

# My Personal Statement of Faith

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There can be no doubt that the true and ultimate statement of our faith is the Bible alone (Rom. 3:2; Rom. 15:4; 2Tim. 3:16; Heb. 4:12; 2Pet. 1:19-21). There is nothing any man can write that will improve upon what God has already written (Deut. 4:2; Deut. 12:32; Matt. 15:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19). But all groups, even the cults, claim that they use the Bible as their supreme and only source, and yet their teachings span everything from the ridiculous and blasphemous, to the orthodox and correct. So who is right? If they all get their stuff from the Bible, then either the Bible is full of contradictions, or their interpretations are full of human viewpoint; because the differences cannot be explained by anything in God or His ability to communicate. God knew what He wrote, and He wrote exactly what He wanted to write. He needs no man to interpret for Him. He needs men to bow humbly before His oracles and shut up so listening and learning can occur.

One solution to the problem of everybody having their own private interpretation of the scriptures has been to develop statements of faith which show a consensus of belief and an assignment of acknowledgement between large groups of people. So then it becomes easy to know what a person or group believes, by a simple statement of their faith. This is good, and this is the way that it should be. We can know quickly what a Baptist church believes, or a Presbyterian, or Methodist, or Anglican, or Reformed etc. If they have compiled a statement, indicated and acknowledged a consensus of affirmation, then we can know where they stand, what they believe and why. This is why names became historically important, the name Baptist in a churches name, is supposed to indicate this consensus among the members, same with Presbyterian, Methodist etc. This is why the alarming trend of churches removing denominational names and affiliations from their church name is dangerous. A Baptist church near my home, decided that it would be beneficial to strike the name Baptist from their name, (with all it's supposed negative associations and connotations), and now instead of being "Tabernacle Baptist Church, (which they were for 40 years), they are "Lifepoint Church". Isn't that nice. What is a Lifepoint Church? Is it a cult? Is it Roman Catholic? They would rather have people not know what they are, (so they can supposedly get more of them to come), then to endorse a consensus of historical and Biblical principles, which set clearly forth their posture and the sacrifice of the thousands of martyrs who died because they refused to be called anything but "Baptist". If they are indeed Baptist, but refuse to associate with the Baptist heritage, doctrines and distinctives, then they are simply deceiving the public, basically lying to them in order to "get them to come". This sort of behavior is extremely popular. Non-denominationalism is "in". Identificationism is "out". And the whole trend is deceptive, alarming, dishonoring to God and hurtful to the strength of the body of Christ.

I believe that these things are true, so I am not ashamed to be known as a Baptist, or to let people know that I think the London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689 adequately sets forth Baptist faith and polity with scriptural proof. While it is not a perfect document, because it is a compilation of human authors, it none the less does present a compelling and careful analysis of what the scriptures teach, and what Baptists historically believe. While nobody would necessarily or blindly acknowledge every detail of that document to be perfect, because it is not, those who subscribe to it find it to be useful as a general consensus of their Baptist faith and practice, in spite of any weaknesses that the document may have.

Why I am making this personal statement of faith available to you, is not because the London Confession is insufficient, it is because you need to hear it from me personally, if you are going to listen to what I teach and preach. No teacher has the right to demand blind allegiance from his students or listeners. Such a thing is cultish, and is the sort of thing that leads people to do stupid things like drink arsenic laced kool-aid in the jungles of Central America. So it is a matter of being informational. I want you to know what I believe. I have nothing to hide, so I am not going to use deception to make my posture more palatable to the likes and dislikes of the masses. The masses are wrong, they always have been wrong, and always will be wrong, so I could care less what they think, and I am not interested in pleasing them, I am interested in pleasing God. God would never have me to deceive anyone.

As to the use of this document, I think that it is useful to commend myself to people, wherever they may be, who sit under my preaching and teaching, or who read my writings . It will set your mind at ease about certain things, and it may help to prevent you from jumping to wrong conclusions about what you are receiving from me. I'll give you one example. Some people have wrongly jumped to the false conclusion that I am a Charismatic because of my position of "continuationism" on the matter of Holy Spirit gifts. The assumption is made that because I do not believe in the cessation of the gifts, that I must be Charismatic or Pentecostal in my theology. This is unfortunate and ridiculous, because there is no correlation between the Biblical gifts and the Charismatic/Pentecostal abuses of counterfeit gifts. There are many solid reformed Baptists who hold this position on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I call myself a Pneumatic Christian and not a Charismatic or Pentecostal, because Pneuma is the Holy Spirit, and He is Lord in the church, so, Pneumatic Christians bow to His Lordship, acknowledging His sovereignty in the dispensing of gifts and all other blessings from God. The position that I hold is that The Holy Spirit can give any gift which He wants to give, whenever He wants to give it, and nobody can prove that He has ceased to do what He wants to do.

The other way that this might be useful for you, is for your own edification. If you look up the verses and try to comprehend what is being said, God can use it to strengthen you in your own faith and walk, and you can learn these truths as tools to assist in your spiritual growth and walk. May God bless you as you read what I believe.

## **What I believe about the Scriptures**

*"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it" - Lk. 11:28*

God has disclosed Himself to men in the Scriptures (Numb. 12:6-8; Matt. 21:42; Matt. 22:31; Heb. 1:1; 2Pet. 1:21).

The Scriptures are contained in the sixty-six books of the Bible and nowhere else (Isa. 8:20; Matt. 22:29; Matt. 26:54,56; Mk. 12:24; Lk. 24:44-47; Jn. 20:9; Rom. 15:4).

The Scriptures are the product of the Holy Spirit and are thus completely inspired by God in the original manuscripts (2Sam. 23:2; 1Cor. 2:13; 1Thess. 2:13; 2Tim. 3:16; 2Pet. 1:19-21).

The Scriptures contain no errors, contradictions or mistakes, although they do record these kind of things in the errors, contradictions and mistakes of various people found within it's pages. This means that the Bible is inerrant, infallible and sufficient in all matters which it discusses, because it is clearly called "the Word of God". It discusses whatever God wanted to say (Isa. 8:20; Mk. 7:12-13; Rom. 10:17; 1Thess. 2:13).

Scripture is self-interpreting, and Spirit interpreted, because He is it's author and He is it's only perfect expositor (Jn. 16:13; Jn. 14:26; Acts. 15:15; 1Cor. 2:10-13; 2Pet. 1:20,21; 1Jn. 2:20,27).

The scriptures are sufficient for the rule, faith and practice of men and churches (Matt. 22:29,31; Acts. 28:25; Eph. 2:20).

## What I believe about God

*“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.” -Ps. 135:6*

*“He hath done all things well.”- Mk. 7:37*

God pre-exists before all things (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:1).

All things were made by Him and exists for Him (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16).

Everything was created by Him, out of nothing, by His spoken command and the sovereign work of His hands (Ps. 33:6; Ps. 102:25; Isa. 45:12, 8; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2-3, 10-12; Heb. 3:4; Rev. 4:11).

He is self-existent (Ex. 3:14; Ps. 90:2; Isa. 44:6; Jn. 8:58; Rev. 1:8; Rev. 4:8).

He is all knowing (2Chron. 16:9; Prov. 15:3,11; Prov. 50:11; Isa. 40:13-14; Col. 2:3; Heb. 4:13).

His omniscience extends even to the most secret thoughts in men’s minds (Ps. 94:11; Ps. 139:2; Jer. 17:10; Jer. 20:12; Ezek. 11:5).

He knows everything about us, and everything about everything (Job. 34:21; Ps. 11:4; Ps. 14:2; Ps. 33:13-15; Ps. 139:1-5; Ps. 147:5; Prov. 5:21).

Evil and sin are also known to God (Gen. 3:11; Gen. 6:5,9,13; Ps. 69:5; Jer. 16:17; Jer. 18:23).

He is present everywhere, is not part of space or time, but exists forever in timelessness (Gen. 21:33; Deut. 33:27; 1Kngs. 8:27; Ps. 90:1-2; Ps. 139:6-16; Prov.15:3; Isa. 40:28; Isa. 44:6; Jer. 23:23-24; Amos. 9:2; Acts 17:28; Rev. 7:12).

He is all-powerful (omnipotent), and infinite in all of His characteristics (attributes), (Gen. 17:1; Gen. 28:3; Gen. 35:11; Ex. 6:3; Ps. 147:5; Isa. 9:6; Hab. 3:6; 2Cor. 6:18; Heb. 4:13; Rev. 1:8; Rev. 4:8; Rev. 11:17; Rev. 15:3; Rev. 16:7; Rev. 19:6,15; Rev. 21:22).

He is unchanging and unchangeable. It is His eternal sameness. (Ex. 3:14; Ps. 90:2; Ps. 93:2; Ps. 102:27; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8; Ja. 1:17; Rev. 1:8).

He is a Pure, Invisible, Spirit, having neither body, parts or passions (Num. 23:19; Deut. 4:15-16; Lk. 24:39; Jn. 4:24; Acts. 14:11,15; 2Cor. 3:17; 1Tim. 1:17).

He possesses all things with absolute perfection. He is Love, Mercy, Holiness, Justice, Righteousness, Wrath, All-sufficiency, Grace, and a whole host of other wonderful attributes which surpass human knowledge (Ex. 15:11; Ex. 33:19; Ex. 34:6-7; Deut. 10:17; Rom. 11:33;

He is absolutely Sovereign and He exclusively does whatever He wants to do, and He does nothing else but what He wants to do, and everything He does is right (Ex. 9:16; Ex. 7:3; Ex. 10:1; Job. 34:12; Eccl. 3:14; Isa. 14:24,27; Isa. 40:13; Isa. 43:1,13,21; Isa. 44:24; Isa. 46:10; Jer. 27:5; Dan. 4:35; Jn. 1:13; Rom. 9:17; Eph. 3:11).

The One God exists in Three persons, Father Son and Holy Spirit. These Three are One, but there are not three Gods, only one. We must not confuse the persons, or divide their essence. The Father is wholly and completely God. The Son is wholly and completely God. The Holy Spirit is wholly and completely God. But there is only one God. This mystery is called the Trinity, a term not found in the Bible but a term which aptly describes this fundamental Christian Doctrine. Any God which is not Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is an idol, and the worship of idols is condemned in the Bible and in the true churches of Jesus Christ. ( Ex. 3:14; Jn.1:1,14,18; Jn. 14:8-9,11; Acts 5:3-4; Phil. 1:2; 1Jn. 5:7; Matt. 28:19; 2Cor. 13:14)

## **What I Believe About God's Plan**

*"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" - Isa. 46:10*

The God who Created all things also sustains and controls what He created (Dan. 4:34-35; Ps. 135:6; Acts 15:18; Acts 17:25-26,28; Col. 1:16-17).

He ordained everything that comes to pass in His Eternal counsels which He decreed in Himself from all eternity (Numb. 23:19; Isa. 49:10; Jn. 19:11; Acts 4:28; Rom. 9:15,18; Eph. 1:3-5; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17).

His plan includes every aspect of the salvation and damnation of sinners, so that nothing is left to chance or to the will of man, and so that everything glorifies Him (Matt. 25:41; Jn. 1:13; Jn. 6:64; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 13:18; Jn. 17:9; Acts. 13:48; Rom. 8:30; Rom. 9:11,13,16,18,22-23; Rom. 11:5; Eph. 1:4-6,9,11; Eph. 2:5,12; 1Thess. 1:4; 1Thess. 5:9; 2Thess. 2:13; 2Tim. 1:9; 2Tim. 2:19; 1Pet. 1:2,10; Jude 4).

## **What I Believe About Sin**

Since nothing exists by accident and everything exists for the glory of God (Col. 1:16), the presence of evil in the universe is not a mystery, but is clearly revealed in the scriptures (Isa. 45:7; Jam. 1:15). When God created everything He said that it was "very good" (Gen. 1:31), and that even included the presence of "the serpent one" in the

garden, who was the devil incarnate (Gen. 3:1; Jn. 8:44; 2Cor. 11:3; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 20:2), a being who had previously sinned and fallen into darkness and alienation from God (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-19; Lk. 10:18). These things being so, God still pronounced that everything was "very good", thus indicating that everything existed according to the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11; Eph. 3:11), and showing that He does not allow accidents in His universe but governs all things (Ps. 103:19; Dan. 4:3; Amos 3:6; Phil. 2:13; 1Tim. 6:15).

The serpent one, deceived the woman, and together she and her husband, believed the Devil's lie, doubted and disobeyed God, and plunged themselves and all humanity with them into a state of sin and death (Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3:1-7; Eccl. 7:29; Rom. 3:23; Rom. 5:12,19; Rom. 6:23; 1Jn. 1:8-10).

Sin renders man totally depraved, alienated from the life and fellowship of God, dead in trespasses and sin, lost and in need of salvation, which he cannot obtain by anything that he does, but only by what God does in grace and love for him and to him (1Kngs. 8:46; Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5; Jn. 6:44; Rom. 3:9-23; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 7:18; Rom. 8:7-8; Eph. 2:1,3,5,8-9,12; Col. 2:13; 1Thess. 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15; 1Jn.1:8-10)

### **What I Believe About Christ**

*"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" - Col. 1:19*

All of God's plans are wrapped up in Christ Jesus (Prov. 8:23; Eph. 3:9,11; Col. 1:26; 1Pet. 1:20).

He is the central person in the universe (Eph. 1:23; Rev. 1:8,11; Rev. 5:9-14; Rev. 22:13).

All the fullness of Deity dwells in Him (Jn. 5:26; Eph. 1:23; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3).

He is God (Ps. 45:6; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6; Isa. 40:9-11; Matt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1; Jn. 3:13; Jn. 10:30,33; Jn. 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; 1Tim. 3:16; Rev. 13:8).

He is the unique person in the universe, being the one and only mediator between God and man (Jn. 3:13; 1Tim. 2:5; Rom. 8:34).

He is the God-man (Matt. 1:23; John 1:1,14; 10:30-33; 20:28; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:8).

He was the object of Old Testament types, shadows, prophecies, and history (Mic. 5:2. Rom. 16:25-26; Heb. 1:1-2).

He was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18,23; Lk. 1:35; Gal. 4:4).

He was God incarnate in human flesh, with a body of flesh and bones (Luke 24:39; Jn. 1:14; Jn. 3:13; Gal. 4:4; Phil.2:6; 1Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:8-13; Heb 2:6-17; 1Jn. 5:7,20).

He is worshiped (Matt. 2:2,11; 14:33).

He is prayed to (Acts 7:59).

He knows all things (John 21:17).

He gives eternal life (Jn. 10:28)

He was absolutely sinless, and positively righteous in all things (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 2:14,16-17; Heb. 4:15).

He came to effectuate all parts of God's plan of salvation by grace (Jn. 17:4; Jn. 19:30; 2Cor. 5:18-19; Eph. 1:7; 2Tim. 1:9-10; Heb. 9:12; 1Jn.3:16; 1Jn. 4:9).

He died a vicarious, sin atoning death on the cross (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 3:24-25; Rom. 5:8,11; Rom. 14:9; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 10:12; Heb. 12:2; 1Jn. 2:2; 1Pet.1:18-20; 1Pet. 2:24; 1Pet. 3:18).

He paid the purchase price and the penalty of sin for the redeemed (Matt. 20:28; Acts. 20:28; Rom. 3:24-25; Rom. 6:28; 1Cor. 6:20; Gal. 3:13; Gal. 4:4-5; Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7; 1Tim. 2:5-6,14; Heb. 9:12; 1Pet. 1:18-19; 1Jn. 2:2).

He expiated our sin, and propitiated the wrath of God for every believer (Rom. 3:24-25; Rom. 5:18-19; 2Cor. 5:18-19; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 8:12; 1Jn. 1:9; 1Jn. 2:2; 1Jn. 4:10).

He justified all those who ever were or shall be saved (Rom. 3:24; Rom. 3:9-24; Rom. 3:25-26; Rom. 4:5; Rom. 5:15-17).

He literally rose from the dead in resurrection power (Jn. 2:19; Jn. 10:17-18; Rom. 6:4; Rom. 14:9; Eph. 1:19-20).

He ascended into heaven to take His place on the everlasting throne of the universe in His never-ending kingdom of glory (Mk. 16:19; Lk. 24:50-51; Jn. 14:2; Jn. 20:17; Rom. 8:34; 1Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:19-23; Phil 2:5-11; 1Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3; Heb. 2:8; Heb. 10:12; Heb. 12:2; 1Pet. 3:22).

He is both Lord and Savior (Acts 2:36; Acts. 10:36; Acts. 15:11; Rom. 6:23; Rom. 16:24; 1Cor. 1:2; Phil. 2:11; Phil. 3:20; 1Thess. 5:23; 2Thess. 1:12; 2Thess. 2:14; 1Tim. 1:1; 2Pet. 2:20; 2Pet. 3:18).

He is literally coming again, at the end of the world, to raise the dead, judge the world, create a new heaven and new earth, and to finally purge all sin and evil out of the universe (Isa. 65:17; Isa. 66:22; Matt. 24:30; Mk. 14:6; Acts. 1:11; Acts. 3:21; Acts. 17:31; 2Cor. 5:10; 1Thess. 4:15; 2Thess. 2:8; Tit. 2:13; 2Pet. 3:13; Rev. 1:7; Rev. 21:1).

Believers anticipate His second coming as their blessed hope, and so shall they be forever with the Lord (1Cor. 1:7,8; 2Cor. 8:9; Phil. 3:12; 1Thess. 4:16; 2Thess. 2:1; Tit. 2:13; 2Pet. 3:13).

## What I Believe About The Holy Spirit

*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” - Jn. 15:26*

The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 5:3-4; Rom. 15:30; 1Cor. 3:16; 1Cor. 6:19; 1Cor. 12:4-6; 2Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6).

He is the Spirit of Truth, and He concerned with anything to do with “Truth” (Jer. 31:33-34; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:13-14; 1Cor. 2:10-13; Eph. 1:17; Eph. 5:9; 2Thess. 2:13; 1Pet. 1:22; 1Jn. 2:20,27; 1Jn. 4:6; Rev. 2:11).

He was the active agent of creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps.33:6; Job 26:12; Isa. 40:12-13)

He gave life to man (Gen. 2:7; Job 33:4).

He inspired the writing of the scriptures God-breathing them in their entirety (2Tim. 3:16; 2Pet. 3:15-16).

He wrote the scriptures and is the interpreter of them (Jn. 16:14; 1Cor. 2:9-14; Eph. 1:17).

He is the re-creator of men in the new birth (Jn. 3:5-8; Jn. 6:63; Rom. 8:2,5,9; 1Jn. 3:9).

He convicts the world of sin (Jn. 8:9; Jn. 16:8; Jude 1:15).

He calls men to Christ effectually creating a new creation, applying the finished work of Christ to them, and giving them justification and union with Him (Rom. 3:22-26; Rom. 8:30; 1Cor. 6:11; Tit. 3:4-7).

He sanctifies believers and calls them to a life of holiness (Rom. 6:19, Rom. 6:22; 1Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:4; Eph. 5:26; 1Thess. 4:7; Tit. 1:8; 1Pet. 1:15).

He is the Lord who is present in the church, who nurtures, governs, empowers her, and who causes fruit to be in her (Acts 2:1-4; Rom. 5:5; Rom. 8:23; 1Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:22-23; Gal. 5:22-23; Col. 1:8)

He provides anointing, illumination and guidance for the church (2Cor. 1:21-22; 1Jn. 2:20,27).

He indwells every believer (Jn. 14:16,26; Jn. 15:26; Jn. 16:7; Jn. 20:22; Acts 2:4,38;

Acts. 4:8; Acts 8:15; Acts 10:47; Acts 19:2; Rom. 8:9-11; Gal. 3:2).

He confers gifts and graces upon the church for life, ministry and edification of the Body of Christ (Gal. 5:22-23; Rom. 5:5; Rom. 8:23; Rom. 12:6-8; 1Cor. 12:4-11,28-31; Col. 1:8).

He has supervision over the guidance, government and the direction of the church (Acts 5:3-4; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 15:28; Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 12:8-11; Eph. 4:8-12).

Preaching derives its inspiration, effectiveness, power and authority directly from the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37; Acts 10:44; 1Cor. 2:1-5; 1Thess. 1:5-6; 1Pet. 1:12).

Prayer and praise derives acceptableness, power, spontaneity and effectuality directly from the Holy Spirit (Matt. 18:19; Jn. 4:24; Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 2:18; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20)

Church musical worship derives its character, reverence, power and effectiveness directly from the Holy Spirit' fullness (1Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:18-19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15).

Officers, ministers, missionaries, teachers and deacons, originate from the Holy Spirit, are selected by Him, are presided over by Him, and should be sought out and acknowledged by the church which is blessed by their presence and labors (Acts 1:8; Acts 13:2-9; Acts 16:6-7; Acts 15:8,28; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:8-12).

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a one time event (just like any other type of baptism example: believers baptism). It happened on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 1:5). All believers are now included in it, and we should not falsely seek a repetition of it, because it was a once and for all time event (Matt. 3:11; Lk. 3:16; Lk. 11:13; Jn. 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:13-18; Rom. 6:3-6; 1Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:11-12; Tit. 3:5-6; 1Pet. 3:21).

Unlike the one time baptism of the Holy Spirit, believers are commanded to seek to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit equates to His control and our humble yieldedness, repentance and obedience to Him in all things (Acts 11:24; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22-25).

The Holy Spirit seals us unto the day of redemption so that we persevere and will not lose our salvation (Rom. 8:11; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13-14; Eph. 4:30).

## **What I Believe About Salvation**

*“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”  
Matt. 1:21*

Salvation is something that God does, and not man. “Salvation is of the Lord.” (Ps. 37:39; Ps. 68:20; Ps. 130:7-8; Isa. 62:11; Lam. 3:26; Jn. 1:29; Jn. 2:9; Acts 3:26; Acts 4:12; Acts 5:31; Acts 13:23,38-39; Eph. 5:25-27; Col. 1:20-23; Tit. 2:4; Heb. 7:25; 1Jn. 1:7; 1Jn. 2:2; 1Jn. 3:5; Rev. 1:5-6).

In saving men, God first designed who would be saved, and who would not be saved according to the doctrine of "election". (Rom. 9:11; Rom. 11:5,7,28; 1Thess. 1:4; 2Pet. 1:10).

According to election God has chosen some men to be saved (Mk. 13:27; Lk. 18:7; Acts 13:48; Rom. 9:11-16; Eph. 1:4-5,9,11; Col.3:12; 2Thess.2:13).

His Choice of these elect ones is a matter of pure grace, unmerited love and Divine Sovereignty (Eph. 1:5-9; Eph. 2:8-9; 2Tim. 1:9).

The Father has given the elect ones to the Son (Jn. 6:37; Jn. 17:2,6,9; Eph. 1:14; Heb. 2:13; 1Pet. 2:9).

The elect ones are "chosen to salvation" (Deut. 7:6; Ps. 32:12; Isa. 43:20; Matt. 20:15-16; Matt. 22:14; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 15:16,19; Acts 9:15; Acts 22:14; Acts 10:41; 1Cor. 1:27; Eph. 1:4; 2Thess 2:13; Ja. 2:5; 1Pet. 2:9; Rev. 17:4).

The salvation of the elect ones is infallibly secured by Christ's finished vicarious atonement on the cross (Isa. 53:6,11-12; Matt. 1:21; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 26:28; Jn. 10:10-11,15; Jn. 15:13; Jn. 17:1ff; Acts 20:28; Rom. 5:8; 1Cor. 5:7; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 1:7; Eph. 5:25; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 1Pet. 2:24; Rev. 1:5-6; please note the particularistic language in these verses "sheep", "friends", "we", "us", "many" etc. This language teaches us that the death of Christ was specifically for the elect, and not for the reprobate).

Since we do not know who the elect ones are, God has commanded us to preach the good news gospel message to all men without discrimination, and to urge all men everywhere to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the "general call" which is to be heard unto the uttermost parts of the world (Prov. 11:24; Isa. 55:11; Matt. 13:3-9; Matt. 22:14; Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 4:3-9; Lk. 8:5-8; Acts. 17:30; Acts 20:31; Col. 1:28).

The Holy Spirit takes the gospel as it is presented indiscriminately to everyone, and He turns it into a "specific call" to the elect one, when he opens their hearts and minds, and effectually calls them to faith in Christ. That is when "the sheep" hear His voice (Jn.10:27). The general call is "external" and falls on everyone's ears. The specific call is "internal" and enters deep into the hearts of the elect one, convicting and converting them (Ps. 65:4; Jn. 3:6; Jn. 6:44,65; Rom. 2:4; Rom. 8:28-30; Rom. 9:11; Eph. 2:4-5; 2Tim. 2:25; 2Pet. 1:10).

We realize our election in Christ through the "new birth" (regeneration). The new birth is a prerequisite to entering heaven. All humans in heaven have been born again while hear on earth (Jn. 3:3,5-8; 1Pet. 1:23; 1Jn.3:9; 1Jn. 5:18).

When a person is regenerated (new birth) he immediately flees to Christ for salvation (Isa. 45:22; Isa. 55:1-3; Matt. 11:28; Jn. 6:37; Jn.7:37-38; Acts 4:12; Rev. 22:17). He repents of sin (Mk. 6:12; Lk. 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; Acts 3;19; Acts 17:30; 2Tim. 2:25; Rev. 3:19). He believes on the Lord Jesus Christ (Mk. 16:16; Jn. 1:12; Jn. 3:15-16,36; Jn. 7:37-38; Jn. 11:25-26; Jn. 20:31; Acts 8:37; Acts 13:38-39; Acts 15:11; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 3:22; , He has all the finished work of the cross effectively applied in

his life by the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1:13; 1Cor. 2:12; 1Cor. 6:11; 2Tim 2:25; 1Jn. 5:6-8). He is justified by faith (Rom. 5:1-2; Gal. 3:26), which is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8-9).

All the elect ones, when they become regenerated, are sanctified "positionally" (set apart for Gods holy uses), and are being sanctified "progressively" day by day as they strive to live holy lives by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in them (Lk. 1:75; Jn. 17:17,19; Acts 20:32; Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:19,22; Rom. 15:16; 1Cor. 1:2; 1Cor. 6:11; 2Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24; Eph. 5:26; 2Tim.2:21; 1Thess. 3:13; 1Thess. 4:7; 1Thess. 5:23; Tit. 2:3; Heb. 2:11; Heb. 12:10,14; Heb. 13:12; Heb. 10,14,29; 1Pet. 3:15; Jude 1).

The elect ones are so intimately connected to Christ that they have union with Him, solidarity with him, salvation in Him, an eternal position in Him, and He is in them. They share in His inheritance, are actual and legal sons of God, and their union in Him gives them union with each other as members of His body - the church. They share in the divine nature (2Pet.1:4). They are one with the Lord (1Cor. 6:17). And God gives them all the blessings that come with salvation (Matt. 28:20; Jn. 6:53,56-57; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 14:20,23; Jn. 17:21-23; Rom. 8:1,9-10,35,39; Rom. 9:1; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:4; Eph. 2:13; Eph. 3:16-17; Eph. 5:29-30,32; Col. 1:27; Col. 3:3-4; 1Thess. 4:14,17; Heb. 2:11; 1Jn. 4:16; 2Pet. 1:4).

All the elect ones have a home in heaven that has been prepared by Jesus for their arrival (Jn. 13:33,36; Jn. 14:2; Jn. 17:24; Heb. 11:16; Rev. 21:2). There is not even a slim possibility that they will not arrive safely to their eternal home, it is waiting for them (Jn. 6:37,39-40; Jn. 10:27-28; Jn. 17:12; Jn. 18:9).

Every aspect of our salvation comes only from the infinite, undeserved, unearned Grace of God. God did it all. We do nothing. Salvation is by Grace alone, plus nothing (+) and minus nothing (-). (Jn. 1:12-13; Jn. 6:37,44,65; Acts 16:14; Rom. 3:24; Rom. 10:14,17; Eph. 1:19; Eph. 2:5,8-10; Col. 2:12; Ja. 1:17-18).

## What I Believe About The Church

*But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" -Heb. 12:22-23*

The church of God was purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28).

That makes the church of God equivalent to the sum total of all the elect, the general assembly, the church of the firstborn; every true believer (including every Old Testament saint) is a part of it (Heb.12:23).

Some have called this the invisible church, but that is a poor term, because there are always visible members of it, and the ones in heaven are visible up there, John saw them, so they are not invisible. Others have called it the church universal (catholic), and that also is a poor term, because there is nothing universal about it. It excludes most people, so how could it be universal? If by this they mean that it includes people from all different races and ethnicities, then perhaps there is some sense in which it is universal. I think it is better to simply call it "the body of Christ" or "The church", forget all

**that invisible, universal and catholic stuff, and stick with the way that God identifies it.**

It is called "His body" (Rom. 12:5; 1Cor. 12:12,27; Col. 1:18).

He is it's head (Eph. 1:22; Eph. 5:23,).

It is called "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23).

It is the Bride of Christ (Isa. 61:10; Isa. 62:5; 2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 21:2,9; Rev. 22:17).

It is to be "a glorious church" (Ps. 45:13; Ps. 87:3; Isa. 62:3; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 7:9-17)

It is not to have spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Song of Sol. 4:7; Eph. 5:27; 2Pet. 3:14).

It is to be holy and without blemish (Eph. 1:4; Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22,28; 1Thess. 5:23).

The doctrine of the union of every believer to Christ as the church is a great mystery (Eph. 5:32).

The church was not born on Pentecost. (Men invented that doctrine). The church existed from all eternity (Matt. 25:34; Acts. 15:18; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8; Rev. 17:8). Moses and the people of God who were with him, and who received the oracles of God, were called "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38 cf. Matt. 8:11).

It is called "the household of God" (Matt. 10:25; Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 3:6).

Every believer is a "member" of God's household, a member of the royal family of God (Rom. 8:29; 1Cor. 12:12,27; Eph. 3:15; Heb. 2:11-15; 1Jn. 3:1; Rev. 1:5-6).

It is called "the Temple of the Holy Spirit" (1Cor. 3:9,16; 2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22).

It is "a spiritual house" (Eph. 2:21-22; 1Pet. 2:5).

It is built of "living stones" (Eph. 2:22; 1Pet. 2:5).

It is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ as the Chief Cornerstone (Isa. 28:16; Matt. 16:18; 1Cor. 3:9-11; 1Cor. 12:28; Gal. 2:29; Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14).

It is called "the kingdom of heaven", "the kingdom of God", "the kingdom of Christ", and Christ called it "My kingdom"(Lk. 22:30; Jn. 18:36), "My Father's Kingdom" (Matt. 26:29), "Thy kingdom" (Matt. 6:10, Matt. 20:21; Lk. 11:2; Lk. 23:42). These terms are to always be understood of the church, either on earth or in heaven, or both, (note context determines which). These terms apply to nothing else but the church, (Ps. 45:6; Dan. 2:44; Dan. 7:27; Matt. 3:2; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:3,10,19-20; Matt. 6:33; Matt. 7:21; Matt. 8:11; Matt. 10:7; Matt. 11:11-12; Matt. 12:28; Matt. 13:11; Matt. 19:24; Matt. 21:31,43; Mk. 1:14; Mk. 4:11; Mk. 4:26,30; Matt. 25:34; Lk. 22:29; Jn. 3:3,5; Acts 1:3; Acts 8:12; Acts. 14:22; Rom. 14:17; 1Cor. 4:20; 1Cor. 6:9-10; 1Cor. 15:50; 1Thess. 2:12; 2Thess. 1:5; Heb. 1:8; Ja. 2:5; Rev. 1:9; Rev. 12:10; ).

This kingdom is an everlasting kingdom (Ps. 145:13; Dan. 2:44; Dan. 4:3; Dan. 7:14,27; 2Pet. 1:11).

This kingdom is not materialistic in any sense (Ps. 45:6; Dan. 7:14; Lk. 17:20-21; Jn. 18:36; Jn. 6:15; Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13).

The church is “the remnant”, the true believers within any group of people (Ezra 9:8,14; Isa. 1:9; Isa. 10:20-21; Isa. 11:11; Rom. 9:27; Rom. 11:4-7).

The church is often referred to as Jerusalem and Zion (Ps. 2:6; Ps. 48:1-3; Ps. 122:6; Ps. 132:13-14; Isa. 12:6; Isa. 14:32; Isa. 52:1; Matt. 5:35; Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 11:10; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 14:1; Rev. 21:2,10; Rev. 22:19).

The church is also “the flock” belonging to the Good Shepherd (Matt. 26:31; Lk. 12:32; Jn. 10:27-29; Acts. 20:28-29; 1Pet. 5:2-3).

The church is “the branches” belonging to “the True Vine” (Jn. 15:5).

The church is “the wheat” growing in God’s field (Matt. 3:12; Matt. 13:25, 29-30,36-43; Lk. 3:17; Lk. 22:31).

The only way the church grows is when people are born again (Acts. 2:47; Acts 5:14; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:30; Rom. 9:17; Tit. 3:4-5).

**When believers gather together as assemblies or congregations, we call them local “churches”, but technically, (ekklesia), means “called out ones”. Some have assumed that this is referring to people who were called out of their homes to attend an important meeting, and thus they gave it the connotation of “assembly”, or “convocation”. That is a doubtful interpretation which is usually given by people who want “church” to only mean something local, something assembled. According to that view, “church” is always local (the church at Corinth, the church of Laodicea etc). In actuality when the term is used in a localized sense, it is still referring to true believers (called out ones), only in a geographical or spatial sense. There are 36 verses in the Bible where localized groups of true believers are called “churches”. But this has nothing to do with them being assembled. Some have thought that without being assembled there is no church. Acts. 9:31, Acts 16:5; and Rom. 16:6 are sufficient to disprove that notion, but there are many other verses like this, where churches are said to exist without being assembled. The term church is never used in the Bible of a building of brick, mortar and stone. Cathedrals and Meeting houses are not “churches”.**

**So we have a true sense in which the members of Christ’s kingdom, residing in a particular area, or joined together in a local covenantal fellowship, are called a church. Groups of these covenant communities are called “churches”. They function as local churches under the presence and power of Christ every time they meet together (Matt. 18:20; 1Cor. 5:4-5). Every one of these ought to be composed of only true believers, but unfortunately we cannot tell with certainty or accuracy who is who, so tares and wheat grow together. The separation of them will not occur till the second coming of Christ. So while we strive for purity in our churches, as we should, there is really no way to achieve it, because all churches are composed of sinners. It is true that they are all supposed to be saved. But the reality is that they are not.**

The Supreme and Sovereign head of the church is Christ (Col. 1:18).

**This extends to local churches as well. He is their sole administrator, and not some Pope, Bishop, denomination or outside agency.**

Where even as little as two or three are gathered together, He is present in their midst so that they can fully function as a church (Matt. 18:20; Jn. 20:19; 1Cor. 5:4; Phm. 1:2).

He leads it through officers and gifts which function in the local covenant communities

(Eph. 4:11-12).

He has given it all the authority, tools and guidance necessary for self-governance in the local congregations, so that it can perform its twofold job of preaching the word of God and edifying the body of Christ, and can keep itself focused on its mission, always pursuing "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Matt. 18:17-18,20; 1Cor. 5:4-5; 1Cor. 5:13; 2Cor. 2:6-8).

Each local congregation chooses and ordains their own officers, as they seek out among them men qualified and gifted according to the Biblical requirements. The two offices in every church are Elders (also called bishops, pastors, overseers) and Deacons. (Acts 6:1-6; Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17,28; Phil. 1:1; 1Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9).

Officers are installed within the local churches by fasting and prayer together with the laying on of hands of the existing elders if there are any, if not with the laying on of hands of the whole church (Acts 6:3,5-6; Acts 8:17; Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23; Acts 19:6; 1Tim. 4:14; 1Tim. 5:22; 2Tim. 1:6).

The work of pastors is to watch, care, feed and guide the souls of men in their flock, to which the church must render due submission and honor. They must give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. The senior pastor, ought to be supported by the congregation, so that his needs are met and so that he does not be encumbered by the cares of this world, but can concentrate on being a faithful minister and servant of Christ. They that preach the gospel should live of the gospel (Acts 6:4; 1Cor. 9:6-14; 1Cor. 16:2; Gal. 6:6-7; 1Tim. 5:17-18; 2Tim. 2:4-6; Heb. 13:17; 1Pet. 4:10-11).

People joining themselves to a local congregation must willingly submit to its governance and discipline, and agree with its teachings and support it with their substance (Amos 3:3; Matt. 10:10; 1Cor. 9:9-14; 1Cor. 16:2; 2Cor. 6:14-16; Gal. 6:6-7; Eph. 4:3; 1Thess. 5:14; 2Thess. 3:6,14-15).

The church assists people in their restoration should they fall into hurtful sinning (Matt. 18:15-18; Eph. 4:2-3).

Prayer should be made for churches everywhere, and all true Christians should be welcomed and received as Christians (Ps. 122:6; Matt. 21:13; Mk. 11:17; Rom. 15:30; Rom. 16: 1-2; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6; 1Tim. 2:1; 2Thess. 3:1; 3Jn. 1:8-10).

Churches can and should fellowship with other churches of like faith and order, and when controversies of doctrine or discipline arise which cannot be settled in the local church by itself. Elders from several churches can meet together and through prayer and the study of God's word come to conclusions which may be helpful, but under no circumstance ought any such convocations be deemed to have judicial authority over any local self-governing congregation. Congregations are never to be run by any made ecclesiastical hierarchy outside the local assembly (Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23,25; 2Cor. 1:24; 1Jn. 4:1).

## What I Believe About Last Things

**Rev 21:1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away;

The plan of God spans the whole course of history, from creation to the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. God has left nothing out, and put everything in that He wanted. As Christians we look for the second coming of Christ as the momentous event toward which all history moves, he will come again "in like manner" as he left (Acts 1:11). That means He will come literally and visibly. "Every eye shall see Him" (Rev. 1:7). Simultaneous with that even and in conjunction with it several other notable events will take place:

- 1). The resurrection of all the dead (believers and unbelievers) of all time - (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- 2). The rapture of living Christians, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord" - (1Thess. 4:17).
- 3). The judgment day for all men and fallen beings, of all time resulting in either eternal bliss or woe (Matt. 25: 31-46; Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20;10,14-15).
- 4). Heaven and earth shall pass away (Matt. 24:35; 2Pet. 3:7,10; Rev. 20;11).
- 5). God will bring about a new creation, and there will be no possibility of sin and death in it (Rev. 21-22). We will live forever with God in it.

**Rev 22:7** Behold, I come quickly:

**Rev 22:20** He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.