

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT FOR ORDINATION

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BIBLIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

General Revelation

I believe that since the very beginning of creation God has been revealing Himself in a general way to all people in all places (Psa 19:1-6). Through creation itself God reveals that He exists and that He is powerful (Rom 1:18-21). Through creation God also reveals that He is both transcendent and immanent (Act 17:24-28). Even human conscience gives man a sense of God's righteousness (Rom 1:20, 32) and moral nature (Rom 2:14-15). Throughout history, God has revealed His goodness by providing for His creation: giving rain and food (Mat 5:45; Act 14:15-17), setting up and taking down rulers, and giving man a measure of wisdom (Dan 2:21). He also preserves the universe by the word of His power (Heb 1:2-3). However, because man lives in a world that is marred by the Fall, he naturally suppresses and rejects this revelation (Gen 3:17-19; Rom 1:18).

Special Revelation

Although God does reveal some aspects of His character to man through general revelation, I believe He has chosen to reveal Himself most fully through special revelation. God has communicated to man through a variety of ways including dreams and angels (Luk 1:11-13), prophets (Zec 1:1), visions (Eze 1:1), and theophanies (Gen 12:7-9). However, God has revealed Himself most clearly through His Son, Jesus Christ (Joh 1:1, 18, 5:36-37; Heb 1:2-3). In the past, God used various ways to communicate with man, but now that His Son, the incarnate Word, has been revealed, God speaks to us today through Scripture (2Ti 3:16-17; 2Pe 1:21). I believe that God gave revelation progressively over time (Heb 1:1). Sometimes God chose to reveal something that was previously a mystery (Eph 3:3-9). Often He gave more details with subsequent revelation (cf Gen 3:15 with Gen 22:18), but the new information was always consistent with what had already been revealed (Deu 18:14-22; Act 17:11).

Inspiration

I believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are the **inspired** ("breathed out by God") and **inerrant** (without error of any kind) Word of God (2Ti 3:16). I believe that through the process of **inspiration**, the Holy Spirit supernaturally guided the human authors so that every word they wrote in the original autographs is the **inerrant** and **infallible** Word of God (2Pe 1:21). Both OT and NT Scriptures testify to being the very words of God (Deu 18:17-22; 2Sa 23:1-2; 1Pe 1:23-25; 1Th 2:13). Also, Jesus, along with the New Testament writers, bore witness to the divine source of the Scriptures, both Old and New (Mat 5:17-18, 2Pe 1:19; 3:16; Luk 24:44). Because the original autographs contained no errors of any kind in any of their parts (even to the smallest stroke of a letter), they carry full and absolute authority (Mat 5:17-18; Joh 10:35; 2Pe 1:19; Gal 3:16). This infallibility extends to matters such as history, science, geography, and others. I believe that all of Scripture is divinely authoritative (Psa 119:142; Joh 17:17) and completely fulfills every need of man for "life and godliness" (2Pe 1:3).

Canonization

I believe that as the Holy Spirit moved men to write God's Word, those Scriptures became part of what we know today as the canon of Scripture. Written by more than 40 human authors over the course of 1600 years, God's people have recognized each of the 66 books as divinely inspired. God's people have been able to affirm that Scripture stands up to each test given it. Not only did God claim to be the author (Exo 3:13-16), but also no prophecy given by Him has ever failed (Deu 18:22). God often gave miracles to confirm the truth of His Word (Exo 4:9; Heb 2:3-4). And nothing He has said will ever contradict other Scripture (Deu 13:2-3; Act 17:11), but is an accurate historical record (Luk 1:1-4). God's people recognize that God's Word

provides spiritual sustenance (2Ti 3:16-17; Mat 4:4) and is accompanied by the confirming witness of the Holy Spirit (2Co 3:18). The NT quotes almost every book of the OT, affirming its canonicity, while the NT itself was written either by the apostles or someone who was close to them and under their supervision (1Jn 1:1-3).

Preservation

I believe that God has graciously promised to miraculously preserve His written Word for coming generations (Psa 119:152, 160; Mat 24:35). God's people have carefully copied His Word from the beginning (Deu 17:18; Jer 36:27-38) and even though those copies can contain scribal errors, we can be certain that today we continue to hold the very Word of God in our hands and that no doctrine of Scripture is affected where we are uncertain of the wording of the original autographs. We have an overwhelming number of manuscripts that agree so closely with one another that no matter of doctrine is brought into question. Besides the direct statements of God, we can have this confidence because God intends for us to be able to verify fulfilled prophecies (1Ki 22:28; Mat 5:18), proclaim salvation (Mat 28:19-20) and continue to grow by His Word (1Ti 3:15-17).

Translation

I believe God intends for His Word to be translated that it may reach every people group of the world (Mat 28:19-20). To the degree that a translation carefully seeks to reflect the original text determines to what degree that translation is accurate. When Jesus quoted from the LXX (Luk 4:18), He demonstrated that in good translations we have the very words that God intended for us. God has preserved His Word in faithful translations, but it is only inspired in the original autographs. I appreciate the helpfulness and accuracy of several modern language translations, especially the NASB, ESV, and NJKV. While any good translation will from time to time have passages that would be more accurately translated a different way, modern translations are very useful for people today. I regularly use the NASB for personal Bible study. Although I believe the KJV is a very reliable translation, I tend to favor the eclectic Greek text.

Interpretation

I believe God gave us His written Word with the intention that it would be clearly understood (perspicuous) by His children (Psa 119:105; Jn 20:31). However, no person will be able to grasp the meaning of Scripture apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit (1Co 2:12-16; Joh 14:26; 16:13) who gives understanding (2Ti 2:7) and transformation (2Co 3:18). Because God communicates in human language, I believe the Bible must be interpreted with a literal hermeneutic, carefully examining grammar, historical context, and literary context. In some instances, Scripture does use figurative or typical language (Isa 9:2), but these passages tend to give clear indications of their genre. I believe Scripture itself must be the main authority for interpreting other Scripture (Act 17:11; 1Co 2:13). Although some passages remain difficult to harmonize or understand, this does not warrant any lesser faith in their truthfulness as the Word of God (2Pe 3:16-18). With this interpretive framework in mind, I believe in a moderately dispensational view of God's working. The whole of Scripture tells the story of God's redemptive act, and yet He has chosen to work by different means in the NT than He did in the OT. Salvation has always been by grace through faith (Rom 4:4-8). I believe God has a distinct plan for national Israel. At times, Spirit-filled Christians will come to different conclusions on matters of less clear interpretation and I believe that each person must always be treated with deference and humility (Rom 14:10).

THEOLOGY PROPER: THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

The Person of God

I believe Scripture teaches God is a **personal being**. He thinks and knows (Psa 139:1-6), makes plans (Isa 55:11), shows emotion of love and hate (Joh 3:16, Psa 5:5-6), and delights in beauty (Gen 1:31). He exists independently of any other being (Exo 3:14). I believe that God is a Spirit (Joh 4:24) and cannot be seen by the human eye (Joh 1:18; 1Ti 1:17).

I believe God has revealed many of His **incommunicable attributes**. God's unique majestic holiness sets Him apart from any other class of being (Exo 15:11; 1Sa 2:2; Isa 57:15). I believe that God is both immanent (near to creation) (Act 17:27-28), and transcendent (far above creation) (Psa 113:5-6; Joh 8:23). He sovereignly rules over all (Dan 4:35). I believe that God is an infinite being who cannot be contained in space (Jer 23:23-24), restrained from any location (Psa 139:7-12), confined to time (Psa 90:2; Rev. 1:8) or fully known by the human mind (Rom 11:33). He is also infinite in all His attributes (2Ch 6:18; Job 11:7-9). He exists for eternity (Psa 90:2). He is omnipotent (Job 42:2; Mat 19:26), omnipresent (Psa 139:7-10; Act 17:27-28), and omniscient (Gen 6:5; Pro 5:21). I believe that God is immutable (Jam 1:17). He will never change even though the physical world will be destroyed (Psa 102:26-27). He will also never change His mind (Psa 33:11) or fail to keep His promises (Mal 3:6).

I also believe God has revealed many of His **communicable attributes**. He is holy (Isa 6:1-4), righteous (Gen 18:25; Jer 9:24), and just (Psa 58:11). I believe God is also entirely separate from sin (Hab 1:13). He is completely righteous in all His ways (Psa 45:6) and performs justice in all His doings (Deu 32:4). Even in His wrath He still remains holy (Eph 5:6). I believe God is truthful (Joh 17:17) and faithful (Lam 3:22-23; Heb 10:23). I believe He is genuine (Joh 17:3), trustworthy (1Sa 15:29) and keeps all His promises (1Th 5:24). I believe God's character is one of perfect love (1Jo 4:7-11), mercy (Rom 11:30-32), and grace (Tit 2:11). Furthermore, I believe that God demonstrates His love through His benevolence to man (Joh 3:16; 1Jo 4:16), His grace (Eph 2:8-9), His mercy (Psa 103:13), and His persistence in extending salvation to unbelievers (2Pe 3:9).

I believe that there is only one true God; the God of the Bible (Deu 6:4; Isa 43:10-11; 45:21-23) and that He is both one (**unity**) and yet at the same time three (**trinity**). The three persons of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) each have three distinct roles with each person clearly identified as fully God (Mat 28:19; 2Co 13:14; Gal 4:4-6).

In the Bible, God has many **titles**. **Elohim** is the primary title for God in the OT (used over 2,000 times as a plural form, it emphasizes God's majesty) (Psa 18:31). Others titles emphasize His covenant keeping (**El Shaddai** - God Almighty) (Gen 17:1), His transcendence above creation (**El Elyon** - God Most High) (Gen 14:18-20), His eternality (**El Olam** - God Everlasting) (Isa 40:28), and His Lordship (**Adonai** - Lord, Master) (Psa 2:4). **Theos** is the primary designation for God in the NT (Act 17:24) and the frequently used title of **Kurios** also points to His Lordship (Rev 4:11). I also believe God has revealed His personal name (**Yahweh**) by which He can be known and called (Exo 3:14). This most frequently used name for God in the OT communicates His self-existence (Exo 3:14) (cf. Joh 8:58 where Jesus makes the same claim) through using the verb "I AM."

I believe that **God the Father** is the first person of the Godhead and the eternal Father of the Son (Eph 1:3-4). As the Father, He gave the Son to be the Savior of the world (Joh 3:16), and those who believe in the Son become children of the Father (Joh 1:12; 1Jo 4:14). I believe that God the Father predestines believers to salvation and then calls them to Himself (1Pe 1:2; Joh

6:44). He works in the lives of all believers for His own glory (Eph 4:4-6), and it is to Him that believers are instructed to pray (Mat 6:9-15). He is the one whom we worship (Joh 4:23) and He is the one who cares for our daily needs (Mat 10:29-31). He is constantly working in our lives to cause us to be spiritually fruitful (Joh 15:2) and to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29).

The Work of God

I believe that God **created** the world out of nothing, using no previously existing materials (Gen 1:1; Rom 4:17; Heb 11:3). I believe that God is the very essence, source, and sustainer of all life (Joh 5:26; Mat 6:25-33). Furthermore, He created through the power of His voice (Psa 33:9), and when He finished there was nothing in it that He could not call “good” (Gen 1:31). I believe Scripture teaches a literal 24-hour day creation in six literal days (Gen 1; Exo 20:9-11). I believe that God’s creative work is all encompassing and includes everything in heaven and earth. Also, Scriptures makes it clear that all three persons of the Godhead were involved in the creative work. The Father created through the Son (Eph 3:9; 1 Co 8:6), the Son was the agent of creation (Joh 1:3; Heb. 1:10), and evidently the Spirit of God took part in creation as well as He “moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen 1:2; cf. also Job 26:13; Psa 104:30; Isa 40:12-13). I believe God’s ultimate purpose in creation is to bring glory to Himself. He does this both as inanimate creation points to His glory (Psa 19:1), and as created beings proclaim His worthiness (Rev 4:11). As a part of His plan for glorifying Himself, God will create a new heaven and new earth to replace this current one that has been corrupted with sin and death (2Pe 3:13; Isa 65:17).

I believe God, in His providence, **preserves** His creation. Without His active preservation (Neh 9:6) the world as we know it would fail (Col 1:17), because His word is upholding all things (Heb 1:3). He also provides for the needs of man and animals (Rom 1:19; Psa 147:8-9). He provides for His children in a special way (Psa 66:8-9), promising to supply all their needs in Christ Jesus (Php 4:19).

I believe that God also **governs** all the activity of His creation. This means He directly controls everything from the lightning (Psa 135:5-7), to the seasons, and the establishing and removing of rulers (Dan 2:21). He gives life and He takes it away (1Sa 2:6-7). Although man may have a plan, ultimately it is the Lord that works out His will (Pro 16:33; 19:21; Eph 1:11). Nothing is able to prevent Him from fully and completely doing what He desires (Dan 4:35). God so governs the lives of believers that He is continually working out all things for their good (Rom 8:28) through the constant shepherding of His Son (Joh 10:11). God uses means to bring about His will, and I believe that humans always have a responsibility to do God’s revealed will. When they do not believe and obey, God will hold them responsible (Eph 1:11; Rom 9:19-21; Mic 6:8). In His providence, God also works through the prayers of believers (Jam 5:16; Luk 11:8-10), though He will always answer according to His will (Joh 14:13-14). At times, God has chosen to demonstrate His power over nature, confirm His word, and bring glory to Himself through the use of miracles (Jos 10:12-14; 2Ki 6:6; Mar 4:39; Luk 5:24; Act 4:21-22). I believe the greatest miracle is the resurrection of Christ (1Co 15).

CHRISTOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST

The Person of Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ is **fully God** (Joh 1:1; Tit 2:13) and has existed from all eternity (Joh 8:58). He Himself testified to be one with the Father (Joh 10:30) and equated receiving the Son with receiving the Father (Mat 10:40). Jesus is called by several key titles in Scripture. In the OT, He was revealed as the **Messiah** (**Christ** in the NT), emphasizing that He is the anointed one (Psa 2:2; Act 4:27). He is also called the **Son of God**, emphasizing His equality with God

while also pointing to His role as second person of the Godhead (Mat 4:3; Luk 1:35; Joh 5:18-19; Joh 20:31). Jesus most often referred to Himself as the **Son of Man**, emphasizing His human nature and His divine rights (Dan 7:13; Mat 16:27-28). Also, Scripture calls Him **the Word**, because Jesus is the ultimate revealer of communication from the Father (Joh 1:1, 14).

I believe the Bible attests to Jesus' **divine attributes**, some of which are eternity (Joh 8:58), immutability (Heb 13:8), omniscience (Mat 11:27), and righteousness (1Jo 2:1). Jesus is also the agent through which the Father created the world (Joh 1:3-4) and He is the one who sustains that creation (Heb 1:3). He has the power to give life or take it away (Joh 5:21) and is the ultimate judge of all (Act 17:31). In His earthly ministry He received the worship of those who recognized Him as God (Mat 21:9; 28:8-9) and one day all creation will bow the knee to Him (Php 2:9-11).

I also believe that Jesus Christ is **fully man**. I believe that when He came to earth in His incarnation (Gal 4:4) Jesus was **born of a virgin** as predicted (Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14), through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit (Mat 1:20; Luk 1:35). I believe Jesus took on full humanity (1Jn 1:1; Joh 1:14; 1Ti 3:16; Luk 2:52) and His lineage traces all the way back to Adam (Luk 3:23-38). In taking on Himself human flesh, He became and will always be **one person yet with two distinct natures** (Col 2:9; Joh 1:14). He is both fully God and fully man at the same time (Rom 1:3-4; 9:5). Neither His humanity nor His deity is diminished in any degree, but the two natures are joined together in one Person who is the God-Man (Isa 9:6). I believe that in His incarnation Jesus temporarily set aside aspects of both His position and His full exercise of divine rights (kenosis) (Php 2:5-8), only using them as the Father willed (Joh 4:34; 10:30). As a man he experienced the full range of human experiences like hunger (Mat 4:2), thirst (Joh 19:28), and weariness (Joh 4:6) and human emotions like love (Joh 13:23) compassion (Mat 9:36) and anger (Mar 3:5). However, although Jesus experienced temptation to sin (Heb 4:15), He did not and could not sin (Joh 14:30; Jam 1:13), and He lived a perfect and sinless life (Joh 8:29; 2Co 5:21; 1Jo 3:5). I oppose any unbiblical views that in any way diminish His deity, His humanity or the union of His two natures in one Person.

The Work of Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus perfectly fulfills the three OT anointed offices of **prophet, priest, and king**. As a **prophet** Jesus is the perfect mouthpiece of God (Act 3:20-22), revealing truths about His Father (Heb 1:1; Joh 1:18). He gave understanding of His fulfillment of OT prophecies (Mat 5:17) while also revealing new prophecies (Mat 11:20-24), and giving spiritual enlightenment to His followers (which would continue through the Holy Spirit; cf. Joh 14:26; 16:13). As a **priest** (Heb 5:6-10), Jesus is the perfect **mediator** between God and men (1Ti 2:5), and is able to save and intercede for those who believe (Heb 7:24-27; 10:12). As the perfect **king**, Jesus will reign eternally and universally from the throne of David (Gen 49:10; Psa 2:6; Isa 9:6-7). Presently, He rules over the physical world (Col 1:17) and He also rules His church (Col 1:18). Although right now He has been given kingship over all (Heb 1:8), that kingship will only be completed in the future (Php 2:9-11; Rev 19:16).

I believe Jesus willingly laid down His life for our sins (Joh 10:17-18). In freely offering Himself as a once for all **sacrifice** for sin (Heb 10:5-18) to God on our behalf (1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 5:2), Christ died in our place (2Co 5:21) and paid the **legal penalty** for our sin (Mar 10:45; 1Pe 3:18). He gave Himself to be the **propitiation** for sin, fully satisfying God's righteous wrath (Rom 3:23-26; 1Jo 2:2). Christ also accomplished our **redemption**, purchasing us back from the slave market of sin (1Co 6:20), and from the curse of the Law (Gal 3:13). His work was one of **reconciliation** to God, bringing us back into a relationship of peace with our Creator (Rom

5:10-11; 2Co 5:18). I believe Christ died for all (1Ti 4:10; Joh 3:16) and His death was sufficient to save all (1Jo 2:2; Isa 53:6) but that it only becomes effective for a person when he accepts God's free gift (Rom 5:15-19). I believe Jesus' **atonement** paid for the sins of mankind, but this does not mean that physical healing also results from spiritual salvation. Only in the end of time will all things, including physical, be made whole (Rom 8:19-25).

I believe Jesus **rose bodily** from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion as predicted by OT Scripture (Psa 16:10) and by Jesus Himself (Mat 28:5-7). Jesus' resurrection displayed the Father's acceptance of His work on the cross (Heb 5:7; Rom 1:4) and His victory over sin and death (Rom 6:4-7). I believe Jesus gave many proofs of His resurrection: the empty tomb, the condition of the linen wrappings (Joh 20:1-8), the multiplicity of appearances in His resurrected body (Mat 28:1-10; Luk 24:31; 1Co 15:5-8), and the radical transformation of His disciples (Act 2).

I believe Christ **ascended** to Heaven after He completed His earthly work (Act 1:9). He then fulfilled His promise to send the Holy Spirit (Joh 16:7). In His glorified state (Joh 17:5) He is enthroned at the Father's right hand (Psa 110:1) where He sustains creation (Heb 1:3), intercedes for believers (Heb 4:14-16), and is the living Head of His body, the church (Col 1:18; Eph 5:22-33). I believe an unknown, future day is coming in which Christ will **rapture** believers (1Co 15:51-58; 1Th 4:13-18), and after the period of tribulation will return in a **Second Coming** to judge the world and ultimately rule over all (Rev 19:11-16; Joh 5:27-29).

PNEUMATOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Person of the Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. Scripture teaches that He has a mind (Rom 8:27) and not only desires to communicate what He thinks (1Co 2:10-13), but He has a specific will about certain situations (1Co 12:11) and exhibits emotions that display His personality (Isa 63:10; Rom 15:30). I believe the Holy Spirit can be sinned against when people blaspheme against Him (Mat 12:31-32), grieve Him by their sins (Eph 4:30), insult Him (Heb 10:29), and lie to Him (Act 5:3-4). His working can also be quenched (1Th 5:19), resisted (Act 7:51), and tested (Acts 5:9). I believe the Holy Spirit possesses each of the divine attributes. He is eternal (Joh 14:16; Heb 9:14), holy (Psa 51:11), loving (Gal 5:22), omnipresent (Psa 139:7-8), omniscient (Isa 40:13-14), and true (1Jo 5:6). The Holy Spirit is clearly distinguished from the other two members of the Trinity (Mat 3:16-17; Mat 28:19; Gal 4:4-6), and yet He also has full equality with the Father and the Son (2Co 13:14; Eph 4:4-6). He proceeds from the Father and is sent by both the Father and the Son (Joh 14:16, 26; 15:26).

The Work of the Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the world (Gen 1:2), both giving life (Psa 104:30) and sustaining it (Job 34:14-15). At points throughout the OT, the Spirit was active in enabling people for God appointed tasks (Jdg 6:34) and was the means by which God inscripturated His Word in both the Old and New Testaments (2Pe 1:21). I believe the Holy Spirit played a unique role in Jesus' earthly ministry. Not only did He enable Jesus' virgin conception (Luk 1:35), but He also anointed Jesus at His baptism (Luk 3:21-22), empowering Him for ministry (Acts 10:38), and leading Him (Luk 4:1) to accomplish His sacrificial work (Heb 9:14). The Holy Spirit also took part in raising Jesus from the dead (Rom 1:4; 8:11).

Today, the Holy Spirit **convicts** people of their guilt (Joh 16:8-11) and **restrains** evil in the world (Gen 6:3; 2Th 2:7). He also works in the lives of people who believe in Jesus to **regenerate** them (the new birth) (Joh 3:3-6). The baptism of the Holy Spirit (1Co 12:13), which

occurs at salvation, unites all believers in the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit then permanently indwells believers (Joh 14:6) acting as a down payment (**seal**) of their future glorification (2Co 1:22; Eph 4:30). He constantly works to **sanctify** believers (Rom 15:16; 1Co 6:11) through teaching them (Joh 14:26), enabling spiritual fruit (Gal 5:22-23), empowering them to do God's will (Eph 3:16), and **interceding** for them (Rom 8:26-27). He guides believers into truth (Joh 16:13), and then glorifies Christ in that truth (Joh 16:14). He also gives them assurance that they are God's children (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6).

I also believe the Holy Spirit gives each believer at least one **spiritual gift** for the benefit of the body (1Co 12:4, 7, 11; 14:26; Eph 4:12). Some of those gifts are manual, like service and showing mercy (Rom 12:7, 8), while others are verbal like exhortation, teaching (1Co 12:28), and a word of wisdom (1Co 12:8). I believe that some of the gifts to the early church (apostolic sign gifts) were only temporary and are no longer given because the foundation of the church is complete (Eph 2:20; Act 4:16; Heb 2:3-4; 2Co 12:12). I believe that **filling** of the Spirit (Eph 5:18) refers to a lifestyle of not grieving or quenching the Spirit (Eph 4:30; 1Th 5:19), but instead choosing to walk by the Spirit (Gal 5:16).

ANGELOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF ANGELS

I believe God created angels sometime prior to the Fall of man (Psa 148:2-5; Col 1:16). They are countless in number (Rev 5:11) and do not propagate, but each is a personal creature (Mar 12:25). They live eternally and are not subject to death (Luk 20:36). They are also superior to man, but their abilities are still limited (Dan 10:13; Heb 2:7; 2Pe 2:11). I also believe they were originally created good and holy (Gen 1:31).

Unfallen Angels

Among those angels that still serve God today, several play significant roles in Scripture. Michael serves as archangel, evidently the highest of his kind. He appears in a dispute with Satan over the body of Moses (Jud 9) and also again as he protects the nation of Israel (Dan 10:13; 12:1). Ultimately he will engage in waging war with Israel against the dragon (Rev 12:7-9). Gabriel, another angel of great significance, served as God's messenger to explain visions to Daniel (Dan 8:15-16; 9:21) and to foretell the birth of both John the Baptist (Luk 1:11-20) and Jesus (Luk 1:26-27). Other angels serve as unnamed messengers (Gen 19:1), and some are engaged solely in the worship of God. Cherubim are always closely associated with the glory of God (Eze 10) and Seraphim are six winged creatures that surround God's throne and eternally proclaim His holiness (Isa 6:2-3).

In addition to the direct worship of God, angels also function in other ways. During Jesus' earthly ministry, angels ministered to Him after He was tempted in the wilderness (Mat 4:11) and also when He agonized in Gethsemane (Luk 22:43). They were the first to announce His birth (Luk 2:10-12) and His resurrection (Mat 28:5-7). They were present at His ascension (Act 1:10) and will return with Him at His Second Coming (Mat 25:31).

I believe angels are also active in the lives of believers as God's ministering spirits (Heb 1:14). Although their presence is often imperceptible, Scripture records that at times they bring answers to prayer (Dan 9:20-21), protect from danger (Psa 34:7; Act 12:7) and even encourage (Act 27:23-25) and guide (Act 8:26). They also accompany believers at their death (Luk 16:22). One day, they will act as God's agents in bringing judgment on the world (Mat 13:41-42).

Satan

I believe Satan (Lucifer) is also one of God's created angels. Originally without sin, like all of God's creation, he evidently functioned in a unique position above the other angels in leading

the worship of God (Eze 28:12-19). However, sometime prior to the Fall of man, pride entered into his heart, and he led a rebellion for which he was cast out of heaven (Eze 28:16; Isa 14:12-14). Through Satan, sin was introduced to the earth as he tempted Eve in the form of a serpent (Gen 3:1). After Adam and Eve sinned, God placed a curse on Satan, predicting his ultimate destruction (Gen 3:15). During the tribulation he will war against God and His people (Rev 12:13). He will then be bound in the abyss during the Millennium (Rev 20:2-3) and afterward be released one final time to lead the nations against God (Rev 20:7-10). Following this, he will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where he will be tormented forever and ever along with his demons (Mat 25:41). I believe Satan is active today as the great adversary of Christ and His followers (Mat 4:10; 1Pe 5:8). In Scripture he is called the evil one (Joh 17:15), the great red dragon, who commits warfare and destruction (Rev 12:3-9), and Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons (Mat 12:24). I also believe he is the god of this age who blinds unbelievers (2Co 4:4), controlling them so they continue to disobey God (Eph 2:2). He is the father of lies (Joh 8:44) and the Devil, constantly accusing and slandering believers (Mat 4:1; Rev 12:10). He also tempts people to sin (Mat 4:3), but ultimately flees when believers resist Him with God's Word (Eph 6:10-17; 1Pe 5:8-10; Jam 4:7).

Fallen Angels

I believe when Satan sinned a great number of angels followed him in his rebellion (2Pe 2:4; Jud 6). He now rules over them (Mat 12:24; 25:41; Rev 12:7). These demons are also referred to as unclean spirits (Mat 10:1) and spiritual forces of wickedness (Eph 6:12). They are indeed powerful (Mar 9:22) and intelligent spirit beings (Mat 8:16; Luk 10:20), at times even causing sickness (Luk 13:11), and yet they are neither omnipresent (Mat 8:31) nor omniscient (Mar 1:24). While they can possess unsaved people (Mar 1:32; Luk 8:36), they cannot possess believers, since the Holy Spirit lives in them (Joh 14:16). Demons actively seek to snatch away the seed of God's Word (Mat 13:19) and propagate false doctrine (1Ti 4:1). At times they may seek to entice God's children (2Co 11:3) whose refuge is to bring their thoughts into subjection to Christ (2Co 10:5; Php 4:6-8), because God is greater than all (1Jo 4:4). I believe some fallen angels may today be in permanent confinement (2Pe 2:4) and others under a more temporary confinement (Luk 8:31; Rev 9:2), but they all await final judgment (Mat 25:41).

ANTHROPOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

The Origin of Man

I believe God created man on the sixth of the 24 hour, literal days of Genesis 1. Forming man out of the dust that God had created on the third day, God breathed life into his nostrils (Gen 2:7). God then met man's need for a companion by forming a woman from his rib (Gen 2:21-22). I do not find Scriptural support for the gap theory and I also oppose the unbiblical theories of atheistic evolution, theistic evolution, and progressive creationism.

The Nature of Man

I believe God created man (male and female) in His own image (Gen 1:26-27). This means He created man as a living, rational being (Act 17:28), able to make decisions (Gen 1:28) and enter into a relationship with Himself (Gen 3:8). As Creator, God also is the rightful owner of man (Mat 22:20-21). I believe God created man in righteousness, holiness, and knowledge (Eph 4:24). While these aspects were marred at the Fall, believers are able to be renewed in this righteous image of God (Rom 8:29; Col 3:10). God created mankind to have dominion over His creation and multiply in it (Gen 1:26-30).

I believe God created mankind with both material and immaterial aspects (2Co 5:1; 1Th 5:23). Jesus emphasized the distinction between the body and the soul (Mat 10:28; 16:26). Upon

death, the material part of man returns to the dust (Gen 3:19; Ecc 12:7). I believe Christians are to glorify God with their body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19), by presenting it a living sacrifice to be used for God's purposes (Rom 12:1; Php 1:20).

Scripture does not speak directly on the origin of the immaterial part of mankind, but I believe the most significant point is that each person is an individual creation of God (Psa 139:13-16; Isa 42:5; Zec 12:1; Heb 12:9) from the point of conception (Gen 1:27; 5:3; Psa 51:5; Heb 7:9-10). The immaterial part of man is referred to in multiple ways throughout Scripture, but I believe the significant factor is that humans are both material and immaterial and accountable to their Creator (Ecc 12:7; Mat 10:28). Most of the following aspects overlap, but each reflects something about the nature of man as a complete being. The **soul** (Deu 10:12; Mat 16:26) can refer to the whole person, or just the spiritual aspect. The **heart** (Mat 15:19-20) is a broad term that often refers to the seat of intellect and emotion. The **conscience** (Rom 2:15; 1Ti 4:2; Heb 10:22) is a God-given, internal witness of right and wrong (though it too is marred by the Fall) (1Ti 4:2). The **mind** (Rom 1:28; 12:2) refers to the thinking processes, and the **will** (Eph 2:3; 2Pe 1:21) to the desires. Finally, I believe the **flesh** (Rom 8:7) is the unredeemable part of man that is always at war with God and which the believer must combat by walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16-25).

Marriage

I believe God created male and female as equal persons in their standing before Him (Gal 3:28; 1Pe 3:7). I also believe that God has given each gender a complementary role (Gen 1:27; 2:18; Mar 10:6; Rom 1:26-27). The woman was created in order to be a helper for man (Gen 2:18; 1Co 11:7-9), who was appointed by God to be the loving leader (Col 3:18-19). I believe God intended for the marriage relationship to be one man and one woman joined in one flesh by covenant (Pro 2:16-17) until parted by death (Gen 2:22-24; Mat 19:5-6; Rom 7:1-3; 1Co 7:39). I also believe that God gave this relationship for companionship (Pro 5:18-20; Ecc 9:9), for raising a godly offspring (Psa 127:3), and for a picture of Christ and His bride, the church (Eph 5:22-32). I believe God prohibits a believer from marrying an unbeliever (2Co 6:14-15). I also believe divorce was never part of God's original intention (Mal 2:14-16; Mat 19:8). Because remarriage after divorce is clearly prohibited in numerous places (Mar 10:11-12; Luk 16:18; 1Co 7:11), and because the exception clause (Mat 5:32; 19:9) is unclear, I would not be comfortable performing a marriage ceremony for a divorced person. I would make exception for the remarriage of a couple who divorced but then biblically reconciled (neither one having married anyone else in the interim).

Sexual Morality

I believe God condemns as sin any deviation from His plan for sexual intimacy between one man and one woman within the covenant of marriage (Gen 2:24; Rom 1:24-32). These aberrations include, but are not limited to homosexuality (Lev 18:22; Rom 1:26-27), polygamy (Deu 17:17; Mat 19:4-6), fornication (1Th 4:3-8), adultery (Lev 18:20), incest (1Co 5:1), and bestiality (Deu 27:21). I believe God's grace is able to deliver people from bondage to these sins (1Co 6:9-11).

The Fall of Man

I believe God gave Adam and Eve a test of obedience in the garden by commanding that they could partake freely of any tree except one (Gen 2:16-17). Satan, entering as a serpent, subsequently tempted Eve through questioning God's Word (Gen 3:1) and contradicting God's promise of the consequence of death (Gen 3:4). Then he told a lie mixed with truth, promising they would be like God, knowing good and evil (Gen 3:5). Ultimately, Satan tempted Eve

through the inordinate desires of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (Gen 3:6; 1Jo 2:16). Satan would later tempt Jesus in these same three areas (Mat 4:1-11). I believe Eve, being deceived (1Ti 2:14), ate the fruit, and then gave it to Adam who also ate.

I believe Adam and Eve's sin resulted in God's direct judgment. First, God judged the serpent, causing its kind to crawl on the ground, and even more significantly He judged Satan in promising that there would be enmity between his seed and the woman's seed (Gen 3:15). I believe God's promise that the woman's seed would crush the serpent's head (who had bruised its heel) looked far ahead to the work of Christ on the cross (Heb 2:14). I also believe the woman received as part of her judgment the curse of pain in childbirth (Gen 3:16). I believe God's judgment of Adam involved a curse on the ground (Gen 3:17-19), and a curse of laboring in toil to produce food. Also, God judged Adam (as the representative of mankind) and his future descendants by universal death (Rom 5:12). These judgments not only affected mankind, but the whole creation, which now groans under the Fall (Rom 8:19-21).

HAMARTIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

The Origin of Sin

I believe God is not the author of sin (Jam 1:13; 1Jo 1:5). God does, however, providentially work through man's sin to do His will (Act 2:23; 2Sa 16:10). I believe mankind is totally depraved in sin. This does not mean that every person behaves as wickedly as they could, but that sin has affected every part of their being to the very depths (Jer 17:9). This also means that even man's best actions cannot earn favor in God's sight (Isa 64:6).

I believe man's sin nature and guilt is a direct result of **Adam's sin**. Scripture seems to indicate that this universal guilt is because of Adam's sinning either as our representative head or as the father of our entire human race (or both) (Rom 5:12-14; Heb 7:9-10). Scripture teaches that people are born with a sin nature, and they begin to go astray as soon as they are born (Psa 14:3; 51:5; 58:3). Although this may not seem fair in our limited human understanding, it is helpful to remember on the other side of the argument that salvation is available through one man's (Christ's) act of obedience (Rom 5:19). I reject aberrant views that teach man's innate goodness, his ability to take steps toward God, or his ability to believe without God giving him faith.

The Nature of Sin

I believe **sin** is any action, attitude, or thought that fails to conform to the holiness of God. Scripture uses a number of terms in defining sin. Sin is **missing the mark** of God's righteous standard, whether by commission (Rom 3:23) or omission (Rom 14:23). It is also the **transgression** of God's perfect law (Rom 4:15; 5:14; Hos 6:7). Sin is a **rebellion** or throwing off of God's law (**lawlessness**) (1Jo 3:4; Tit 2:14). Not only does sin refer to specific acts, but it also refers to the **evil** and **corruption** in the very being of man, often referred to as man's sin nature (Rom 7:21). I believe all sin makes a person **guilty** before God (Jam 2:10), but I also believe some sins are particularly heinous and will carry greater consequences (Mat 11:20-24; Joh 19:11). I believe the unpardonable sin made reference to by Jesus can only be committed by unbelievers who persistently reject the power of Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit, instead attributing it to demonic activity (Mat 12:18, 31-32). I believe some sins are of such a nature that God may choose to bring about the early death of those who commit them. Even believers may bring this upon themselves, but it does not affect their eternal security (1Jo 5:16-17 probably refers to 1Co 11:30). Although believers do not become immune to sin, they are free from slavery to it (Rom 6:6).

SOTERIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Salvation

I believe that before the creation of the world God sovereignly chose certain people to be saved, not on the basis of their works, but according to His will (**election**) (Eph 1:4; Rom 9:11; 2Ti 1:9). I believe God marked out beforehand certain people (**predestination**), to be adopted as sons (Eph 1:5), to give Him praise for His grace (Eph 1:6), to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29), and ultimately to be glorified (Rom 8:30). I also believe Scripture teaches that God foreknew people prior to predestinating them (Rom 8:29). He then chose them according to that **foreknowledge** (1Pe 1:2). Although Scripture does not explain why God foreknows believers, Scripture does repeatedly teach man's inability to come to God on his own (Joh 6:44, 64-65; 8:43-45; 1Co 2:14). I believe each person has a responsibility to believe the gospel and if they refuse they are lost because of that refusal to believe (Joh 3:36).

I believe God freely offers salvation to all who will accept it (Mat 11:28; Rom 10:13; Tit 2:11). In order for people to understand the seriousness of their fallen condition, the Holy Spirit must **convict** them of the truth of His Word (Rom 2:15; 1Th 1:5). I believe God uses the Law as a schoolmaster to teach people of their desperate need for Christ (Gal 3:24). The Holy Spirit also **illuminates** their previously darkened mind so that they are able to understand the truth (1Co 2:14; 1Jo 5:20). Unless the Father draws a person to His Son, no one can come (Joh 6:44). When God saves a person He does it entirely by His **grace**, because no one has any merit of his own (Eph 2:8-9).

I believe Jesus is the only way of salvation (Joh 14:6). A person must turn from his sin in **repentance** (Isa 55:6-7), showing genuine sorrow over his sin and sinfulness (2Co 7:9-10). He must also turn to God in obedient **faith** (Rom 1:5), trusting with his entire being (Rom 10:9). He must believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (1Co 15:3-4), Who is both Lord and Christ (Act 2:36; Rom 10:9-10). I believe a person that puts his faith in the gospel, is born again (**regeneration**) (Joh 3:3, 5; Tit 3:5). This results in a new nature (2Pe 1:4) and a new self (Eph 4:24) that is not just a renewal of the old, but an entirely new creature (2Co 5:17) that now has the ability to serve God (Rom 6:13). This new life is made possible through the believer's **union with Christ**, who is their life (Joh 15:1-8; Rom 6:5). I believe God **justifies** the believer, forgiving his sin and legally **imputing** the righteousness of Jesus Christ to his account (Rom 5:1-2). Those who believe also become sons of God (Gal 3:26; Joh 1:12-13). As legal heirs, they share an inheritance with Christ (Eph 1:5, 11). They are able to address God as Father and speak to Him personally about their needs (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). Believers still await the full fruition of **adoption** in the future redemption of their body (Rom 8:22-23).

Although Scripture does not speak directly concerning the death of infants and young children, I believe several key passages seem to indicate God will not condemn them (2Sa 12:23; Jon 4:11; Deut 1:39; Isa 7:16; Mat 18:3).

Sanctification and Glorification

I believe that at salvation a believer obtains a holy standing before God through the finished work of Christ (Heb 10:10, 14). I also believe the Bible teaches a **progressive sanctification** in which each believer must seek greater Christlikeness (Col 3:1; Rom 8:12-13). This is done by choosing to abide in Christ (Joh 15:4-6) through the vital relationship of His word (Joh 15:3; Act 20:32; 2Ti 3:16-17; Psa 119), and by praying (Heb 4:16), in submission to the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:16, 22-23). The believer's life is hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). He has died with Christ to sin (Rom 6:5-7), and he must constantly choose to put to death sin and its lusts (Rom 6:12-13). I do not believe Christians will ever be entirely free from sin in this life

to the point of perfection, but they will experience the constant cleansing of Christ's blood as they seek to walk in the Light and confess their sin (1Jo 1:5-10).

I believe in the **eternal security** of all true believers. This security is based on the work of the Father from eternity past (Rom 8:28-30), the Son who always intercedes for them (Heb 7:25), and the Holy Spirit who seals them (Eph 4:30). The believer's security rests on God who does the saving (Joh 10:27-29). A lack of perseverance indicates a person was never a true believer in the first place (Joh 15:2; 1Jn 2:19). Some believers may experience lack of **assurance** about their salvation. Paul exhorts each person to examine his true spiritual condition (2Co 13:5). I believe doubts of salvation are the result of a self-ward focus (1Jo 5:11-13) or a lack of ongoing growth in Christian belief and behavior (2Pe 1:8-9). Scripture contains many warning passages addressed to true believers and professing believers. While at times it would appear that true believers can be lost (Heb 6:1-8; 2Pe 3:17), other passages clarify that the real issue is whether a person has a saving relationship with Jesus Christ (Mat 7:22-23; Joh 15:5). Every true believer will **persevere** to the end (Rev 2:7; 21:7). Believers will one day be presented to Christ entirely holy and blameless (Eph 5:26-27), and ultimately they will experience the final stage of **glorification** when they are given resurrection bodies which are transformed into the full likeness of Christ in all His communicable attributes (1Co 15:42-44; 2Co 3:18; Php 3:21; 1Jo 3:2).

ECCLESIOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The Universal Church

At salvation, a person is baptized with the Spirit, becoming a part of the **body** of Christ, which universally unites all believers in this present church age (Mar 1:8; 1Co 12:13; Gal 3:28; Eph 4:4). Christ is the Head of the body, and as the preeminent One, He governs it (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18). He also provides gifts that each member would be able to build up the other members and function together as a one (Eph 4:11-16; Col 2:19). Scripture also pictures the church as a **living building**, of which Christ is the chief cornerstone, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells as His temple (Eph 2:20-22). I believe every believer can enter directly into God's presence, needing no other Mediator than Jesus Christ to whom he is joined (Heb 4:14-16; 1Pe 2:5; Rev 1:6). I believe the church is also the **bride** of Christ (Eph 5:25) whom He loved and gave Himself for. As His espoused bride, the church awaits His return (Joh 14:1-3; 1Th 4:16-17). Jesus is also the Shepherd of His **flock** (Joh 10:16) and the True Vine who gives life and fruit-bearing ability to His **branches** (Joh 15:1-8). In addition, the church is the **pillar and support of the truth** (1Ti 3:15).

I believe Christ promised He would build His **church** (Mat 16:18) and that it began when the Holy Spirit came (Act 1:5) at Pentecost (Act 2:1-4). I believe the NT church is distinct from OT Israel, which is limited to those of physical descent from Abraham (1Co 10:32). I believe the church is part of **God's kingdom**. God has always sovereignly ruled everywhere for all time (this is His universal kingdom) (Lam 5:19; Psa 103:19). Today, true believers are translated into the kingdom of God's Son (Col 1:13) and they submit to His reign (Rom 14:17).

The Local Church

I believe the local church is to engage in weekly worship on the first day of the week, **the Lord's Day** (Act 20:7; 1Co 16:2; Rev 1:10), which marks the day of Christ's resurrection (Joh 20:19). This worship is spiritual in nature, and involves the believer's offering of his entire self to God in accordance with God's revealed truth (Joh 4:24; Rom 12:1-2). The early church gathered for the purpose of doctrinal instruction, Christian fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer (Act 2:42-47; 11:26; 1Co 4:17). Consistent teaching of **sound doctrine** provides the

regular sustenance that gives spiritual growth (1Ti 4:6) and protects from false doctrine (1Ti 1:3). Also the **fellowship** is intended to strengthen each believer (Rom 15:14) while building unity through prayer and observance of the **Lord's Supper** (Php 2:1-4). The early church also saw **unbelievers** come to the Lord (Act 2:47) and **missionaries** sent out from their local congregations (Act 13:2; 15:3). I believe the church is responsible for carrying out Christ's commission to make disciples of all the nations (Mat 28:18-20).

I believe a number of NT directives imply **church membership** within a local body. This allows believers to place themselves under spiritual leaders (Heb 13:17), to exercise their spiritual gift (Eph 4:11-16), and to give monetary resources (1Co 16:2). It also allows the local body of believers to keep them accountable for regular gathering (Heb 10:24-25) and practice church discipline if needed (1Co 5:1-5). I believe a congregational polity most closely reflects an accurate picture of the early church. Multiple passages indicate the involvement, not just of church leaders, but also of the entire congregation in important decisions (Act 15:12, 22-25). I believe Scripture teaches two main offices of qualified (1Ti 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9) male (1Ti 2:12) leadership in the church: **elder** (pastor/overseer) and **deacon**. I believe in a plurality of elders (Act 14:23; 20:17), who all "rule" (1Ti 5:17), and a subset whose main role is public teaching and preaching (Act 6:4; 1Ti 5:17). I also believe each church should appoint qualified men to serve as deacons (1Ti 3:8-13) who can serve to meet the physical needs of those within the church (Act 6:1-6). I do not believe the office of deacon is open to women (1Ti 2:12), but women can ably serve within the body (Rom 16:1).

I believe God has given the church three specific areas of **separation** in order to preserve unity and purity within the body. All believers must separate **from the world** in the sense that they do not put themselves under its influence or join in its sinful practices (1Jo 2:15-17; Eph 5:11). However, this does not mean they should live in isolation, otherwise they will not be able to reach the lost (Joh 17:15-18). Also, believers must identify and separate **from false teachers** who will seek to lead people into error (Act 20:28-30; Gal 1:8-9; 2Jn 9-11). Finally, believers must be willing to separate **from persistently and blatantly disobedient Christians** (2Th 3:6). However, care should be taken to follow Jesus' teaching of Matthew 18:15-18, with the ultimate goal of bringing the sinning believer to repentance (2Th 3:14-15).

I also believe Jesus established **two ordinances** for the church to practice: baptism and the Lord's Supper. I believe **baptism** is a **step of obedience** which identifies the believer with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and new life (Mat 28:19; Act 2:41; Rom 6:4-5). I believe baptism by immersion best portrays this **outward picture of the inward reality** and is the most accurate understanding of the original Greek (Act 8:38). I also believe that only believers should be baptized after testimony of their true regeneration (Act 2:41). I believe Jesus instituted the **Lord's Supper** on the night before His crucifixion as a **memorial** of His death (Mat 26:26-29). Believers are to partake of the broken bread and fruit of the vine as a remembrance of Jesus' broken body and shed blood (1Co 11:24-25), soberly examining their lives for unconfessed sin (1Co 11:27-29). In doing this, they not only remember what Christ has done, but they look forward to His soon return (1Co 11:26), in fellowship with other believers (1Co 10:17).

ESCHATOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

Individual Eschatology

I believe the Bible teaches every person will **die physically** (Heb 9:27), at which point their physical body and soul will be separated (Jam 2:26). This death is the result of sin's wages (Rom 6:23; 1Co 15:56), which affects all men through Adam (Rom 5:12). Scripture teaches that the lost will experience spiritual death in a place of eternal torment (Luk 16:19-31), while believers will enter immediately into God's presence (2Co 5:8). Scripture uses the term "heaven" in three different ways. At times it refers to the earth's atmosphere (Psa 147:8), while at other times it refers to the celestial heavens (Gen 1:14). However, it also refers to the place of God's immediate presence (Mat 6:9), where the righteous enter upon death (Luk 23:43; 2Co 5:8; Php 1:23; 1Th 4:14).

I believe **Hell** (Sheol/Hades) is a place of torment (Luk 16:23), weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mat 13:40-42), unquenchable fire (Mar 9:43-48), and darkness (Mat 22:13), where the wicked are punished at death. At the end of the Millennium, death and Hades will give up the dead in them at the final resurrection (Rev 20:13), and the judgment of the wicked will be intensified when they are cast into the **lake of fire** in their physical bodies for all eternity (Rev 21:8). I believe false teachings like soul sleep and purgatory contradict Scripture (Luk 16:23; Eph 2:8-9). Also, universalism and annihilationism deny clear biblical teaching of eternal punishment for those who do not believe in Jesus (Mat 25:46; Joh 3:36; 2Th 1:8-9).

General Eschatology

I believe Scripture contains many unfulfilled promises that are yet to be fulfilled in the future. I believe a **premillennial** view of Christ's return best accounts for a literal interpretation of the biblical data (Rev 20:1-10) and God's future plan for Israel as distinct from the church.

I believe in the **imminent, pretribulational**, return of Christ to **rapture** the church, with the dead in Christ being raised first and living believers being caught up to meet the Lord in the air (Joh 14:1-3; 1Th 4:13-18; 1Co 15:51-54; Rev 22:20). After the rapture, I believe the works of each believer will be evaluated (not for punishment, but for reward or loss) (1Pe 5:4; Jam 1:12) at the judgment seat of Christ (**bema**) (Rom 14:10; 1Co 3:9-15; 2Co 5:10). During this time, the marriage of the Lamb will occur in heaven (Rev 19:7).

I believe the rapture will begin the 7 year **tribulation** which will be the fulfillment of Daniel's 70th week (Dan 9:24-27). This time period will be one in which God pours out His righteous wrath on unbelieving Israel (Zec 13:8-9) and on the entire unbelieving world (Rev 6:16-17). The **Antichrist** (also called by other names like dragon and beast) will call himself deity (2Th 2:3ff; 1Jo 2:18) and will employ a false prophet in his attempt to force the entire world to bow to him (Rev 16:13; 19:20). All will worship him except the small number of those who will be saved during this time (Rev 12:17). He will then gather all the armies of the world for battle at **Armageddon**, but they will be utterly defeated at the **Second Coming** of Christ with His armies from heaven (Rev 19:11-21).

I believe Satan will then be bound in the abyss, restricting him from further deception, and Christ will begin His **1,000 year reign** on earth (Rev 20:1-3). Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected to join believers in reigning with Christ (Rev 20:4, 6; Dan 12:2; Zech 14:3-9), and all those in the millennial kingdom will conform (at least outwardly) to His rule (Isa 66:18-24). I believe the **Abrahamic Covenant** will finally be fulfilled at this time as Israel receives the extent of the land originally promised to them (Gen 15:18). Christ's earthly, millennial reign as David's Greater Son (Mar 12:37), will also fulfill God's promise in the **Davidic Covenant** (2Sa

7:12-16). And finally, at this time, national Israel will receive the full blessings of the **New Covenant** (Jer 31:31-34; Eze 36:27; 37:26-28), which were also given to NT believers through Christ (Heb 9:15; 10:15-18).

At the end of the Millennium, **Satan** will be released for one final rebellion against God (Rev 20:7-9) before being cast into the **lake of fire** with his demons (Rev 20:10). Then, all the remaining dead will be raised and judged according to their deeds and those whose name is not in the **book of life** will be thrown into the lake of fire (Dan 12:2-3; Rev 20:11-15), where death and Hades are also cast (Rev 20:14).

Finally, after all these things have been accomplished, a **new heaven and earth** will be formed (2Pe 3:10; Rev 21:1) with a **New Jerusalem** extending 1,500 miles in every direction (Rev 21:2, 16). The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb will be its temple (Rev 21:22), and God's people will serve Him, worship Him, and fellowship with Him face to face, basking in His glory for all eternity (Rev 22:3-5)!