

Grace Redeemer Fellowship

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT *With Scriptural Proofs and Applications* By Pastor Michael J. Beasley

Section 1: The Eternal God

It is declared in Holy Writ¹ that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth *ex nihilo*.² Before the created Universe had its beginnings, before the physical establishment of His covenant people, the nations or any created thing, *God was*. He therefore is in need of nothing, nor is He served with human hands,³ nor does He require an abode in which to dwell.⁴ The Lord God is eternally self sufficient, self satisfied, self efficient, undivided and forever glorious. All that He has decreed, all that He has made, all that He has disclosed in His self revelation, all that He has accomplished and will accomplish ever-more is all to the praise of His majestic glory; for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.⁵

1.1. God's Substance: The Lord our God is declared in Holy Scripture⁶ as being one in essence, unified in His person, infinite in His being and immutable in all His perfections. The Lord God is incomprehensible and transcendent in His nature and could never be understood by any of His creatures if He did not, in His immanence, graciously and condescendingly communicate Himself⁷ to them, for He dwells in unapproachable light.⁸

¹ The doctrine of Scripture (God's special revelation) is addressed in section 6 of this doctrinal statement. The order of this doctrinal statement is arranged, with this slight variation to that of the LBC, in order to begin presuppositionally, with the eternal One who is the source of all revelation, whether general or special [Heb. 1:1-2]. This order is presented as a matter of preference and not strict dogmatics. For a secondary witness here and throughout this doctrinal statement, see the London Confession of Faith of 1689 (LBC).

² The Hebrew word *Bara* denotes a creation that is made *ex nihilo* [out of nothing] rather than it being formed from other, pre-existing materials. Before there was anything respecting creation, there *was* [perpetually] *God* (John 1:1-4) [LBC, Section 2].

³ Acts 17:24-25.

⁴ Isaiah 66:1-2 1 Thus says the Lord, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? 2 "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the Lord. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

⁵ Rom. 11:36.

⁶ For a full discussion of the nature and domain of the Scriptures, please see section #5 God's Special Revelation.

⁷ Deut. 30:11-15.

⁸ 1 Timothy 6:16.

God is spirit and He is by substance described as an eternal spirit. Not only is He transcendent in His nature, but in the wisdom of His decree of self revelation, He has disclosed Himself as being most holy, righteous, all-wise, glorious, wrathful, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness, truth and faithfulness; yet He is much more than the sum of any list of attributes. He is the absolute source of all life, goodness and blessedness and He alone is self sufficient, in need of nothing from His creation.⁹

1.2. God's Subsistence (The Father, Son and Holy Spirit): The divine and infinite God subsists as the Father, the Word or Son and the Holy Spirit, all of one substance, power and eternity, each having the whole divine essence, yet their essence is undivided: The Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding, the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit Himself proceeds from the Father and the Son. All three are infinite, without beginning and bearing all the attributes of deity within the Godhead. It is this doctrine of the Trinity, which establishes the basis, and means of God's self-glorification and it is the foundation of the believer's every communion with and rest in God.¹⁰

Section 2: God's Eternal Decree

God has decreed, for His own purposes and by His own wisdom, all things. There is therefore nothing which transpires within creation that is outside of His eternal decree. All things good and evil within creation find their origin in God's decree and yet they are derived from that decree in such a way that God remains pure and unaffected by sin. In the transcendent wisdom of God, all things good and evil have been decreed by His holy wisdom and for His own glory. Therefore His decree, established from before the foundation of the world to create and redeem His elect, was derived in accordance with His good pleasure and nothing else outside of His own good pleasure.¹¹ His decree of the fall of Lucifer and the fall of man was fashioned to manifest His glory ultimately through the Lamb of God who was slain from before the foundation of the world.¹² God's decree to save, sanctify and glorify His elect carries the central purpose of declaring the blessedness and graciousness of His mercy found in the will of the Father, the sacrifice of the Son and the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit – all to the praise of the glory of His grace.¹³ The number of those unconditionally elected for salvation and those that God

⁹ Job 35:6-7.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Deuteronomy 6:4; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 48:12; Exodus 3:14; John 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; Malachi 3:6; 1 Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23; Psalms 90:2; Genesis 17:1; Isaiah 6:3; Psalms 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 11:36; Exodus 34:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6; Nehemiah 9:32, 33; Psalms 5:5, 6; Exodus 34:7; Nahum 1:2, 3. John 5:26; Psalms 148:13; Psalms 119:68; Job 22:2, 3; Romans 11:34-36; Daniel 4:25, 34, 35; Hebrews 4:13; Ezekiel 11:5; Acts 15:18; Psalms 145:17; Revelation 5:12-14. 1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Exodus 3:14; John 14:11; 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:14,18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6. [LBC Section 2. In the council of Nicea (325 AD) the sameness of God's substance was defended in accordance with Scripture. It was in this council that the homo-ousian doctrine of the same-ness of substance of the Father and Son was defended by Athanasius against Arius].

¹¹ Isaiah 46:10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. [See also - Psalm 115:3, 135:6, Prov. 33:11; 19:21, Is. 14:24; 25:1; 40:8; Daniel 4:35]. [LBC Section 3].

¹² Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

¹³ Ephesians 1:1-15.

passes over, are determined by God's secret counsel, and their number can and will never change as God's decree can and will never change.¹⁴

2.1. The Recognition of His Decree: The truth of God's decree should evoke within the child of God a deep sense of God's honor, glory, mercy and grace. As well it should and must generate within the true believer a deeper sense of humility, gratitude, love and response of worship of the Godhead.¹⁵

2.2. The Partial Revelation of His Decree: God has in His eternal decree, determined to manifest His glory through the revelation of His nature and wisdom. This He has accomplished through the manifestation of His will in creation and through the manifestation of His revealed Word. Not all that He has decreed has been revealed to the sons of men and His secret counsels are His and His alone, but what He has revealed is for the whole of humanity that all might declare His Lordship through His self-revelation: Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

Section 3: God's Providence

As the Creator, the Lord God is the providential governor of all things, therefore, He upholds, directs and moves all things for the accomplishment of His immutable will.¹⁶ God is self efficient in accomplishing all His own good pleasure through the manifestation of His divine will, therefore nothing to Him is contingent or uncertain.¹⁷ His knowledge of all things is therefore independent and determinate rather than dependent and indeterminate. Our Lord is the only being who is free and unrestricted in the accomplishment of His will, and yet in all that He does, He moves in a manner that is consistent with His own nature such that He is infinitely incapable of lying or committing sin.¹⁸ Creaturely evil is suffered by the sovereign hand of God such that the evil-doer is culpable as a free agent.¹⁹ God's providential governance over all things good and

¹⁴ Isaiah 46:10; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 6:17; Romans 9:15, 18; James 1:13; 1 John 1:5; Acts 4:27, 28; John 19:11; Numbers 23:19; Ephesians 1:3-5. Acts 15:18; Romans 9:11, 13, 16, 18. 1 Timothy 5:21; Matthew 25:34; Ephesians 1:5, 6; Romans 9:22, 23; Jude 4; 2 Timothy 2:19; John 13:18; Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11; Romans 8:30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Romans 9:13, 16; Ephesians 2:5, 12; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; Romans 8:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10:26; John 17:9; John 6:64.

¹⁵ 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 2 Peter 1:10; Ephesians 1:6; Romans 11:33; Romans 11:5, 6, 20; Luke 10:20.

¹⁶ Isaiah 45:5-7 5 "I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these. [LBC Section 5].

¹⁷ Isaiah 46:9-11 9 "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

¹⁸ James 1:13-14; Psalm 5:4 For Thou art not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with Thee.

¹⁹ Proverbs 16:4-5 4 The Lord has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom. 5 Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished. [Men are free agents in that they are responsible for their own actions and yet God made the wicked for the day of doom (see also 1 Peter 2:8). What Scripture maintains is that God remains holy and sovereign in all

evil is entirely sovereign and holy and He is immanent with respect to His every work in creation.²⁰

Section 4: God's Angels, Elect and Fallen

In His wisdom, God created a host of angels to be His messengers, servants and representatives of His glory.²¹ As created beings, being of higher order than that of man,²² they are not to be worshipped, but were made to be worshippers of God.²³ Through Satan's rebellion²⁴ there fell with him numerous angels²⁵ that are now his servants in the matter of wickedness and evil scheming against the plan of God. Satan is the opponent of the Trinitarian God²⁶ and he is the very enemy of mankind.²⁷ Though he is the prince of this fallen world he is a limited creature, having no self-authority²⁸ and he is, along with his demonic cohorts, used of God for the manifestation of God's ultimate good in all things.²⁹ Satan and his fallen angels will face their final doom in the Lake of Fire.³⁰ Those angels who remain in the presence of God do so immutably by God's sovereign election and sustaining grace, and will remain as His servants, reflecting His glory,³¹ adoring His wisdom³² and worshipping Him in holiness, forevermore.³³

Section 5: God's General Revelation

In the beginning it pleased God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, to the praise of His glory and for His own good pleasure, to reveal a portion of His power and wisdom in the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, the seas and the springs of waters in order that His worthiness to be feared, glorified and worshiped would be made known to His creatures for all eternity.³⁴ It was by the Father's will that all things be created through the Son³⁵ and with the

His actions, while at the same time the existence and governance of evil remains in His hand. The LBC employs the language of first and secondary causes of all events in order to differentiate between God's direct and indirect workings. God is free to use His creation as a means to the end of the accomplishment of His will: "Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently."].

²⁰ Ecc. 3:1-8, Job 38-41.

²¹ Rev. 22:8,

²² Ps. 8:5-6, Heb. 2:7.

²³ Luke 2:9 14; Hebrews 1:6 7, 14; 2:6 7; Revelation 5:11 14; 19:10; 22:9

²⁴ Satan [H. *Satan* - one who withstands, opposes or accuses; G. *diabolos* - Devil, slanderer]. Isaiah 14:12 17; Ezekiel 28:11 19.

²⁵ Matthew 25:41; Revelation 12:1 14.

²⁶ Isaiah 14:13 14; Matthew 4:1 11; Revelation 12:9 10.

²⁷ Gen. 3:15a.

²⁸ John 12:31.

²⁹ Is. 45:7, Job 1:6-12, 1 Kings 22:18-23, Judges 9:22-25, 1 Sam. 16:14-23, 18:10, 19:9, 2 Thess. 2:7-12, Rev. 2:8-11.

³⁰ Isaiah 14:12 17; Ezekiel 28:11 19; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10.

³¹ Is. 6:1-4.

³² 1 Peter 1:12.

³³ Heb. 12:22-23, Rev. 5:11-14.

³⁴ Rev. 4:8-11 [LBC Section 4].

³⁵ The eternal Son is also referred to as the first born since He is the recipient of power, authority and pre-eminence over creation (Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:6) to include the redeemed (Rom. 8:29) and the reprobate (Psalm 2:7-9). As the eternal Son and heir He sits at the right hand of the Father, the very position of power, authority and pre-eminence (Eph. 1:20-21).

abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.³⁶ Apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.³⁷ As the Creator and sole proprietor of the Universe, God has singular authority and rule over all things.³⁸ God accomplished His will of Creation by means of His own powerful Word and by correlation, the Heavens perpetually preach and proclaim the praiseworthiness of its Creator.³⁹ This work of creation was accomplished in the span of six literal days and at the end of this creative event, God declared that it was all very good.⁴⁰ The pinnacle of His creation came in the forming and fashioning of the first man (Adam) and the first woman (named Eve after the fall) when God made them in His own image and likeness. By imparting His life and His own image and likeness, God gave to the first man and woman immortality, righteousness and holiness. God therefore creatively revealed His glory to the first man and woman by two means: 1. Through the special revelation of His Word whereby Adam was instructed regarding the use and preservation of the garden; and 2. Through the general revelation of creation itself. This general revelation of Creation revealed the glory of God in two ways:

5.1. The Internal Witness of General Revelation: Adam and his wife were created in such a manner that they bore *within themselves*, through the imparted image of God, a knowledge of God. Therefore, that which was known about God was evident *within them*; for God made it evident to them, and their fall in sin in no way eradicated this internal witness given by God.⁴¹

5.2. The External Witness of General Revelation: God disclosed a general revelation of Himself through the observable Universe, therefore, His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature were made clearly evident through all that He made.⁴² Therefore the first couple possessed a sufficient knowledge of God through all that He revealed.⁴³ Having the witness of God's glory through His special revelation, having the internal witness of His image and likeness within them and the external witness of all that He made, and being kept and sustained by God's grace, they worshipped and served God in innocence and purity. They lived and walked in the law of God contingent upon God's decree and His sustaining grace. As mere creatures, whose holiness was derived by God alone, they were not independently secure, for they would fall, as would any man or angel, into sin apart from God's gracious suspension.⁴⁴

³⁶ Genesis 1:1-2, Colossians 1:13-20.

³⁷ John 1:3.

³⁸ Rev. 14:6-7.

³⁹ Psalm 33:6, Psalm 19:1-6.

⁴⁰ Genesis 1:31.

⁴¹ Romans 1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

⁴² Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

⁴³ Romans 1:19-20.

⁴⁴ John 1:2, 3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13; Romans 1:20; Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Genesis 1:26; Romans 2:14, 15; Genesis 3:6; Genesis 2:17; Genesis 1:26, 28.

Section 6: God's Special Revelation

God is the author⁴⁵ of all things and He is the source of all truth, since He is Truth.⁴⁶ In His special revelation, God Has disclosed great truths respecting Himself, His plan and work of redemption, His kingdom, His judgments, His mercies and He has withheld mysteries from men and angels that are not for them to possess.⁴⁷ But what God has revealed, He has disclosed through His prophets, in many portions and in many ways, and He has consummately disclosed Himself through His Son.⁴⁸ By God's providence, the corpus of Holy Scripture has been preserved throughout the generations and has been recognized by true believers as being wrought by God.⁴⁹

6.1. The Recognition of God's Word: That which God has revealed in His written Word, which has been progressively given to Adam and to his descendants that all might obey Him, is now finally contained in the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament.

6.1.a. Of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

6.1.b. Of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, To Titus, To Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, Epistle of James, The first and second Epistles of Peter, The first, second, and third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation.

6.2. The Means of Recognizing God's Word: The very authority of God's revealed Word bears no difference to His personal authority or to the authority of His eternal decree. God Himself, His secret counsels and His revealed Word contained in the above 66 books are all by unity of authority, self authenticating⁵⁰ therefore there is no council on earth, no church and no single human agency that can impute or remove the substance of authenticity respecting the Holy books of the Bible. The aforementioned canon of Scripture is therefore not authenticated by anyone but by God Himself. Only the children of God, throughout the generations, have truly recognized God's self authenticating Word and this has always been accomplished through the inward work of the Holy Spirit as He bears witness to that Word, in their hearts.⁵¹ These 66 books of the Bible were written

⁴⁵ Author - (L. *auctor*) - denoting progenitorship and authority. As the author of all things, God has all authority [LBC Section 1].

⁴⁶ Rev. 3:14 [Christ is the *Amen* - by identity, He is truth]: John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me (ASV).

⁴⁷ Deut. 29:29, 1 Peter 1:12.

⁴⁸ Hebrews 1:1-2.

⁴⁹ 1 Cor. 1:18; 1 Thess. 1:5.

⁵⁰ "The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, *because it is the Word of God.*" [LBC 1:4, Italics mine].

⁵¹ Psalm 119:34, 73, 130; Eph. 1:17.

not by mere men but holy men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.⁵² Therefore the authority of Holy Writ comes not from men, but from God who spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.⁵³ As God is the author of Scripture, it should be noted that its exegesis is not a matter of one's own interpretation.⁵⁴

6.3. The Perfection of God's Word: The Bible is the plenary Word of God, verbally inspired in each word, inerrant in the original documents, God breathed and utterly infallible.⁵⁵

6.4. The Perspicuity of God's Word: God's Word, although varying in the degree of its perceived clarity at times,⁵⁶ is overall perspicuous, such that it is an understandable and communicable revelation.⁵⁷ Because the interpretation of Scripture belongs to God,⁵⁸ texts of lesser clarity should be interpreted in light of those Scriptures possessing greater clarity.

6.5. The Eternal use of God's Word: Even into glory, the redeemed will use God's own Word to praise and extol His name forever.⁵⁹

Section 7: Mankind's Fall – His Nature and Punishment

Though the first man and his wife were surrounded with the splendor of God's glory through His sufficient revelation, both special and general, they fell in violation of God's commandment. Adam was entrusted with the stewardship of the law⁶⁰ that prohibited them from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They sinned by violating the witness of their internal conscience and the external witness of God's law. Their fall into sin served the greater purpose of the Father, who in His infinite wisdom, determined that His Son would be glorified through His death, burial and resurrection.⁶¹ Thus, God gave the first couple over to their own devices and wisdom to fall into sin through their own creaturely weakness. Satan the tempter first deceived Adam's wife through a distortion of God's commandment⁶² and Adam, without deception,⁶³ disobeyed God as he willfully transgressed the law of God by eating the forbidden fruit.⁶⁴ Our first parents, by Adam's sin,⁶⁵ fell from their original righteousness and communion with God. In Adam, the whole human race sinned and reaped the identical nature and curse of the

⁵²2 Peter 1:21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)

⁵³Hebrews 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, (NKJV)

⁵⁴2 Peter 1:20.

⁵⁵Psalm 119:96, 160.

⁵⁶1 Peter 3:15-16.

⁵⁷Deut. 29:29.

⁵⁸Gen. 40:8.

⁵⁹Rev. 15:3-5 (Jer. 10:7, Is. 66:23)..

⁶⁰Gen. 2:15-17, Genesis 3:17 1 Tim. 2:12-13 [LBC Section 6].

⁶¹1 Peter 1:20-21.

⁶²Genesis 3:1-5.

⁶³1 Timothy 2:14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression.

⁶⁴Genesis 3:6.

⁶⁵Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

first parents.⁶⁶ Adam's nature and guilt was transferred to all his descendents as their federal and seminal head,⁶⁷ thus, all of the descendents of Adam fall short of God's glory⁶⁸ and they are incapable of any good.⁶⁹ All of mankind has therefore travailed in darkness and sin in a world that groans in anticipation for God's final redemption.⁷⁰ God's special and general revelation, once regarded as precious to the first couple, is now regarded as mere foolishness to all their descendants,⁷¹ who suppress God's revelation in unrighteousness.⁷² Mankind is still an image bearer of God, but now his conscience condemns him as does God's Word and the whole of creation. In man's continued rebellion against God, the Lord has further given mankind over to his own vices and idolatry.⁷³ In Adam's sin, the whole race fell into cobeligerence with Satan⁷⁴ and has throughout history lived in accord with his evil schemes. Man's intrinsic value before God is therefore negative⁷⁵ making him an enemy of God⁷⁶ and worthy only of God's wrath, eternal punishment and torture,⁷⁷ just as Lucifer deserves.⁷⁸ There is nothing in Adam's fallen descendants with which God can be pleased or which God can accept.⁷⁹ Man is, therefore, completely dependent upon God's grace for salvation.

Section 8: Mankind's Will

As the bearers of God's own image and likeness, Adam and his descendants were endowed with intellect, volition and a will. Scriptural language testifies to the fact that the will of any being is derived from it's own nature, desire and determination⁸⁰ and this is well illustrated in the very nature and will of God. God, who is perfectly free, accomplishes all things consistent with His own desire, determination and unified nature.⁸¹ What He freely wills, He freely accomplishes in perfect holiness. In a similar manner, the will of man is derived from his own desire, determination and nature,⁸² however as a finite, corrupted and sinful agent, man's will is limited to his own slavery in sin. Being in bondage to sin, man's will is only as free as he is free and

⁶⁶ Romans 5:12.

⁶⁷ Romans 5, Hebrews 7:8-9.

⁶⁸ Romans 3:23.

⁶⁹ In Romans 3:9-18 the Apostle Paul clearly teaches: "There is none who does good." No one could accomplish any good that would ever be considered meritorious or acceptable in the sight of the holy God.

⁷⁰ Romans 8:22.

⁷¹ 1 Corinthians 1:18.

⁷² Romans 1:18.

⁷³ Romans 1:18-25.

⁷⁴ John 8:44.

⁷⁵ Ephesians 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were *by nature children of wrath*, even as the rest. [Bold & italics mine. See also 2 Peter 2:14, Romans 6:23, Rom. 5:8-9].

⁷⁶ Romans 5:10.

⁷⁷ Revelation 20:11-15.

⁷⁸ Revelation 20:10.

⁷⁹ Isa. 64:6, Rom. 3:10-18.

⁸⁰ In Hebrew (*Avah*), and in Greek (*boulomai, thelo*) we see that the very source of one's will is determined his own passion, desire and intent. This fundamental question of the nature of the will is key in that the concept of freedom or bondage is determined by the nature of the one considered. God acts freely with respect to His own nature and in light of His omnipotence and sovereignty. He is therefore absolutely free in a way that is consistent with His holy nature and will [LBC Section 9].

⁸¹ Isaiah 46:10 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' God's will is free in that He immutably accomplishes all that He wills, however God cannot commit sin and He is incapable of lying. His freedom of will is therefore only consistent with His own nature.

⁸² Gen. 6:5 "...every intent of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually."

therefore in his creaturely limitations and sin, man can only accomplish a portion⁸³ of his evil desires and determinations, which he devises perpetually.⁸⁴ Therefore, man is only free with respect to his bondage to sin,⁸⁵ and with this, he has full culpability for his condition⁸⁶ and choices.⁸⁷ As a slave of sin, he is not drawn to holiness and righteousness and therefore his only spectrum of freedom resides within the domain of darkness.⁸⁸ It is only the saint, the bond-slave of righteousness, who is tethered to holiness being therefore free to walk in newness of life.⁸⁹ This newness of life comes when the sinner is translated into a state of grace by means of the Holy Spirit and the eternal Gospel of God.

Section 9: The Eternal Gospel⁹⁰

God's purpose of self-glorification, through His creation, continued by means of Adam's fall. Before sin entered the world God was worshipped by the first couple through their obedience to His revealed will while in a state of creaturely innocence.⁹¹ Their only special revelation was a lawful revelation, for they, in their state of grace, were able to serve God by means of the law. After their fall, the worship of God then became no longer predicated upon the observance of the law, but upon God's gracious promise of the Redeemer.⁹² The Gospel of God is therefore a gracious doctrine that has been disclosed throughout the span of revelatory history and which focuses, objectively, on the promised Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and subjectively, on man's need to repent of his sins and believe in that Redeemer.⁹³ The Eternal Gospel was first preached to Adam and Eve concerning the promised seed, Jesus Christ, who would crush the head of Satan.⁹⁴ Noah received the Gospel of mercy⁹⁵ when he shed the blood of a sacrifice, having been delivered through the deluge, which is a type for spiritual redemption.⁹⁶ Abraham received the Gospel concerning the promised seed, Jesus Christ,⁹⁷ and rejoiced greatly in seeing the Lamb of God through His promises.⁹⁸ Moses received the Gospel⁹⁹ through God's deliverance of the nation of

⁸³ Whereas God does accomplish all His good pleasure through His omnipotence, man can only accomplish a portion of all his evil desires. What man desires to do will always be greater than what he will actually do.

⁸⁴ Psalm 14, Jer. 17:9, Gen. 6:5; 8:21, Prov. 6:18, Matt. 15:19.

⁸⁵ John 8:34, Romans 6:6, 16-17.

⁸⁶ Romans 5:12.

⁸⁷ James 1:15-17.

⁸⁸ Eph. 2:1-3, Col. 1:13.

⁸⁹ Romans 6:4.

⁹⁰ Revelation 14:6-7 6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an *eternal gospel* to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people;7 and he said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters." [Bold & italics mine. See also LBC Section 20].

⁹¹ Genesis 2:15-17. See also LBC Section 19:1. God gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and endued him with power and ability to keep it.

⁹² Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

⁹³ Psalm 2:11-12

⁹⁴ Genesis 3:15, Romans 16:20.

⁹⁵ Genesis 8:20-9:17.

⁹⁶ 1 Peter 3:18-22.

⁹⁷ Galatians 3:8-18.

⁹⁸ John 8:56, Hebrews 11:13, Genesis 22:8.

Israel by means of the applied blood of the Passover sacrifice.¹⁰⁰ King David received the Good News concerning the Reigning Redeemer¹⁰¹ whose throne would be established forever and on whose shoulder God's government would rest.¹⁰² John the Baptist, the Apostles and Prophets of the early church preached the same Gospel proclaimed by the incarnate Lord during His earthly ministry: That mankind is to repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.¹⁰³ By this history of God's eternal Gospel we see that man's fall in sin was an instrumental means to the end that God would be glorified through the glorious Redeemer, whose obedience to the Father¹⁰⁴ led to His death on the cross.¹⁰⁵ By Christ's sacrifice the Father has given the authority of the judgment of the entire world to His Son¹⁰⁶ and has secured the final redemption of His elect throughout the nations.¹⁰⁷ The Good News of God is that He continues to declare to men that all everywhere should repent¹⁰⁸ and engage in the privilege of worshipping Him¹⁰⁹ through true faith in the Savior who died as a vicarious sacrifice for sinners, and was raised on the third day having ascended to the right hand of the Father where He reigns forevermore.¹¹⁰ God's Gospel is therefore called eternal, for He established it in His eternal decree of self-glorification through the decree of the cross,¹¹¹ and He has faithfully proclaimed it for His own glorious purposes¹¹² of redemption and judgment.¹¹³

Section 10: The Object of the Eternal Gospel – Jesus Christ

It pleased the heavenly Father to ordain the eternal Son to become the appointed Messiah who would die for the sins of His people.¹¹⁴ When the fullness of time came, the eternal Logos became flesh and dwelt in the earth, taking upon Himself the full nature of a man, while remaining the immutable and sinless second person of the Holy Trinity. Christ was miraculously conceived by the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the virgin Mary,¹¹⁵ the Holy Spirit having come down upon her and the power of the Most High overshadowing her; and so the incarnate Son of God was made of a woman of the tribe of Judah, of the line of Abraham and David according to the Scriptures.¹¹⁶ In His incarnation Jesus Christ subsisted in two whole, perfect and distinct natures: Very God and very man. These two natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion as one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.¹¹⁷ The works of the glorious Son have been clearly disclosed throughout the

⁹⁹ Deuteronomy 18:17-18.

¹⁰⁰ Exodus 12.

¹⁰¹ 2 Samuel 7:13-14a, Hebrews 1:5.

¹⁰² Isaiah 9:6-7, Acts 2:30.

¹⁰³ Matthew 3:2, 4:17, Acts 14, 17.

¹⁰⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, John 8:54, 17:1.

¹⁰⁵ Philippians 2:5-9.

¹⁰⁶ Psalm 2, Philippians 2:10-11, Ephesians 1:18-23, 1 Corinthians 15:25-28, John 5:25-29.

¹⁰⁷ John 7:36-39, John 10:11, Revelation 5:9-10.

¹⁰⁸ Acts 17:30.

¹⁰⁹ Revelation 14:6-7.

¹¹⁰ Romans 10:9.

¹¹¹ 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the beast], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. NKJV

¹¹² Acts 2:22-36, 1 Corinthians 15:28 And when all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. NASB

¹¹³ John 12:37-41.

¹¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:19-20 [LBC Section 8].

¹¹⁵ Matt. 1:18-25.

¹¹⁶ Luke 1:27, 2:1-14.

¹¹⁷ Some of the language here is derived from the LBC 8:2.

corpus of Holy Writ and are clearly seen in His archetypical offices of Prophet, Priest, King and Apostle. These offices describe the perfect work of the Savior as He proclaims truth, intercedes for His people, governs the universe and bears absolute leadership over the church, respectively:

10.1. Prophet: As our great Prophet, according to the promise of Scripture, He is the consummate source of the Father's self revelation¹¹⁸ and we must therefore listen to Him.¹¹⁹ Our great Prophet is the very Author of our faith and the supreme manifestation of the Father's own glory.¹²⁰

10.2. Priest: As our High Priest Christ laid down His life for the sheep of His own possession,¹²¹ whom the Father gave to Him from before the foundation of the world,¹²² and no one can snatch those sheep out of the hand of the eternal Son, nor from the Father.¹²³ He intercedes for His people¹²⁴ having shed, not the blood of bulls and goats, but His own blood.¹²⁵ This sacrifice He offered once for sins, for all time, and is not repeated by any means, whether by the Son Himself or by any ceremony devised by the art and thought of man.¹²⁶

10.3. King: As King He rules supremely over all creation and will return to judge the living and the dead as the ruler of every man and nation.¹²⁷ As the King of kings and Lord of lords He is the worthy recipient of adoration and homage from all creation.¹²⁸

10.4. Apostle: As our Apostle¹²⁹ He was sent by the Father into the world¹³⁰ in order to fulfill His ministry which was completed through His death, burial and resurrection. He is the supreme source, head¹³¹ and cornerstone¹³² of the church and He alone is its builder.¹³³

Section 11: The Call of the Eternal Gospel

¹¹⁸ John 1:1-14.

¹¹⁹ Deut. 18:15, Luke 9:35.

¹²⁰ Heb. 12:1-2, John 1:14-18.

¹²¹ Christ's death was brought forth so that those who "...have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:15.

¹²² John 17:1-2.

¹²³ John 10:11, 16, 27-30.

¹²⁴ Heb. 7:25, John 17:9.

¹²⁵ Hebrews 9:12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

¹²⁶ Acts 17:29.

¹²⁷ Psalm 82:8,

¹²⁸ Phil. 2:9-11.

¹²⁹ Hebrews 3:1

¹³⁰ John 17:23.

¹³¹ Eph. 1:18-23.

¹³² Eph. 2:15-22.

¹³³ Matt. 16:18.

The eternal Gospel is spread and used by God in order to accomplish its twofold purpose: The salvation of God's people and the judgment of those who remain at enmity with Him.¹³⁴ It is considered in its external and effectual aspects, as follows:¹³⁵

11.1. The External Call of the Eternal Gospel: The external call refers to the general and universal proclamation of the gospel message. "How shall men come to faith unless they hear the Gospel?" the Apostle Paul queried: This important question clearly leads us to the truth of Scripture which testifies that believers are brought forth by the word of truth¹³⁶ which is the power of God unto salvation.¹³⁷ God's people throughout the generations have been privileged with the responsibility to proclaim God's word to all nations. As God exercises His patience by staying the return of Christ, the church is to remain faithful in the matter of sending out God's Gospel call to all men without distinction. As the Gospel goes forth, God's glory is established by the judgment of the enemies of the cross¹³⁸ and the redemption of His beloved sheep,¹³⁹ for His Word never returns void.¹⁴⁰ This gospel call is characteristically both an invitation and a command. It is an invitation because God's offer is gracious and merciful.¹⁴¹ It is a command because all men owe homage to the Son.¹⁴² Throughout the generations, God has called His people to actively proclaim His Word throughout the world: "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other." Isaiah 45:22. God's eternal Gospel has been proclaimed throughout the ages to men of various tribes, tongues and nations that all should turn to God in faith, believing in His Messiah.¹⁴³

11.2. The Effectual Call of the Eternal Gospel: Effectual calling refers to God's work of regeneration as the Gospel is savingly applied by means of the quickening work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴⁴ When God regenerates¹⁴⁵ and draws His sheep, He does so with the living and active Word of God such that the sinner is drawn towards truth and that truth is made evident by means of the internal workings of God the Holy Spirit. Many are called with the external call, however few are chosen to be effectually saved by that call.¹⁴⁶ It is God alone who generates new life within the sinner, renewing the mind, the will, the

¹³⁴ John 12:37-43, Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

¹³⁵ LBC Section 10.

¹³⁶ James 1:18.

¹³⁷ Rom. 1:16.

¹³⁸ John 12:36-41.

¹³⁹ John 10:16, 2 Peter 3:1-9.

¹⁴⁰ Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

¹⁴¹ Matt. 11:28.

¹⁴² Ps. 2:12, Acts 16:31, 1 John 3:23 And this is His **commandment**, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us [Bold, mine].

¹⁴³ Jonah 3:1-10.

¹⁴⁴ Romans 8:30 [LBC 10:2].

¹⁴⁵ John 3:3 - The principle of being regenerated (born again/from above) is clearly seen in Scripture as the principle necessity for one's salvation. The spiritually dead man cannot make himself alive (1 Peter 1:3) and thus he is dependent upon God alone for regeneration. Death can only beget death, but life is only imparted from the living God (John 1:4; 5:21; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...).

¹⁴⁶ Matt. 22:14.

appetites, the desires and motives,¹⁴⁷ and therefore it is God alone who causes the sheep to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd.¹⁴⁸ God's effectual call cannot ever be substituted by external religion, good works, ecclesiastical duty, physical baptism, good intentions, benevolent servitude or any superficial confession of faith. The spiritually dead man needs the new life that can only come from the living God who sovereignly saves His children by means of His living Word.¹⁴⁹

Section 12: Salvation

The general concept of salvation, both in the OT and NT, speaks of the rescue or deliverance of one who is in distress, whether physically or spiritually. It is this spiritual aspect of the word salvation that is the focus of redemptive history and it is the very subject of this section. God's work of salvation in the life of a sinner is established by regeneration,¹⁵⁰ conversion, justification and adoption.¹⁵¹

12.1. Regeneration: It is while the spiritually dead sinner travails in his trespasses and sins¹⁵² that God, by the Holy Spirit, invisibly and miraculously imparts new life through the implantation of His immutable, regenerative seed.¹⁵³ Apart from this new life principle, the sinner cannot of His own ability, strength, wisdom, knowledge, discernment, or of any other human means come to Christ.¹⁵⁴ It is this invisible work of God that is visibly manifested as *conversion*.

12.2. Conversion:¹⁵⁵ The Biblical vocabulary relative to the concept of conversion includes such words as: repentance, faith, persuasion and trust. 1. Repentance:¹⁵⁶ The sinner who is moved to hear the Gospel repents and turns from his former convictions of life in order to serve and worship the Creator. Therefore, repentance speaks of the negative aspect of the sinner's turning in that it emphasizes what the sinner must reject

¹⁴⁷ 2 Cor. 5:17.

¹⁴⁸ John 10:3-5, 27-28.

¹⁴⁹ Heb. 4:12-13.

¹⁵⁰ 1 John 3:9, 2:29, 4:7, 5:4, 3 John 11, 1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (ASV).

¹⁵¹ While there are many terms that are used to speak of the event of salvation, regeneration, conversion, justification and adoption will be discussed here for the sake of simplicity [LBC Sections 11, 14 & 15].

¹⁵² In Eph. 2:1-5 Paul makes a very clear, temporal statement indicating that the sinner was *regenerated with new life* (*sunezoopoiesen* - made alive together, v. 5) at the very time/moment in which he was (lit. *being*) dead in his trespasses and sins. Regeneration is not some miraculous response to what man does, rather it is a sovereign act of God whereby He imparts the new life principle to those who are His by His choosing from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-6, Acts 13:48). It is this new life wrought in the descendant of Adam that brings him to truth (John 3:3, John 6:44, 65), faith (Phil. 1:29, Eph. 2:8-10, 1 John 5:1), repentance (2 Tim. 2:25, Acts 11:18; 5:31), righteousness (1 John 2:29) and the love of God (1 John 4:7, 19),

¹⁵³ 1 John 3:9. John is emphasizing the realities of the new nature of the believer denoting that they are no longer able to sin as they did before they received new life.

¹⁵⁴ John 6:44, 65: 44 "***No one can come*** to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 65 And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that ***no one can come to Me***, unless it has been granted him from the Father." (Bold, italics mine).

¹⁵⁵ Conversion in the Bible speaks of the general matter of the sinner turning to God in faith and repentance with conviction, persuasion and trust (Ps. 51:13, Matt. 18:3, John 12:40).

¹⁵⁶ Repentance (*metanoia*) denotes a change of conviction within the heart and mind of man such that he intellectually, emotionally and volitionally turns from his idolatry to serve the living God; Rom. 3:20, Ps. 51:2, 10, 14; Acts 2:38; Rom. 2:4.

epistemologically.¹⁵⁷ Repentance is itself a gift of God, wrought by means of sovereign grace.¹⁵⁸ 2. Faith:¹⁵⁹ The sinner who is moved to hear the Gospel, repents as he is led to objective faith in Christ. Therefore, faith speaks of the positive aspect of the sinner's turning in that it emphasizes what he must accept epistemologically. Saving faith is that which is based upon conviction rather than mere intellectual assent, something that even the demons have,¹⁶⁰ and true faith is a gift of God's sovereign grace as well.¹⁶¹ 3. Persuasion and Trust: Taken together, these words in the English represent the frequently used Greek word *peitho*, which speaks of internal persuasion, conviction and resulting obedience. Used as a synonym of faith,¹⁶² persuasion and trust are to be seen as components of genuine, saving faith in that they emphasize the believer's resolve to live out and act upon such faith.¹⁶³ Together, these words complete the picture of true conversion: A turning from evil unbelief to objective faith in Jesus Christ with genuine trust, conviction and obedience. Unconverted sinners can have temporal, intellectual faith, but this faith is devoid of true conversion and conviction and is therefore non-salvific.¹⁶⁴

12.3. Justification:¹⁶⁵ The first principle of justification centers on the priority of God's glory, for it is He who manifests His glorious grace and demonstrates His righteousness such that His wisdom and perfection may be clearly displayed.¹⁶⁶ As a means to this greater end of God's demonstrated righteousness, God justifies sinners such that He remains just while the sinner receives the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁷ This miracle, which stands at the heart of salvation, is the very basis of the believer's right standing before God almighty. The demands of the law of God require perfect righteousness and it is Christ alone who fulfilled the law infallibly and with entire holiness.¹⁶⁸ The believer has a right standing before God because he has the

¹⁵⁷ Acts 14:15 "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them."

¹⁵⁸ Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Timothy 2:25 "...correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth..."

¹⁵⁹ Faith (*pistis*) speaks of the resolve of belief that is both intellectual and volitional. It is positive in nature in that it focuses on the object of faith: the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶⁰ James 2:14-26.

¹⁶¹ Ephesians 2:8-9, Phil. 1:29; Heb. 12:2 [Jesus is the author and perfecter of "the" faith. The article of previous mention is not in the NASB translation, which serves as a pointer, referring back to the faith wrought in the hearts of generations of believers throughout the generations in chapter 11].

¹⁶² Acts 18:4; 19:8; 28:23; Acts 28:24 And some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.

¹⁶³ As a negative illustration of this word, Paul calls the unbeliever "sons of disobedience" [*apeitheias*, disobedient] in Ephesians 2:2. The **unbeliever** manifests disobedience and the **believer** manifests obedience [Eph. 2:10].

¹⁶⁴ Matt. 7:21-23.

¹⁶⁵ Justification (*dikaio-o*) speaks of the event whereby the sinner is declared *righteous* by the merit of Christ's righteousness *alone* (Acts 13:39, Rom. 5:1, 9; 8:30-33; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal 2:16; 3:11).

¹⁶⁶ Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; 2:7, Rom. 3:25

¹⁶⁷ Romans 3:26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

¹⁶⁸ Romans 10:4, Heb. 4:15.

righteousness of Christ *imputed* to him by means of faith.¹⁶⁹ Imputation refers to the forensic (legal) declaration, made on behalf of the sinner, that the demands of the law have been perfectly satisfied in Christ, on his behalf. The sinner who believes in Christ becomes the righteousness of God in Christ by Christ's merit alone. This is not to be confused with the human invention of *infused* righteousness.¹⁷⁰ The believer's position is determined by Christ's righteousness *alone*, without any contribution made by the defiled and spiritually bankrupt sinner.¹⁷¹

12.4. Adoption: Having been justified by means of Christ's righteousness, the believer is lovingly brought into a filial relationship with God. The believer is no longer counted as a member of Satan's dominion,¹⁷² but is delivered from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of the Beloved Son.¹⁷³ The believer is forever redeemed and claimed as an adopted son,¹⁷⁴ having become a member of God's family by His loving and electing grace.¹⁷⁵

Section 13: The Sanctification and Perseverance of the Saints

Redemptive grace does not end with the sinner's initial conversion, rather it continues in the life of the redeemed in what is called sanctification¹⁷⁶ and perseverance.¹⁷⁷ While believers are justified, adopted, sealed in the Spirit and secured for eternal life perfectly, this does not mean however that they will live out their sanctification with perfection. Believers still struggle with sin and the weaknesses of the flesh, however, they cannot totally fall from their state of grace and security that is in Christ¹⁷⁸ because they are securely placed in the immutable hand of the Father and the Son and they shall therefore never perish.¹⁷⁹ When a believer lapses into sin he is never counted as a victim,¹⁸⁰ but he is accounted as personally responsible for his actions.¹⁸¹ The

¹⁶⁹ Romans 4; Esp. Romans 4:16 For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

¹⁷⁰ The Romish doctrine of infused righteousness denotes synergistic justification rather than monergistic justification. Biblical doctrine finds justifying righteousness as an entirely foreign substance, supplied by Christ alone, without the consideration of the sinner who is utterly bankrupt with respect to righteousness.

¹⁷¹ 2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

¹⁷² Eph. 2:1-3, John 8:44.

¹⁷³ Colossians 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

¹⁷⁴ Ephesians 1:5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

¹⁷⁵ Ephesians 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household,

¹⁷⁶ Sanctification (*G. hagiastos*) is used of both the believer's positional separation unto God, 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2; as well as the manner of life that corresponds to those so separated: 1Thess. 4:3, 4, 7; Rom. 6:19, 22; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14.

¹⁷⁷ Perseverance (*G. hupomeno*) speaks of the saint's "remaining under" the trials and difficulties of this present life in a state of sanctifying grace. Because of the great overlap of these concepts (sanctification and perseverance) they will be combined in this section [LBC 13, 16 & 17].

¹⁷⁸ John 10:29.

¹⁷⁹ John 3:16, John 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

¹⁸⁰ James 1:13-17 13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by *his own lust*. 15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is

believer, having been delivered from the domain of darkness¹⁸² and from the overwhelming¹⁸³ influences of Satan himself,¹⁸⁴ is no longer vulnerable to the slavery of sin and the realities of demonization, as he was before, since he is now the temple of the living God.¹⁸⁵ Believers may lapse into periods of sin, grieving the Holy Spirit for a time and bringing upon themselves the temporal judgment of God, but in this God restores them as a faithful Father who disciplines His children.¹⁸⁶ God, in His provision of grace unto perseverance, moves the believer to will and to work for His good pleasure¹⁸⁷ bringing renewal and the conviction of sin to him in such a manner that his character and conduct is obviously distinct from that of the children of the devil.¹⁸⁸ This faithful, persevering work of grace continues throughout the life of the believer and will be perfected ultimately in glory.¹⁸⁹

Section 14: Assurance of the Saints:

As the believer grows in his sanctification and perseverance, so too will his hope, confidence and assurance of salvation grow. The believer can pollute and diminish his hope by means of weak faith, the corruption of sin and the increase of doubt. But in his sanctification the believer obtains assurance of his salvation and destiny by the bases of the objective truths of the Gospel of Christ and the subjective experience of his new life, respectively:¹⁹⁰

14.1. The Objective Basis of Assurance: The objective basis of assurance, for the believer, is derived from Scripture and is therefore the only infallible source of confidence and hope. The believer can have assurance and confidence of his preservation because of the perfect promises of Scripture.¹⁹¹ As the heirs of the promises of God, believers have a hope that is an anchor to their soul because of God's unchanging

accomplished, it brings forth death.¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.¹⁷ Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow. [Bold, italics mine].

¹⁸¹ Ezek. 18:20. Personal culpability for sin is true for the believer and the unbeliever.

¹⁸² Colossians 1:13 For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. [The word delivered > *errusato* > *rhuo* denotes more than a mere delivery of something. In its primitive form it speaks of the establishment of a protective boundary that is established around the perimeter of a piece of property. The key point is this: The believer is *protectively delivered* as His personal possession into the kingdom of His beloved Son. The children of God cannot be trifled with by the Satanic realm, as before.

¹⁸³ Rom. 6:6, Matt. 12:42-45 [demonization of the moral man], Ephesians 2:2 [trespasses and sins]...in which you formerly walked *according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.* (*anestraphamen* > formerly walked: Paul uses active and passive verbs to bring out the full extent of our co-belligerence with Satan. See also Acts 5:1-11; 8:18-24, Matt. 16:21-23).

¹⁸⁴ Eph. 2:1-5; 1 Cor. 6:9-11.

¹⁸⁵ Eph. 5:8, 1 Cor. 6:17-20; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:16. In 1 Cor. 6:17 the Apostle Paul uses marriage as a comparison to the realities of the believer's new life. God's Spirit is joined inseparably [*kollomenos* > *kollao* - lit. to glue or bind] with ours, therefore it is unthinkable to suggest that the believer's spirit and soul can be divided out and manipulated by demonic influences. Believers can be presented with temptations and even *externally* chastened by demons, or by Satan himself, but not demonized [see also Rev. 2:8-11].

¹⁸⁶ Heb. 12:4-11.

¹⁸⁷ Phil 2:13.

¹⁸⁸ 1 John 3:6-9.

¹⁸⁹ Philippians 1:6 For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

¹⁹⁰ LBC Section 18.

¹⁹¹ John 3:16.

purposes, His immutable nature and His absolute inability to lie.¹⁹² The objective grounds for the believer's assurance is as immutable as God Himself is immutable,¹⁹³ therefore, Scripture is the principal basis of assurance for the true believer.

14.2. The Subjective Basis of Assurance: The subjective basis of assurance in the life of a believer comes from his awareness of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit,¹⁹⁴ the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit,¹⁹⁵ the clear distinction of his character from that of the world,¹⁹⁶ the internal conviction of sin,¹⁹⁷ and the reality of his overall perseverance in grace.¹⁹⁸ This subjective grounds for the believer's assurance, fallibly evaluated and considered by human observation, can only provide a mutable basis for assurance and is therefore secondary in its importance, relative to the Word of God.

Section 15: The Church

The church was instituted by the will of God, for His good pleasure, satisfaction and glory.¹⁹⁹ The church is that institution which was created by Christ, who is its head and Chief Shepherd, through His established Apostles and it exists as a distinct institution from that of secular government and the nation of Israel.²⁰⁰ On the day of Pentecost, following the resurrection of Christ, the Holy Spirit was uniquely²⁰¹ poured out upon the Apostles and upon some three thousand souls for the establishment of Christ's church on the earth. With this event came the formulation of the visible and the invisible (universal) church. Both concepts of the church are presented in Scripture as follows: 1. The invisible church is comprised of all true believers throughout the world²⁰² and 2. The visible church refers to the organized church that will contain both true and false believers.²⁰³ Christ promised that the pure fields of wheat (the true church) would be infested with pretenders (the tares),²⁰⁴ hence the visible church must never assume purity²⁰⁵ but she must always evaluate her individual members knowing that false sons may reside in her pale.²⁰⁶ God's promise to build His church has been realized through the work of the Spirit²⁰⁷ as He has empowered the saints of God to perform the work of the ministry based solely upon His revealed Word. This authoritative Word of His provides the only foundation for the

¹⁹² Hebrews 6:9-20.

¹⁹³ Malachi 3:6 "For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."

¹⁹⁴ Romans 8:15-16.

¹⁹⁵ Gal. 5:19-26

¹⁹⁶ 1 John 3:6-9.

¹⁹⁷ Psalm 51.

¹⁹⁸ Romans 8:25.

¹⁹⁹ Ephesians 5:6-10 [LBC Sections 22, 26 & 27].

²⁰⁰ Romans 13; 11.

²⁰¹ What is unique in the establishment of the early church is generally threefold: 1. God sovereignly gave the temporal sign gift of tongues principally as a witness to the generation of Jews (1 Cor. 14:21-22) who observed the establishment of the church among their own countrymen (Acts 2), the Samaritans (Acts 8:12-17) and the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48); 2. Unique oversight was given by Christ's Apostles in the establishment of the church through divinely inspired, inscripturated preaching (Acts 2:42, Jude 17); 3. Signs and wonders accompanied the generation of the Apostles as a temporary attestation to the Word and work of God (Mark 16:17-20).

²⁰² Eph 2:18-22.

²⁰³ Matt. 13, Jude, Rev. 2-3.

²⁰⁴ Matt. 13.

²⁰⁵ Matt. 18.

²⁰⁶ Jude 4, 2 Pet. 2, Acts 20:28-30.

²⁰⁷ Acts 1:8.

Church of God, hence any other foundation will only support a structure that faces the condemnation of God.²⁰⁸ The foundation of divine revelation has been given to the church for her stability and unity²⁰⁹ and she cannot be the pillar of truth in this world without it.²¹⁰ As the pillar and support of the truth of God, the church presides beneath the Word and not above it. The Word of God is that which calls men to faith and repentance²¹¹ and it is the Word of God which leads saved men to maturity and the sanctification of their souls.²¹² Holy Writ is that singular medium which Christ uses to wash and cleanse His bride²¹³ and it is through this prophetic Word²¹⁴ that the believer can obtain all that is needed for true life and godliness through the knowledge of His Son.²¹⁵ It is therefore the principal mission of the Church to communicate the Scriptures, to the people of God, and to the lost.²¹⁶ Through obedience to Christ's apostolic commission²¹⁷ the church continues to spread the message of Christ to all nations without distinction. The priority of the church is to live for the glory of God through its twofold mission: 1. The Edification of the saints and 2. The Evangelization of the lost:

15.1. The Edification of the Saints: Within this universal body of true believers there resides a positional unity that is utterly foreign to the world and this unity comes by the Spirit of God, grounded in the truth of God.²¹⁸ In order to preserve this unity in the church, she has been endowed with gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit of God²¹⁹ and these gifts are to be used for the edification of the church, for ministering to her local community and for spreading the Gospel message throughout the world. The giftedness of the church is described as follows:

15.1.a. The Source of the Gifts: The church has been endowed with the blessings and the gifts of Christ by means of His death, burial and resurrection.²²⁰ Nothing else can be helpful with respect to the sustaining of the church's unity

²⁰⁸Revelation 22:18-19 18 If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. (NKJV)

²⁰⁹Ephesians 2:19-22 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (NKJV)

²¹⁰1 Timothy 3:15 I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, *the pillar and ground of the truth.* (NKJV, italics mine).

²¹¹1 Cor. 14:24.

²¹²Tim. 3:16, 17.

²¹³Ephesians 5:26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, (NKJV)

²¹⁴2 Peter 1:16-21; 2 Peter 1:19 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.

²¹⁵2 Peter 1:3.

²¹⁶Acts 2:41-47. The early church set a good example regarding the priority of the ministry of the Word. The Word was preached to the saints *within* the church as a first priority. The Word was then lived and proclaimed in their surrounding community, resulting in further conversions. The church is to work from the inside out, not from the outside in.

²¹⁷Matt. 28:18-20

²¹⁸Eph. 2:13-22.

²¹⁹Rom. 12; Eph. 4:1-16.

²²⁰Eph. 4:7-11.

than that of the bounty of Jesus Christ who is the sole builder of the church.²²¹ Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ and His gifts the visible church and its servants are counted as nothing.²²²

15.1.b. The Purpose of the Gifts: The gifts given to the body are interdependent and yet distinguishable²²³ provisions that should be used for the purpose of the glory of God through the building up and strengthening of the church and the evangelization of the world. Each member of Christ's body is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good of the body,²²⁴ and not for the building up and exaltation of self.²²⁵

15.1.c. The Duration of the Gifts: The church, which is the household of God, is comprised of both the static and the dynamic elements of a fixed foundation and the growing temple of the Lord.²²⁶ The static foundation of truth was given once for all time by means of apostles, prophets and Christ Jesus as the cornerstone. The prophetic and apostolic ministries that have ceased still uphold their effectual authority through the completed canon of Holy Writ.²²⁷ The cessation of the apostolic office, by correlation, affirms the completion of the canon itself.²²⁸ The sign gifts associated with the unique establishment of the church have ceased in the post-apostolic period of the church,²²⁹ according to the plan of God²³⁰ and those gifts that continue, in like manner, are to be used for the maturation of the body of Christ, for the glory of God.

15.1.d. The Ongoing Manifestation of Gifts: Those that have been given to the church as evangelists and pastors/teachers serve Christ's body in the proclamation of the Word, both without and within, respectively. Through these gifted servants

²²¹ 1 Cor. 3:4-15.

²²² 1 Corinthians 3:7 So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth.; John 15:4-5 4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."

²²³ 1 Cor. 12:13-31.

²²⁴ 1 Cor. 12:7.

²²⁵ 1 Corinthians 14:12 So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

²²⁶ Eph. 2:19-22; Ephesians 2:20 having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone.

²²⁷ 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

²²⁸ Jude 3, 17; Revelation 22:18-19 18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book;19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

²²⁹ With the cessation of the Apostolic office came the cessation of the sign gifts associated with that office and function to include: 1. Signs of healing (Acts 4; 5:16; 8:7; 9:34; 10:38) and 2. Signs of judgment (Acts 5:1-12; 1 Cor. 14:21, Is. 28:11). 2 Corinthians 12:12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

²³⁰ In 1 Cor. 13:8 the Apostle Paul declares that prophecy and knowledge will *passively* come to an end in the future, whereas tongues will *cease* of themselves (*pausontai*, future middle indicative). God raises and sets aside His sovereign gifts according to His own will and good pleasure. *Tongues have ceased as a part of their overall function and purpose: To elevate and signify the completed canon of God's Word* (Hebrews 2:1-4).

the church is led in the path of the great commission of Christ in the matter of evangelism and discipleship. It is this leadership, under the ultimate headship of Christ our Chief Shepherd and Apostle,²³¹ that stirs the church towards holiness and maturity through the proclamation of the Word and it is this ministerial progeny of the church that must be entrusted to faithful men.²³² The manifestation of the gifts and fruit of the Spirit²³³ within the body of Christ serve to strengthen the familial relations of the church,²³⁴ offer encouragement and stimulate believers towards love and good deeds that are fitting for the people of God.²³⁵

15.1.e. The Officers of the Church: Christ's leadership of His church is to be mediated through the application of His Word by the teaching and prayers of the pastors/elders. The other important services of the church are to be tended to by qualified deacons. The offices of elders and deacons are summarized as follows:
1. The Elder/Pastor: The elder/pastor is a man who has been recognized within the local church as one who meets the Biblical character qualifications.²³⁶ The primary task of the elder is to be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the word whereby the ministry of the Word would include all opportunities in which God's Word is taught to any of God's people as well as to the lost. The sheep of God's fold are to be fed and nourished on the good Word of God so that they might grow in unity, maturity and increased capability of service.²³⁷ The church's overseers are to be absorbed with the responsibility of feeding the flock of God and proving to be godly examples among the members of the fold.²³⁸ Their priority of the Word must be upheld at all times, for without a strong adherence to Biblical truth, the local church will fall prey to worldly imports and it is understood that Scripture is that defining element which makes the church not of the world in the same way in which Christ is not of the world.²³⁹ The Scriptures alone must govern all of the duties of the church and therefore it's overseers must

²³¹1 Pet. 5:4, Heb. 3:1, respectively.

²³² 2 Timothy 2:2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

²³³ Gal 5:22-23.

²³⁴ Romans 12:10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

²³⁵ Heb. 10:23-25.

²³⁶Titus 1:5-9 ... appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (NASB), 1 Timothy 3:1-7 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, uncontentious, free from the love of money. 4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity 5 but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?; 6 and not a new convert, lest he become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. 7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (NASB)

²³⁷ Eph 4:11-16.

²³⁸1 Pet. 5:1-4.

²³⁹John 17:16.

be committed to the ministry of prayer and the Word in order to leave a clear pathway for the sheep of God to commune with their Good Shepherd.²⁴⁰ Men have always tried to run the church on their own merit and authority and has always led to ruin and judgment,²⁴¹ therefore it is the duty of the pastor, as he shepherds and tends the flock of God, to nurture the flock with God's Holy Writ and nothing else. The flock must therefore receive the direction of its overseers,²⁴² provided that their leadership is of Christ.²⁴³ **2. Deacons:** Deacons are to fulfill their Biblical requirements²⁴⁴ and provide the important services that the overseers/elders cannot attend to.²⁴⁵ They too establish a godly example of piety within the local assembly as they seek to remove any possible hindrances to the ministry of the elders.

15.1.f. The Familial Characteristics of the Church: The church bears a reflection of the family order. Older women are to *encourage*²⁴⁶ the younger women and older men are to set a good example for the younger men.²⁴⁷ Men are given the task of leading and teaching within the church and older women are called to encourage other women, but women are not to teach or to exercise authority over a man.²⁴⁸ Whatever forms of ministry there might be within the church, there must always be the presence of relationships that reflect the image of the family, which God created. As the family of God, believers are to grow in an un-hypocritical love for and familial devotion to one another.²⁴⁹

15.1.g. The Familial Priorities of the Home: As the elders are to eagerly bear the weighty responsibility of shepherding and tending the flock, so too must the microcosm of the family bear the responsibility of teaching and shepherding its individual members. The husband must bear the leadership of their homes in a manner that reflects Christ's own leadership of the Church,²⁵⁰ by carefully nurturing, loving and teaching his family. Parents are to raise their children up in

²⁴⁰ John 10:2-3 2 "But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out."

²⁴¹ Jude 4-11.

²⁴² Heb. 13:17.

²⁴³ 1 Cor. 11:1, Gal 1:8.

²⁴⁴ 1 Timothy 3:8-12 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. (NASB)

²⁴⁵ Acts 6:2-3.

²⁴⁶ In Titus 2:4 the *hina* clause sets the stage for the primary verb *sophronizosin* - "encourage." Paul is calling older women to be encouragers of younger women in the matters of domestic life and ministry (vs. 4-5). The importance of this ministry should not be underestimated so that the Word of God may not be *blasphemed* (G. *blasphemetai* > Blasphemy. The word "dishonored" is a weak choice for what is a very strong word given in this text, Titus 2:5).

²⁴⁷ Titus 2:1-8.

²⁴⁸ 1 Tim. 2:12

²⁴⁹ Rom. 12:10, Eph. 2:19, Galatians 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

²⁵⁰ Eph. 5:25-28. Men are called to lead as sacrificial servants in their homes and women are called to be recipients of leadership, in the home and in the church, receiving instruction with entire submissiveness.

the fear, admonishment and love of the Lord.²⁵¹ The parents, through the headship of the father, are the God-ordained sources of primary teaching, instruction and discipleship in their home.

15.1.h. The Assembly of the Saints and Worship: The word *worship* bears the verbal idea of ascribing worth to God who is the believer's sole object of love, service and adoration.²⁵² This is the pre-eminent task of the people of God, to serve and worship God in a manner that ascribes to Him glory and honor through His Word. The church is also to engage in the privilege of singing from the heart hymns, psalms and spiritual songs to her Lord.²⁵³ Since such songs bear theological content and doctrinal messages, such a ministry must be considered as an extension of the teaching ministry and therefore must be treated with great care, discernment and oversight.²⁵⁴

15.1.i. Ordinances, Restoration and Discipline: Corporate worship also includes the observance of the Lord's table, baptism and church discipline.²⁵⁵ All these elements constitute God's vehicle of disciple making and each of these acts of worship present the believer with the important consideration of the seriousness of his own salvation and communion with God, as well as his ecclesiastical and public testimonies.²⁵⁶ Church discipline has at its core the goal of the restoration of an errant brother²⁵⁷ whereby he is to be addressed by a one who is spiritual, in love and humility,²⁵⁸ so that he would be won over to a repentance that is without regret.²⁵⁹ If he remains unrepentant, then one or two more should assist in the process so that every matter may be confirmed on the basis of two or three witnesses.²⁶⁰ If the errant one still resists then the matter must be reported to the church as a third attempt at restoration.²⁶¹ If he still refuses this accountability, then he is to be treated as an outsider to the community of God's people, no longer enjoying the fellowship of the saints that he once enjoyed.²⁶² Those who genuinely turn in repentance are to be received with great joy²⁶³ and be enfolded with loving care²⁶⁴ for the full support of their

²⁵¹Deut. 6:1-13.

²⁵² The word *worship* comes from the old English word *weorthscipe* (*weorth* ~ worth and *scipe* ~ ship). The primitive idea of this English word is that of casting to God a declaration of His worth, value or glory.

²⁵³Eph. 4:19.

²⁵⁴ For a more extensive treatment of this important subject, please consult my *Philosophy of Worship*.

²⁵⁵1 Cor. 11, Rom. 6 and Matt. 18 respectively.

²⁵⁶ For a more complete discussion on the ordinances, please consult section 16.

²⁵⁷ Matt. 18:12-35.

²⁵⁸ Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

²⁵⁹ Matt. 18:15, 2 Cor. 7:10.

²⁶⁰ Matt. 18:16, Deut. 19:15-21, Lev. 19:15-18.

²⁶¹ Matt. 18:17a.

²⁶² Matthew 18:17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, **let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.**" 1 Cor. 5:7-13: 1 Corinthians 5:11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. See also: Titus 3:10-11, 2 John 10, Rom. 16:17-18.

²⁶³ Matt. 18:12-14.

²⁶⁴ 2 Cor. 2:1-11:

sanctification and restoration, and for the glory of God and the magnification of the Gospel.

15.2. The Evangelization of the Lost: Saints are called to worship God within the church, and as well, they are called to worship the Lord beyond the local assembly through their piety and the proclamation of the Gospel. The church is commissioned with the privilege and responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel to all men without distinction and this ministry of the church to the world comes from the very authority of Christ who commanded the disciples to *go* and *make* disciples of all the nations. We find in Scripture that *the primary discharge of the authority of Christ is in the building of His church: A building made by His hands through His people.* The disciples were to preach the gospel to all creation²⁶⁵ calling sinners to repentance for the forgiveness of their sins.²⁶⁶ When the church is committed to reaching the world around her with the gospel, she is truly committed to disciple making. The church must become conscious of the world around her and share the gospel with the lost.²⁶⁷ The church must have an interest in reaching her local community and the nations, knowing that the Lamb of God has purchased for God, with His blood, men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and that He has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.²⁶⁸ This final truth is one of the premier bases for the very praise that is given to the Lamb of God.²⁶⁹

Section 16: Ordinances of the Church

The ordinances²⁷⁰ given by our Lord, of which there are two, being baptism and communion, reflect heavily on the finished work of Christ through His death burial and resurrection. These ordinances are symbolic in nature, but they ultimately are grounded in a very real and spiritual dynamic in that they are acts of worship, wrought by God's grace. They do not convey grace as a result of their performance, but are evidences of God's grace as they are genuinely observed by the worshipper, through the leading of the Holy Spirit.

16.1. Baptism: Those who have genuinely repented of their sin and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ are commanded by the Lord²⁷¹ to be baptized²⁷² as a visible signification of their salvation. The believer signifies at least three things in this spiritual act of worship:

2 Corinthians 2:8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

²⁶⁵Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. (NASB)

²⁶⁶Luke 24:47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name *to all the nations*, beginning from Jerusalem. (NASB)

²⁶⁷2 Corinthians 5:11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.... (NKJV)

²⁶⁸ Rev. 5:9-10.

²⁶⁹ Revelation 5:11-14 11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."¹⁴ And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshipped.

²⁷⁰ Ordinances (L. *Ordinare* > ordain) are typically spoken of as those commands of the Lord which possess symbolical significance. There are many commands, but only some ordinances which bear a symbolic significance [LBC Section 28-30].

²⁷¹ Matt. 28:18-20.

16.1.a. The Grace of Salvation: In water baptism the believer conveys the historical reality of his death to sin in that the old self was crucified with Christ.²⁷³ What he was apart from Christ has passed away, new things have come²⁷⁴ and the nakedness of his wretched estate has now been covered by the righteousness of Christ.²⁷⁵ Having been born again, having received new life, having been sealed by the Holy Spirit the believer is forevermore forgiven of his sins.²⁷⁶

16.1.b. The Grace of Sanctification: Water baptism not only conveys the reality of the believer's salvation, but as well it communicates the indicative expectation of ongoing life that is experienced by all the redeemed.²⁷⁷ This important truth brings to the child of God the confession: "may it never be!" as an answer to the antinomian proposition: "let us continue in sin that grace might increase."²⁷⁸ As the baptized are raised out of the waters, they communicate the abiding reality of their new life in Christ.

16.1.c. The Grace of Final Glory: Baptism represents the believer's anticipation of eternity since his new life will be fully manifested in glory.²⁷⁹

16.2. Communion:

The Lord's supper was established by means of both type and reality, of shadow and substance.²⁸⁰

16.2.a. Of Type and Shadow: In the Old Testament we see many foreshadowings of Christ in the deliverance of the nation of Israel.²⁸¹ Before the final plague was poured out on the land of Egypt the Lord made provision for the deliverance of His people through a lamb that was to be slain. The blood of an unblemished lamb was to be applied to the door posts of the worshipper so that the curse of the plague would pass over him. They were not allowed to leave

²⁷² Baptism (G. *Baptizo*) denotes complete immersion into some medium or substance. Believers are not dipped into the body of Christ at conversion, rather they are completely immersed by means of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), and in their water baptism, they should do no less in order to accurately signify the work of Christ.

²⁷³ Rom. 6:1a.

²⁷⁴ 2 Cor. 5:17.

²⁷⁵ Galatians 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

²⁷⁶ Col. 2:11-14.

²⁷⁷ Romans 6:2 How shall we who *died* to sin *still live* in it? [Italics mine]. Paul uses an aorist indicative verb to denote the death experience. Believers have died as a historical, punctiliar fact. The walk of their new life is their very real (indicative) future, both in this life and in the life to come. Christ saves us from our sins, both positionally and practically.

²⁷⁸ Romans 6:1,2,12 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?... 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts. [The entire argument of Romans 6:1-11 serves the purpose of supporting the conclusion in verse 12. Paul's point in Romans 6 is not just the signification of the event of salvation, but the full process of salvation to include sanctification and final glorification].

²⁷⁹ Romans 6:8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

²⁸⁰ Colossians 2:17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

²⁸¹ 1 Cor. 10:1-13, John 6:35-38.

their households, but to remain inside in order to subsist on unleavened bread while remaining behind the protection afforded by the blood of the lamb. This ordinance of the Lord was inaugurated in order to direct the true worshippers of Israel to the substance of Christ whose blood would be shed in order to cover the sins of many, protecting them from the imminent wrath of God.

16.2.b. Of Reality and Substance: During His earthly ministry the Lord Jesus Christ, the true substance and very object of the Passover, obediently observed this memorial as an act of loving obedience to the Father. Through His death on the cross, Christ gave reality and substance to that which had been observed by the Jews by way of type and shadow for centuries. The Lord's supper was first instituted when Christ observed His final Passover memorial on earth, with His disciples²⁸² as described by Matthew in his Gospel: "And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'"

16.2.b.i. The Priority of the Lord's Table: The church is commissioned to regularly observe the Lord's table such that the event and the elements be set apart for observance by means of prayer and the presence of the assembly.²⁸³ The Lord's table is to be observed by true believers whose consciences have been adequately readied by means of proper contemplation, examination and confession of sin, for the glory of God and the avoidance of His judgment. Those who fail to approach the Lord's table in this manner become guilty of the body and blood of Christ.²⁸⁴

16.2.b.ii. The Nature of the Lord's Table: The representative elements of the body and blood of Christ (unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine) remain unchanged throughout the observance of communion. Those elements can only remain as they are, and should not be considered in any sense of superstition or myth such as transubstantiation.²⁸⁵ As the event of Communion is spiritual, so are the elements spiritually representative of the very body and blood of the Savior.

Section 17: Governing Authorities

²⁸² Matt. 26:20-30; Mark 14:17-21; Luke 22:17-20; John 13.

²⁸³ 1 Cor. 11:23-26.

²⁸⁴ 1 Cor. 11:26-33.

²⁸⁵ Transubstantiation denotes that historic Romish doctrine whereby the elements, blessed by the priest, become the very blood and body of Christ. This doctrine leads to the veneration of inanimate elements which is nothing less than idolatry.

God, who is the supreme Ruler, King and *Despotēn*²⁸⁶ has established the institution of human government as His providential ministry among the affairs of men for the establishment of civil order,²⁸⁷ the mediation of temporal judgment against other nations²⁸⁸ and men.²⁸⁹ The children of God are to pray for and submit to kings and their designated servants,²⁹⁰ as unto the Lord.²⁹¹ Only the future monarchical reign of King Jesus will bring absolute justice and moral perfection through the establishment of His government. Until then, governments ruled by the sons of Adam will be fraught with imperfection, immorality and wickedness, the consummate example of this being the future reign of the anti-Christ on the earth.²⁹² Within the broader scope of God's providential rule²⁹³ earthly governments will alternately engage in the judgment and protection of the wicked,²⁹⁴ as well as the judgment and protection of the righteous.²⁹⁵

Section 18: The State of Man after Death and the Last Things

Until God's eternal plan of redemption and judgment is finally consummated, it will remain for all men to die bodily, their corpses returning to the dust and their souls remaining in a conscious and intermediate state whereby they await the final resurrection and judgment.²⁹⁶ The souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence at death²⁹⁷ and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the body at His coming, when soul and body, reunited, shall be associated with Him forever.²⁹⁸ The Rapture of the Church will be followed by The Great Tribulation²⁹⁹ which will be climaxed by the Pre-millennial return to earth of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish His kingdom.³⁰⁰ Christ will reign upon the earth for 1000 literal years, whereby God's promises to Israel to restore them to the land which the Lord God had given to them will be fulfilled.³⁰¹ The souls of unbelievers remain, after death, in conscious misery³⁰² until the Final Judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the Millennium, when

²⁸⁶ Despot (G. *despoten*) denotes an absolute sovereign who rules by virtue of property rights. Though this term is normally used as a pejorative for human rulers, it is one of Christ's titles as the absolute owner and ruler of the universe: Jude 4, 2 Peter 2:1 [LBC Section 24].

²⁸⁷ 1 Peter 2:12-20.

²⁸⁸ Jer. 1:13-16.

²⁸⁹ Rom. 13.

²⁹⁰ 1 Tim. 2:1-2.

²⁹¹ Believers submit themselves to governing authorities *as for the Lord's sake* (1 Pet. 2:13, italics mine). The believer's submission to God is always their *sine qua non* of obedience to any authority. (Acts 4:19-21 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge;20 for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard."21 And when they had threatened them further, they let them go (finding no basis on which they might punish them) on account of the people, because they were all glorifying God for what had happened).

²⁹² Rev. 13:1-18.

²⁹³ Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord. He turns it wherever He wishes.

²⁹⁴ Governments are given for the providential judgment of the wicked (Rom. 13:3-5) as well as their protection (Matt. 27:16-26).

²⁹⁵ Governments are also given over to the unjust judgment of the righteous (e.g. Herod's beheading of John the Baptist - Matt. 14:1-12) as well as for their protection (1 Pet. 2:13-14, Acts 25).

²⁹⁶ Heb. 9:27, Gen. 3:18, Luke 16:20-31, 2 Cor. 5:10 [LBC Sections 31-32].

²⁹⁷ II Cor. 5:8, Luke 23:43, Phil. 1:23

²⁹⁸ I Thes. 4:16-17

²⁹⁹ Dan. 9:27-31, Jer. 30:7, Matt. 24:15-21, Rev. 16:1-19,21

³⁰⁰ Zech. 14:4-11, Matt. 24:27-31, II Thes. 1:7-10, Rev. 20:6

³⁰¹ Is. 65:17-25, Ezek. 37:21-28, Zech. 8:1-17.

³⁰² Luke 16:19-26

soul and body, reunited, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction away from the presence and glory of the Lord.³⁰³ At the end of Christ's millennial reign upon the earth, the heavens and the earth will be dissolved and replaced with new heavens and a new earth in which only righteousness abides. The heavenly city of God will descend out of heaven³⁰⁴ and will be the eternal abode for the saints of God, who will joyously dwell in the light of His eternal glory forevermore.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ II Thes. 1:7-9, Jude 6-7, Rev. 20:11-15

³⁰⁴ Rev. 21:2.

³⁰⁵ John 17:3, Rev. 21-22.