

Statement of Faith

For Legacy Baptist Church

(edited early 2014)

Churches have historically used confessions or statements of faith in order to summarize and clearly identify what they believe. Our statement of faith is subservient to the Scriptures. It should never be viewed as having an authority equal to that of the Bible. It is authoritative only in a limited sense, as far as it accurately reflects the meaning of Scripture. We view it and use it as a tool to promote, achieve, and maintain doctrinal understanding, purity, and harmony. Eric Redmond assembled this in early 2014 (after preaching at Legacy Baptist several months, but before coming officially as pastor) so that the church would know what to expect in key doctrines preached in expository, book-by-book, verse-by-verse sermons. Future members will not have to agree with every point (some are certainly more crucial than others), but will be asked to indicate where they have questions or concerns, so that one of the pastor/elders can go over these areas with them. We are always seeking to grow together in unity under the authority of God's inspired Word.

The church is "the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15, NASB). It is the responsibility of every member of the church to "contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3, ESV).

God's truth has always been questioned, attacked, and twisted. The Bible warns us that such deception will continue, and history has demonstrated the accuracy of these warnings. It is no wonder, then, that in our day, truth is rare while error is rampant.

We offer this statement of faith, not as something new or profound, not as a response to any single system of false doctrine, but rather as a simple and sincere attempt to proclaim and defend God's inerrant Word.

We pray that the reader, whether in agreement or disagreement, will emulate the fair-minded people of Berea who examined "the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so" (Acts 17:11, ESV).

What the Asterisk* Points To in this Statement of Faith

* Embedded in our statement of faith are the following five critical Christian doctrines. They're often called the "five solas" of the Protestant Reformation, because during that time these crucial doctrines were clarified and appropriately emphasized.

1. Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone)

The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

2. Sola Gratia (by Grace alone)

In salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by His grace alone. God's unmerited favor is granted through the calling and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit who releases us from our willful bondage to sin and enables us to repent and believe in Christ.

3. Sola Fide (through Faith alone)

Justification is by grace alone through faith alone. Justification can never be the reward or result of human works or merit, nor does it grow out of an **infusion** of Christ's righteousness [instead, we need the

1 **imputation** / crediting of God's righteousness in Christ to our lives – see the article below on
2 “Justification”].

3
4 4. Solus Christus (because of Christ alone)

5 Our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of Christ alone. His sinless life and
6 substitutionary death alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

7
8 5. Soli Deo Gloria (for the Glory of God alone)

9 God glorifies Himself in all that He does. Therefore we should acknowledge His highest purpose and
10 live for His glory alone.

11
12
13 Colossians 2:8 (ESV) - See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and
14 empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the
15 world, and not according to Christ.

16
17 2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV) - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a
18 worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

19
20
21 **1. The Holy Scripture**

22
23 God has revealed all that is necessary for life and salvation in the sixty-six books of the Bible,
24 which is the Word of God.¹ All Scripture is inerrant and infallible, transmitted through human
25 authors by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.² Scripture alone* is the final authority in all matters of
26 doctrine and practice. The authority of Scripture is derived from its Author and not from the
27 opinions of men. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by
28 which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of
29 Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious
30 opinions should be tried.³ Scripture (Old and New Testament) is a testimony to Christ, who is
31 Himself the focus of divine revelation.⁴ God's final words of authoritative revelation (Heb 1:1-2, Jn
32 1:17-18), given through Christ and His New Testament apostles and prophets (Eph 2:19-20; 3:4-
33 5, cf. Jn 16:12-14), have become the authority concerning Christian thinking, beliefs, and conduct
34 (1 Cor 9:20-21, Mt 28:20), and the interpretive lens through which the Old Testament must be
35 understood and applied.⁵

36
37 ¹ Psalm 19:7-10, 119:9, 11; Matthew 4:4; Acts 20:32; Romans 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Timothy
38 4:16; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21; 2 Peter 1:2-4; 3:15-16

39 ² 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 119:160; Proverbs 30:5; John 17:17; 2 Peter 1:19-21

40 ³ Matthew 22:29; Psalm 138:2; Proverbs 30:6; John 17:14-21; Acts 17:11; Galatians 1:8-9; 1 Timothy
41 1:3; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 John 9-11

42 ⁴ Matt 5:17-18; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39, 46, 8:56; Acts 8:30-35, 18:28; Col 2:16-17; Heb 1:1-
43 13, 10:1-10.

44 ⁵ Acts 3:17-24; Deuteronomy 18:15-19 (cf. John 12:47-50); Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44; 28:20a;
45 John 5:45-47; 13:34-35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14; Romans 14:5-6; 1 Corinthians 9:20-21; Colossians
46 2:16-17 (cf. 2 Chronicles 2:4; 8:12-13; 31:3)

47
48 **2. God**

49
50 There is one true and living God¹ who exists in three eternally distinct persons:² the Father, the
51 Son, and the Holy Spirit.³ These three are one in being,⁴ united in purpose,⁵ and fully worthy of
52 glory, adoration, and obedience.⁶

¹ Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; Isaiah 45:5-6; Jn 17:3; 1 Cor 8:6; 1 Tim 2:5; James 2:19

² Matthew 28:19; Titus 3:4-6; Matthew 3:16-17

³ **The Father:** Matthew 3:16-17; 6:9; John 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24-25; **The Son:** Matthew 1:23; 3:16-17; Mark 2:5-12; John 1:1, 14; 5:19-23; 8:58 (cf. Exodus 3:14); John 10:31-33; 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 25; Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; 3:4, 6 (cf. Isaiah 43:11; 45:21); Hebrews 1:1-8; 2 Peter 1:1; **The Holy Spirit:** Matthew 1:18 (cf. Luke 1:35); John 14:16-17; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 12:11; Hebrews 10:15-17 (cf. Jeremiah 31:33-34)

⁴ Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22-24; Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:16

⁵ Isaiah 42:1; 48:16; 61:1-3; Matthew 28:19; John 5:19, 30; 14:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Titus 3:4-6

⁶ Matthew 12:31-32; John 5:23; 17:5; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Thess 5:19; Isaiah 63:10; Eph 4:30; Hebrews 1:6; 10:29; Revelation 4:11 (cf. Psalm 104:30); Revelation 5:12-14

A. God the Father

God the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace.¹ As the absolute and omnipotent Ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption.² His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator, He is Father to all men (Mal 2:10, Acts 17:29), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom 8:14-15; 2 Cor 6:18, Jn 8:39-47). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph 1:11, Ps 115:1-3). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (1 Chron 29:11-12, Rom 11:36). In His sovereignty He is neither the author nor approver of sin (1 Jn 1:5; James 1:13-14; Ps 5:4-5; Jn 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (Ecc 7:29; Isa 66:3-4; Mk 14:21, Acts 2:23, Rom 9:19-20). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon their adoption, Father to His own.³

¹ Ps 145:8-9; 1 Cor 8:6; Prov 21:1, 16:1, 4, 33; Isa 45:7; James 4:13-16; Eph 1:11

² Ps 103:19, 115:3; Mt 10:29; Dan 4:35; Rom 11:36; Jn 1:13; 1 Pet 1:3; Rom 9:11-23; James 1:18

³ Jn 1:12; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5; Heb 12:5-9

B. The Divine, Eternal Son - Jesus

Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, coeternal, and shares the same nature with God the Father (Jn 1:1, **5:23**, 10:30, 14:9; Mk 2:5-12; Heb 1:1-8).

Our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isa 7:14; Mt 1:23, 25; Lk 1:26-35); He was and is God incarnate (John 1:1, 14). The purpose of the incarnation (God taking on flesh) was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps 2:7-9; Isa 9:6; Jn 1:29; Phil 2:9-11; Heb 2:7-9, 7:25-26; 1 Pet 1:18-19). In the incarnation, Christ surrendered only the privileges of deity (Phil 2:5-8) but nothing of the divine essence (Mk 2:5-12; Jn 1:1, 14, 14:9-10, 20:28-29). In His incarnation, the eternally existing second Person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-Man, fully human yet fully divine (Phil 2:5-8; Col 2:9, Rom 9:5). He was tempted in all respects like we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15), living the perfect life of righteousness on behalf of His people (Mt 3:13-15, 2 Cor 5:21).

Jesus accomplished redemption for all who would trust in Him through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross (Jn 10:14-18, Acts 20:28, Rev 5:9-10, Rom 5:10, Heb 9:12, 10:11-14). His death was voluntary (Jn 10:17-18), substitutionary (He died for our sins –

1 Isa 53:5-6, 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Pet 2:24, 3:18), propitiatory (wrath-satisfying – Rom 3:21-26, Isa
 2 53:10-11, 1 Jn 4:10), and redemptive (the price paid, a rescue made – Eph 1:7, 1 Pet 1:18-19,
 3 Rom 3:24-25). On the basis of the effective death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing
 4 sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of
 5 sin; and he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God (Rom
 6 3:25; 5:8-9; 2 Cor 5:14-15; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18).
 7

8 After dying for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, Jesus was buried, raised physically
 9 and literally from the dead on the third day, then had many post-resurrection appearances in
 10 His physical, glorified body (1 Cor 15:1-8, Isa 53, Acts 2:22-36, Lk 24:25-27, 46; Jn 20-21). In
 11 the resurrection of Jesus, God the Father confirmed the deity and authority of His Son and
 12 gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. (Rom 1:4; Acts
 13 2:29-36, 17:31; Eph 1:20-22). Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future
 14 resurrection and eternal life for all believers (Jn 14:19; Rom 6:5-10; 1 Cor 6:14, 15:12-19, 22;
 15 2 Cor 4:14).
 16

17 After many physical post-resurrection appearances, Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:1-
 18 11) to appear in the presence of God as our perpetual High Priest, presenting Himself as the
 19 only acceptable sacrifice for sin (accomplished once for all time on the cross - Heb 7:23-27;
 20 9:11-14, 24; 10:4, 10-14). He is the one and only Mediator between God and men, (1 Tim 2:5;
 21 Heb 8:6, 9:15, 12:24) and Head of His church (Mt 16:16-18; Eph 1:22, 5:23; Col 1:18). He
 22 intercedes forever on behalf of His people (Isa 53:12; Rom 8:34; Heb 7:23-25; 1 Jn 2:1) and
 23 rules over all things for their sake (1 Cor 15:24-26; Eph 1:18-23).
 24

25 **C. The Holy Spirit**

26 The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, eternal, possessing all the attributes of personality and
 27 deity, including intellect (1 Corinthians 2:10-13), emotions (Eph 4:30), will (1 Cor 12:11),
 28 eternity (Heb 9:14), omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10), and omniscience (Isa 40:13-14). In all the
 29 divine attributes He is coequal, coeternal, and sharing the identical divine nature with the
 30 Father and the Son (Mt 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Jer 31:31-34
 31 with Heb 10:15-17).
 32
 33

34 We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen 1:2), the incarnation (Mt 1:18, Lk 1:35),
 35 the written revelation (2 Pet 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (Jn 3:5-7, Titus 3:5). The
 36 broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of
 37 judgment (Jn 16:7-9); glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 14:26, 15:26, 16:13-15, 1 Cor 12:3)
 38 and transforming believers into the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18; Eph 2:22, Gal 5:22-26).
 39 The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign Agent in regeneration (Jn 3:5-8, Titus 3:5, 1
 40 Cor 6:11), baptizing all believers into the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit also
 41 indwells (Rom 8:9), sanctifies (1 Cor 6:11, 1 Pet 1:2), instructs (1 Jn 2:20, 27), empowers
 42 them for service (Acts 1:8, 4:31, 1 Cor 12:11), and seals them unto the day of redemption
 43 (Eph 1:13).
 44

45 The Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as
 46 they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible (Jn 14:25-26, 16:13; 1 Cor 2:7-10, 2 Pet
 47 1:19-21). Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the
 48 moment of salvation (Rom 8:9, 1 Cor 3:16). AND all those born of the Spirit are commanded
 49 to be filled with (controlled by) the Spirit (Eph 5:18; Gal 5:16-26).
 50

51 The Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself
 52 nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of

1 redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (Jn 15:26, 16:13-14; Acts
2 1:8; 1 Cor 12:4-11; 2 Cor 3:18, Gal 5:22-23).

3. Creation

6 God created all that now exists in six days and from nothing, and it was all very good.¹ The
7 Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit acted together in the work of creation.² Out of all living things,
8 only man was created in God's image. God granted him dominion over all lesser forms of life and
9 over the earth itself.³ God created mankind, both male and female, in His image as the crowning
10 work of His creation. The gift of gender (and special roles for men and women) is thus part of the
11 goodness of God's creation.⁴ Though there is NOT enough revealed in Creation for someone to
12 be saved (Rom 10:9-14), there IS enough revealed about God in Creation to hold people
13 accountable for not believing in Him (Ps 19:1-3, Rom 1:18-20).

15 ¹ Gen 1; Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Acts 17:24; Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11

16 ² Gen 1:1-2, 26-28; Ps 33:6, 9; 104:30; Jer 10:12-13; Jn 1:1-3, 14; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:2; 11:3

17 ³ Genesis 1:26-28; 9:6; Psalm 8:3-8; Colossians 3:10; James 3:9

18 ⁴ Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 1 Cor 11:3, 8-12; 1 Tim 2:12-13

4. Providence

22 God orders and directs His universe in every detail.¹ Every event in nature and every human
23 action and decision is according to His decree and purpose.² In His providential control, God is
24 neither the author nor approver of sin (1 Jn 1:5; James 1:13-14; Ps 5:4-5; Jn 8:38-47), nor does
25 He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (Ecc 7:29; Isa 66:3-4; Mk 14:21, Acts
26 2:23, Rom 9:19-20). In God's infinite wisdom and power, all things work together for the good of
27 His people,³ and for His own glory.⁴

29 ¹ 1 Chron 29:11-12; Job 38:4-41; Prov 16:1, 4, 9, 33; Isa 45:7, 46:9-11; Rom 11:36; Eph 1:11

30 ² Ps 135:6-7; Ex 4:21; 5:2; 7:2-5; 9:15-16 (cf. Rom 9:17-21); Ps 105:25; Prov 16:4, 9, 21:1; Dan 4:25,
31 35; Amos 3:6; Lam 3:37-38; Mt 10:29; Jn 6:37-40; Acts 4:27-28; 13:48; Phil 2:12-13

32 ³ Rom 8:28; Heb 12:5-11 (cf. Deut 8:15-16); Gen 45:4-8 (cf. Ps 105:16-17), Gen 50:20

33 ⁴ Ex 14:4, 17, 18; Ex 9:16 (cf. Ex 7:3-5); Isa 60:21; Ezek 28:20-24; Rom 9:17-23 (with Prov 16:4);
34 11:33-36; Eph 1:3-6, 11-14

5. The Fall and Its Effects

38 God made Adam perfect, holy, and upright,¹ appointing him representative and head of the
39 human race.² He fell from his original righteousness into sin when he disobeyed God's
40 command.³ By his sinful act, Adam brought all people (except Jesus, because of His miraculous
41 conception – see Lk 1:35) into a state of death and condemnation, passing to each one of them a
42 corrupt sinful nature.⁴ All people (except Jesus) are now born “dead” in “trespasses and sins,”
43 sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration.⁵ Therefore, all people are under the just
44 condemnation of God, and all by nature and choice deserve the eternal torment of hell.⁶

46 ¹ Genesis 1:26-31; Ecclesiastes 7:29

47 ² Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22

48 ³ Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24

49 ⁴ Gen 6:12; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Ecc 7:20; Rom 3:9-19, 23; 5:12, 18, 19; 6:23 (cf. Jm 1:14-15); 1 Cor 15:22

50 ⁵ Eph 2:1-3; Ps 51:5; Ps 14:1-3; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12

51 ⁶ Eph 2:1-3; Mt 7:13-14; 18:8, 25:41, 46; Jn 3:17-18, 36; 2 Thess 1:9; Rev 14:11

6. Man's Inability and Accountability

1 The Fall (Genesis 3, cf Rom 5:12) brought every person into a state of utter depravity,
 2 meaning every dimension of his being is distorted by sin.¹ Apart from the grace of God, fallen
 3 man treats sin as his master,² God as an enemy,³ and the message of the cross as foolishness.⁴
 4 Until he is born again (regenerate / made alive), he possesses neither the desire nor the ability to
 5 love God, to keep His laws, to understand the gospel, to repent of sin, or to trust in Christ.⁵ Yet
 6 all people are accountable to God for their rejection of Him and their choice to sin.⁶ Even though
 7 the image of God has been horribly distorted by the Fall, man is still in the image of God (Gen
 8 9:6, James 3:9). Therefore, we are not surprised that people often do things that are helpful to
 9 others. But this kind of civic “goodness” has no eternal spiritual value, and even very kind, moral
 10 people must be saved.⁷

11
 12 ¹ Genesis 6:5, 12; Isa 64:6-7; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:9-18; Titus 1:15-16

13 ² Romans 6:16-22; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:13; 2 Timothy 2:26; Titus 3:3

14 ³ Romans 5:10; 8:6-8; Colossians 1:21; James 4:4

15 ⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21-24; 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

16 ⁵ Jer 13:23; Jn 3:3 (cf. Mk 4:10-12); Jn 3:19-20; 6:44, 65; 8:47; 15:5; Rom 8:6-8; 1 Cor 2:14; Col 2:13;
 17 1 Jn 5:1 – note the order: he who believes “is” / “has been” born of God. FIRST born again, THEN
 18 able to believe in Jesus (these happen almost simultaneously; the way we know we’ve been born
 19 again/regenerated is that we find ourselves believing in Jesus, so we first NOTICE ourselves repenting /
 20 believing, then Scripture informs us that that means we’ve been born again/regenerated).

21 ⁶ Isa 66:3b-4; Rom 1:18-20, 9:13-23; Eph 2:1-10 – especially Eph 2:3 – “by nature” AND “wrath”.

22 Our moral inability because of our fallen human nature does NOT excuse us from God’s righteous
 23 wrath. Also see the example of Judas, who was sovereignly ordained to betray Jesus, yet was also held
 24 accountable (Mt 26:24).

25 ⁷ Mt 7:9-11; Acts 10:1-6 (cf Acts 10:34-43 – This civically “good” man still needed “remission /
 26 forgiveness of sins” in Acts 10:43); Lk 16:19-31 – note the rich man’s concern for his family, even
 27 when he was tormented in hell; Isa 64:6-7; Heb 11:6; Rom 14:23b [since any “good” that lost people do
 28 is not coming from the ground of faith in Jesus, it does not have any eternal value]

30 7. Election and Responsibility

31
 32 Before the foundation of the world, God elected (chose) a great multitude of men and women
 33 to eternal life¹ as an act of His free grace alone*. This election was in no way dependent upon His
 34 foresight of human faith, decision, works, or merit.² This truth gives us confidence that no person
 35 is beyond the reach of God’s sovereign grace and choice (1 Tim 1:12-16; 1 Cor 1:26-31).
 36 Believers are not to try to figure out who the elect are (Deut 29:29), but are to proclaim the
 37 Gospel freely to all.³ In the unsearchable realm of God’s sovereign will,⁴ all people remain
 38 responsible beings, subject to God’s commands to repent and believe, and accountable to God
 39 for their rebellion, impenitence, and rejection of Christ.⁵

40
 41 ¹ Jn 6:37-39; 10:14-16; 17:2; Acts 13:48; Rom 8:28-30; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; 2 Thess 2:13

42 ² Rom 9:10-16; 11:5-10; Eph 2:8-9; 2 Tim 1:9

43 ³ Mt 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 17:30-31; Mt 11:25-29 – note the STRONG sovereign choosing / electing of
 44 God in Mt 11:25-27 and the sweet invitation from Jesus in the same passage!

45 ⁴ Deuteronomy 29:29; Isaiah 55:8-9; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 2:16

46 ⁵ Mk 1:14-15; Jn 3:36; 6:37; Acts 17:30-31; Rom 1:18-21; 2:4-5; 9:19-22; 2 Thess 1:5-10

48 8. Calling and Regeneration

49
 50 Believers have a responsibility to freely share the Gospel to all.¹ This external, general Gospel
 51 call is resisted by most who hear it.² However, when God chooses to accomplish His redemptive
 52 purpose in a person,³ the Holy Spirit works effectively through the gospel of Christ,⁴ regenerating

1 elect sinners⁵ and drawing them irresistibly to repentance and saving faith.⁶ This internal,
2 effective call of God actually creates the new life that it calls for in the person, and is well
3 illustrated by the call/command at Creation (2 Cor 4:6) and at Lazarus' tomb (Jn 11:38-44).
4

5 ¹ Mt 28:18-20; Lk 24:47; Rom 10:11-15 (esp “everyone who believes” / “everyone who calls on the
6 name of the Lord”); Examples of this external, general Gospel call: Mt 22:9-14 (esp Mt 22:14); Mt
7 11:28 (again, note that the very strong verses on the sovereignty of God in salvation in Mt 11:20-27 are
8 immediately followed by one of the sweetest general invitations); Rev 22:17

9 ² 1 Cor 1:22-23; Prov 1:23-31; 2 Chron 30:9-12, 36:16; Acts 7:51, 13:41, 17:32, 26:14

10 ³ Gal 1:15-16a; 2 Cor 4:6; Isa 55:10-11; Ezek 34:11-13, 16 (cf. Lk 19:10, Jn 10:16); Acts 13:48, 16:14;
11 2 Thess 2:13

12 ⁴ 1 Cor 1:21-24; Rom 1:16; 10:14-17; 1 Thess 1:4-5 [a powerful picture of God using His Word to
13 bring life is the vision in Ezek 37:1-10]

14 ⁵ Deut 30:6; Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26-27; Jn 1:13; 3:3-8; 2 Cor 4:6; Eph 2:1-10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18

15 ⁶ John 6:37, 44-45, 65; 10:16; Acts 2:39; Rom 8:30 [ALL who get this “call” are one day glorified]; 1
16 Cor 1:22-31 [Note the general Gospel call in 1 Cor 1:22-23, rejected by most who hear it. But when
17 God gives the internal, effective call, ALL who get that “call” see Jesus as irresistible. Also compare
18 Acts 2:2 (which demonstrates the general Gospel call) and Acts 2:39 which is the effectual call of God.
19 See the general call in 2 Chron 30:9-10, resisted/mocked by most. But those who listened and changed
20 in 2 Chron 30:11-12 are explained by the sovereign work of God in their hearts (the effective, internal
21 call of God).]
22

23 9. Repentance and Faith

24
25 Repentance and faith are divine commands¹ AND inseparable graces of God, given in our
26 souls by the regenerating Spirit of God.² Repentance is a sincere commitment to turn away
27 FROM our sin and anything/anyone other than Jesus as our hope for life and salvation.³ Belief
28 (faith / trust) is a whole-hearted⁴ turning TO God through Jesus⁵ as our Savior (Mt 1:21, Acts
29 4:12), Lord (Lk 2:11, Rom 10:9), Treasure (Phil 3:7-8, Mt 13:44), and Life (Jn 14:6, 17:3).
30 Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin (Heb 6:1, Isa 55:6-7), and will result in
31 visible changes in a person's life.⁶ A life of turning AWAY from sin (not perfectly, but increasingly)
32 and turning TO God in Christ is how we confirm and give evidence of our election (2 Pet 1:10, Lk
33 22:31-32, 1 Thess 1:2-10).
34

35 ¹ Mk 1:14-15; Lk 3:7-9, 13:1-5; Acts 2:38, 3:19-26, 17:30-31

36 ² Acts 11:18; 2 Tim 2:24-25; Eph 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; Acts 13:48; 1 Jn 5:1a; God uses the COMMANDS
37 to repent / believe to actually bring those He is calling to Himself to voluntary repentance and faith (see
38 the previous article for how God uses the general call to create what He commands in the hearts of
39 those He is saving).

40 ³ Acts 3:19, 17:30-31, 26:20; Ezek 14:6, 18:30-32, 33:11; Lk 5:30-32; Rom 2:2-8; 2 Cor 12:21; Heb
41 6:1; Rev 2:20-23, 9:20, 16:7-11

42 ⁴ James 2:19 – NOT just believing some correct facts about God; Jn 2:23-25, 8:31 (“IF you abide in my
43 word...”); Heb 11:6

44 ⁵ Jn 1:10-13, 3:16-18, 3:36, 6:40, 20:24-31; Acts 16:30-31; Rom 3:21-26, 4:3-5, 10:9-13

45 ⁶ Lk 3:7-9; Acts 26:20; Jn 8:31-32, 34-36; 2 Cor 12:21; 1 Jn 2:4-6; Rev 2:20-23
46

47 10. Justification (remember that “right / righteous” and “just / justify” have the same Greek root)

48
49 Sinners who have been converted (given new life by God and enabled to believe in Jesus) are
50 declared righteous in the sight of God because of Christ's perfect life, His substitutionary death,
51 and the imputation / crediting of God's righteousness in Christ to our lives.¹ Justification can
52 never be the reward or result of human works or merit,² nor does it grow out of an **infusion** of

1 Christ's righteousness [see note below – we need an **imputed** (credited to us) and **alien** (outside
2 of ourselves) righteousness].³ It is granted through faith alone*⁴ in the person and work of Christ
3 alone*.⁵ Justification has two wonderful aspects: our sins are forgiven (Rom 4:4-8) and the
4 righteousness of God in Christ is credited to our lives (2 Cor 5:21).
5

6 ¹ Isaiah 53:11; Romans 3:19-26, 4:5-8, 11, 16, 20-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21

7 ² Romans 3:20-21, 27-28; 4:1-5; 10:1-4; Galatians 2:15-16; 20-21; 3:10-14; Titus 3:4-7

8 ³ Rom 4:1-8; 5:12-19; Heb 10:14; Lk 18:9-14 – the Pharisee gave God the credit/thanks for the
9 righteousness in his life, but he was NOT justified. He was looking to a righteousness within himself
10 (an infused “righteousness” that he believed was a gift from God), rather than an alien (outside of
11 himself) righteousness that would be imputed / credited to him only by the mercy of God in Jesus.
12 What this Pharisee (and the Roman Catholic Church) missed is that God justifies the UNGODLY who
13 throw themselves on His mercy in Christ – see Lk 18:13-14, Rom 4:4-5.

14 ⁴ Gen 15:6; Jn 1:11-12; Rom 1:17; 3:20, 26-28; 4:5, 20-24; 5:1; Gal 2:15-16, 20-21; 3:2-3, 5-9, 11-13;
15 5:1-6; Eph 2:8-9; Philippians 3:9

16 ⁵ John 3:14-18, 36; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 16:22
17

18 **11. Sanctification** (remember that “saint,” “sanctify” and “holy / holiness” have the same Greek root)

19
20 Every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to
21 be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous
22 and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This positional sanctification has to
23 do with the believer’s standing, not his present walk or condition.¹
24

25 There is also, by the work of the Holy Spirit, a progressive sanctification by which the state of the
26 believer is brought in PRACTICE closer to the POSITION the believer enjoys through justification.
27 Through Holy Spirit-empowered obedience to the Word of God, the believer is able to live a life of
28 increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus
29 Christ.² All true believers must and do direct their will and affections toward this purpose,³ putting
30 to death the desires and deeds of the flesh by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:13;
31 Phil 2:12-13) as God’s Word is more fully understood and applied.⁴
32

33 In this respect, every saved person is involved in a daily conflict—the new creation in Christ doing
34 battle against the flesh (Rom 7:21-25; Gal 5:16-26)—but adequate provision is made for victory
35 over sin through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁵ The struggle nevertheless stays with the
36 believer all through this earthly life. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural.⁶
37 While sinless perfection will never be attained in this life, it IS a certainty in heaven.⁷
38

39 ¹ Acts 20:32; 1 Cor 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess 2:13; Heb 10:10; 13:12; 1 Pet 1:2

40 ² Jn 17:17, 19; Rom 6:1-22 (esp **Rom 6:22**); 2 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:19; 1 Thess 4:3-4, 5:23; Heb 10:14 -
41 Heb 10:10, 14 capture beautifully BOTH the Positional and Progressive aspects of sanctification

42 ³ Heb 9:13-14, 12:14, Rom 8:13; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 4:24; Col 3:5-13; 1 Thess 4:3-8; 2 Tim 2:21-22; 1 Pet
43 1:14-16; 1 Jn 2:3-6

44 ⁴ Jn 17:17, Acts 20:32, Rom 12:1-2, Eph 5:26

45 ⁵ Ezek 36:27; Rom 6:14-18, 8:8-14; 1 Cor 10:13; 2 Cor 3:18; Heb 13:20-21; Gal 5:22-25; 1 Jn 3:5-9

46 ⁶ Ecc 7:20; Phil 3:12-14; James 3:2; 1 Jn 1:8, 10

47 ⁷ Eph 5:27; Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23-24; Heb 12:1-2 – “founder and perfecter of our faith” or “author and
48 finisher”; 1 Jn 3:2; Jude 24; Rev 21:27
49

50 **12. Perseverance**

51
52 Because “Salvation belongs to the LORD” (Jonah 2:9), and it is God working salvation for His
53 elect from beginning to end,¹ we can be sure that all who are chosen, called, regenerated, and

1 justified shall persevere in faith and never finally fall away.² Perseverance **is** a necessary
 2 evidence of real saving faith,³ but it is a condition / requirement that God will insure is fulfilled in
 3 the lives of those who are truly His.⁴ Although perseverance IS a command to believers,⁵ it is
 4 most fundamentally a work of God through the indwelling Holy Spirit who creates, sustains, and
 5 nourishes a living, growing, transforming, and enduring faith in all true believers.⁶ So we can say
 6 both that true believers **MUST** and **WILL** persevere to the end.
 7

8 ¹ Rom 8:28-39, especially Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:3-14, especially Eph 1:11-14; Phil 1:6; Heb 12:2

9 ² Jn 5:24, 6:37-40, 10:27-29; Rom 8:1-2, 28-39; 1 Thess 5:23-24; **Heb 3:14**; 1 Pet 1:3-5; **1 Jn 2:19**

10 ³ Jn 8:31-32; Mt 10:22; Col 1:22-23; Heb 3:12-14 – note carefully the wording of Heb 3:14 in a good,
 11 literal translation like NASB – “we HAVE BECOME partakers, if we hold fast...until the end”. I.e.,
 12 *our necessary holding fast is not HOW we become partakers, but evidence that we HAVE BECOME*
 13 *partakers of Christ* (NKJV, HCSB, NET also “have become”; ESV and NIV have the similar “have
 14 come”).

15 ⁴ Jn 6:37-40, 10:27-29; Rom 8:30 – heaven is so sure it’s spoken of in past tense – “He also glorified”;
 16 1 Pet 1:3-5 – note that God keeps us THROUGH faith – real faith is always connected to perseverance.
 17

18 And see **Acts 27:22-26, 30-32** for an example of **conditions** with something that **will** definitely happen.
 19 This is also an example of how the warning itself, with its “condition of perseverance” can be used by
 20 God to actually keep those He promised to preserve.

21 ⁵ Jude 20-21 – “building yourselves up... keep yourselves in the love of God”

22 ⁶ Jude 1, 24 – note that the command “keep yourselves” of Jude 20-21 is sandwiched between an
 23 opening and closing reminder / promise that we ARE kept / preserved by and for God Himself. Also 2
 24 Cor 3:18; Gal 2:20; Phil 2:12-13 – note the balance between us persevering in obedience and it
 25 ultimately being God at work in us; 1 Thess 5:23-24; 2 Tim 1:12, 2:19; 1 Pet 1:3-5; 2 Pet 1:3-11. And
 26 remember that the Biblical explanation for those who seem to leave the faith is that “they were not of
 27 us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us...” (1 Jn 2:19)
 28

29 **13. The Church**

30
 31 A local church is a body of baptized believers¹ gathering regularly to share life with Christ and
 32 each other,² to affirm and proclaim His gospel,³ and to submit to His headship in doctrine and
 33 practice according to His written Word.⁴ Though Christ shepherds and rules over His church as
 34 Head,⁵ qualified men⁶ are appointed as elders to shepherd, oversee, and lead the local church as
 35 His subordinates.⁷ Qualified deacons may be chosen to assist the elders in serving the body as
 36 needed.⁸ Each member of the church is uniquely gifted by the Holy Spirit to edify the body.⁹
 37

38 ¹ Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12, 36; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 31-33

39 ² Acts 2:41-42; Jn 13:34-35; Rom 12:10; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Gal 6:1-2, 10; Eph 2:19; 2 Tim 2:22 (“WITH
 40 those who call on the Lord...”); 1 Jn 3:14; Heb 10:24-25

41 ³ Mk 16:15-16 (cf Mk 1:14-15 and Mt 28:18-20); 1 Cor 15:1-4; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Gal 1:6-9

42 ⁴ Mt 28:19-20; Jn 6:68, 14:15, 21, 17:17; Acts 2:42, 30:32; Rom 16:17-18; 1 Cor 5:11-13; Eph 4:11-24;
 43 2 Thess. 1:8, 3:14-15; 1 Tim. 1:3-11, 3:14-15; 2 Tim 3:16-4:4; Titus 2:1-10

44 ⁵ Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18

45 ⁶ 1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Tim 2:9-15 (Notice that Paul, inspired by God, grounds his reasoning way
 46 back in Gen 1-2, in the order of Creation. This is deeper than constantly changing cultural settings.)

47 ⁷ 1 Pet 5:2-4; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; Heb. 13:17; “elder” is the most often used
 48 word for this office in the NT. But “pastor” (Eph 4:11-16) and “overseer” (“bishop” in KJV) are also
 49 used. In Acts 20:17-38 1 Pet 5:1-4 and Acts 20:17-38, all three words are used, when you know that
 50 “shepherd / feed / care for” in Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet 5:2 are the same Greek root word as “pastor” in Eph
 51 4:11.)

⁸ 1 Tim 3:8-13; Phil 1:1; Acts 6:1-4 (most agree that this was the first group of those later called “deacons”. The Greek word in Acts 6:2 for “serve” is where we get our English word “deacon”).

⁹ Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:7, 11; 14:12, 26; Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 4:10-11

14. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the two ordinances established by Jesus, to be regularly practiced by His church.¹ **Baptism** is a public act of identification with and obedience to Christ, and is always done in the New Testament as part of a person making their profession of faith in Jesus.² Baptism is immersion in water,³ giving an outward SYMBOL of the already accomplished inward realities that occurred when God saved the person. Baptism symbolizes the believer's union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection to new life,⁴ his immersion by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor 12:12-14), and his cleansing from sin.⁵ Following their baptism, Christians should regularly partake of the **Lord's Supper**. By sharing in the broken bread and the cup, believers remember the suffering and death of Jesus on the cross, and look forward to His return.⁶ Through the Lord's Supper, believers affirm and celebrate their oneness, distinction from the world (1 Cor 10:16-17, 21 with 1 Cor 5, 2 Cor 6:14-7:1), and their fellowship with Christ in the New Covenant.⁷ Because of the precious and serious realities pictured by the Lord's Supper, it should be preceded always by solemn self-examination (1 Cor 11:23-32).

¹ Matthew 28:18-20; Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:23-26

² Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38, 41; 8:36-38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:14-15, 31-34. Notice that baptism is always practiced EARLY on, as an initial act of discipleship. Of course, this assumes the Biblical evangelism practiced in the early church, not a high pressure “hurry and make a decision” approach that is often practiced today. In the early church it was often very costly for believers to make a public stand (like baptism) proclaiming Jesus as their Savior and Lord. But true believers are willing to obey Jesus and identify themselves publicly as His.

³ **A)** The normal meaning of the Greek word “baptizo” is “dip / submerge / immerse”. **B)** John the Baptizer apparently practiced immersion, therefore baptizing where there was “much water,” and Jesus came “up from the water” in His baptism. It looks like the early church continued this practice - Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Jn 3:23; Acts 8:26-38 (notice that the new believer did NOT say – “Just pour a little water from my water jug on me”). **C)** What baptism symbolizes is most clearly represented by immersion.

⁴ Rom 6:3-6 (with Gal 2:20); Acts 19:3-5; Colossians 2:11-14

⁵ Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Cor 6:11; Titus 3:5; Heb 10:22; Baptism is a symbol like a wedding ring. The ring itself doesn't DO anything but is an outward SYMBOL that people CAN see of an inward reality that people CAN'T see.

⁶ Mt 26:26-30; Lk 22:17-20; 1 Cor 11:23-32

⁷ Mt 26:27-28; Lk 22:20; Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 10:16-17 (compare 1 Cor 11:17-34)

15. Evangelism / Missions and Discipleship

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every local church to endeavor to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded.¹ Because repenting from sin and believing in Jesus is the ONLY way to be saved from God's righteous wrath,² and because this life is short (James 4:14, Ps 90:8-12) and we will soon stand before God the righteous Judge (Heb 9:27, Rom 2:16, Lk 12:16-21), there is a real urgency in our evangelism (Isa 55:6-7, 2 Cor 5:10-11).³ Believers need to be persuasive without being manipulative,⁴ proclaiming the infinite value of Jesus our Treasure while calling people to count the cost of following Jesus in discipleship.⁵ It must be a priority in evangelism and discipleship to unite new believers with local churches.⁶

¹ Mt 28:18-20 (with Rev 5:9, Jn 10:16 – referring to future, non-Jewish believers); Acts 1:8; Ps 86:9; Mal 1:11; Mt 9:36-38; 2 Cor 5:18-20

² See the entire article above titled “Repentance and Faith”

³ James 4:14; Ps 90:8-12; Heb 9:27 (also Rom 2:16); Lk 12:16-21; Isa 55:6-7; 2 Cor 5:10-11

⁴ Compare 2 Cor 5:10-11 with 1 Cor 1:17, 2:4, 13. Also see 2 Cor 4:1-7 – knowing that the miracle of becoming a new creation in Christ comes from the creation command of God, just like in the creation of Gen 1 (see 2 Cor 4:6), we renounce all manipulative, high-pressure ways of trying to make converts.

⁵ See BOTH of these ideas in Mt 13:44, Phil 3:7-8. Also see Lk 14:25-33, Mk 8:34-38

⁶ Acts 20:28 (cf. Ezek 34:11-14); Mt 16:18; Acts 2:40-47; Eph 2:19-22, 4:14-16. Also see Jn 13:34-35; Rom 12:10; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Gal 6:1-2, 10; 2 Tim 2:22 (“WITH those who call on the Lord...”); 1 Jn 3:14; Heb 10:24-25

16. The Return of Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ shall come again to raise the dead bodily, both righteous and unrighteous.¹ The justified (those declared “right / righteous” before God by faith in Jesus) shall enjoy everlasting life in the presence of God in heaven, while the unjustified shall eternally endure God's wrath in hell.²

¹ Jn 5:28-29 [what we’ve DONE gives evidence of whether we are justified or not – see the article above on “Justification”. We are NOT justified on the basis of what we do, but justification is ALWAYS accompanied by works that show a righteous life. The reformers would say, “We are justified by faith alone, but the faith that justifies never remains alone – it is always accompanied by good works.” See Eph 2:8-10]; Jn 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Cor 15:51-57; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Heb 9:28

² Mt 25:31-46; 2 Thess 1:6-9; Heb 9:27-28; Rev 20:11-21:8, 22:3-5, 14-15

17. The Glory of God

Christians must live, not for their own glory or the approval of men, but for God's glory alone*.¹ This is accomplished through their awareness and enjoyment of His Person,² submission to His authority,³ and reliance upon His goodness.⁴ In truth, all things that have or will transpire, serve to glorify God as their highest and ultimate purpose.⁵

¹ 1 Cor 10:31; Lev 10:3; Mt 5:16; Phil 1:9-11; 1 Pet 4:11

² Psalm 16:11; 23:4; 46:1; 84:10-12; 139:7-10, 17-18; Prov 15:3; Mt 28:20; Heb 13:5-6

³ 1 Sam 15:22-23; Ecc 12:13-14; Micah 6:8; Jn 15:14-16 (cf. Jn 15:8; Eph 2:10); Heb 12:28-29

⁴ Ps 23, 18:1-3, 34:7-10; Isa 41:10; Hab 3:17-19; Mt 6:25-32; Lk 11:11-13; Acts 17:24-25, 28; 2 Cor 1:3-4; Phil 4:6-7; James 1:17

⁵ Rom 11:33-36; Ps 46:10; 86:9; Prov 16:4 (with Rom 9:17-23); Mal 1:11; Eph 1:3-14 (esp Eph 1:6, 11-12, 14); Eph 3:20-21

Romans 11:33–36 (ESV)

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!

³⁴ *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?”*

³⁵ *“Or who has given a gift to Him that He might be repaid?”*

³⁶ ***For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.***

To Him be glory forever. Amen.

1 Community Church. Further use was made of the **2000 Baptist Faith and Message**, which itself made great use of
2 much older Statements of Faith. Significant help also came from the document “**Together for the Gospel -**
3 **Affirmations and Denials**”.