5:24; Jas. 1:18), regeneration simultaneously begins when one responds in faith to the finished salvatory work of Christ (1 Pet. 1:3). This impartation of new life and nature is manifested by good works (Eph. 2:10) and a Spirit-filled life that is obedient to the word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Col. 3:16).

Conversion is a sinner's voluntary turning away from sin and turning to Christ. It begins with repentance, a conscious and sorrowful change of mind regarding the divine character of God and the devastation of sin (2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Cor. 7:9-10). At the same time, it is expressed in terms of saving faith, which results in a new and trusting belief in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8).

Justification before God is an act of God by which He pardons all of a believer's sins and accepts that person as righteous in His sight (Rom. 8:33). This justification is a legal declaration that a sinner is just before God, because such a person has by faith been united with Christ and has been imputed with Christ's righteousness (Rom. 3:24-26; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21).

As a result of our union with Christ, which is that Christ is in those who trust in Him (2 Cor.13:5) and believers are in Christ (Eph.1:4), the Christian enjoys the privilege of adoption (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 3:26; 4:6). This new position is enjoyed by believers because they are no longer under condemnation (Rom. 8:1), but instead are identified with the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ, who embodies the righteousness of God (Rom. 6:3-7; Eph. 2:4-7).

Sanctification is that work by the Holy Spirit whereby each believer is set apart from sin unto God. At the initial point of salvation, a believer is positionally sanctified (1 Cor.1:30; 6:11; Heb.10:10). However, because the believer retains his sin nature in this life, Christians experience a progressive sanctification as they conform to the image of Christ through obedience to the word of God (Acts 20:32; 2 Cor.7:1), and to the empowering of the Holy Spirit (2Cor.3:18). The final phase of progressive sanctification is when a believer's experiential sanctification matches his or her positional standing at the point of death or the rapture (Eph.5:27).

I believe all those who are born again of the Holy Spirit are kept by God's power and are forever secure in Christ (Heb. 7:25; Jn. 10:27-29; Rom. 5:9-10.) A believer responds to this divinely provided eternal security through perseverance and demonstrates a continuance in the way of faith and holiness (Col.1:21-23; 2 Pet. 1:5-10). The security and salvation of the believer are fully realized at the point of glorification, at which time, all those who have trusted Christ will be conformed to His image and will be presented to Him holy and blameless (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 5:25-27; Jn. 17:24).

## 11. THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

I believe all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, where Christ is the head (1 Cor.12:12-13; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; 5:23). This divine assembly, which is called the universal church, is the spiritual body and bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8), and consists of members who are chosen by God (Eph. 1 :4-5; Col. 3:12), possessed

by God (Titus 2:14; 1Pet.2:9-10), sanctified by Him (1 Cor. 1:2), united with Christ (Rom. 6:5-6; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20), and are united with the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16-17).

The church is a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ and is made up of all truly born-again believers, whether they be Jews or Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (1Cor.10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-12).

The universal church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47). The purpose of the church is to respond in love and worship as faithful believers in glorifying the Triune God (Rom. 11:36; Eph. 3:21), to follow Christ and adhere to His word (Jn. 8:31-32), to share in the love of God with fellow members of the body of Christ who are brothers and sisters in Him (Eph. 6:23-24; Heb. 13:1; 2 Pet.1:7), and to reach out with the gospel to unbelievers, and to make disciples of all the nations by baptizing and teaching them to observe all that the Lord has given in His word (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor.5:20).

As the Holy Spirit forms the church, He uniquely gifts each member of the body, at the time of conversion, with a unique blend of special spiritual abilities that are to be used in the context of serving one another (Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; 1 Pet. 4:10-11). To a portion of the body of believers, the Holy Spirit gives gifts for the purpose of equipping the other saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12). The universal church is, therefore, spiritually gifted by the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's purpose.

I believe the local church is an organized assembly of believers in Jesus Christ in one locality, where God is worshiped, the word of God is preached and practiced, ordinances are observed, spiritual gifts are exercised, and discipline is practiced. Its purpose is to glorify and worship God (Eph. 3:21; 5:15-21), by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), through the teaching of the word (2 Tim. 2:2, 15; 3:16-17), fellowship (Acts 2:47; 1 John 1:3), keeping the ordinances (Lk. 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), disciplining erring saints (Matt. 18:15-20), proclaiming the gospel, and making disciples throughout the world (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

Because the local church is to be a microcosm of the universal body of Christ, only those who are regenerate should be members of a local body (Rom.1:6-7; 1 Cor.1:2; Col. 1:2). The local church should also be characterized as being autonomous, free from any external authority or control, exercising the right to self-government, and is not to be controlled by a hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Titus 1:5). The local church has the authority to judge its own membership (1Cor. 5:13), elect its own officers (Acts 6:1-6), observe the ordinances (1 Cor. 11:23), settle its own internal disputes (1 Cor. 6:1-5), and determine its extent of involvement with other churches (Acts 15:1-2).

Christ is the one supreme authority over the local church (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18). The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are a plurality of elders (qualified males, who are also called overseers/bishops and pastors; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:1-2), and deacons and servers who assist the elders (Acts 6:2-4). Both leadership offices are only to be held by those who meet the biblical qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-5). The congregation is to support and submit to their leadership (Heb.13:7, 17).

The Lord Jesus has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39), is a public testimony which symbolizes the identification of the individual with the Person and work of Christ and thus their salvation from sin, and signifies an individual's identification with the people and message of God in the church (Acts 2:38, 41-42).

The Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes and is always to be preceded by prayer and solemn examination (1Cor.11:23-32). The Supper is viewed as a symbolic memorial of the suffering and death of Christ, where the elements represent the body and blood of Christ. It is a time of meaningful fellowship with both Christ and fellow believers (1Cor.10:16-17). Both ordinances are not efficacious (a means of grace) in that baptism does not save an individual, and participation in the Lord's Supper does not in and of itself benefit the one partaking in salvation.



## 12. THE DOCTRINE OF MISSIONS

I believe one of the primary purposes of the church is to reach out to lost individuals with the life-changing and saving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ specifically commanded the church to evangelize, which entails going out to the lost, proclaiming the gospel, teaching the importance of obedience and baptism, and instructing and training them to be disciples of Christ (Mat.28:18-20). This mission of gospel proclamation is to be accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

Every believer is a missionary to the people God has placed around them. Each Christian is to appear as a light in the world in which he lives by living by example and speaking the gospel of Christ (Matt.5:14-16; Phil.2:15; 1Pet.3:15).

Missions is a worldwide view of evangelism that involves reaching across the globe with the Good News of Christ. Those individuals God has called and raised up for worldwide evangelism are to be supported in all ways by their fellow believers. This ongoing support of these individuals and families includes uplifting them in prayer, providing for their financial needs, and extending regular encouragement to fulfill the ministry that God has given them (2 Cor.11:9; Phil. 4:15-18).

## 13. THE DOCTRINE OF ESCHATOLOGY/LAST THINGS

I believe death involves a separation of two things that are designed to be joined together. Physical death, which all humans experience, is a separation of the body from the immaterial part of the person (Gen. 35:18; Eccles.12:7; Acts 7:59). The condition of all unbelievers is spiritual death, the resultant state of being separated from God by sin (Eph.2:1,5). Eternal death is the experience of all those who depart from this life unbelieving and unsaved and are eternally and consciously separated from God (2 Thes.1:8-9; Rev. 20:13-15).

The souls of those who are redeemed by Christ pass immediately into His presence (Lk. 23:43; 2 Cor.5:8; Phil. 1:23). For the deceased believer in Christ, the separation of soul and body will continue until the rapture (1Thes.4:13-17), at which time the believer's body will be transformed and both body and soul will be reunited to be glorified forever with the Lord (1Cor.15:35-44, 50-54; Phil.3:21). Until that time, the souls of all the redeemed remain in conscious, continual, and joyful fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ (2Cor.5:8).

The period of conscious human existence between physical death and the resurrection of the body is called the intermediate state. In this conscious state that the righteous enjoy bliss (Ps.16:10-11; 2Cor.5:8; Phil.1:23), and the wicked experience punishment (Luke 16:19-24; 2Pet.2:9).

A literal bodily resurrection of the dead in Christ will occur at the time of the rapture (1Thes.4:16). The resurrection of the Old Testament saints and the unbelieving dead from all ages will occur at the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ's kingdom on earth (Dan 12:2, Rev.20:5a).

The climax of the church age will be the rapture of the church, at which point all living saints will be caught up with Christ in the air just prior to the tribulation (1Thes.4:13-18). The removal of the living church saints will be accomplished in conjunction with the resurrection of the dead saints of this age, at which time the individual believer's works will be evaluated with regard to reward at the Bema judgment of Christ (2Cor.5:10). This returning of Christ to gather His church can occur at any moment, and is not conditioned upon the fulfillment of any predicted events.

Immediately following the removal of the church from the earth is the tribulation, the seventieth week of Daniel, at which time the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon the world and the unbelieving in an unprecedented manner (Is.2:12-19; 24:19-21; Dan.12:1). During this seven-year period,

the earth will be populated with the godless, which includes the Antichrist (2 Thes.2:3-4; Rev.17:14; 19:19), Satan (Rev.16:13), a world power called Babylon consisting of a gentile religio-economic cartel (Rev.17-18), and a godless population of "earth dwellers" (Rev.3:10; 6:10; 13:8). There will also be included the godly, consisting of the 144,000 sealed Israelites (Rev.7:1-8; 14:1-5), the two witnesses (Rev.11:3-13), and multitudes of believers (Rev.7:9-17). The end of the tribulation will be marked by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world for a one thousand years (Rev.19:20-20:6).

After the tribulation period, Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Lk.1:31-33; Acts 2:29-30) and establish his Messianic kingdom for a thousand years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-6). During this time, the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Lk. 22:19; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 5:10; 20:4-6). The kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel (Ezk.37:21-28; Zech.8:1-17; Mic.4:1-4) and restore Israel to her own land (Deut. 30:1-10). During this millennial kingdom, the Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Is.11; Ezk.36:33-38) and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Rev. 20:7).

Following Satan's release after the thousand-year reign of Christ, Satan will deceive the nations of the earth, and many will gather with him to battle against the saints and the beloved city of Jerusalem, only to be destroyed by fire from heaven (Rev.20:9). Ensuing this event, Satan will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10), and Christ will physically resurrect and judge all of the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15). After receiving judgment based on their deeds, the unbelieving will be condemned to eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (2Thes.1:9; Rev.20:11-15).

After the judgment of unbelievers, the elements of this earth are to be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10) and replaced with a new earth where only righteousness will dwell (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), at which time all those who believe will enter the eternal state of glory with God. Following this event, the new Jerusalem will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will forever enjoy glorifying God and rejoicing in fellowship with God and one another (Jn. 14:2-3; Rev. 21-22).