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SALVATION TESTIMONY

I grew up going to Catholic Church every week. As a young boy, I also began attending a Good News Club after school each week, and Pastor Dennis Sanders would teach a Bible story. Each week he would tell us about the gospel and ask us if we wanted to make the decision to trust Jesus, and come and pray with him. I remember being surprised that I hadn't heard any of that before, and knowing that I didn't want to go to hell for the punishment I deserved for my sin. One week I prayed with Pastor Sanders and asked Jesus to be my Savior.

As I continued to grow up in the Catholic Church, I attended weekly catechism classes, served as an altar boy, sang in the church choir, and was very interested in church. By the time I graduated high school and left for college, church was still important to me... but I did not understand salvation. I hoped that by being good enough and doing Christian things that I could earn heaven.

My first week at the University of Iowa, I set out to find a Christian group. I didn't care whether the group was Catholic. The Lord connected me with Campus Bible Fellowship through Pastor Rob Carleton, and when I attended that Thursday night, I was surprised that he confronted sin issues and took the Bible seriously.

As I got connected and was learning quickly, I remember commenting at one point about a Catholic friend I was trying to bring, that I wanted him to "realize that Catholic wasn't the only way." One person replied, "Catholic isn't a way." In my understanding, "Christians" were Christians, and this provoked a time period of many questions.

Through various forms of discipleship, and especially one-on-one with Pastor Rob, I came to see truths of the Bible that contradicted what I had been taught growing up in the Catholic Church. Each week, I called

the youth director from the Catholic Church back home with questions, comparing answers with what I was seeing in the Bible. As I wrestled with understanding and discerning truth, God gave me a trust in his Word rather than the traditions of man. I came to the realization that I could never be good enough or earn salvation, but that it was the free gift of God that I received by faith alone.

I was baptized by Pastor Tim Waldron at Faith Baptist Church of Iowa City in October 2004. Since that time, I have learned much, and have truly come to see that “by the grace of God, I am who I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10), and that “He who began a good work in [me] will be faithful to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6). God is still working on me, and I am grateful for many faithful people He has used in my life to mature me in my faith!

CALL TO MINISTRY



I am confident that from the very beginning, God has been cultivating in me a heart that enjoys ministry and impacting people. I began to see this more during my two years at the University of Iowa, when I immersed myself in the ministries of Campus Bible Fellowship and Faith Baptist Church of Iowa City. I became Student Vice President of CBF, and spent most of my free time serving. When a friend left for Faith Baptist Bible College, I started seriously contemplating that direction. I had already lost interest in my Computer Science degree, and I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I grew excited about the prospect of Bible College, and applied to transfer.

Toward the end of my final semester at the University of Iowa, Missionary Elva Craig, who helped with CBF, approached me with a letter from Missionary Norman Smith in Japan, which requested college students for his GRIT (God's Recruits In Training) mission trip and discipleship program that he was hosting for 2 months that summer in southern Japan. "This would be perfect for you!" Elva declared.

I spent the summer of 2006 on that mission trip, and took leadership of one of the small groups. I was challenged to grow in many ways. I also loved the culture and was burdened by the great need in Japan, with less than 1% of the population knowing Jesus as Savior. I returned home and headed to Bible College determined to return to Japan as a missionary.

At Faith Baptist Bible College, I pursued a degree in Biblical Studies with a Missions emphasis. I joined Campus Baptist Church (now CrossRoad Baptist Church) of Ames and became heavily involved in college and international ministries. I enjoyed the mentorship of Pastors George Hatfield, Lee Abuhl, and John Murray, as I had many ministry and discipleship opportunities. I eventually turned my ministry focus

wholeheartedly toward international ministry when I had an internship under Pastor George Hatfield. I had so many great opportunities for connecting with students, training Christians, and evangelizing unbelievers.

The Lord brought me a wonderful and godly friend during this time – Diane, who became my wife and joined me in my ministry endeavors as I follow the Lord. Upon graduation and marriage, we joined ABWE and began raising support to be church planters in Japan. However, as we went from church to church talking about our plans for evangelism and discipleship in Japan, we were burdened upon seeing so many American churches that were lacking in these very things. With much resistance, because I had pursued a plan for 6 years, we surrendered to God’s will.

I wholeheartedly believe that the pursuit of missions was not a mistake or misdirection, but God’s preparation for where He would bring us. I learned so much through all that God brought me through that I believe is valuable for serving anywhere.

Through this whole process, I believe the Lord was growing in me a love for people and the joy of seeing lives changed by the power of God’s Word. I continue to endeavor to take the things I have learned and to “commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2) and to preach Jesus, “warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28). I am humbled and grateful to be used by God to impact others.

BIBLIOLOGY

GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

I believe that God is a relational God, and has revealed Himself to mankind in order that we may know Him. God expresses His nature in general revelation, as His creation proclaims His attributes (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20) and man's conscience bears witness of God's moral nature (Romans 2:15). Man is therefore accountable for knowing God, and without excuse (Romans 1:20, 2:15). God has also revealed Himself more directly through dreams (Genesis 20:3), visions (Ezekiel 1:1), prophets (Hebrews 1:1), and signs and wonders (Hebrews 2:4), and most directly, in the person of Jesus (Hebrews 1:2).

God has revealed Himself progressively through history, and that at this point in time, God chooses to limit His direct revelation to us to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 13:8-12), consisting of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament. The Bible is without error in its original form (Psalm 19:7), and God has preserved His Word (Matthew 5:18, Psalm 12:6-7) in reliable modern translations.

The Scriptures reveal God's nature, will, and work, and give us all we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). I believe that each word of the Bible is from God (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We must interpret and understand the Bible literally, with its plain meaning and within its grammatical-historical context, seeking to understand the authorial intent (2 Peter 1:20-21). God's Word is sufficient for all of our spiritual needs, including salvation (Romans 1:16, 2 Timothy 3:15), guidance (Psalm 119:105), resisting sin (Psalm 119:11, Matthew 4), growth, being equipped for good works (2 Timothy 3:16-17), hope (Romans 15:4), and worship (Colossians 3:16).

The Bible can be difficult to understand (2 Peter 3:16), but the Holy Spirit enlightens (Ephesians 1:18) and illuminates (1 Corinthians 2:9-12) man's understanding. We should mine Scripture's treasures (Proverbs

2:2) through personal study (2 Timothy 2:15) to obey it as our standard and final authority (Acts 17:11). Jesus Himself knew Scripture well (John 7:15-16), held to it as the standard for truth (Matthew 19:4-5), and followed it as His guide and authority (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). The Bible is trustworthy, infallible, eternal (Isaiah 40:8), and true (John 17:17).

THEOLOGY PROPER

GOD IS...

I believe that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) eternally existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17). Each person of the godhead is equal in essence but distinct in personality and role.

God is known by many names in the Bible. There is special significance to His covenant name, Yahweh, because He is self-existent, “I am that I am” (Exodus 3:14). He is often referred to in relationship to His covenant people, identifying Himself as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:15), indicating the continuity of His relationship to His covenant people. He is also called Adonai, meaning Lord (Genesis 15:2), and Elohim, meaning God (Genesis 1:1), among many other names.

God created the world in six literal days (Genesis 1). God created according to His design, and spoke most of creation into existence. God formed man from the dust of the earth and breathed life into him. All things were created for God’s glory. God created the world and everything in it perfect (Genesis 1:31), but sin cursed (Genesis 3:14-19) and corrupted (Romans 8:21) the world. All of creation awaits the fulfillment of God’s restoration plan (Romans 8:20-22).

God sustains all of His creation (Colossians 1:17). God is the supreme and sovereign ruler over all of creation. God is working all things together for His glory (Romans 11:36) and believers’ good (Romans 8:28) according to His divine plan (Ephesians 1:9-10). His purposes cannot be thwarted (Job 42:2).

God is spirit (John 4:24). God was not created, but is eternal (Psalm 90:2), immutable (James 1:17), and self-existent (Exodus 3:14). He transcends all of creation (1 Kings 8:27), yet he is immanent (Acts

17:27). God is perfectly holy (1 Peter 1:16) and righteous (Deuteronomy 32:4). He is omnipotent (Luke 1:37), omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10), and omniscient (Romans 11:33). His wisdom and ways are incomparable (Romans 11:33). God is love (1 John 4:8). He is faithful (Deuteronomy 7:9), patient (2 Peter 3:9), and true (Titus 1:2). God is worthy of all honor and glory (Revelation 4:11). He is good (Psalm 136:1), merciful (Ephesians 2:4), gracious (1 Corinthians 15:10), majestic (Psalm 8:1), and glorious (Isaiah 42:8).

CHRISTOLOGY

JESUS IS...

I believe that Jesus is a member of the Triune Godhead. He is eternal, and was with the Father prior to creation (John 1:1). He is called “the first and the last” and “the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:13). He is called Lord (John 20:28), Jesus, meaning “Yahweh saves” (Matthew 1:21), Christ, meaning “anointed one” (John 6:69), Son of God (John 1:34), identifying Him as equal to God (John 5:18), Son of Man (Matthew 24:30), asserting His humanity, the Word (John 1:1), Savior (Titus 2:13), and Lamb of God (John 1:29). Jesus’ offices include prophet (Hebrews 1:1-2), priest (Hebrews 5:9-10), and king (Luke 1:32-33).

Jesus is eternal (John 1:1), self-existent (John 8:58), immutable (Hebrews 13:8), omnipresent (Matthew 28:20), omniscient (John 21:17), and omnipotent (Matthew 28:18). He is the Creator of all things (John 1:3, Colossians 1:16), the author of life (John 1:4, 1 Corinthians 15:22), and the preserver of all things (Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3). He forgives sins (Matthew 9:2) and accepts worship (Matthew 14:33).

Jesus is 100% God (Colossians 2:9) and 100% man (John 1:14). Because of this, He is the one mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus left the presence of God in heaven to dwell on the earth (John 6:38). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20, Luke 1:35), born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:23) and became man (John 1:14). He is the Messiah promised since the fall of man (Genesis 3:15). In His incarnation, Jesus emptied Himself and became man (Philippians 2:6-8). He was born without sin (1 Peter 1:19) and lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), because He is holy (Mark 1:24).

All of Scripture points to Jesus (John 5:46, Luke 24:27). He came to fulfill the Law (Matthew 5:17), to give His life as a ransom (Matthew 20:28), to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), and to testify to truth (John 18:37). The spotless Lamb (1 Peter 1:19) was the perfect sacrifice

once for all (1 Peter 3:18). Jesus died on the cross to atone for sins (Romans 3:25). He died, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4), being seen by the disciples and many others (1 Corinthians 15:5-7). He suffered God's wrath on our behalf (1 John 2:2) when He became our sin, so that we might become God's righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus has the power to forgive sins (Luke 5:20-24), and offers forgiveness freely to all who trust Him (Acts 10:43).

Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of Christianity (1 Corinthians 15:14). Jesus rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:4). His resurrection conquered death (Romans 6:9), demonstrated His deity (Romans 1:4), provided justification (Romans 4:25), empowered believers' resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20). Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9) and will come again (Acts 1:11, Titus 2:13) to judge all of the earth, both the living and the dead (John 5:22).

Jesus declared "It is finished" (John 20:30), upon paying our debt in full (Colossians 2:14) and accomplishing our salvation, and He has seated at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20). However, Jesus is still at work today. His present ministry includes being the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23), our high priest and intercessor (Hebrews 7:24-26), and our advocate (1 John 2:1). We await Jesus' imminent return (Titus 2:13) to consummate God's redemptive plan (Ephesians 1:10)!

PNEUMATOLOGY

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS...

I believe that the Holy Spirit is a member of the Triune Godhead. The Holy Spirit is called God (Acts 5:3-4) and Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17). He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), omnipotent (Acts 1:8), and omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10). The Holy Spirit was active in creation (Genesis 1:2). He gave the Word of God in Scripture by moving men to speak (2 Samuel 23:1-2) and write (2 Peter 1:21) God's inspired Word.

The Holy Spirit was present at times in Old Testament saints (Judges 14:6, 1 Samuel 16:14). At Pentecost, God established the church by giving the Holy Spirit to confirm the gospel message (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit gives new spiritual life to those who are saved by faith in Jesus (John 3:3-6, Titus 3:5), baptizes them into the universal church (1 Corinthians 12:13), and permanently indwells those believers (1 Corinthians 6:19). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is given as a seal (Ephesians 1:13) and down payment (Ephesians 1:14) of our promised inheritance.

The Holy Spirit has many more ministries to the believer. When we yield to God's control, the Holy Spirit fills us (Ephesians 5:18). He is our Comforter (John 14:16). He illuminates our understanding (Ephesians 1:17-18), guides us (John 16:13), assures us of salvation (Romans 8:16), assists us in weakness (Romans 8:26), intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11). We are urged not to quench (1 Thessalonians 5:19) or grieve (Ephesians 4:30) the Holy Spirit, but instead to be led by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-18), which will be evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

He imparts gifts to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:4-11) for service in the church (Romans 12:4-6) for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7),

the unity of the church (Ephesians 4:3), and the edification of the church (Ephesians 4:12) unto maturity (Ephesians 4:13). The sign gifts, such as healing, tongues, and prophecy, were given to confirm God's message and messengers (Hebrews 2:3-4), and fulfilled their purpose in the apostolic age and have ceased with the completion of Scripture (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).

ANTHROPOLOGY

MAN IS...

I believe God created man on the sixth day (Genesis 1:26). God formed man from the dust of the earth, and breathed life into him (Genesis 2:7). God took a rib from this man, Adam, and made the first woman (Genesis 2:21-22), whom Adam called Eve (Genesis 3:20). Woman was created to be a companion and helper to man (Genesis 2:18). God designed humanity with these two distinct genders, male and female (Genesis 1:27). These genders are equal in value (Genesis 1:27) but distinct in role (1 Timothy 2:8-14). This is a literal, descriptive account of man's origin, delineating God's direct and personal creation of man, rather than the use of evolution.

Adam and Eve were created holy (Genesis 1:31). Both man and woman are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Man consists of material and immaterial parts (Matthew 10:28). God created mankind with the purpose of bringing Him glory (Isaiah 43:7) and living in fellowship with Him (Ecclesiastes 12:13). God put eternity into the hearts of man (Ecclesiastes 3:11), and apart from God, life is meaningless (Ecclesiastes 1:2).

God created man with free will (Galatians 5:13, John 7:17). Man was entrusted with a stewardship of the earth (Genesis 1:28, 2:15), the responsibility of bearing children (Genesis 1:28), and obeying God's prohibition of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). Satan deceived Eve (Genesis 3:4-5, 13), and Adam and Eve were tempted by desire (Genesis 3:6) and disobeyed God (Genesis 3:6), introducing sin and breaking fellowship with God (Genesis 3:8-10).

All of mankind inherits their sin nature from Adam (Romans 5:12). Man is totally depraved and unable to save himself (Galatians 2:21), deserving God's wrath (Ephesians 2:3), and in desperate need of a Savior (Matthew 19:25).

God designed man to live in community, and therefore instituted the family (Genesis 1:27-28). God designed marriage for one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24), who covenant together until separated by death (Matthew 19:5, 22:30). The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25) and lead her in godly living (Ephesians 5:23), and the wife is to respect (Ephesians 5:33) and submit (Ephesians 5:22) to her husband. God forbids divorce (Malachi 2:16), adultery (Exodus 20:14), and homosexuality (Romans 1:26-27). Sex (Genesis 2:24-25, 1 Corinthians 7:2) and bearing children (Genesis 1:28) are designed to take place within the bounds of the marital union. Parents are to raise their children (Proverbs 22:6), train them in godliness (Ephesians 6:4), and correct them in love (Proverbs 13:24). Children are to honor (Exodus 20:12) and obey (Ephesians 6:1) their parents. Children are a gift from God (Psalm 127:3). Every life is sacred (Genesis 1:26-27, Exodus 20:13), designed by God (Psalm 139:13-16), and begins at conception (Jeremiah 1:5).

HAMARTIOLOGY

SIN CORRUPTS

I believe that God, in His holy character, demands our holy perfection (1 Peter 1:16), and that He must judge sin (Psalm 7:11). Sin is anything that fails to meet God's holy standard (1 John 5:17). We have all fallen short of that standard (Romans 3:23). At the root of all sin is untruth (Romans 1:18) and unbelief (Romans 14:23). Sin can occur in our actions (Galatians 5:19-21), inactions (James 4:17), words (James 3:8-10), or even thoughts (Matthew 5:22, 28). In fact, sin is the natural disposition of man's heart (Romans 7:21, Jeremiah 17:9).

Sin was introduced into the world and into humanity when Satan deceived Eve (Genesis 3:4-5), and she and Adam doubted God, and chose to disobey God (Genesis 3:6). The consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This death is both a bodily death (Genesis 3:19, 5:5) and a relational death, being separated for all eternity from God (Isaiah 59:2), who hates sin and will not dwell with evil (Psalm 5:4). Not only did sin introduce death, but it corrupted all of creation on earth (Romans 8:21). God pronounced a curse on man (Genesis 3:17), woman (Genesis 3:16), the serpent (Genesis 3:15), and the ground (Genesis 3:17), and subjected creation to futility (Romans 8:20).

Sin has infiltrated man's nature, being spread from Adam to all people (Romans 5:12), so that we are conceived with sin (Psalm 51:2). No one is without sin (Romans 3:23) and no one is even seeking God (Romans 3:10). This total depravity of man (Ephesians 4:17-19) is because we are "dead in sin" (Ephesians 2:1), enslaved to sin (John 8:34) and loving it (John 3:19), and hostile toward God (Romans 8:7). Sin affects every part of man! Even our righteousness is disgusting to God because it is tainted by sin (Isaiah 64:6); therefore, sinful man cannot please God (Romans 8:8). Breaking one command makes us guilty of all (James 2:10), and we are all accountable and without excuse (Romans 1:20, 2:1).

Man's major struggle with sin is that it appeals to his desires (James 1:14-15). Temptation is the work of Satan and is not sin, for even Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). However, we must find the way of escape from our faithful God (1 Corinthians 10:13), rather than succumbing to desire and choosing the very temporary pleasure of sin (Hebrews 11:25). This struggle against sin is ongoing for the believer, who is freed from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:7) and must continually choose to let Jesus and not sin reign (Romans 6:11-12).

SOTERIOLOGY

GOD SAVES

I believe that man is entirely helpless to save himself (Matthew 19:25-26), but that the gospel is the good news that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). In so doing, Jesus paid the penalty for sin (Romans 6:23) in full (John 20:30). He was the perfect sacrifice once-for-all (1 Peter 3:18), shedding His precious and spotless blood (1 Peter 1:19), bearing our sins (1 Peter 2:24) and dying in our place (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus is our propitiation (1 John 2:2), fully satisfying God's wrath. Jesus came for this purpose, to seek and save sinners (Luke 19:10, 1 Timothy 1:15) and to give His life as a ransom for them (Matthew 20:28).

Salvation cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9), but is a free gift (Romans 6:23). The only earnings we can insist on is death, which we have earned by our sin (Romans 6:23). Salvation is entirely God's provision, which man receives by faith alone through grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is offered in Christ alone, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). There is no alternative means of salvation (Acts 4:12).

Salvation is offered freely to all (John 3:16), and God desires all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). However, God has chosen some (Ephesians 1:4), deciding in advance (Romans 8:29) on the basis of His pleasure, purposes, and will alone (Ephesians 1:5-6, 11). Salvation occurs when God draws people to Christ (John 6:44), and they repent (Acts 2:38) and respond in faith (John 3:16) to His Word (Romans 10:17).

At the moment of salvation, a person is born again (John 3:3) with the Holy Spirit's regeneration (Titus 3:5). That person is a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), in present possession of eternal life (John 5:24). He is reconciled to God through Jesus (Romans 5:11), and is justified (Romans 5:1), having been declared righteous because he has

Jesus' righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). His sins are forgiven (Ephesians 1:7), having been fully atoned (Romans 4:7). He is redeemed from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13). He is adopted as God's son through Jesus (Ephesians 1:5).

Upon salvation, Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer (Romans 5:18-19), and he has positional holiness (Hebrews 10:10). However, God is not finished with us (Romans 5:3-5), but promises to finish what He started in us (Philippians 1:6). God call us to practical holiness (1 Peter 1:16), and is sanctifying us (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24) to make us more like Christ (Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18). God has given us all we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). We ought to live in pursuit of knowing Jesus more (Philippians 3:9-10), and godliness (1 Timothy 4:7-8, Titus 2:12). We do this through fixing our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2), studying God's Word (2 Timothy 2:15), and training by putting off sin and putting on holiness (Ephesians 4:22-32). Man's sanctification is consummated at the return of Christ (Philippians 3:21), which we await eagerly (Titus 2:13).

ECCLESIOLOGY

GOD'S PEOPLE CALLED OUT

I believe that God is currently active in the world through His use of the church (Matthew 16:18). The universal church consists of all believers in Jesus from the time of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4, 41) until the time of the rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), admitted by Spirit baptism (1 Corinthians 12:13). The church consists of both Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14-18), but the church has not replaced Israel; God has a future plan for Israel (Daniel 9:27) and their salvation (Romans 11:26). The universal church is called the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23), with Christ as its head (Ephesians 1:22). The church demonstrates God's wisdom and power among the physical and spiritual world (Ephesians 3:9-10).

The local church is a community of believers who have covenanted together for fellowship (Acts 2:42) and mutual edification (Ephesians 4:12) in a common mission to worship (Colossians 3:16) and serve (1 Peter 4:10) God. Each local church is independent and autonomous (1 Peter 5:2), but ought to cooperate with other churches of like faith and practice (Acts 15) and separate from apostasy and worldliness (2 Corinthians 6:14-15), since doctrine is the basis of fellowship (Acts 2:42). The office of elders leads (1 Peter 5:5), oversees (Titus 1:7), shepherds (1 Peter 5:2), and equips (Ephesians 4:11-12) the people. Elders must be godly men who meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. The office of deacons serves the needs of the people (Acts 6:1-3) in order to enable the elders to be devoted to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Deacons must be godly men who meet the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

Baptism is one ordinance of the local church (Acts 2:41). Church members must be believers who have been baptized in water (Acts 2:41). Baptism is a public declaration of a believer's salvation, a picture

of identification with Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection symbolized by a single immersion in water (Colossians 2:12, Romans 6:3-5).

The Lord's Supper is another ordinance of the local church (Acts 2:42). It is the commemoration of the Lord's death celebrated together often (1 Corinthians 11:25) by obedient believers (1 Corinthians 10:16-22), preceded by careful self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:17-19, 27-30), until Jesus comes again (1 Corinthians 11:26). Believers partake of bread, which represents Jesus' body given for us (1 Corinthians 11:23-24), and wine, which represents Jesus' blood shed for us (1 Corinthians 11:25).

The local church congregation makes decisions (Acts 6:3) led by the elders (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:2-5). The ministers are the members (Ephesians 4:12), who are equipped and trained by the pastors (Ephesians 4:11-12) and use their spiritual gifts to serve one another (1 Peter 4:10) and build up the body (Ephesians 4:13). The local church must be devoted to worship (Romans 12:1-2), prayer (Acts 2:42), teaching of the word (Acts 2:42), observance of the ordinances of baptism and communion (1 Corinthians 11:17-32), service (Galatians 5:13), and outreach to the world (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 19-20). If a member is in unrepentant sin, that member ought to be confronted in order to restore him to fellowship (Matthew 18:15-17).

ANGELOLOGY

GOD'S MESSENGERS

I believe that angels were created by God (Colossians 1:16). They are higher than man (Psalm 8:5), but lower than Jesus (Hebrews 1:4). They worship God (Revelation 7:11) and are not to be worshiped (Colossians 2:18). The angels are innumerable (Revelation 5:11). Some are cherubim (Genesis 3:24), some are seraphim (Isaiah 6:2), and Michael is the archangel (Jude 9). Angels are spirit beings (Hebrews 1:14) and personal beings, having intellect (1 Peter 1:12), emotions (James 2:19), and will (Jude 6).

The word “angel” means messenger, which is a primary purpose of angels. They also are ministering beings (Hebrews 1:14). The angels ministered to Jesus, particularly after His temptation (Matthew 4:11) and in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43), as well as informing Mary of His coming birth (Luke 1:26-38) and announcing Jesus’ birth to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-15). Angels minister to humans in many ways, one of which is protection (Psalm 91:11-13).

Lucifer was the anointed garden cherub (Ezekiel 28:14), called “Star of the Morning” (Isaiah 14:12). God created Lucifer (Ezekiel 28:13) full of wisdom and beauty (Ezekiel 28:12), but he became corrupted by pride (Ezekiel 28:17). One third of the angels (Revelation 12:4) rebelled against God, led by Lucifer (Revelation 12:9) and were cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:9). Hell was prepared especially for Lucifer and these fallen angels (Matthew 25:41), who will one day be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:10).

Lucifer is also called Satan, meaning “adversary” (Job 1:6), and devil, meaning “slanderer” (Matthew 4:1). Satan has temporary (Revelation 20:2) and limited (Colossians 1:13) reign over the earth, called the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4) and the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). He often distorts truth by mixing truth and error,

deceiving man to cause him to doubt and disobey God. He blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4) and is looking for those he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

There is a very real and very active spiritual war taking place, in which Satan and his demons are seeking destruction (1 Peter 5:8). We must realize that in our own spiritual walk, we are up against great spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:11-12). Satan is powerful (Hebrews 2:14-15), and we cannot stand against him alone (Ephesians 6:11). Instead, we are urged to take up (Ephesians 6:13) and put on (Ephesians 6:11) the full armor of God. It is with God's truth (Ephesians 6:14), righteousness (Ephesians 6:14), gospel (Ephesians 6:15), salvation (Ephesians 6:17), and Word (Ephesians 6:17), as we abide in Him with faith (Ephesians 6:16) and prayer (Ephesians 6:18), that we will find the strength of God (Ephesians 6:10) that we need to resist the devil, so that he will flee (James 4:7).

ESCHATOLOGY

GOD'S BLUEPRINT

I believe God, in His perfect wisdom and according to His purpose and counsel, is working His perfect plan (Ephesians 1:9-11). God has unfolded His plan to man progressively (Ephesians 3:3), throughout different dispensations, since the creation of man. In each dispensation, man has been accountable to the revelation which God has entrusted to him (Luke 16:2).

The angel Gabriel revealed to the prophet Daniel God's plan for seventy weeks of years (Daniel 9:24). After 69 weeks of years, the Messiah would be cut off (Daniel 9:26). At that point, God placed His program with Israel on hold, while He inaugurated the Church (Acts 2:41), a different dispensation in which God would use the Gentiles to provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 10:19, 11:11). God is not finished with His people of Israel, and will resume His plan with them (Romans 11:25-27) at the close of the church age (Isaiah 11:11-12).

We currently await the imminent (1 Thessalonians 5:2), pretribulational (1 Thessalonians 5:9) return of Jesus in which all those of the church, first the dead in Christ, and then the living, will be caught up together with Jesus in the clouds to be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Believers will be judged according to their works at the Bema Seat (Romans 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10) and celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-10).

Upon His removal of the church from the earth, God will resume His plan for Israel (Luke 21:23-24). The 70th week will begin with the antichrist making a covenant and bringing apparent peace on earth for 3 ½ years (Daniel 9:27) before judgment comes heavily in the second half of that week (Matthew 24:21). During this time, God's wrath will be poured upon the earth (Revelation 11:18). God will seal 144,000 from each of the tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:4-8).

The tribulation will conclude with the Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:19-20:3) at Jesus' second coming (Revelation 19:11), when the antichrist will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:20) and Satan will be seized, bound, and thrown into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:2-3). The tribulation saints will be resurrected and Jesus will establish His earthly kingdom for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4-6).

At the end of Jesus' millennial reign, Satan will be released (Revelation 20:7). There will be one final battle, and Satan will be defeated and thrown into the eternal Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:9-10). At this time, Jesus will judge all unbelievers at the Great White Throne according to their works (Revelation 20:11-13), and those unbelievers, along with all of Death and Hades, will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:13-15). There will be a new heaven and new earth, where all saints of all time will dwell forever in the blessed presence of God (Revelation 21:1-4).