

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

OF

EDWARD C. SCHICK

Originally Presented to the Ordination Council

Called by

Haddon Heights Baptist Church

Haddon Heights, New Jersey

9:30 AM

October 8, 1991

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND CALL

INTRODUCTION

REVELATION.....	6
The Bible.	6
The Inspiration of the Bible.....	6
The Integrity of the Bible.....	6
GOD.	7
Revelation.	7
Uniqueness and Being.	7
Trinity.....	7
Infinity, Eternality, Immutability.	7
Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence.	8
Holiness, Righteousness, Justice.	8
Goodness, Mercy, Love.....	8
The Decree of God.....	8
CHRIST.	9
Christ's Being.....	9
Christ's Deity.	9
Christ's Humanity.....	9
Christ's Humiliation and Glorification.....	9
Christ's Provision for Salvation.	10
Christ as Prophet, Priest and King.....	10
HOLY SPIRIT.....	11
His Being and Deity.....	11
His Personality.....	11
His Works in the Old Testament.	11
His Works with Christ.	11
His Works in the Church.	11
CREATION.	13
UNIVERSE.	13
MAN.	13
Man's Origin and Being.....	13
Man's Purpose and Function.	13
The Effects of Sin on Man.....	13

ANGELS.	14
Origin, Being and Function.	14
Personhood and Characteristics.	14
Fallen Angels and Satan.	14
Classification and Destiny of Good Angels.	14
Classification and Destiny of Evil Angels.	14
SIN.	15
The Fall of Man.	15
Definition of Sin.	15
The Pervasiveness of Sin.	15
SALVATION.	16
Definition of Salvation.	16
Recipients of Salvation.	16
Election.	16
Regeneration.	16
Justification.	17
Conversion.	17
Sanctification.	17
Security of Believers.	18
Spiritual Gifts.	18
CHURCH.	19
The Church's Definition and Origin.	19
Israel and the Church.	19
Church Membership.	19
Offices of the Church.	19
The Church as the Unified Body of Christ.	20
Activities of the Church.	20
Worship.	20
Baptism.	20
The Lord's Supper.	20
Evangelism.	21
Edification.	21
Church and State.	21
Baptist Distinctives.	21
END TIMES.	22
Christ's Return.	22
The Rapture.	22
The Tribulation.	22
Christ's Coming to Earth.	22
The Millennium.	23
The New Heavens and New Earth.	23

PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND CALL

I was born and raised in the suburbs north of Detroit, Michigan. My parents attended a German Baptist Church through which I was exposed to the Gospel. I accepted Christ in 1971 through the preaching of a child evangelist in Vacation Bible School.

In 1972, my family moved out beyond the suburbs and attended the First Baptist Church of Romeo. It was there that I was challenged to commit my life to service for God. Though I desired to do this on previous occasions, this desire did not actualize until God sent a new youth pastor to our church. His burden for discipling young people resulted in increased growth in my personal life, spiritual life and in my ministry involvement. It was during my high school years that I sensed God's call upon my life to serve Him in vocational Christian service. I had a desire to be either a pastor or a missionary.

After high school I attended Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. These were great years of growth in Bible knowledge and well as spiritual life and ministry. It was during my last years at college that I began dating my wife to be.

Leslie Murray was born and raised in Pennsauken, New Jersey. Her dad was saved when she was five years old through the ministry of the First Baptist Church of Merchantville. Leslie accepted Christ at a camp in 1974. In 1980 her family joined Haddon Heights Baptist Church. She attended Baptist High School and went on to Baptist Bible College after her senior year.

Leslie and I were engaged our senior year in Bible College. We were married in 1987 after my first year at Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary. We both were desiring to go into foreign missions after finishing our schooling. In 1989, a missions survey team came back from West Germany with a recommendation that candidates to this field have pastoral or church planting experience. Since Haddon Heights Baptist Church was looking for a church planter, we decided this was God's provision for the experience that would be needed for eventual foreign missions service.

After graduating from seminary in the spring of 1990, we came to Haddon Heights Baptist Church to do an internship and start a new church. We are both dedicated to starting this new work and continuing in God's service whether here in the states or overseas.

INTRODUCTION

Theology in its proper definition is the study of God. In its fuller sense, theology can be described as the study of God Himself and His relationship to man. The following statements include my personal beliefs concerning God based upon His revealed Word and shaped by my theological studies in recent years. I have not included all the truths I have studied, but I have addressed what I believe to be the central doctrines of our faith and also the current theological issues facing the Church today.

Though the proper place to begin my study is with God, I will begin instead with the doctrine of revelation. For it is in the doctrine of revelation that we find our basis for knowing assuredly who God is and how we are to relate to Him. Since today's knowledge of God is obtained primarily through the Bible, I will focus on that aspect of revelation in this first section.

After the section on revelation, I will then discuss the three persons of the Trinity. My beliefs about creation and man's relationship to God will then follow. I will conclude with sections on the Church and prophetic history.

REVELATION

We can describe God's revelation in two ways: general and special. His general revelation is seen through creation. Through general revelation, men may know that God exists and has created an orderly world. Men cannot know exactly who God is and what He expects of man except through special revelation. God's special revelation has come through angels, appearances, visions, Scripture and His Son, Jesus Christ. Through special revelation we know the attributes of God, His historic working with man and His moral law for men today. (Ps. 19:1; Gen. 1:28-30; 2:15-17; Mt. 1:20; Gen. 15:1; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 1:1-2; Acts 14:15-17; 17:27-31; Rom. 1:18-20)

The Bible

God reveals His will today through His inscripturated Word, the Bible. This includes the 66 books of both the Old and New Testaments. These books have been recognized as being inspired writings and therefore have been set apart from all other writings as being totally true and wholly trustworthy. I believe the 66 books of the canon of Scripture are both sufficient and complete. God has given us everything we need to know to understand who God is and how we should live. It is complete because God has chosen to not provide any written revelation since the writings of the apostle John.

The Inspiration of the Bible

Inspiration can be defined as the process by which God breathed or produced the words through which He communicates His person and will. The inspired writings are therefore to be treated as the very words of God though written through men. Our response to the Bible should be one of obedience and not doubt or rejection. We have the responsibility to obey what God has clearly revealed to us. The Bible sits in judgment on man's thinking and behavior. It is not man's duty to decide whether or not the Bible is true; neither is it his option to decide if he should obey it. The Bible, therefore, is the standard by which all truth is to be judged. There is no human authority which is higher than God's Word. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:19-21; Ps. 119; Jn. 17:17)

The Integrity of the Bible

Based on the testimony of Scripture itself, the fulfillment of prophecy and the testimony of the Son of God Himself, the Bible can be trusted as being totally inerrant. It is verbally inspired in that the words penned by the biblical authors were inspired of God and therefore authoritative. Because the words are inspired they must be properly interpreted in accordance with textual research, grammar, context, author's intent, culture and history. I believe in plenary inspiration in that all the words of Scripture are inspired. No portion of Scripture is more inspired than any other. God has supernaturally preserved the Bible through the centuries as His inspired Word. (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:20-22; 1 Tim. 5:18 cf Deut. 25:4 and Lk. 10:7; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 3:16; Mt. 5:17-18, 23:35; Lk. 24:44; Jn. 10:35; Mt. 5:18; 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25)

GOD

Revelation

Though unregenerate, man can attribute his origin to God and know some characteristics of God. He can also have some moral laws in his conscience. In spite of this knowledge, he cannot be assured of knowing God accurately except through God's self-disclosure and a corresponding change in man's sinful heart. God has revealed Himself in creation, history, His Son and His written Word. (Acts 17:28; Rom. 1:18-20, 2:14-15; 1 Cor. 2:13-14; Heb. 1:1-2)

Uniqueness and Being

God is the only self-existent being in the universe. He is eternal and therefore has always been and forever will exist. His being exists in and of Himself and is not derived from anything. All other beings are derived from Him and are dependent upon Him for original and continued existence. There exists an infinite, qualitative difference between God and His creation. He is everywhere in His creation but distinct from it. God is immaterial spirit and not a fleshly or material creature except through God the Son who became incarnate. (Ex. 3:14; Ps. 90:2; Gen. 2:7, 6:17, 7:15; Rev. 11:11; Acts 14; Lk. 10:21-22; Rom. 1:20; Jn. 4:24; 1 Tim. 1:17; Jn. 1:14, 18)

Trinity

There is one God who exists eternally in three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is distinct in person and function but the same in essence or nature. Each possesses the attributes of the Godhead in Their fullness. All three are co-equal and work in harmony to accomplish God's will. There is no competition or confusion between them. Though the Bible does not specifically discuss this doctrine there is ample evidence to defend it. In the Old Testament there is a plurality in the words used of God and sometimes a distinguishing between two persons of the Godhead. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each addressed as Deity in the New Testament. The different Persons are also distinguished from each other. (Deut. 6:4; 1 Tim. 1:3-5; Jam. 1:27; Eph. 4:6; Jn. 1:1, 14; Heb. 1:3, 8; Acts 5:3-4; Mt. 3:16-17, 28:19; Gen. 1:26; Mt. 28:19; Gen 1:1, 26)

Infinity, Eternality, Immutability

God is infinite in that He does not bear the creaturely limitations with which we are accustomed. This unlimitedness applies to His attributes, each within their own perfection. God is eternal in that He has no beginning and will have no end. He has created time but is in no way bound by it. He exists outside of time; and therefore is able to see all events past, present and

future. God is not a changing or progressing being. He is all that He is and will not develop or digress. (1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 90:2; Gen. 21:33; Deut. 32:40; Mal. 3:6)

Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence

God is everywhere present at once. There is no thing or person which is hid from Him. This does not imply that He is one with creation, because as God, He always remains distinct from it. God is all knowing in that His mind comprehends all there is to know immediately and without aid. He is all powerful in that His will is superior in ability to all others and He has at His disposal the right and power to do anything He wishes. These three attributes together also demonstrate God's sovereignty over the universe. His power to create and sustain the universe also can be seen in these. (1 Ki. 8:27; Ps. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23-24; Acts 7:48-49, 17:27-28; Ps. 147:4-5, 33:13-15; Mt. 10:29-30; Acts 15:8, 2:23; Gen. 1:1-3; Gen. 18:14; Is. 44:24; Rom. 4:17)

Holiness, Righteousness, Justice

God is holy in that He is the only totally perfect, flawless and complete being. He is morally perfect and remains separate from all evil. He is the only pure source of truth. He is righteous in that He acts according to His own perfect law. He never acts in contradiction to what He is, says or does. He is just in that He rules all creation, including man in a way consistent with His perfect will. (1 Sam. 2:2; Mt. 5:48; Is. 6:3; Jn. 17:17; Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4)

Goodness, Mercy, Love

God is good in that He is, says and does what best accomplishes His will. In spite of the presence of evil, God always does what is best for man. He is merciful to all, especially those who call on His name. God is love. The greatest example of this is the sending of His Son to die for undeserving and sinful men. These three attributes stand in contrast to His holiness, righteousness and justice but never in contradiction as we men might judge. (Ex. 34:6-7; Jn. 3:16; Mt. 5:44-45; 1 Jn. 4:7-16)

The Decree of God

The decree of God is His singular plan to create and control every person, event and thing in the universe. This plan was formed before the creation of the world. It includes the salvation of men, the length of our lives and all world events. This teaching does not preclude the moral responsibility of man. At times God even used the evilness of men to accomplish His purposes. (Deut. 32:8; Job 12:13; Ps. 33:6-11; Is. 46:10; Job 14:5; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Eph. 1:4, 11, 3:10-11; Rom. 14:12; Gen. 45:5-7, 50:19-20; Acts 2:23; Rev. 17:17)

CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God. He was sent to reveal to us the nature of God in flesh and to die a propitiuous death on behalf of sinful man. He co-existed with the Father and the Spirit from eternity and is one with the Father in the Godhead. His incarnation and redemptive work on the cross constitute the central focus of the Bible and theology. (Lk. 1:35; Jn. 8:58, 10:30; Phil. 2:6-11; Jn. 1:1-14; Rom. 1:2-4)

Christ's Being

Jesus Christ was fully human and fully divine in His incarnate, earthly existence, and remains the same in His present ascended state. He is of the same nature as both God and man. He exists as one person, containing two natures. These two natures exist in Christ without being confused, without being changed, without being divided into two distinct categories, and without being contrasted according to function. Their union in one person in no way diminishes His humanity or divinity. (Lk. 2:52; Jn. 29:28; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Cor. 15:12-58; Phil. 2:6-11)

Christ's Deity

In regard to His divine nature, Jesus Christ exists eternally as the second person of the Trinity. He was born of the Virgin Mary as a man while remaining fully God. Christ displayed His deity by His works, His authority, His relationship to the Father, His own direct claims, and the implications of His words. His deity underlies even His ability to become incarnate. (Heb. 1:5-6; Lk. 1:30-37; 2:6-7; Mt. 3:16-17; Mk. 2:1-12 Mt. 28:19; Jn. 10:30; Lk. 22:70; Mk. 2:28; Jn. 17; Mt. 1:21-23)

Christ's Humanity

Jesus had a fully human nature. Scripture describes Christ as being born of a woman, as growing up, as being hungry, thirsty and tired. He was like any other human physically, yet He was without sin. Since Christ was God, He was not able to sin. The purpose of His temptation by Satan in the wilderness was for Him to identify with man's temptations. Yet in this temptation He remained completely obedient to the Father. (Heb. 2:14; Lk. 2:6-7, 2:52; Mt. 4:2; Jn. 19:28, 4:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:14-15)

Christ's Humiliation and Glorification

Christ has functioned in two states: humiliation and glorification. While He was incarnate on earth, He voluntarily laid aside the independent use of His divine attributes. This state of humiliation includes: His incarnation, in which God became man; His servanthood, in

which He lived a perfect life of holiness, obedience and service to His fellow man; and His death on the humiliating cross, on which He suffered the complete wrath of God vicariously for sinners. His glorified state includes: His resurrection, which conquered death, Satan's ultimate weapon; His ascension to rule at the right hand of the Father in heaven; His session, in which He intercedes for believers today; His second coming, at which time believers will be with Him in glory and the wicked will be condemned by Him as He reveals Himself fully so that all men will acknowledge His greatness; and, the new creation, in which He will turn all things over to the Father, having fully redeemed the cosmos. (Phil. 2:7; Mt. 3:16; Jn. 17:4; Is. 53:6; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Mk. 16:19; Eph. 1:20-23; Rom. 8:34; Rev. 1:7, 19:11-21)

Christ's Provision for Salvation

As the God-Man, Christ's holy life and vicarious death reconciles believers to the Father by imputing to their account both His righteousness and His payment for sin. Thus He is the only mediator between God and man. The atoning work of Christ is unlimited in its provision, or nature, but is limited in its purpose, or application, to those elect, chosen by God for salvation. His atonement reconciles man to God, satisfies all of God's righteous demands, defeats Satan and pays sin's penalty. And, whoever repents and believes on Him will receive eternal life. (Mt. 5:17; Rom. 5:18-19; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Cor 5:21; Rom. 5:18-19; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rom. 3:21-26, 8:37, 6:23; Acts 16:31)

Christ as Prophet, Priest and King

Christ functioned as a prophet in that He represented God to men and was authorized to speak God's will to the people. Christ fulfilled the office of priest, in that He became the sacrifice which satisfied God's wrath. His Kingship is emphasized throughout His earthly life, and is exercised over His people today, but will be seen clearly by all in the Second Coming. (Mt. 10:41, 21:11,46; Lk. 4:24 Heb. 7:23-28; Jn. 1:1,14; Mt. 2:2, 16:28; 1 Tim. 1:15-17; Rev. 19:16)

HOLY SPIRIT

His Being and Deity

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the trinity and is therefore one with the Father and the Son. He is just as much God as the other Persons and therefore possesses all the same qualities and attributes as God. He functions in a submissive role as an implementer for God and as a replacement for Christ after He left earth. (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Jn. 16:13)

His Personality

The Holy Spirit is a person, just as the Father and the Son are persons, having the capacity for relationships and communication, characterized by knowledge, feelings, a will and other aspects of personhood. The Spirit's indwelling at salvation brings man close to the transcendent God. (Jn. 16:13-14, 14:26; 1 Cor. 12:11)

His Works in the Old Testament

The Holy Spirit has been active in the world and in the lives of believers from creation. Although His work was hidden in the Old Testament, He was involved in creation, regeneration, revelation, sanctification, filling, and gifting for various tasks such as administration, war, craftsmanship, and prophecy. The Holy Spirit was the agent who produced the moral and spiritual qualities of holiness and goodness in those He indwelt or came upon. (Gen. 1:2; Ex. 31:35; Josh. 13:25; Gen. 41:38; Ez. 2:2; Is. 32:15-20)

His Works with Christ

The Holy Spirit was powerfully and pervasively active in the incarnate life of Jesus by: causing His conception; filling Him and anointing Him for the ministry of prophet/priest/king; leading Him; empowering Him to preach and work miracles; and, raising Him from the dead. (Lk. 1:35, 4:1; Mt. 3:16, 4:1; Lk. 4:18-21; Mt. 12:28; Rom. 8:11)

His Works in the Church

The work of the Holy Spirit was expanded at Pentecost with new effects, as predicted by Jesus' teaching. Some of the Spirit's Old Testament works were heightened while many new works were added. He gave new revelation which made clear His past work. He regenerates believers. Through the baptism of the Spirit at conversion, people became partakers in the New Covenant and a new people, the Church. He replaces Jesus on earth as the Paraclete, or Comforter. He convicts of sin and affects holiness. He illumines men to apply revelation. He

fills believers to speak the truth with power. He works sanctification in the lives of believers as they exercise His fruit of self-control to walk or live in the Spirit. He indwells, seals, fills and preserves believers, giving them assurance of eternal life. And, He gives special gifts to individual believers. (Acts 1:16; 21-41; Jn. 16:13-14, 3:5-6; Acts 19:5-6; 1 Cor. 12:13; Jn. 14:16-17, 16:13, Rom. 7:6; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:25; 1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19; Eph. 1:13)

CREATION

UNIVERSE

God created the universe, stars, planets and everything in them in seven normal, twenty-four hour days. He created the earth, atmosphere, oceans, land, plant life, animal life, day, night, seasons and man. Everything He made was good and was designed to do His will. (Gen. 1)

MAN

Man's Origin and Being

Out of His own wisdom and will, God created man. Man is in the image of God but not a part of God. He is a dependent, finite creature. Man can find purpose, meaning and fulfillment only as he chooses to relate to God, other men and creation according to His divine plan. Each man is a single being possessing personality. Man's being can be described by using two main divisions: spirit and body or the material and the immaterial. The Bible also describes the spiritual part as the "soul" or divides it into "spirit and soul". I believe it is proper in light of all these passages to describe man in three parts in order to distinguish between the soul (self-consciousness) and the spirit (God-consciousness). (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; Jn. 12:27, 13:21; Mt. 10:28; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12)

Man's Purpose and Function

God made man unique among all creation by creating him in His image as a reflection of Him in the world. Man, as God's image, is to reflect the attributes of God in a limited, temporal, changeable and dependent way. His primary duty was to love God with his whole being. His function on earth was to glorify God by being productive and increasing. He was to be productive in that he would tend the earth in accordance with God's will and in harmony with His creation. He was to increase numerically as a race and to also increase the beauty and the magnitude of creation. (Gen. 1:26-28; 1 Cor. 11:7; Jam. 3:9; Ps. 8:3-8; Mt. 5:16; 2 Cor. 3:18; Mk. 12:28-31; Gen. 1:28-30, 2:15)

The Effects of Sin on Man

Because of Adam's sin, man's God-given purpose has been severely distorted. Men still bare God's image in personality but are morally damaged to the point where he cannot please God. This damage can be progressively restored in those who are regenerated by the power of God. Eventually the full restoration of man will be in his eternal state in heaven. (Gen. 3:16-19, 9:6; Rom. 3:10-18; 2 Cor. 4:16; Rom. 12:2; Rev 22:1-5)

ANGELS

Origin, Being and Function

Angels were created by God probably just prior to or simultaneous with the creation of the earth. They are dependent, created beings with personality. They serve as ministers of God wherein they carry out His will in the world. (Gen. 1; Mt. 4:6; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 148:2, 5; Col. 1:16; Jn. 1:1-3; Job 38:4-7; Gen. 1:31, 2:3; Heb. 1:7, 14)

Personhood and Characteristics

Angels are persons manifesting intellect, emotion and will. Though they are spirit beings which exist without a material body, they often assume a body temporarily for specific tasks. Although they are spirits, they are not omnipresent. They are greater than man in knowledge, though not omniscient. They are stronger than man, though not omnipotent. They are sexless and are therefore a fixed company, not a race. (Gen. 18-19; Heb. 1:14; Job 1:12; Mt. 24:36; 1 Pet. 1:12; Dan. 10:13; Jam. 4:7; 2 Pet. 2:11; Ps. 103:20; Mt. 22:28-30)

Fallen Angels and Satan

Although all angels were created good, a number of them willfully rebelled against God. The leader of this rebellion was Satan, chief of the angels. This fall occurred prior to the fall of man. This rebellious hierarchy of angels, though permitted by God, forms the opposition to His work in this world. Their doom is certain, however, and their final destruction will be the eternal lake of fire. (Gen. 1:31; Is. 14:12-15; Ez. 28:12-15; Jude 6; Eph. 6:12; Gen. 3; Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10)

Classification and Destiny of Good Angels

The angels that remained in their first estate can be classified into cherubim, seraphim, guardian and archangels. The good angels will find their eternal destiny in God's Kingdom. (Gen. 3:22-24; Ez. 10:4, 18-22; Is. 6:1-3; Heb. 1:14; Mt. 18:10; 1 Thess. 4:16)

Classification and Destiny of Evil Angels

The evil angels can be classified as follows: 1) angels kept in prison for their sin; 2) free angels who aid Satan in his warfare against the good angels and God's people; 3) demons, or evil spirits, who often possess and control people; and, 4) Satan, the prince deceiver and adversary. Though powerful, demons cannot possess or indwell the believer. However, they can significantly oppress Christians. The evil angels and Satan will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the Millennium. (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7, 20:7-10; Mt. 8:31, 15:41; Gen. 3; Rom. 8:9, 7:14-25; 1 Cor. 12:3)

SIN

The Fall of Man

Although man was created perfect, God gave moral guidelines for him to follow. Man could choose to continue in obedience to God or disobey His will. Adam, the representative of all mankind, chose to disobey God, to sin, and by doing so rejected a right relationship with God. This brought God's judgment and wrath upon all creation and all men, and a distortion to all relationships. (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12, 8:22)

Definition of Sin

Sin is the rejection of God in rebellion or in neglect, stemming from selfishness, sensuality, and pride. This disobedience is based on Satan's deception and man's blindness due to past sins. It brings upon men God's judgment of death and eternal punishment. (Rom. 1:18-23; 1 Jn. 2:16; Gen. 3:1-5; Rom. 7:14; Jam. 1:13-15; Rom. 6:23)

The Pervasiveness of Sin

Since Adam was the representative of all men, his sin was transmitted to all men. All men are related to Adam by birth, and therefore inherit not only his humanity but also his total depravity, that is, his pervasive sinfulness. This depraved condition, involves corruption at the very core of man's being. It results in his total inability to change, or to even desire to change. Indeed, this problem of sin and depravity cannot be changed without direct intervention by God. (Rom. 5:12-21; Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:10-18, 23)

SALVATION

Definition of Salvation

Salvation is the gracious, and loving act of God whereby He restores sinful men to a right relationship to Himself on the basis of the Person, Word and Work of Jesus Christ. In saving men, God moves them from their condition of spiritual deadness in which they are at enmity with God, objects of His divine wrath, and places within them the newness of eternal life, blessing them with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 1:5; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 3:10-23, 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22; Eph. 2:1-7, 1:3)

Recipients of Salvation

God offers His gift of salvation generally to all men. It is His desire that all men come to repentance and faith. All believers are expected and commanded to preach this Gospel freely and with power to men. However, it is man's individual responsibility to repent and believe. And, although it is only God's grace put within a man that effects this repentance and faith, it is man's own depravity and rebellion which causes him to reject so great a salvation. (Mt. 11:28, 28:19-20; Jn. 6:44, 7:37-38; Acts 1:8, 2:21, 17:30-31; Rom. 10:13; Eph. 1:6; 2 Pet. 3:9; Jn. 3:16-19)

Election

God, by His own free will and love for mankind, chose to provide a perfect and infinite sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind in His Son, Jesus Christ. Based upon this eternal provision for the sins of all men, which God foreordained before the foundation of the world, He predestined certain men to become His sons. This election by God in no way eliminates man's responsibility for sin nor does it deny the sufficiency of God's provision for all men. Rather, it grants those elected by God the grace and mercy to accept His provision through repentance and faith, thereby effecting their eternal salvation. (Jn. 3:16; Eph. 1:3-6; Heb. 10:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-3; Eph. 2:8-10; Rom. 8:28-31; Acts 2:38; Jn. 6:35-40)

Regeneration

Based on the election of God, individuals are regenerated by the power and work of the Holy Spirit. This regeneration also involves the baptism of the Holy Spirit whereby we identify with Christ's death and resurrection: dead to sin and raised to new life. The Holy Spirit also seals us in that we can be assured of the promises of salvation both now and forever. This action has also placed us within the body of Christ. The Bible also speaks of this as our adoption as sons into God's family with all the rights and privileges as adult heirs. (Titus 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 1:22; Jn. 1:12; Gal. 4:5-7)

Justification

Justification is the judicial act of God whereby He applies the sacrificial death of Christ to the account of individuals so that their sins are totally paid for. This allows the reconciliation of man to God and at the same time satisfies God's demand for justice. These actions are based on the propitious work of Christ on the cross. As a result, these individuals are forgiven of all their sins, past, present and future. They will enjoy eternal life and escape the wrathful, punishment of God which was originally due them. (Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:25, 5:1,11; 1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10)

Conversion

On the basis of God's election and sovereign work, men are converted and believe in God. This can be seen in a person's acknowledgment of sin and their response of faith in Christ. God grants salvation to those who believe and accept these truths of the Gospel:

Sin - That one is a sinner, totally unable to please God and deserving of everlasting punishment in hell. (Rom. 3:23)

Atonement - That Christ died to pay the full price for all of one's sin. (Rom. 5:6)

Savior - That accepting Christ's payment provides salvation. (Acts 16:31)

Lord - That accepting Christ includes totally giving one's life to Him. (Eph. 2:9-10)

Heaven - That believing the truths above results in a person's entrance into heaven upon death thus escaping the judgment due upon all those who are born in sin. (Jn. 3:16)

Those who believe this become born-again and join God's family as a child of God. (Mt. 11:28; Jn. 16:7-11, Rom. 1:16-17; Acts 16:31; Heb. 11:6; Jn. 1:12, 3:8)

Sanctification

Sanctification is the setting apart of something for a special use. In salvation, it is the setting apart of believers according to God's holy purposes in election, salvation and service. From a subjective point of view it is God's will that believers set themselves apart by dedicating their lives to do what pleases God. This is a process whereby believers become more and more like Christ. Ultimately we will be glorified in heaven at which time we will no longer struggle

with the sinful nature but will be pure and holy before God. Though there is no sin which is unconquerable, no believer will reach entire sanctification on earth because of the ever present sinful nature. (1 Pet. 1:2; Heb. 10:10; 1 Thess. 4:3; Eph. 2:8-10; 5:26-27; Rom. 6)

Security of Believers

All those who are the elect of God and have received salvation cannot lose their salvation and will be preserved by God until glorification. The subjective assurance of our salvation is based on the "fruit" of holiness as seen in our lives. Therefore, a person who claims to be saved but is living a life characterized by sin will be chastised by God as a carnal believer or will be rejected by God as one who made a false profession of faith. (Jn. 6:35-40, 10:28-29; Phil. 1:6; 1 Jn. 2:19; Rom. 8:35-39, 16-17, 29-30; Eph. 4:17-24; 1 Jn. 1:6-8; Rom. 6:1-11; 1 Cor. 3:1-4; Mt. 7:15-23; Acts 8:9-24; Heb. 10:26;)

Spiritual Gifts

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to individual believers with the responsibility and purpose to develop them and use them for the edification of the whole body, the Church. No individual has all the various gifts, nor is any one of the gifts given in abundant measure to all individuals. And, since all gifts are important for the proper functioning of the body, the individual believers need each other.

It was the sovereign choice of the Holy Spirit to bestow upon men at certain times the ability to do miraculous works. The miraculous sign gifts of tongues, healing, and working of miracles were temporarily given to New Testament believers by the Spirit for the purpose of initiating the age of the New Covenant, and are no longer mediated by men today. The gift of prophecy has also been limited to the proclamation of the written revelation since the completion of the canon. (1 Cor. 12-14, Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-48, 19:6; Heb. 2:3-4)

CHURCH

The Church's Definition and Origin

The Church is a body of people called out of the world and separated from sin by the power of God to faith in a crucified and risen Christ. The beginning of the Church was predicted by Christ and inaugurated by the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. It was originally formed out of those called from the nation of Israel and, eventually, from other nations to be a people for His name. The New Testament uses the term "church" to refer to the universal Church as well as local churches. (Mt. 16:16-19; Acts 2:1-13, 15:14, 8:1-3; Col. 1:18)

Israel and the Church

The Church is distinct from the Old Testament nation of Israel, in that it is based on the person, words and works of Christ. Membership requires a spiritual qualification, not racial. It is based on the teachings of Christ and not specifically on the rudiments of Old Testament law. All and not some of its members are empowered and gifted by the Holy Spirit. (Mt. 16:16-19; Acts 8:17, 11:15-16, 15:14, 19:6)

The Church has similarities with Israel because of the unchangeable nature of God in His dealings with men. Church members are still considered righteous before God by faith. The Church shares with Israel the Old Testament culture and history which serve as examples to us. The Church also practices ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper which are commanded by God. (Rom. 9:6-8, 24, 11:11-24; Gal. 6:15; 1 Cor. 10:6)

Church Membership

The Church manifests itself in local congregations when believers from a certain geographical area join together. The prerequisites for membership in this local body include repentant faith in Jesus Christ and the public declaration of this faith through the ordinance of baptism. (Acts 2:38, 41)

Offices of the Church

New Testament local churches have two offices. The first office is that of the pastor/elder/bishop. The primary responsibility of a pastor is to shepherd, oversee and lead the flock. The second office is that of deacon. Deacons are to relieve the pastors of duties which hindered them from preaching and prayer. Their primary responsibilities are to care for the material needs of the flock. Pastors and deacons are to meet the high spiritual qualifications given in the pastoral epistles. (Acts 13:1, 20:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

The Church as the Unified Body of Christ

This body is an organism consisting of Jesus, as the head, and individual believers, who fulfill vital roles in their local assembly as members of one another. Unity is to characterize them. This unity is to be illustrated often in the sharing together of the Lord's Supper. Unity is to be maintained through the prominence of truth, whether written or spoken, and through loving discipline of erring believers with restoration as the goal. On an inter-church level, the Church is to keep itself pure from apostasy. (Col. 1:18; Jn. 17:11, 21-23; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 11:17-34; 2 Tim. 3:16, 4:2; Mt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1-2; 2 Jn. 7-11; Jude 3ff)

Activities of the Church

The purpose of the church is to bring glory to God in this world through the worship of God, evangelization of the lost and the edification of believers.

Worship

One of the main activities of the church is to worship God through the assembly of believers together to offer praise, thanks, prayer and song to the Lord. This gathering also includes the reading of Scripture and its exposition. Jesus commanded that two ordinances be practiced in the Church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. (1 Cor. 14; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:25; 2 Tim 4:2)

Baptism

Baptism is the immersion in water of believers who have professed faith in Christ and have received Him as their Lord and Savior. This rite which was commanded by Christ symbolizes and identifies us with His death, burial and resurrection. It also shows our commitment to die to sin and to live the abundant life. (Mt. 28; Acts 8:36-38; Rom. 6)

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was initiated by Christ in the Upper Room shortly before His death. It symbolizes the death of our Lord Jesus Christ through the use of common elements. Jesus wanted His followers to maintain this practice as a remembrance of His death until He returns and shares this meal again at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Mt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:7-22; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Rev. 19:6-10)

Evangelism

Spreading the Gospel of Christ is inherent in the Great Commission and is the first step in "making disciples". The early believers preached the Gospel boldly and saw many come to Christ. This is to be the main task of churches today. We must lovingly bear the testimony of the Christ in the context of good relationships and a pure life. (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8; 2:14-41; Jn. 17:15-16; 1 Tim. 3:7; Jn. 13:35)

Edification

Another main activity of the Church is the building up of believers through discipleship, teaching, fellowship and prayer. Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples and to teach them all that He had taught them. This teaching continued in the early church as believers met together for fellowship and prayer. As a result, believers were strengthened in their faith and increased in number. (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-57; 16:5)

Church and State

The Church is subject to Christ, its founder and head. No governmental organization has authority over the Church in matters of faith and godliness. Believers are to be in subjection to the state except when the state prescribes behavior for believers which is clearly contrary to God's Word. We are to pray for those who are in authority and to express Christian values on moral issues of the state. The Church is to remain distinct from the state and is not to seek political power. (Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23-24; Acts 4:19-20, 5:29; Jn. 18:36; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2; Mt. 22:15-22)

Baptist Distinctives

Though many denominations and Christian movements hold to many of the fundamental truths of Scripture, only those who carry the name "Baptist" and hold to these truths are genuinely considered to be Baptists.

Biblical Authority (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Autonomy of the Local Church (Titus 1:5)

Priesthood of All Believers (Rev. 1:5-6)

Two Ordinances: Water Baptism and Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42)

Individual Soul Liberty (Rom. 14:5)

Saved Church Membership (Acts 2:41, 47)

Two Offices: Pastor and Deacon (Phil. 1:1)

Separation of Church and State (Mt. 22:21)

END TIMES

Christ's Return

The Lord Jesus Christ will return physically to this earth, in His glorious, resurrected body. He will manifest Himself with such power and authority that all will fall in subjection to Him. This second coming will occur over a period of time. It will begin with the pre-tribulational rapture of the church and end with the presentation of all creation by the Son to the Father at the end of the Millennium, after He has put all things in subjection to Himself. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 21-22)

The Rapture

The next event in prophetic revelation is the return of our Lord to rapture His bride, the Church. I believe that this rapture is imminent and therefore can occur at any time. This uptake of people will include the dead in Christ, who will rise first, as well as those believers which are alive at that time. They will all be resurrected in renewed, perfect bodies and spirits, worthy of existing in glory with the Lord forever. While in heaven, our Lord will judge all believers for how they invested their lives on earth. Eternally worthy works will be given rewards while worthless works will be burnt up. Also during this time, the believers will celebrate their consummated union with Christ at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. (Mt. 24:36, 42, 44, 50, 25:13; 1 Thess. 4:13 - 5:6; 2 Thess. 2:1; 1 Cor. 15:35-49; 1 Jn. 3:2; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:11-15, 4:5; Rev. 19:6-10)

The Tribulation

The wrath of God will be poured out on those remaining on earth after the rapture. This seven year time period, called the Tribulation, will be a terrible time when Satan runs unrestrained by the Holy Spirit, deceiving and bringing to ruin the majority of mankind and the world. Only a remnant will be saved including 144,000 special followers of God. Satan's work will be accomplished primarily through the leadership of the beast and the false prophet. The period will be divided into two 3.5 year parts, the latter being even more terrible than the first. The destruction will culminate in the catastrophic battle of Armageddon. Thankfully, the Church will be spared from this time of desolation. (Rev. 6ff; 2 Thess. 2:6-10; Rev. 7:4-10, 13, 16:13-21; Zech. 14:1-8; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Pet. 2:4-9; Rev. 3:10)

Christ's Coming to Earth

Christ's coming to earth will signal the end of the Tribulation as He judges the unbelievers of this period, rewards those who remained true to God and binds Satan for the next period of time. Believers who are still alive or who died during the Tribulation will enter the Millennium and reign with Christ. (Mt. 25:27-31-46; Rev. 20:2, 4)

The Millennium

Immediately following the Tribulation, a literal 1,000-year period will begin in which Jesus Christ will reign in full power and glory, Satan will be bound and the resurrected saints will rule with Christ. This will be a time when our Lord's glory will be clearly seen by all mankind and all evil will be immediately judged. Even nature will be restored. At the end of this Millennium, Satan will be loosed for a short time to deceive a large number and gather an army against the Lord. This rebellion will be immediately quenched with fire from heaven. In the end, Satan will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever. (Rev. 20:1-7; Is. 11:3-4; Micah 4:3-4; Is. 11:6-9; Rev. 20:7-10)

All unbelievers will be resurrected to appear before the great white throne after the Millennium. Based on this judgment, they will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented eternally. (Rev. 20:11-15)

The New Heavens and New Earth

The culmination of all history will be when the Son turns the now perfect cosmos over to the Father. In this eternal state of glorious perfection, all believers will live forever. The application of these truths should result in the urgency of believers to preach the Gospel, live holy lives and to expect Christ to come at any time. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 21:1 - 22:5; Heb. 10:25-27; 1 Pet. 4:7-10; 2 Pet. 3:11-12; Mt. 25:1-13)