

Light of the Gospel Baptist Church

Preparing for Baptism

Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith and Ethics

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Doctrine about the Bible

Statement of Faith

The Word of God. We believe that the Bible, the canonical books of the Old (39 books) and the New (27 books) Testaments, is the inspired Word of God. It was written by men of God, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2Pet. 1:21; 2Tim. 3:16). Inspiration is the writing down of God's revelation by men of God who were guided by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the only inerrant and infallible source of truth and doctrine for the Christian faith (John 20:31; Rom. 10:17; 2Tim. 3:16). It provides the only true guidance in matters of salvation, life, and ministry (Josh. 1:7-8; 2Pet. 1:19; Rom. 15:4; Heb. 4:12).

The Bible is the complete written revelation of God to men; its central theme is the Word of God incarnate - Jesus Christ (John 5:39; 2Pet. 1:19; Heb. 1:1-2). Adding to, or subtracting from, the Word of God entails a strict punishment from God (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18-19).

Uniqueness of the Bible

What distinguishes the Bible from all other books on earth? Why is it so important for people? What is the reason that in many countries it is banned and destroyed?

The main difference of the Bible lies in its divine inspiration. This means that it is inspired by God Himself. Since God is the Creator and Supreme Judge of all people, His Word is of great importance to all of us. The Bible enlightens our hearts and changes people's lives. This is the only Book through which you can receive salvation and eternal life for your soul. Therefore, it is so important, and for this reason it is persecuted.

Inspiration by God

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2Tim. 3:16).

Biblical inspiration is a unique process when God through the Holy Spirit opened His truths to the authors of the Bible and kept them from inaccuracies and errors.

We can see Biblical Inspiration of God in two types.

1. *Direct revelation from the Holy Spirit.* Usually the prophets wrote that way. They wrote what was openly revealed to them by the Lord. "Moreover, the Lord said to me, "Take a large scroll, and write on it with a man's pen..." (Isaiah 8:1).
2. *Motivation from the Holy Spirit.* The Lord inspired an author to write and helped him in this. The Holy Spirit guided the man in a special way by protecting him from mistakes and unnecessary words, and by sending thoughts that accurately convey the Truth. For example, the Evangelist Luke writes: "...It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed" (Luke 1:3-4).

How can biblical inspiration of God be proven?

The unity of the Bible books. The Bible consists of 66 books. They were written over 1600 years in different countries and in different languages. At the same time, they are united by one idea and do not contradict, but complement each other. This unity lies in the idea that exists in all the books of the Bible: "People constantly leave from God, but He continues to love them and wants to save through Jesus Christ, who took upon Himself their sins."

Scientific accuracy. Thousands of years ago, the Bible proclaimed scientific facts that were recently discovered by scientists. For example, "He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing" (Job 26:7).

Prophetic accuracy. The prophet Micah almost 700 years before Christ's birth predicted the place of his birth - Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The Old Testament contains over 60 prophecies about Christ that were fulfilled during His life.

Biblical canon and apocrypha

The Biblical canon is a list of 66 books of the Bible that have been studied and accepted by the Church, that they are inspired by God.

What criteria were used for this? First, the authors of the books of the Bible were people who had direct contact with God, or who were in close contact with the apostles (Mark and Luke Evangelists). Secondly, their content had to fully correspond, and not contradict, the teachings of Jesus Christ, the apostles and Old Testament prophets. Second criteria would be a contain of a text. Which should not contradict, but complete teachings of Jesus Christ, disciples, and Old Testament Prophets.

Therefore, only the canonical books of the Bible can be the basis for our doctrines, used for edification in faith, quoted in sermons, and serve as a norm for behavior.

What is the Apocrypha? In Greek, the word apocryphos means "hidden." This term is used for books of unknown or doubtful origin, because their inspiration is not confirmed by anything. Such fake messages began to appear in the time of the Apostle Paul: "...not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, *as if from us*, as though the day of Christ had come" (2Thess. 2:2).

Important to remember

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
2Tim. 3:16

Biblical inspiration is when God through the Holy Spirit opened His truths to the authors of the Bible and kept them from inaccuracies and errors.

The Biblical canon is a list of 66 books of the Bible that have been studied and accepted by the Church, that they are inspired by God.

Apocrypha is a term used for books of unknown or doubtful origin, because their inspiration is not confirmed.

3 steps of effective Bible Study:

1. Observation: what is written here?
2. Explanation: what is the meaning of this particular text?
3. Application: what does this mean for me personally?

How can you properly study Bible?

Regular reading of the Bible and meditation on the read 1) serves our spiritual growth, 2) strengthens in faith, 3) helps us to know the will of the Lord for our lives, and 4) keeps ourselves clean before God.

Three steps of effective Bible Study:

1. Observation: what is written here?
2. Explanation (interpretation): what is the meaning of this particular text?
3. Application: what does this mean for me personally?

At the APPLICATION step, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are there any examples for me here that need to be followed?
2. Are there any warnings that need to be considered?
3. Are there any commands from the Lord that need obedience?
4. Are the sins indicated here to be left?
5. Are there new truths about my own life here?

Important rules for studying the Bible

1. When you read the Scriptures, apply this passage primarily to your life.
2. First, you must obey the Word of God yourself, and only then you can teach it to others.
3. God speaks to us through His Word. Therefore, pray before reading the Bible.
4. If there are some verses that you do not understand, do not hesitate to ask for explanation from more experienced Christians or church ministers.
5. Always study the context of any passage of Scripture. The study of a separate verse, detached from the context, often leads to a misinterpretation.

How will you find time?

- Please understand! Deep and serious Bible study is not a chose: to do or not to do? It's a vital duty for a healthy spiritual life of Christians.
- You have time to eat, sleep, bathe and work, meet with friends and play games ... However, we cannot find time to study the Bible because "we are so busy..." We should realize: it's not about time, it's about choosing our priorities.
- Make a decision: give up some things and schedule time for your daily reading of the Bible and prayer.

"Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them..." (1Tim. 4:16).

Key questions

1. What is a definition of Biblical Inspiration?
2. What evidence can you give that the Bible is inspired by God?
3. What is the Biblical canon?
4. How to properly study the Bible?

Doctrine about God

Statement of Faith

God. We believe that there is only one living, true and eternal God (Isa. 45:22; Jer. 10:10; John 17:3) who created, in six literal days, the heavens and earth and all that fills them. (Gen. 1:1-2; Ex. 31:17; Ps.24:1; Isa. 45:12; Acts 17:24-29).

God is the Spirit, perfect in all His qualities (Matt. 5:48; John 4:24). He reveals himself as the infinite, incomprehensible, self-sufficient, and unchanging Lord (Ex. 3:14; Tit. 1:2). He is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent (Gen. 17:1, 28:16; Ps. 22:3, 94:11; 1Pet. 1:16).

God is love. He is holy, righteous and just, and he desires salvation for all people (Deut. 32:4; Ps. 119:137; Isa. 6:3; 1Pet. 1:15-16; 2Pet. 3:9; 1John 4:16; 1Tim. 2:4).

The Triune God. We believe that God is one in His nature and yet exists in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Trinity possesses all divine attributes in equal measure (Isa. 48:16; Matt. 28:19; 2Cor. 13:13).

God the Father. We believe that God the Father is the Eternal God, the Creator and the Ruler over all that exists, including all humanity (Eph. 4:6).

God the Father sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to provide salvation for us (John 3:16). He is the caring and loving Father of all believers who are called to worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 1:13, 4:23; 1Cor. 8:6).

How do we know about God?

Nature. When only looking at all the magnificent beauty of nature, created by God, we can already know what God is. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20).

Bible. The Holy Scripture is the main and trustworthy source about God, His qualities, deeds and plans for humanity and the whole Universe. "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

Who is God?

The Bible says that "God is Spirit" (John 4:24). What is the spirit? Christ said so: "A spirit does not have flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). Spirit is an invisible, immaterial person. God is not limited by time or location. He is the invisible Person present in all places at the same time, all-knowing and all-powerful. He is perfect in everything.

God's Characteristics and Virtues

1. Our God is the Almighty Creator

God created the earth, the sky and the whole universe with His word. He also created the entire animal world, nature and man (Gen. 1-2).

2. God is Omnipresent, Immense and Infinite

Omnipresent means that God is present always and everywhere in all His fullness. God fills everything at the same time. "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me" (Psalm 139:7-10).

3. Our God is Everlasting God

He has always existed and will continue to exist in the future. Eternity does not have time. God lives outside of time, and the Eternity of God means that everything is for him in the present tense.

4. Our God is omniscient (He knows everything)

God knows both the past, the present and the future as already happened. This is like we see several pictures showed together on a computer screen. God knows everything! People are open to Him, and He knows their intentions. "You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off" (Psalm 139:2).

Moral Attributes of God

1. God is holy

The holiness of God is absolute moral purity and infallibility. He is in no way tainted by sin or any uncleanness. "You shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy" (Lev 20:26).

2. God is love

God's love has been expressed in the Father's feeling for His children, which encourages Him to care for them regardless of their merit. He loves the whole world and even sinners (John 3:16). The Calvary cross is the highest manifestation of God's love for sinful people.

3. Righteousness and Justice of God

The righteousness of God is shown in the just punishment of sin. No sinner will be able say on the Day of Judgment that he is undeservedly punished. The righteous judgement of God means that He does not have partiality towards anyone.

Important to remember

Who is God? God is Spirit. He is an invisible Person present in all places at the same time, all-knowing and all-powerful. He is perfect in everything.

Natural Attributes of God

1. The Almighty Creator
2. Omnipresent
3. Eternal
4. Omniscient

Moral Attributes of God

1. God is holy
2. God is love
3. He is righteous and just

The Trinity of God

Christians do not confess pagan polytheism, but they believe in one triune God. In the Bible there is no such word as "Trinity". It simply establishes a fact of the trinity of the Godhead, and it provides facts about God manifesting himself in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Biblical Evidence

1. The Holy Scriptures recognize each of these three Persons as God (1Pet. 1:2, Rom. 9:5, Acts 5:3-4).
2. The Holy Scriptures make a clear and definite distinction between the three Persons.
 - The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are described as individuals. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you" (John 14:26).
3. This trinity is not three Gods. The Trinity is one God.
 - "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me" (John 14:11).
 - "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1Иоан. 5:7).
4. All three Persons of the Godhead - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - are equal.
 - Conclusions based on the Holy Scripture references:
 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).
 - "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2Cor. 13:14).
 - "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1Иоан. 5:7).
 - The Son is equal to the Father. "...Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6).
 - The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have the same divine attributes: eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience.

What should be our relationship and attitude to God?

"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes which I command you today for your good" (Deut. 10:12-13).

To Love God

God loves us, and He desires the same in return. He wants to have a personal and deep relationship with each of us. This includes our feelings, our will, and state of mind.

Jesus Christ said that the love of God is the first and greatest commandment for us: "Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind'" (Matt. 22:37).

Worship and Glorification

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

Worship is a necessary part of a Christian's life. It should not be specious, as a religious ritual. It should be genuine and with the proper attitude of the heart. Our worship should also be "in truth," that is, conforming to Scripture and focus on the Word of God.

Service to God

"...Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11). Christians should not be just nominal attendees of the church services. We must serve God out of love for Him and the Church, and because we are thankful for our salvation.

Holiness and fear of God

"But, after the Holy One who called you, be holy in all your actions" (1Pet. 1:15). Our life should reflect the holy character of the One Who saved us. God is holy in everything. To become like Him, we must be holy in everything what we do and say. The fear of God is a respect for the Lord and a fear of upsetting Him by our sin. "Let the fear of the Lord be upon you" (2Chron. 19:7).

Be Doers of His Word

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). A true Christian is not one who has a Bible, but one who regularly reads and follows it. We must have a deep desire to hear God. His Word should be a part of our life.

Key Verse:

"And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy" (Lev. 20:26).

Key questions:

1. What are the natural attributes of God?
2. What are the moral attributes of God?
3. Name the three Persons of the Trinity.
4. Write one verse from the Bible about the holiness of God.

Important to remember

The Trinity of God

We believe in one triune God who reveals Himself in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three Persons - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - are equal.

What should be our relationship and attitude to God?

We are ought to:

1. Love Him
2. Serve Him
3. Worship Him
4. To have the holiness and fear of God
5. Be doers of His Word

Key Verse:

"And you shall be holy to Me, for I the Lord am holy" (Lev. 20:26)

Doctrine about Jesus Christ

Statement of Faith

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God Eternal (1John 5:20; Tit. 2:13), who has no beginning or end (Heb. 7:3). He is also the Creator of the Universe (Col. 1:16).

We believe God the Son existed with the Father from eternity past (Ps. 2:7; John 1:18). Before the creation of the world, God foreordained the Son to be a sacrifice for the propitiation of sin, and the redemption and salvation of the entire human race (1Pet. 1:18-20, 2:24, 3:18; 1John 2:2; Gal. 4:4).

God the Son became a man (1Tim. 2:5; 1Tim. 3:16), yet retained the fullness of His deity, being both fully God and fully man (Luke 1:35). He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Matt. 1:18). He was without sin (1Pet. 2:22; 1John 3:5).

Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world, promised to us by God (Gen. 3:15; Luke 4:18-19; John 4:42; Acts 2:36, 4:12; Eph. 5:2). Christ redeemed us with His blood and became the only mediator between God and man (Col. 1:20; 1Tim. 2:5-6; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 7:24-25). By His death and resurrection, Christ defeated the devil and death (1Cor. 15:54-57; Rev. 3:21, 5:5). He sets believers free of eternal punishment (Rom. 6:9; 2Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14). Christ is the Head of the Church (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23; Col. 1:18). Having arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven, Jesus Christ is Head of the Church. Now in glory, He gives eternal life to those who believe in Him, and He intercedes for His children before the Father (John 6:47; 1John 2:1; 1Tim. 3:16). He will be the Judge of the Universe and its King forever and ever (John 5:22; Acts 17:31; Rev. 11:15).

Importance of the Doctrine of Jesus Christ

The doctrine about personality of Jesus Christ is the foundation of all Christian core beliefs, because all believers are His followers. What does a person think about Christ? This question is so important that the salvation of our soul depends on the answer to it. Christianity, as a religious teaching, has the deepest connection with the Person of Christ. Therefore, let's consider the most important aspects of the doctrine of Christ: His incarnation, His divine and human nature, and His death and resurrection.

Reasons for Christ's Incarnation

1. *To confirm God's promises.* Throughout the Old Testament, God at all times promised to send his Son into the world. More than 60 prophecies about Christ came to be during His life on Earth.
2. *To remove sin.* Sin is the reason, which separates us from God and makes the salvation of man impossible. People cannot free themselves of sin with their own personal efforts, since they are already living in sin. Because of His incarnation, Jesus Christ became a person, born NOT in sin. In other words, sin did not have any authority over Him. For this reason, He could sacrifice Himself for our sins, so that God could forgive us and accept us.
3. *To destroy the deeds of the devil.* The incarnation of Christ and His death on the Calvary cross led to a complete victory over death and the devil. Accepting death, He was able

to conquer death with His Resurrection (John 14:19). Conquering death, He made Satan powerless against those who are saved. "...That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

4. *To show us an example of a holy life.* Christ was blameless in His teaching, actions and character. For us, He is an illustration of what God wants us to be. "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1John 2:6).

The Deity of Jesus Christ

If Jesus Christ is God, He must have all the attributes that God has. Many people readily acknowledge Jesus Christ as an outstanding person, but they doubt His divinity. Recognition of Jesus Christ as God means to submit to His authority and the Word. Denying the divinity of Christ means depriving humankind of the Savior.

1. The Bible directly calls Christ God:
 - "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life"(1John 5:20).
2. He is given divine names:
 - First and Last (Rev. 1:17; Rev. 22:13)
 - Lord (Luke 2:11)
 - Mighty God, Everlasting Father (Ish. 9:6)
3. He has Divine attributes:
 - Eternity (John 17:5, Phil. 2:6, Col.1:16-17)
 - Omniscience (John 2: 24-25, John 6:64)
 - Omnipotence (Heb. 1:3)
4. He accepted worship, acted as God, did what only God has the right to do:
 - Jesus declared "your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:5)
 - He spoke of the future judgment over the world (Matthew 25:31-46)
 - Jesus declared that He has the power to give life (John 5:21).

Important to remember

Reasons for Incarnation of Christ

- To confirm God's promises.
- To remove sin.
- To destroy the deeds of the devil.
- To show us an example of a holy life.

The uniqueness of Christ's nature

- God the Son became a man yet retained the fullness of His deity, being both fully God and fully man.
- He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin.
- There was no sin in Him.

The Deity of Jesus Christ

- He is given divine names.
- He has divine attributes.
- He accepted worship as God.
- He forgave sins.
- He has the power to give life.

The Humanity of Jesus Christ

- He was born and grew up as a person.
- He had the same physical needs as all people.
- He expressed the same feelings and emotions as all people.

Importance of the Death of Christ

- God can forgive sin only when a punishment is received.
- Jesus died for the sins of all people in the world.

The Humanity of Jesus Christ

If Jesus Christ was a man, He must have had all the qualities that people have. This was necessary so that He could offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of people and to satisfy the justice of God. The humanity of Jesus Christ is confirmed by the following characteristics:

- Birth (Luke 2:7, Gal 4:4).
- Growing up, like all people (Luke 2:40).
- Asking questions (Luke 2:46).
- He was successful in wisdom (Luke 2:52).
- He looked like a normal person (John 4:9).
- He felt hungry (Matt. 4: 2)
- He was thirsty (John 19:28)
- He was tired (John 4: 6)
- He was asleep (Matt. 8:24)
- He loved (Mark 10:42)
- He showed mercy (Matt. 9:36)
- He was angry and grieved (Mark 3:5)
- He wept (John 11:35)

The Infallibility of Christ

By becoming a man, Jesus Christ obeyed all human laws of nature, including death. However, His main difference from the rest of the people was that He did not sin like the rest.

- "He did no sin ..." (1 Pet 2:22).
- "...but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

The Importance of the Death of Christ

It is the main condition for our salvation. Jesus Christ needed to ascend to the cross so that man could be saved (John 3:14-16). Sin cannot be forgiven only based on the sinner's repentance. God can forgive sin only when a punishment is received or carried upon someone. For this, Christ took upon Himself the punishment of all sinners (Rom. 3:25).

The extent of Christ's death. Christ died for all sin (John 1:29). Although Jesus died for the sins of all people in the world, only the ones who accept Him with faith and come to Him with repentance will receive salvation.

Christ's Resurrection

His resurrection supports His deity. Apostle Paul tells us that Christ's death was a sign or proof of His divinity: "and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4).

His resurrection gives foundation for our resurrection. Christ's resurrection is our guarantee that our bodies will be resurrected as well (1Cor. 15:20-23; 1Thes. 4:14).

The Resurrection of Christ confirms our justification. "...Who was delivered up because of our offenses and was raised because of our justification" (Rom. 4:25). If Christ remained in the tomb, there would be no justification for us. However, the fact of His resurrection shows us that the work was done, the price was paid, and God is forever satisfied with the Christ's redemption of sins.

What does the term "justification" mean? Justification is the action of God, through which He declares the believer innocent for the crimes that he committed.

How to become like Jesus?

"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1Peter 2:21).

1. *Study and read* about Jesus Christ as much as possible.
 - " You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).
2. *Love Him*. Share this love with others.
 - "Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matt. 22:37).
 - "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another" (John 13:34).
3. *Obey His commandments*. One of the most important commandments of Christ is the Golden Rule on the attitude towards our neighbors.
 - " You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (John 15:14).
 - " And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).
4. Be *humble*.
 - " He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8).
5. *Forgive* others; do not hold grudge and bitterness.
 - "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Col. 3:13).
6. Devote yourself to *servicing* Christ.
 - " If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor" (John 12:26).
7. Be ready for *persecution* for Christ.
 - "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).

Key verse:

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8)

Key questions:

1. What are the four main reasons for Christ's incarnation?
2. What are the evidences of the humanity of Christ?
3. What are the evidences of the deity of Christ?
4. What is the importance of Christ's death?
5. What is the importance of the resurrection of Christ?
6. How to become like Jesus?
7. Learn by heart and write down the key verse of Romans 5:8.

Doctrine about Holy Spirit

Statement of Faith

God the Holy Spirit. We believe that the Holy Spirit is God and possesses all the divine attributes (Ps. 139:7; Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:10). The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead and has mind, will and emotions (Acts 5:3-4, 15:28; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 10:29). The Scripture warns us about sins against the Holy Spirit (Isa. 63:10; Mark 3:29; Acts 5:3,9; 7:51; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19).

The Holy Spirit inspired men, who were chosen by God, to write the Bible, and He gives the illumination for its understanding (John 14:26; 2 Pet. 1:21).

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sent to testify about Christ, to glorify Him and to establish the Church (John 15:26, 16:7,14; Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment, and He urges people to repent (John 16:8; Heb. 3:7-8).

At the moment of conversion, the Holy Spirit indwells, regenerates and seals a person (John 3:3-6; Acts 5:32; 1 Cor. 6:19). In the same moment, Jesus Christ baptizes (immerses) the regenerate Christian into the Body of Christ, which is the Church (John 1:33; 1 Cor. 12:13).

The Holy Spirit lives in regenerated people (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16), equipping them with power from above (Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; Eph. 5:18), teaching, encouraging and counseling them (John 14:26, 16:13; 1 Cor. 2:12-13), convicting them (John 16:8-9), and producing fruit in their lives (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:9).

Regeneration, (birth from above, or spiritual (new) birth) is a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit in the life of all who exercise faith. Through regeneration, God quickens a man's spirit and gives him a new nature (John 1:12-13, 3:3-6; James 1:18; 1Pet. 1:23; 2Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:4-6; Tit. 3:5).

People become children of God through spiritual birth, and their bodies become temples of the Holy Spirit (John 1:12; 2Pet. 1:4; 1Cor. 6:19; Heb. 2:14).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit immerses regenerated person into the Body of Christ, the Church, and unites them with Christ. Christ, by the Holy Spirit, baptizes each believer at the moment of regeneration (Luke 3:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27-28). Every born-again believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13).

Introduction

The study of the Holy Spirit is very important, because a believer establishes a personal connection with God only through Him. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, we become able to understand the Scriptures, grow in faith and knowledge of the Lord, overcome sin, and live a fruitful Christian life.

Unfortunately, there have been many false teachings that misconstrue the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a truthful understanding of what the Bible says on this topic is very important for us if we want to "stick to the pattern of sound words" (2Tim. 1:13).

Personality of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a person

- He thinks, has knowledge, and He searches (Rom. 8:27; 1Cor. 2:10-11).
- He has the will and acts according to the plan (1Cor. 12:11; Acts 16:7).

- He has feelings, such as love (Rom 15:30), grievance (Eph. 4:30).
- He speaks to people (Heb 3:7, Rev 2: 7, Acts 8:29).

The Holy Spirit is not "he," but "He". The Holy Spirit is not "what", but "Who". Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit, uses the pronoun not of the middle, but of the masculine gender: "...When He, the Spirit of truth, has come..." (John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit is God

The Holy Spirit is not just a Person; He is God. His divinity we know by the fact that He:

- *Named as God* in the Holy Scripture (Acts 5:3,4).
- *He has the God's names*: the Spirit of God (2 Chron. 15:1); The Spirit of the Lord (Ish.11:2); The Spirit of the Lord God (Ish. 61:1); The Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10:20); The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9).
- *Has the qualities of God*: eternity (Heb. 9:14), omniscience (1Cor 2:10), omnipresence (Ps. 138:1), omnipotence (Ish 39:19, Rom 15:13,19)
- *He does the deeds of God*: the work (Job 33:4, Ps. 103: 30); the gift of life (Gen. 2:7, John 6:63); prophecy (2Sam. 23:2,3, 2 Pet. 1:21); Revival (John 3:3-8, Tit. 3:5); the resurrection (Rom. 8:11).

The Holy Spirit is God, equal to the Father and the Son; He is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity. Confirmation of this can be found in the New Testament, where the Holy Spirit is used in equality with the names of God and Christ in such cases as the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20); apostolic blessing (2Cor. 13:13); in the management of the church (1Cor. 12:4-6).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers

As long as a person is an unbeliever, the Holy Spirit convicts him as a sinner (John 16:8-11). If he sincerely repents and turns to Christ, at that moment the Holy Spirit performs important actions in his personality. He completely changes the spiritual nature of man and his position in the spiritual world and before God.

At the moment of repentance, a person *receives the Holy Spirit*, becomes *born from above*, *sealed*, *adopted*, and gets *baptised with the Holy Spirit*.

Throughout life, a person is *sanctified* by the Spirit, brings forth the *fruit of the Spirit*, is *filled with the Holy Spirit*, and serves others with *gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Our will plays an important role in the progress of each of these processes.

Regeneration (John 3:3)

A person can be born again only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3).

Regeneration is a spiritual birth. This is the appearance of the new true spiritual life in a person. The Holy Spirit revives the human spirit for spiritual relationship with God. This happens at the moment of repentance and conversion with faith to God.

Why is it necessary? Since our ancestors, Adam and Eve, became sinful, all their descendants have been also born in sin (Rom. 5:18, 1Cor. 15:22). Before turning to Christ, all people are spiritually dead: their spirit is incapable of communicating with God. A person cannot resurrect his or her dead spirit himself, as he has no life in himself. Only God can do this. He grants eternal life through birth from above.

Signs of a born-again person:

1. *Battle with sin* and *victory* over it. "Whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself" (1John 5:18).
2. *Love towards people*. "He who does not love does not know God" and "everyone who loves is born of God" (1John 4:7-8).
3. The desire to *pray* to God and *read* His Word. "He is now praying", this was one of the first fruits of the revival of the Ap. Paul (Acts 9:11). The born-again Christian with pleasure reads and studies the Scripture.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer (2Cor. 6:16)

"You know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14:17). The presence of the Holy Spirit is very important. If a person does not have the Spirit, he does not belong to Christ.

- "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Rom. 8:9).
- "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1Cor. 3:16).

God seals believers with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30)

The sealing of the Spirit – this is an indication that, we are the property of God, His children, and are under His protection.

- "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth..., you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13).

Adoption (Rom. 8:15-16)

When a person is born again, he or she is accepted into God's family as a son or daughter. Thanks to a new spiritual feeling, we turn to Him as our own Father. The role of the Holy Spirit - "The Spirit of Adoption" - is that He gives the believer to feel his family status.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Christ baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ.

- "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).
- "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... and have all been made to drink into one Spirit" (1Cor. 12:13).

Baptism with The Holy Spirit is the process of joining of people to the Body of Christ – the Church of Christ.

Who baptizes? – Jesus.

With Whom? – Holy Spirit.

Result? – Body, Church of Christ.

Therefore Christ, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, immerses God's children into the Church, filling them with Himself and thus connecting them with all the other members of His Body (and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.).

When does the baptism of the Spirit occur?

It occurs at the time of repentance, when a person accepts Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior. The Universal Church is the host of born-again believers who were redeemed by Christ and connected to His Body through the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as soon as a person becomes born-again, he or she immediately joins the multitude of such renewed believers in the Body of Jesus Christ.

The following passages in Scripture support this statement:

- "...Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." (Rom. 8:9).
- "...No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit." (1Cor. 12:3).

Doctrine about Holy Spirit (Continued)

Statement of Faith

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers. Gifts are special abilities which are given by God to men for service in, and the building up of, the church (1Pet. 4:10; 1Cor. 12:7-11,28).

The gifts of wonders, signs, prophecy, healings, other tongues and the interpretation of tongues were actively used in the apostolic period for the founding of the church. God gives His gifts in accordance with His will, but the Scriptures warn us that in the last times the Devil will try counterfeit the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to deceive believers (Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22-23; 2Pet. 1:19; 1Cor. 13:9-10; 2Cor. 12:12; Eph. 2:20; Heb. 2:2-4; Rev. 16:14).

The gift of speaking in tongues should be understood as a supernatural ability to speak a foreign language (Acts 2:5-11). Any other manifestation of speaking "in tongues" is a forgery of this divine gift, as it does not correspond to the nature of human speech and the conditions set in the Holy Scripture (1Cor. 14: 6-9, 21-23, 27-28).

We accept that supernatural gifts and signs do not serve for the affirmation of faith, but rather the Word of God and following of God's will (Lk.16: 27-31, Jn.12: 37; 1 Pet.2: 1,2; 2Pet.1: 5-11; Rom.10: 17; Col. 3:16, 17; Ephesians 5: 9-11).

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

"...But be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

The filling of the Spirit is a special ministry of the Holy Spirit, when the believer gains strength and success in serving Christ.

Having the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit - these are different concepts. All believers have had the Holy Spirit since the day of their repentance. However, not everyone experiences the fulfillment by the Spirit, although the source of power is open to all.

The filling with Spirit is given only for the work of ministry. The will of God is that we are constantly be filled with the Holy Spirit. This is necessary for the blessed ministry and work for the Lord.

Being filled with the Spirit is the same as being filled with Christ, because the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ (John 16:14).

How can a believer be filled with the Spirit?

From various passages of the Scriptures we learn that to be filled with the Spirit, we must:

1. Confess and leave all sins that we know (1John 1:5-9). Holiness is part of the name of the Holy Spirit; thus, He will not work freely in those who tolerate sin.
2. Completely submit to His guidance (Rom. 12:1-2). This means that our will, mind, body, our time, talents, and our finances should be devoted to Christ. All this must be under His control.
3. Let the Word of God dwell in us (Col. 3:16). This includes reading, learning, and obeying it.
4. Finally, we must get rid of our selfish ego (Gal. 2:20). In order to fill the bowl with something new, it is necessary to pour out the old stuff first. To be filled with the Spirit, we must first "pour out" our selfishness.

Nowhere in the New Testament (after Pentecost) are we finding an example of prayer for the filling with the Holy Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit means to allow the Spirit to control my life. I give my will to the Holy Spirit, and He acts further Himself.

Comparison of "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" and "Filling with the Holy Spirit"

Confusion in these concepts may lead to dangerous doctrinal errors.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit	Filing with the Holy Spirit
Refers to the Body of Christ	Refers to the person.
We join the Body of Christ, the Church.	We gain strength for ministry.
Occurs only once during our conversion.	It happens many times throughout the whole life.
Every believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit at the time of repentance.	Not every believer is making effort to filled with the Holy Spirit as required.
No conditions, except faith in Christ.	The condition is an obedient life according to the Word of God.

Anointing with the Holy Spirit

“Anoint” means to set someone apart, to authorize and equip him for a task of spiritual importance. The Holy Spirit sets Christians apart for their ministry in Christ’s name. The New Testament indicates that there is an anointing for *individuals* who are put in special ministry, and there is anointing for *all* the born-again Christians for the knowledge of truth and affirmation in faith.

1. Anointing *individual* people for ministry.
 - The ministers of the Church must be called by the Holy Spirit. To do work in the name of God, they must have the power of the Holy Spirit and ability from Him (Eph 4:11-12).
 - "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the **Holy Spirit has made you** overseers, to shepherd the church of God^[a] which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).
2. Anointing *all* Christians for the knowledge of the truth.
 - The anointing for all Christians is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. His anointing (presence) helps us:
 - *Distinguish that from the Lord, which is true and not false.* Only the Spirit of God can reveal the deep things of God to us and preserve the believer from false teaching (1Cor. 2:10; Rom 16:17). " You have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things...But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you... the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him" (1John 2:20,27).
 - *Anointing enables Christians to stand firm* (2Cor. 1:21-22).

Fruit of the Holy Spirit

«But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control» (Gal. 5:22-23).

The fruit of the Spirit is the result of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of spiritually mature believers. It is the fruit of the Spirit that shows the degree of spiritual growth of a Christian.

- The virtues of the fruit of the Spirit are divided into three groups:
 1. In relation to God and people - love, joy, peace;
 2. In relation to people - longsuffering, kindness, goodness;
 3. In relation to personal Christian life – faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Important to remember

Baptism of The Holy Spirit is the process of joining of people to the Body of Christ – the Church of Christ.

The Filling of the Spirit is a special ministry of the Holy Spirit, when the believer gains strength and success in serving Christ.

Anointing with the Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit sets Christians apart for their ministry in Christ’s name.

The Fruit of the Spirit is the result of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of spiritually mature believers.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are spiritual abilities given to believers for the purpose of building up the Church, serving each other, and God

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1Pet. 4:10).

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are spiritual abilities given to believers for the purpose of building up the Church, serving each other, and God (1 Cor 12:11).

How are the gifts of the Spirit distributed?

1. The body of Christ (the Church) is granted with gifts. They are given for the edification of the whole Body, and not for the pleasure or personal enrichment of individual members of the church who own these gifts (1Cor 12:7; 14:5,12).
2. Every believer has a gift (1Pet 4:10, 1Cor. 12:6-7,27).
3. No man has all the gifts (1Cor. 12:14-21), and not all gifts are endowed by all people (1Cor.12:28-30). Therefore, church members need each other.
4. Although not all gifts look equally spectacular and effective, they are all important (1Cor. 12:22-26).
5. The Holy Spirit distributes various gifts to believers “as He wills” (1Cor. 12:11).

Romans 12:6-8	1Cori. 12:4-11	Eph. 4:11-12	1Peter 4:11
Prophecy	Wisdom	Apostles	Speaking
Ministry	Knowledge	Prophets	Ministry
Teaching	Faith	Evangelists	
Exhortation	Healings	Pastors	
Administration	Miracles	Teachers	
Giving	Prophecy		
Mercy	Discerning of spirits		
	Tongues		
	Tongues interpretation		

How can I identify my spiritual gift?

Every Christian is given his gift of ministry from the Lord. To discover your gift, let's ask ourselves a few questions:

1. **Am I ready to serve the Lord?** Are there any sins or other obstacles on my part that prevent the Lord from using me? Our readiness for any work and godly life are the main conditions for the Holy Spirit to use us.
 - "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work" (2Tim. 2:21).
2. **What kind of work do I have interest in and desire for?** What have I already started to do?
 - "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).
 - "To will and to do" is an important factor. But not every our "will" is truly God's will.
3. **What am I already able to do well?** In what do I achieve good results?

- Example: A person has a desire to sing, but he does not have a voice and a musical ear... Another one wants to be a graphics designer, he knows how to use the appropriate computer software, but he has no artistic taste...
 - “But our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant” (2Cor. 3:5-6).
4. **Who evaluates both my desire and success in using the gift? – The church!** The purpose of all spiritual gifts is to build-up the church; hence, your gift should be positively recognized by the church. If I rely on myself only, I can be deceived...

Sins against the Holy Spirit

Quenching the Holy Spirit (1Thes. 5:19)

To quench the Spirit is to suppress His action in your life, to limit and hinder Him. When a Christian resists or ignores an urge to work in the field of God, it is also the quenching of the Holy Spirit.

Grieving the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)

We grieve the Holy Spirit whenever we deliberately sin. All that violates the commandments of Jesus Christ in our lives grieves the Holy Spirit.

“The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously” (James 4:5). Restoring the relationship can only be through confession.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:22-23)

The denial of the action of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus Christ, or the attribution of his works to demonic influence.

This is the most terrible sin, to which there is no forgiveness. The essence of this sin lies in conscious insult and opposition to Him (Heb 6:4-8). The Holy Spirit withdraws from such sinners; thus, they have no more motivation for repentance.

It happens that devil causelessly makes Christians to think that they blaspheme the Holy Spirit when, in fact, they sincerely love the Lord.

Key verse: «But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control» (Gal. 5:22-23).

Questions:

1. What is the Filling of the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the difference between the Baptism of the Spirit and Filling of the Spirit?
3. What is the Fruit of the Spirit?
4. What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Important to Remember

Quenching the Holy Spirit is to suppress His action in your life, to limit and hinder Him.

Grieving the Holy Spirit - all that violates the commandments of Jesus Christ in our lives grieves the Holy Spirit.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit - the denial of the action of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus Christ, or the attribution of his works to demonic influence.

Doctrine about Mankind

Statement of Faith

We believe that man is the greatest of all earthly creatures, created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; Isa. 45:12). God created man for His glory, without sin, and with the right of moral choice (Gen. 2:16-17; Josh. 24:15; Isa. 43:7; Jer. 21:8). God blessed man (Gen. 1:28) and put him in charge of creation (Ps. 8:6).

God created man as an eternal, perfect being and endowed him with a mind, emotions, free will and moral responsibility (Gen. 2:16-17; Deut. 30:19; Josh. 24:15; Eccles. 11:9; Rom. 2:14-15). Man is comprised of spirit, soul and body (1Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12).

The gift of human life can only be given and taken away by the Lord Himself, from the moment of conception to the moment of the natural death of an individual (Ps. 139:14-16; Jer. 1:5).

God created man as male and female, and gave no one the right to change His plan regarding human gender (Gen. 1:27, 2:22). Every human being, no matter their race, has the fullness of dignity and deserves respect and Christian love (Acts 17:26-27).

Creation of man

The Bible teaches that man did not come from a blind experience of playing nature. The first people were created by the caring and mindful design of the Triune God.

1. The first man Adam created from the dust of the earth on the 6th day of creation.
 - “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).
 - The union of the higher divine principle (the breath of God) with the lower material (dust from the earth) has resulted in man as a "living soul" - a conscious person, gifted with reason and free will.
2. Man is created in the image and likeness of God. This means that, like God, man is a person who has mind, ability to think, and will.
 - “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27).
3. For Adam, wife Eve was created. Thus, God established the first marriage and defined its purposes – to multiply and fill the earth (Gen. 1:22).

The Nature of Man

Man is a unique and perfect creation, which consists of the Spirit, the Soul and the Body.

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole *spirit, soul,* and *body* be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1Thes. 5:23).

The words "spirit" and "soul" in the Scriptures are often interchangeable and are used to indicate the spiritual part of the human identity (Job 7:11, 1Cor. 5:5, Heb. 10:39).

However, the difference between "spirit" and "soul" is shown clearly in these passages: 1Thes. 5:23, Heb. 4:12.

1. **SPIRIT.** We perceive God and have fellowship with Him through our spirit.
 - Through our spirit, we can have a connection with God. God, in turn, speaks through His Spirit to our spirit. "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16).
2. **SOUL.** The center of self-cognition (mind, feelings, will).
 - The soul has a great influence on our self-awareness, our character, and our emotional life.
3. **BODY.** We perceive the world with it. The body is the material part of our identity.
 - Through the five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste), we are able to perceive and cognize the world around us.

The Fall of Man (Gen. 3)

- The first people, Adam and Eve, were free from sin. They had no struggle between spirit and flesh, because there was no sin and lust of flesh.
- Adam and Eve had the ability not to die, and they did not really die, because death had no right on them until they became sinful.
- Disobedience was the cause of the fall. God gave the only ban – not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which grew in the Garden of Eden. They deliberately violated this prohibition, and thus death followed.
- Sin, as well as spiritual and physical death, were inherited by all people.
- "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12)

What is sin?

- Sin is any thought, word or deed that contradicts the will of God and His standards of holiness. Unwillingness to obey His will is a sin (1John 3:4, 1John 5:17).

Important to Remember

The "image of God" in humanity

Like God, man is a person who has mind, ability to think, and will.

Humane Spirit, Soul, and Body

Spirit. We perceive God and have fellowship with Him through our spirit.

Soul is the center of self-cognition (mind, feelings, will).

Body is the material part of our identity. We perceive the world through our body senses.

What is sin?

- Sin is any thought, word or deed that contradicts the will of God and His standards of holiness.
- Sin is not only doing what is wrong, but the failure to do what one knows to be right.

- Sin is not only doing what is wrong, but the failure to do what one knows to be right (James 4:17).

“The thought of foolishness is sin...” (Prov. 24:9). Sin begins in the mind. When encouraged and entertained, it breaks forth an act, and the act leads on to death. Sin is often attractive when first contemplated, but hideous in retrospect.

How did sin affect people?

- The mind is darkened (Eph. 4:18, 1Cor 2:14);
- The heart is deceitful and spoiled (Jer. 17: 9-10);
- Thoughts are defiled (Gen. 6: 5, Titus 1:15);
- The flesh and the will are smitten with sin (Rom. 7:18).

The state of man before and after the fall

Before the fall	After the Fall
1. Spirit (Dominator)	1. Flesh (Dominator)
2. Soul (Servant)	2. Soul (Servant)
3. Flesh (An instrument of service)	3. Spirit (Prisoner)

This table shows what happened to the person after the fall. The spirit must rule in man, but everything was perverted: the body became in the dominant position. The spirit is in a depressed state, in captivity. The Holy Scriptures say that the spirit is dead (Eph. 2:1-5). Through rebirth, God restores the original order.

Key verse:

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Questions to check:

1. How did God create man?
2. Explain in your own words, what functions are the spirit, soul, and body of a person?
3. What text of Scripture says about the fall of man?
4. Explain in your own words, what is sin?

Doctrine about Salvation

Statement of Faith

We believe that God, in love, offers mankind salvation through repentance and faith in the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This salvation frees man from the bondage of sin and death, restores the relationship between God and man and results in eternal life for all who believe (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Col. 1:13-14; Tit. 3:4-7). God desires the salvation of all people, but each person is responsible either to accept or reject God's grace (Isa. 43:11; 2Cor. 7:1; Eph. 2:8-9; 1Tim. 2:4; Tit. 2:11).

God foreknew those who would respond to His call to salvation. He chose those individuals in Christ Jesus and predestined them to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29; Eph. 1:4-5).

Redemption, liberation from the bondage and penalty of sin, is offered through the blood of Jesus Christ, which was shed on the cross to satisfy the demands of God's justice (Matt. 20:28; 1Pet. 1:18; Rom. 3:24-25). Jesus Christ died for all, and now salvation by grace is available to all people through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 28:28; 2Pet. 3:9; Rom. 3:24; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 2:9).

Justification is the act of God by which the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer. Man is freed from the punishment of sin and its guilt and is reconciled to God (Rom. 3:24). Justification is a gift given by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ and is not dependent on human works and merits (Rom. 3:28, 4:5, 5:1, 5:18; Gal. 2:16).

Faith, which is necessary for salvation, comes from hearing the Word of God (Acts 4:4; Rom. 10:17; Heb. 11:6). The faith which saves a man is a faith which responds to God's offer of salvation by unconditionally accepting the message of the Gospel and trusting Christ as the only Savior and Lord (Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:1).

The confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is a confirmation of true faith (Matt. 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9; John 20:28; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; 2Cor. 4:13). Works of faith also bear testimony to true faith (James 2:26; Gal. 5:6; Heb. 11).

Believers are called to grow in faith, and the knowledge of the Lord, through listening to and studying the Word of God, praying and living godly lives (Eph. 4:13; 2Thess. 1:3).

Repentance occurs when people realize their fallen condition, experience sorrow over their sin and agree with God through confession. Repentance is the result of God's grace acting within the individual by means of God's Word, which leads him or her to conversion (Ezra 10:10-11; Prov. 28:13; Luke 15:17-21; Acts 2:37-38, 26:20; 2Cor. 7:10; Tit. 2:11-12).

Conversion is evidenced when one turns away from a sinful way of life and turns toward a life of obedience to God.

The result of accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and the subsequent conversion, is forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:42-43; 1John 1:9; Col. 1:13-14) and a new birth from God's Word and Holy Spirit (John 1:12-13, 3:5-6; James 1:18).

Sanctification occurs as God acts and man responds. During the process of sanctification, one becomes more like Jesus Christ, separates increasingly from sin and consecrates more to the new and holy life and service to God (1Pet. 1:2,14-16; Rom. 6:22; 1Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:4).

Imputed, or initial sanctification separates the believer from the sinful world and changes his position before God. Accomplished by God at the moment of conversion, initial sanctification liberates the

believer from the bondage of sin and identifies him with Christ and the saints (1Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:19; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 10:10).

Progressive sanctification liberates a born-again individual from the power of sin and transforms him into the image of Christ. This transformation, leading to spiritual growth, is done by God the Father with the help of the Holy Spirit, God's Word, and the individual's participation, throughout his entire earthly life, (John 17:17-19; 2Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 1:9-11; 1Thess. 4:3-8; Rev. 22:11).

Final sanctification fully liberates the regenerated individual from the presence of sin and results in Christ-likeness in eternity (1John 3:2). Final sanctification occurs at the rapture of the church and our meeting with the Lord (1Thess. 4:16-17, 5:23; Rom. 8:22-23).

Assurance of Salvation. We believe that the believer, kept by God has the assurance of salvation and God's election on the basis of continuation in the faith (John 10:27-29; 1John 5:13; Rom. 8:38-39; Heb. 10:38-39; Rev. 3:5). Assurance of salvation is based on God's promises and the testimony of the Holy Spirit (1John 5:11-12; Rom. 8:16).

We believe that a born-again individual, exercising his free will, can fall away from salvation by abiding in willful sin, denying Christ or falling into heresy. In this case, a believer can be deprived of God's grace and will perish (Ezek. 18:24-32; 2Pet. 3:17; Rom. 11:20-22; Gal. 5:4; 1Tim. 1:19; 2Tim. 2:12; Heb. 2:1, 12:15).

Repentance and Conversion

Repentance occurs when a person realizes his fallen condition, experience sorrow over his sin and agree with God through confession.

Conversion is an internal decision to turn away from sin, expressed in changing direction from the sinful way of life towards obedience to God.

As a result repentance and conversion, a person experience a change of his views on sin, a change in feelings, and a change in will.

1. *Change of views* in relation to sin, God and himself.
 - Sin is perceived as a personal guilt,
 - God as the One who rightly demands righteousness,
 - A person is perceived as defiled and helpless.
2. *Change of feelings.* We sincerely regret being sinners, and truly crave forgiveness.
 - In David's prayer, strong feelings of repentance are revealed: "Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your loving kindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1-2).
3. *Change of will* and purpose of life. We willfully make the decision that henceforth our life belongs only to Christ.

Fruits of Repentance:

- Confession of sin (Psalm 32:5; 51:3 etc...; Luke 15:21; 18:13; 1John 1:9).
- Compensation for harm, caused to other people (Luke 19:8).

Faith

True repentance never happens outside of faith. This means that we are not capable of turning away from sin without turning to God at the same time. In addition, we can say with certainty that true faith does not exist without repentance. Repentance and faith are inseparably tied together.

What is faith?

The word "faith" has two meanings: "to trust or believe someone" or "consider something true."

- The saving faith in Jesus Christ means trusting Him as your Savior and the certainty that He can remove the guilt of sin from us and grant us eternal life.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

Sources of Faith:

1. God's side. It is clear that faith is a gift of God:
 - "... as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3).
 - Paul says that salvation and faith are God's gift: " For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8).
2. The man's side. For his part, the believer makes efforts to constantly partake from the sources of faith:
 - It's a matter of man's will: Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Gal. 3:6).
 - The Word of God is a source of faith. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom.10:17).
 - Prayer increases our faith also (Mark 9:24; Lk.22: 32). The disciples once addressed the Lord: "Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

Results of faith:

1. **Salvation.** Our total salvation depends on faith. From the beginning and to the end, we are saved through faith, which will turn out to be our justification (Rom. 5:1) adoption (Gal. 3:5,14; 4:5 and so forth) and sanctification (Acts 26:18). Peter tells us that we are saved "by the power of God through faith" (1Peter 1:5).
2. **Confidence.** It's true that confidence appears by the testimonials of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16). Nevertheless, God directs the soul to the promises of the Scriptures, and confidence appears in us when we assimilate them in faith. Faith and peace are tightly woven together (Ish. 26:3; Rom. 5:1 Heb. 4:3) as well as joy (1Peter 1:8).
3. **Good works.** Faith certainly results in good works. We are not saved by our works (Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:9), but for good works (Eph. 2:10). Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matt. 5:16).

Sanctification (Holiness)

Bible about sanctification:

- "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).
- "Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God." (Lev 20:7).

- "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Cor. 7:1).

Sanctification is the dedication and separation and yourself for God, as well as purification and rejection of everything sinful and defiling.

- There can't be a true separation of oneself from the world to God without a complete, decisive, and definitive rejection of sin.
- The believer needs to separate himself:
 - from all wickedness (2Corinthians 6:17),
 - from false teachings (2John 1:9),
 - from his of works of flesh (Romans 6:11-14).

Three phases of sanctification in the life of a believer:

1. *Imputed, or initial sanctification.* At the moment of acceptance of Jesus Christ, the believer is sanctified in the sense that he separates, dissociates himself from sin and is consecrated to God. Therefore, in the New Testament, believers are often called "saints" (1Cor. 1:2, Rom. 1:7).
 - "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1Cor. 6:11).
2. *Progressive sanctification* liberates a born-again individual from the power of sin and transforms him into the image of Christ. This transformation, leading to spiritual growth, is done throughout his entire earthly life.
 - "For this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1Thes. 4:3).
 - "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9).
 - "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word" (Ps. 119:9)
3. *Final sanctification* liberates the regenerated individual from the presence of sin and results in Christ-likeness in eternity (1John 3:2). Final sanctification occurs at the rapture of the church and our meeting with the Lord
 - "Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Thes. 5:23).

Key verses:

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom.10:17).

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

Questions to check:

1. What is repentance and conversion?
2. Name: a) three elements of repentance and b) give them an explanation.
3. What is faith?
4. What are the sources of faith?
5. What is the sanctification of the believer?
6. How do you know the three phases of sanctification in the life of a believer?

Prayer and Fasting

Statement of Faith

To grow in Christ and to stay on the path of salvation, each born-again Christian is called to pray to God (Mark 14:38, Luke 18: 1, 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Prayer

Prayer has a vital place in the life of a believer. It is impossible to keep a Christian life without prayer. Prayer is the breath of the believer's life!

Importance of Prayer

- Neglecting prayer is a sin.
 - Samuel said to the people of Israel: "Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you..." (1Sam. 12:23).
- The Lord commands us to pray.
 - "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2).
 - "Continuing steadfastly in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).
 - "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18).
- Prayer is important for receiving blessings.
 - "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ... How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matt. 7:7-8,11).
 - "...Yet you do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2).
- The authoritative persons of the Bible about prayer:
 - Ezra believed that prayer is much more effective for security than a detachment of soldiers and riders (Ezra 8:21-23).
 - Christ believed that it was more necessary than food and sleep (Mark 1:35).
 - The apostles placed the importance of the ministry of prayer along with preaching (Acts 6:4).

What is prayer?

Prayer is our conversation with God. Through prayer, we communicate with the Lord, expressing to Him our thoughts, desires and feelings.

1. Whom are we praying to? The Scripture teaches that we should pray to the Father and the Son.
 - "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" (John 16:23)

- Stefan, when he was dying, prayed to Jesus Christ: "Lord Jesus! Receive my spirit "(Acts 7:59).
 - The Holy Spirit and prayer. There are no instructions in the Bible to pray to the Holy Spirit.
 - It is important to note that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of prayer. His primary role is to encourage us to pray, but not to receive our prayers (Rom. 8:15, Jude 1:20, Eph. 6:18). We should pray *in the Spirit*, and not *to the Spirit*.
 - Praying in the Spirit is a prayer inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.
 - Therefore, the normal way of praying is as follows: we pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the Holy Spirit.
2. Position of the body during prayer.
- Scripture describes the different positions of people during prayer: standing (Mark 11:25); kneeling (Luke 22:41); prostrating on the ground (Matt 26:39); lying in bed during illness (Isaiah 38:1-3).
 - In any case, the position of our body during prayer should show respect and humility before God, as it is appropriate in the local culture.
3. The time of prayer.
- Scripture teaches us that we should pray whenever it is necessary, when we are in need, when we need spiritual help, or just to talk to Him (Luke 18:1).
 - We also need to pray before eating (Matt. 14:19; Acts 27:35; 1Tim. 4:4-5).
4. Types of prayer.
- Personal prayer alone (Matt. 6:6). Each spiritually alive Christian should have a regular personal prayer life. Life without prayer is an empty life. It lacks its main part: personal communication with God.
 - When praying alone, you can pray either in thoughts or verbally.
 - Companion prayer (Matthew 18:19-20). Joint prayer with other believers is a prayer of harmony and accordance. It is especially pleasing to God. Joint prayer inspires us and strengthen the faith.
 - Every Christian should not to miss prayer services in his or her church.
5. What to pray about.
- Worshiping and glorification of God (Matt. 6: 9-10).
 - To communicate our personal, spiritual and material requests (Phil 4: 6; Mk.14: 38; James 1:5).
 - For each other (James 5:16; Eph. 6:18).
 - For the servants of God (Eph. 6:19-20, Col. 4:3, 2Thess. 3:1).
 - For the government and all people (1Tim. 2: 1-4).
 - To understand the Word (Ps.119:18).
6. Obstacles in prayer
- Sin in the life of the believer.

- "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).
 - Selfishness.
 - "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:3).
 - Unforgiveness.
 - "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25)
 - Unbelief
 - We must believe that God *is able* send a response to our prayer if He finds it necessary: "But let him ask in faith, with no doubting... For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6-7).
7. Main requirements for successful prayer: our heart condition *and* life according to the Bible.
- The condition of our heart:
 - Sincerity (Jeremiah 29:12-13).
 - Crush (Psalm 33:19).
 - Diligence (Luke 22:44, Acts 12: 5).
 - Constancy (Col. 4:2).
 - Love (1 Peter 4:8).
 - Living according to the Word of God:
 - "If you continue in me and my words abide in you, then whatever you wish, ask, and it will be done for you" (John 15: 7)
8. Reserve specific time for prayer in your schedule.
- Make an appointment to talk to God in the same way as you schedule it for everything else. If the meeting is not on the schedule, it is always easy to postpone it.
 - Do not ignore the morning prayer - it starts your day!

Fasting

Fasting is a time when we willingly abstain from food and entertainment, to focus all our attention on God. During the time of fasting we humble ourselves before the Lord. We desire to listen to Him as we bring our specific concerns. Sincere fasting will strengthen the person spiritually and draw him or her nearer to God.

The inner state of the heart is significant. For God, it is important that we have the desire to be with Him. As well as have a personal interest in the specific need which we bring to Him.

Reasons for Fasting in the Bible

- There are many examples of people, who, seeing their viciousness and untruth, fasted and lamented before the Lord, asking Him to forgive them (3Kings 21:27, Dan. 9: 3, Joel.1: 14, 2:12,15; Ion.3:5).

- The fasting was often used for spiritual purification (1Sam.7: 6; Neh. 9:1; Zach.8:19),
- The ministers fasted and prayed, preparing for the ordination (Acts 13:3).
- Jesus Christ (Matt. 4) and many other men of God used fasting and prayer as a weapon in the fight against temptations.

The inner condition of our heart

For God, it is important to see our deep desire to be with Him, a sincere interest in resolving the problem that we bring to Him. The Book of Isaiah, chapter 58 tells us a lot about fasting.

1. What fasting is ACCEPTABLE to the Lord?

- Lords will for the fasting is to seek His face continually (Ps. 104: 4; 1Par.16: 11) and direct their eyes to Him.
- All our thoughts and reflections should be, if possible, about the Lord (Col. 3: 1-2).
- There should be no room for vanity, sin, etc.
- The intimate relationships of spouses should also be postponed for another time (1 Corinthians 7: 5).

2. What fasting is NOT ACCEPTABLE to the Lord?

- If a person is in sin, his fasting is not acceptable.
- He does not approve the fasting of a person who is unmerciful, does not see the need of others.
- God does not accept a hypocritical, ostentatious fast (Mt.6: 16).
- Sometimes people have a consumer attitude to the fasting to take materialistic advantage. This is a wrong approach.

Fasting planning

1. How often and when to fast?

- The Bible encourages us to fast as often as possible. This opportunity was enjoyed by all the followers of Christ, in particular, the Apostle Paul ("often in fasting..." (2Cor.11: 27).

2. Duration of the fasting.

- Do not start with long fasting. Any fast requires prayer preparation and attitude. It is best to start with one-day fasts. Later, you can increase the length of the fast.

3. Time for fasting

- The best thing is to choose non-working days for fasting (1Peter 4:7; Col 4:2; 2Cor. 10:5).

4. Reading the Bible and praying during fasting

- The Bible and prayer are the vital companions of fasting. We speak to God in prayer, and He speaks to us through His Word and the Holy Spirit. Fasting is not a monologue, but a dialogue. God wants to not only listen, but also speak.

Key verse:

"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2).

Questions to check:

1. What is prayer?
2. Who do we turn to during prayer?
3. What is the main condition for prayer to be answered?
4. What is fasting?
5. Which post is good and which is not pleasing to God?

Doctrine about Church

Statement of Faith

We believe that the Church is the gathering of born-again believers who were redeemed by Christ and connected to His Body through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These believers are found both on earth and in heaven (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 12:23). The Creator and Head of the Church is Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 12:27; Col. 1:24).

The Universal Church is composed of born-again people from all nations and generations. From the Day of Pentecost, to the moment of the Rapture of the Church, all who have believed, and will believe, are united by one Lord, one faith and one baptism (Acts 2; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-13; 4:4-6; 1Thess. 4:13-18).

The local church is the assembly of believers who live in one location and are connected by the same confession of faith, are united for service to God and each other, and who gather for the preaching of the Gospel (Matt. 18:17; Acts 2:42-47, 14:23; Eph. 4:11-16; Phil. 2:1-2). The local church is an integral part of the Universal Church; therefore, each Christian must be a member of the local church, attend services regularly and participate in its ministry (Acts 2:41-42; 1 John 1:7; Eph. 10:25). The church's most authoritative body is the membership meeting.

Church Ministers. We believe that the church should have order and government in accordance with the Scriptures (1 Cor. 14:33,34). For this purpose, the Lord calls and installs ministers through the election and calling of the church (Acts 6:2-7, 15:22; Eph. 4:11-12).

When a minister is installed for the office of the presbyter (same as pastor or bishop) and deacon, ordination is performed by laying on of hands. Only men who fulfill the qualifications in the Scriptures can occupy these offices (Acts 6:1-6, 14:23; 1Tim. 3:2-12; Titus 1:5-9).

The church, and the pastors who lay hands on the candidate, recognize that is worthy to receive the office of a minister of the New Testament church and is endowed with rights, responsibilities and authority thereof (Rom. 15:15-16; 2Tim. 1:6).

Pastor's responsibilities include teaching God's Word, performing ordinances shepherding the flock (soul care), and leading the church (Acts 20:28,35; 1Pet. 5:1-4; 2Tim. 2:15; Titus 1:9).

Deacons are called to help pastors in their ministry; their main responsibilities are the financial and material aspects of church activity and acts of benevolence (Acts 6:1-4). Deacons (by pastor's assignment) have the right to perform any ordinances, except ordaining ministers and prayer over the sick with anointing of oil (James 5:14; Titus 1:5).

Church ministers may be supported financially by the church (Matt. 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:14; Gal. 6:6; 1Tim. 5:17-18).

Church Discipline. Church members should walk in obedience and faithfulness to the Lord by keeping themselves from sin (1 Kings 15:22-23; Rev. 2:10), living in peace and mutual love with each other (2Thess. 1:3), and keeping the unity of the church according to the teaching of Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5-6; Phil. 1:27; 2:2).

To preserve purity and order in the church (1Cor. 5:6-7; 2 Thess. 3:6) the following measures of church discipline exist: admonition (1Tim. 1:5; Tit. 2:15), reproof (Matt. 18:15-18), rebuke (2Thes. 3:14) and excommunication (1Cor. 5:12-13).

Excommunication from the local church can be applied in the following cases: one falls away from faith in God (1 Cor. 16:22), strays into heresy (Titus 3:10) or commits and abides in sin (Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5:11-13; 2 Thess. 3:6). The church receives the excommunicated back after they repent, leave their sin and show fruits of repentance (2 Cor. 2:6-8).

What is the Church?

The church is a gathering of believers who have been born-again and redeemed by Christ. They belong to the Body of Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Who founded the Church?

The Church was founded by Jesus Christ: "I will build my church..." (Matthew 16:16-18).

When was the Church founded?

Historically this occurred on the day of Pentecost after the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1-2).

The Universal and Local Churches

The Universal Church

It consists of all redeemed by the blood of Christ of all times, and from every nation.

The Universal Church consists of all local churches; it consists of all deceased and all living believers born-from-above (Gal 3:28, Eph. 2:11-13, 4:4-6, 1Thes. 4:13-18).

Local Churches

- A true child of God will necessarily be a member of the local church.
- A true member of the Church will attend church services.
 - "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some" (Heb 10:25).
 - One of the most important parts of the Christian life is live communication other Christians, and it could not be completely replaced by listening to or viewing the video records of church services.
- One who loves the Lord and who fears Him, will try not to be late for church services, and will behave appropriately during the service.

To what is the Church liken in the Holy Scriptures?

Church – body of Christ. Christ is the head. He governs. He gives gifts/talents for service/worship. He established rules and laws (1Cor. 12:20-27).

Church – flock. Christ is the good Shepard (John 10:7-30). "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters" (Psalm 23:2). "I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick" (Ezk 34:15-16).

Church – The Temple of God. Christ is the corner stone of this structure (1Peter 2:4-6). This Temple is of living rocks, or in other words believers.

Church – The Bride of Christ. Christ – The Groom of the Church (Matt 25:10). Christ is readying the Church – for the meeting with Himself, purifying and sanctifying her. He walks amongst the Church and watches... The Bride must be obedient to her Groom – Christ. Obedience is better than sacrifice (1Samuel 15:22).

Functions of the Church

The New Testament Church has five main functions, which are dictated by the Great Commission: evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, service to others, and worship of God. These functions are evident from Acts 2:42-47. As believers, we must fulfill these five functions, both in our personal lives and in church activities, in order to fulfill the calling of Christ.

1. **Evangelism.** The study of the Bible concentrates on obedience to Christ in the work of evangelism.
2. **Discipleship** is a path that begins after repentance and lasts a lifetime. The gospel begins the process, communication with other believers contributes, and from this the ministry grows.
3. **Communion of believers.** God wants His children to collaborate together and share their Christian faith. Sincere communication destroys disunity in order to build unity.
4. **Service** is the discovery and use of spiritual gifts and abilities in order to serve others in the name of Jesus Christ. Service is the natural result of discipleship in the process of Christian development.
5. **Worshiping God** is the result of knowing God and loving Him in spirit and truth (John 4:23).

What you need to become a member of the Church

1. **Repentance.** "Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).
2. **Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.** "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mk. 1:15).
3. **Being born again.** "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (John 3:3).
4. **Water baptism.** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19).
5. **Stay in the teaching** of the Word of God. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

The conduct and life of the Church members

Show love to others. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Respectful relationship between church members. "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Rom. 12:10).

Do not lie. "Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another" (Eph. 4:25).

In anger do not sin. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26-27).

Do not steal. "Let him who stole steal no longer..." (Eph. 4:28).

Leave the rotten words, speak only the good. "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Eph. 4:29).

Remove everything that causes damage to others, forgive, and be kind to one another. "Let all irritation and fury, and anger and screaming, and maliciousness with all malice be removed from you; but be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31-32).

Appearance should be modest.

- "In everything, show in yourself a pattern of good deeds" (Titus 2:7).
- "In order also that the wives, in a decent garment, with modesty and chastity, adorn themselves not with weaving hair, not with gold, or with pearls, with many valuable garments" (1Tim. 2:9).

Other sins, dependence, and worldly practices.

- "I will set nothing wicked before my eyes" (Ps. 101:3).
- "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12).
- "All things are lawful for me, but not all things edify" (1 Cor. 10:23).
- Church members should avoid everything that can "bring us under the power," "not helpful," and "does not edify."
- Alcohol, tobacco, drugs, pornography. All of them cause addiction and lead to sin. Church members should refrain completely from these things.
- Non-Christian movies and music, computer games. They carry worldly values, confront God and the Holy Spirit, waste our time, distract from reading the Word of God, and may also lead to dependence.

Church's disciplining

God – is a God of structure and order (1Cor. 14:33). There are rules regulations and statutes in the Church. Members of the Church are obliged to follow these rules and statutes. Those who do not follow will be held accountable and even punished by the Church. The Church's following disciplinary actions and punishments are founded on the Scriptures.

- **Admonition.** Persuade, urge, council, advice, convince (Titus 2:15).
- **Reproof.** To reveal, to show or point out. To criticize or reproof. "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone..." (Matt. 18:15-18).
- **Rebuke, reprimand** – express sharp disapproval or criticism of someone because of their behaviour or actions. "Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear" (1Tim. 5:20).
 - These people cannot engage in communion and at gatherings for members.
- **Excommunication.** In this case, from the Church. This is a last resort punishment. Excommunication is only for a spiritually dead person. After all attempts to exhort or

rebuke an individual, if that individual does not correct their ways and continues to sin, let that person be as a Gentile; in other words - an unbeliever (Matthew 18:18).

Ministers of the Church

The Lord appointed ministers – pastors and deacons. They are elected by the congregation ordained and to serve the church.

Pastor, presbyter (bishop). He is an appointed leader of a local church and must keep good order and discipline in the church, guard against heresies and preach the sound teaching of the Word of God (Acts Ap. 20:28; Heb. 13:17).

Deacons. They have financial, material, and organizational responsibilities. Deacons help pastors to conduct the Communion service and with water baptism. They also visit church members and perform other tasks in the church.

Attitude towards the ministers.

Scripture teaches that every church member should:

- *Obey the ministers.* “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive...” (Heb. 13:17). “Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders” (1 Peter 5:5).
- *Respect them.* “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:17).
- *Pray for them.* “Brethren, pray for us...” (2 Thess. 3:1).
- *Maintain the unity of the church.* “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.” (Rom. 16:17).

Key Verse:

“I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

Questions for check-up:

1. What is the Church?
2. Who founded the Church and who is the Head of the Church?
3. When was the Church founded?
4. What are the main Church’s functions?
5. To what is the Church liken according to the Holy Scriptures?
6. List some punishments/penalties of the Church.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Statement of Faith

Christ instituted and commanded **water baptism** for all believers. It is established for those who have experienced conversion and became believers, to testify that they have entered into a covenant with the Lord. Baptism expresses obedience to the Lord, the pledge of a good conscience before God and a testimony of faith to others. Baptism is a sign of a believer's death to sin and his resurrection to new life in Christ (1Pet. 3:21; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27).

Baptism is administered for those who have received instruction in the faith and have reached the age of accountability. Baptism is a one-time, full immersion into water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19).

Baptism, a step of obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ, testifies to the truthfulness of a person's conversion. Baptism makes one a member of the local church (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42, 8:36-38; James 2:14,20). In order to maintain one's spiritual life and fellowship with Christ and the church, a regular participation in the Lord's Supper is required (1Cor. 10:16-17).

Lord's Supper (Communion) - Jesus Christ enacted communion to proclaim and remember His suffering and death on the cross and to attest to His coming for the church (Matt. 26:26-28; 1Cor. 11:23-26). The Lord's Supper, taken with living faith, signifies of our union with Christ and with each other - a union which happens in an unseen spiritual world and reflects the reality that we share in the Blood and Body of Christ (1Cor. 10:16-17). The bread and the wine represent the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, but do not become them literally (1Cor. 11:23-26).

Only born-again, baptized believers can take part in communion. They should be at peace with the Lord, the church and their neighbors, and should have a high regard for the body of Christ (1Cor. 11:27-29).

Water Baptism

Why should this be done?

Baptism is the command of Jesus Christ to His followers.

- "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19).
- "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

What does water baptism mean?

Water baptism is the pledge of a clear conscience toward God and a symbol of the believer's connection with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

1. **Baptism is the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.**

- "Baptism is not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1Peter 3:21).

2. It is a symbol of that we died for sin, and we are resurrected to a new life with Christ.

- "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

3. Baptism also symbolizes the joining of a believer to a local church.

- "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41).

What are the conditions to get baptized?

1. *Repentance.* "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38)
2. *Birth from above.* "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 10:47).
3. *Instruction in the Word of God.* "...Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20).
4. *Faith.* "... And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"(Acts 8:36-37).

Is there salvation through baptism?

No, only faith in Jesus Christ saves us. However, baptism is the logical result of our faith.

Method of Baptism

The word "baptize" means immersion. Therefore, we are baptized through a full immersion in water.

The Lord's Supper (Communion)

Other designations: "Remembrance", "Breaking of bread", "Eucharist".

The Lord's Supper is the command of Christ when we break bread and drink from the cup, remembering His death for us.

Meaning of the Communion

1. It is committed in remembrance of Christ.
 - Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me" (1Cor. 11:24).
 - We remember the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary because thanks to it, we received the atonement for our sins.
2. This is the proclamation of the death of Christ.

- "For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1Cor. 11:26).
 - When believers come together to remember Christ, they actively proclaim the death of Christ to the world.
3. This is communion with Christ and members of His Church.
- The Apostle Paul writes that "the cup is the communion of the blood of Christ," and bread is "the communion of the body of Christ" (1Cor. 10:16).
 - These elements are symbols of His presence. Accepting bread and wine does not mean that we physically eat the body and blood of Christ. This is an inner spiritual communion with Christ.
 - The Lord's Supper was established by Christ and was always conducted not as an individual, personal, but as a joint supper. It is inconceivable that it was performed as the acceptance of bread only for oneself. The joint eating of bread is always communion with other Church members.
 - Therefore, unity cannot occur if we participate in the Supper being not in peace with each other.

Conditions for participation in the Communion

- Spiritual regeneration.
 - In order to have "the communion of the body of Christ," a person must first become a member of this Body by being born again.
- Membership in the Church through water baptism at a conscious age.
 - It is necessary to be a Church member, because the Supper was established only to members of the Church of Christ.
 - To participate in the Communion, it is important that a person be baptized at a mindful age. If he or she is baptized in a childhood or unstable adolescent age, he or she cannot yet give the "answer of good conscience" with all responsibility. In this case, his membership in the Church will not be genuine, but formal.
- To be at peace with the Lord and neighbors – living a life obedient to Christ.
 - "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1Cor. 11:27).

Key verse:

"Baptism is not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1Pet 3:21).

Questions for self-check:

1. What is baptism? What does it symbolize?
2. What are the conditions for getting baptized?
3. What is the Lord's Supper (Communion)?
4. What are the conditions for participating in the Communion?

Life after Death

What is physical death?

- Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. It is the termination of physical life. It is described in several ways in Scripture: the separation of body and soul (Eccl. 12:7; Acts 7:59; James 2:26), the loss of the soul or life (Matt. 2:20; Mark 3:4; John 13:37), and departure (Luke 9:31; 2Pet 1:15).
- When one dies, the body decays in the grave and returns to dust (Gen. 3:19), and the soul continues on.

The origin of death

- **Physical death bears a relationship to sin.** Adam was not subject to physical death until after the fall. Physical death is a result of man's spiritual death (Rom.5:21; 6:23; 1Cor. 15:56).
- **Physical death is a judgment** (Rom. 1:32; 5:16) and a curse.

Attitude of Christians toward death

- **The believer has been freed from the power of death.** Scripture records that Christ partook of flesh and blood "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15).
- **The believers do not have fear of death.** Though death is a common enemy, through Christ the believer needs no longer to fear it. Death for the believer is entrance into the presence of Christ. He is absent from the body and present with the Lord (2Cor. 5:8). Death to the believer is "to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23). The sting of death has been removed (1Cor. 15:55-57) and the Christian falls asleep in Jesus (1Thess. 4:14).
- **Death of unbelievers.** In stark contrast to the believer, the unbeliever has no such comforting hope. He faces condemnation and eternal judgment away from the presence of the Lord (John 3:36; 2Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:10).

Man is immortal as his soul never dies

- **The soul is immortal.** Physical death relates to the physical body; the soul is immortal and as such does not die. While Scripture declares that God alone has immortality (1Tim. 6:16; cf. 1:17), man is immortal in the sense that his soul never dies.
- **Immortality of the soul is confirmed by Scripture.** In answer to the Sadducees' question concerning the resurrection, Jesus responded by quoting what God had said to Moses in Exod. 3:6, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Matt. 22:32). He further commented, "God is not the God of the dead but of the living" (v. 32), the point being that if God was the God of Abraham in Moses' day, then Moses was yet alive. The story of Lazarus and the rich man also indicates the immortality of the soul (Luke 16:19-31), as does the mention of souls under the altar (Rev. 6:9, and further).

What happens to the soul after death, but before the resurrection?

- **In the first place, the believer is with Christ.** Paul said that he would “prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord” (2Cor. 5:8). Further, Paul had the “desire to depart and be with Christ” (Phil. 1:23). This was the encouragement which Jesus gave to the penitent man on the cross next to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23 :43). That paradise was heaven is clear from 2Cor. 12:3 and further.
- **Not only is the believer with the Lord and in heaven, but he is in fellowship with other believers.** Hebrews speaks of the “general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven” (12:23).
- **Believers are alive, conscious, and happy** (Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 14:13). This state between death and the resurrection is a condition to be preferred above the present state. Paul calls it “very much better” (Phil. 1:23).
- **The fate of unbelievers after death.** In the story of Lazarus and the rich man, Lazarus was in Abraham’s bosom, comforted; the rich man was in agony (Luke 16:19-31). From this we gather that the unsaved individual is also in a temporary state undergoing conscious torment, while awaiting the great white throne judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

Conclusions

- **In regards to believers.** We conclude that at death the believer enters into the presence of Christ. He remains with the Lord in a state of conscious blessedness until the time of the resurrection, at which time he will receive his body of glory.
- **In regards to unbelievers.** The unbeliever enters into a state of conscious torment until the resurrection, at which time he will be cast into the lake of fire.

Key Verse:

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth... they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them” (Rev.14:13).

Questions for check up:

1. What is the origin of death?
2. What is the attitude of Christians towards death?
3. Please list examples from Scripture confirming immortality of the soul.
4. What happens to the soul after death, but before the resurrection?

Events of the End Times

Statement of Faith

We believe in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 1:11), and these consequential events of the last days:

The Rapture of the Church, at which time the church will meet the Lord in the clouds (1John 3:2; Phil. 2:16, 3:20-21, 1Thess. 5:23). At the rapture, those who are dead in Christ will be raised up, and those who are alive will be changed (1Cor. 15:52-57; 1Thess. 4:16-17).

After the Rapture, those who are saved will stand before the **judgement seat of Christ** to receive their rewards (1Pet. 5:4; 1Cor. 3:14, 9:24-25; 2Cor. 5:10; 2Tim. 4:7-8).

The Great Tribulation, will be a period of the Antichrist's rule and a time when God's judgements will be poured out on unrepentant humanity (Matt. 24:29-31; Luke 21:25-29; Rev. 12:12, 13:4-8).

The Coming of Jesus Christ in power and glory to the earth will be a visible, open coming of the Lord. (Matt. 24:27; 25:31; 26:64; 1Thess. 1:10; Rev. 1:7). It will occur before the Millennium, which will be preceded by the rule of the Antichrist (Rev. 20:1-6).

The Millennium is a time when Christ reigns visibly on earth for one thousand years, according to the promises given to Israel (Isa. 11:6-9, 65:17-25; Dan. 7:13-14,27; Rev. 20:1-6)

Great White Throne Judgment is the final righteous judgment of God over all people whose names are not recorded in the Book of Life (Rev. 20:11-15).

After that, **eternity** will come. The righteous will enter into eternal bliss, while the unrighteous will be thrown into the lake of fire where they will be eternally tormented (Matt. 25:46; John 5:29; Rev. 20:11-15, 21:7-8).

The Scriptures call all believers to be ready for the Second Coming of Christ by looking forward to it with desire and anticipation (Luke 21:34-36; 2Pet. 3:12-14; Heb. 9:28; Rev. 22:20-21).

Advent of Christ: coming into the air to receive His Own (Church).

Paul writes: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1Thessalonians. 4:16-17). In 2Thessalonians 2:1 it's written of our gathering to Him. This very idea is expressed in John 14:3 "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also". In this coming Christ will not appear on earth at all, but He will gather His own in the air. The dead in Christ will be resurrected, and the living will be changed (1Corinthians 15:51-54).

The Great Tribulation

The Bible speaks about the Great Tribulation - a period of unimaginable suffering, confusion and disarray; foretold under this name in many places of the scriptures, from Psalm 2:5 to Revelations 7:14, and also described in Revelations 13. Spread throughout the world in one form or another (Revelations 3:10), "The Great Tribulation" will be an especially "disastrous time for Jacob" (Jeremiah 30:7), and the most violent display will be in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. "The Great Tribulation" will be borne (carried by) by God's people, having returned to Palestine in the state of disbelief. This will continue three and a half years, or the second part of the seven years of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27; Revelations 11:2-3).

"Great Tribulation" manifests itself:

1. Cruel authority/rule of Antichrist, "a beast rising up out of the sea" (Rev. 13:1), who in the beginning of an aforesaid (prophesized) time during the three and a half years will break his agreement with the Jews; (of which in result they will re-establish divine worship in the temple, Daniel 9:27), and he will appear in the temple, demanding that he be worshiped, like God (Mat. 24:15; 2Thes. 2:4).
2. Open interference of Satan "with great wrath" (Rev. 12:12), who will appoint the beast to "operate with authority" (Rev. 13:4-5).
3. Unprecedented demonic activity (Rev. 9:2, 11).
4. The outpouring of horrific contents from the "seven cups of wrath" (Rev. 16).

In this period, the chosen from Israel will be sealed for God (Rev. 7:4-8), at the same time as a great multitude from the nations of pagans (non-Jews) (Revelations 7:9); it is said that they are like "those which came out of great Tribulation" (Revelations 7:14). They are not priesthood, nor do they belong to the church; in which their relationship is some what like the relationship of the Levites to the priests in the time of Moses.

The end of the Great Tribulation and the return of Christ to earth with the Church

Immediately following the great Tribulation, Christ will return in full glory, along with all the events associated with his appearance.

In the book of Zechariah 14:4, it is written: "And His feet will stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east". When He returns to this earth, He will return with His own (Joel 3:11; 1Thes. 3:13; Jude 14).

When the years of the great Tribulation draw to an end, the demons outgoing from the dragon, the beast and the false prophet will rush about the earth and gather the kings of the earth for battle (Rev. 16:12-16). They will gather for the purpose of subduing Jerusalem and the Jews in Palestine (Zech. 12:1-9; 13:8-14:2). But precisely in that moment, when they will be confident in their victory, Christ will come down from the heavens, together with His army (Rev. 19:11-16). Then these masses will turn to battle the Son of God, but the battle will turn out to be extremely short, and the outcome obvious. The leaders will be cast into the lake of fire (2Thes. 2:8; Rev. 19:19), and the

armies will be slain by the sword which proceeded out of Christ's mouth (2Thes. 1:7-10; Rev. 19:21).

Millennial Kingdom

Christ's Role

1. Christ will be present on earth; He will sit on the Throne of His father David. He will rule over all the earth and nations (Ps. 72:6-11; Ish 2:2-4; Isaiah 11:1-5; Jer. 23:5 etc...; Zech 14:9).
2. Two details characterize His Kingdom:
 - a) Universal peace (Psalm 72:7; Isaiah 2:4) and
 - b) Universal truth (Isaiah 11:9 etc...; Jeremiah 23:5).

Position of the Church

The Church will reign together with Christ (Luk 19:16-19; 1Cor. 6:2; 2Tim 2:12; Rev 2:27; 5:9; 20:4-6).

State of Israel

- All Jews will gather to their land (Isaiah 11:10-13; Jeremiah 16:14).
- Israel will repent and circulate (Isaiah 66:8; Jeremiah 31:31-37).
- The Temple along with its Divine worship will be restored (Ezekiel 37:26-28; Zechariah 14:16).
- Israel's role will be the evangelization of the heathens (Isaiah 66:19; Zechariah 8:13).

State of the Nations

The surrounding nations will make their way to Jerusalem for worship; especially for the annual feast of Tabernacles (Isaiah 2:2-4; Zechariah 14:16-19). Those countries that will not go and worship will not have rain.

State of Satan

In the very beginning of this period, Satan will be bound and thrown into the underworld for a thousand years (Revelations 20:1-3). Undoubtedly, the evil spirits will be in confinement along with him. In this period, Satan will not tempt the nations, as he did before.

State of Nature

- The nature of predatory animals will change also (Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25; Ezekiel 34:25). The grounds fertility will be restored and renewed (Isaiah 35:2; Ezekiel 34:6; Joel 2:22-26).
- Human life span will increase considerably and yet during this period people will still die (Isaiah 65:20).
- With the decrease of sin, decreases in sicknesses will be prevalent; and yet sickness will not be entirely eliminated.

Overall State and Situation

- This will be a time of great happiness and joy.
- Many will receive physical healing (Isaiah 35:5);
- This will be a time of great materialistic and economic prosperity and security (Micah 4:3-5).
- There will be friendly relations not only between individuals, but also nations, and people will no longer learn to fight (Isaiah 2:4).

Near the end of this Period

The Last Battle

In the end of the Millennial Kingdom Satan will be released for a short time (Revelations 20:3 and 7-10). During this small interval Satan will gather the nations once more, Gog and Ma'gog, a number equal to the number of grains of sand. This army under his rule will surround the holy camp and the beloved city. This city, undoubtedly, is Jerusalem. In any case, this contest will turn out to be short-lived and the outcome decisive. Fire will fall from the heavens and destroy these armies (Ezekiel 38:39).

Namely in this moment Satan will be condemned and sent to his final place of punishment – into the lake of fire.

Final Judgment

This will be a trial done before the great white throne, for which all the unsaved will be resurrected. Only the unsaved will be touched by this judgment (Revelations 20:11-13; 21:8). After everything, all those whose names are not written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. Death and hell will be thrown into this place also.

NEW BEING AND NEW CREATION

Biblical prophecies conclude by describing the conditions we will dwell in eternity. The last two chapters of Revelations are devoted to describing this (Revelations 21:22).

New heaven and new earth

Apostle Peter tells us that our present-day heaven and earth will be destroyed and replaced by new ones (2 Peter 3:10-13). We can read John's prophecies about this also in Revelations 21:1. The new Nature without doubt will be distinguished by complete harmony and beauty, and will lack such elements and catastrophes that we see today.

New Jerusalem

Christ's Church will inhabit the New Jerusalem which will be created by God Himself.

1. *City Description.* This will be a real city, having a foundation, gates, walls and streets – all this will be built out of gold and priceless stones. “The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light” (Revelations 21:23). Indeed this city will be absolute in security and beauty.
2. *City's Inhabitants.* This city will be the house of the redeemed; where the bride and wife of the Lamb will be the church (Revelations 21:9). Christ Himself will fill this city: “But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22).

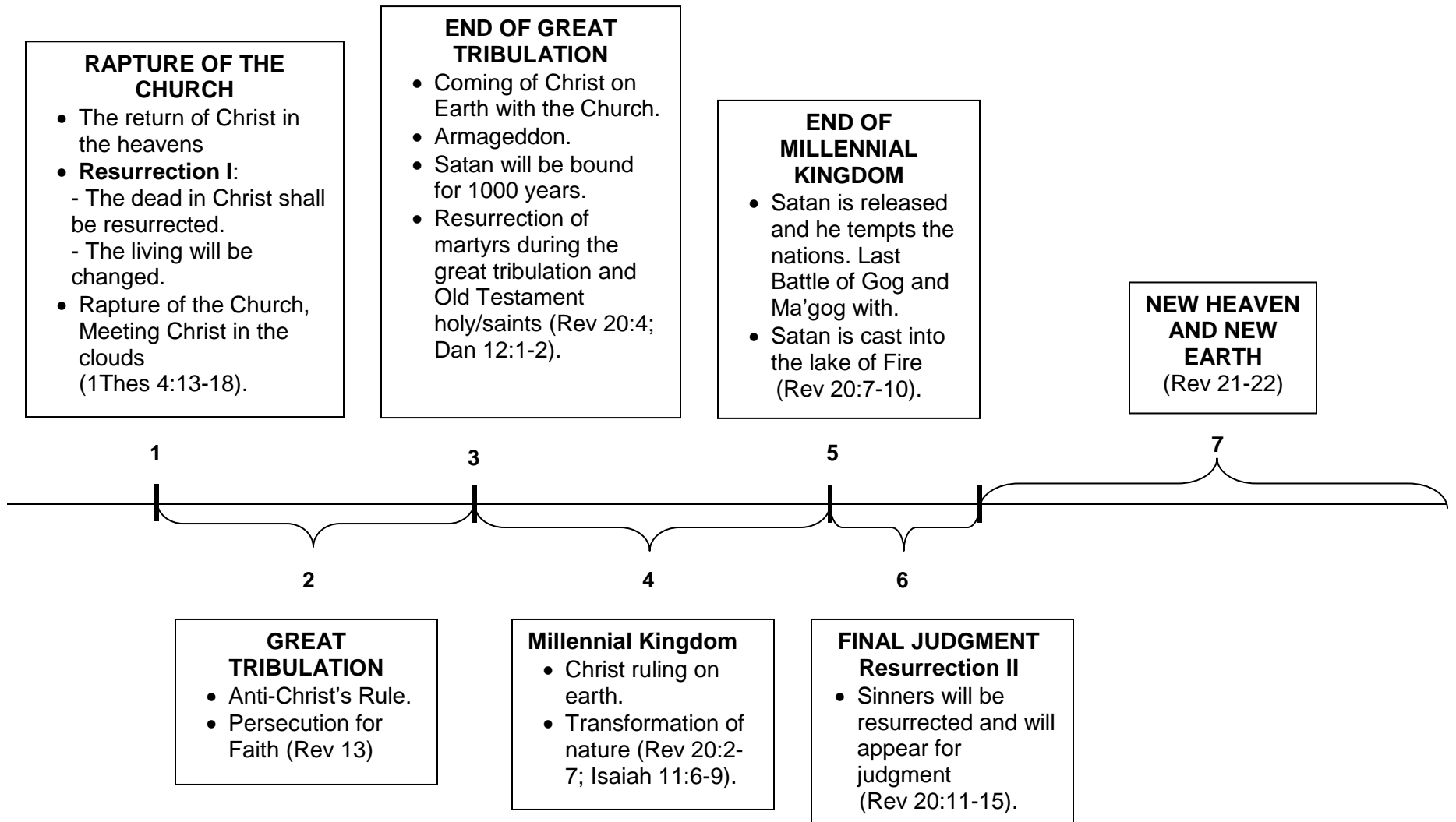
Key Verse:

“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power...” (Revelations 20:6).

Questions for check-up:

1. What will Christ's coming for the church be like?
2. Who will rule during the Great Tribulation?
3. How many resurrections will there be?

EVENTS OF THE END TIMES



Christian Marriage and Family

Articles of Faith

We believe that marriage was instituted by God (Gen. 2:18-24). It is a union between one man and one woman, and was established for fellowship, mutual help and support, and for the perpetuation of the human race (Gen. 1:28; 1Cor. 7:1-5). A believer should only marry another believer, a member of the church, and one with whom he or she is spiritually united (1Cor. 7:39; 2Cor. 6:14-17). God commanded those who marry not to divorce (Matt. 19:6-9), and to be faithful to each other till death (Rom. 7:2).

God established the family to be the first, and most foundational, institution of society. Families consist of people who are connected with each other by marriage, by blood or by adoption. The husband and wife have equal dignity before God, since both were created in His image and likeness, but their roles and functions are different (Gen. 1:27; 1Cor. 11:11).

The husband is the head of the family, and the wife is his helper; this reflects the relationship of Christ and the church (Gen. 2:18; 1Cor. 11:3,8-9; Eph. 5:22-33).

Children are a gift and inheritance from the Lord (Ps. 127:3-5, 128:3-6). They are to honor their parents and be obedient to them (Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20).

Christian marriage is a blessing

The desire to love and be loved, to have a family and children, the desire for intimacy - all of this is inherent in us by God. For this reason, the Lord created a man and a woman and established marriage — a legal union, in which the family develops.

It is a great blessing from God to have a Christian marriage and a family. Therefore, young men and ladies should start praying about it in advance.

Nowadays, we see a tendency to dispel the importance of marriage and family in society. It is becoming more and more popular to never to get married at all, or not to have children. This is not according to the Word of God.

The Bible teaches that any sexual relationship outside of marriage is a sin. Sexual intimacy is what the Lord created for marriage only. The marriage union is blessed by God Himself and is for life.

When to marry?

1. Overall maturity. A guy or a girl should be old enough and responsible in order to get married. They must also have a certain spiritual and psychological maturity, as well as financial stability. This is especially true of future husbands. Overall maturity is important for solving various problem situations that may arise in future family life.

2. Spiritual condition. Both the boy and the girl must be born from above Christians and are members of a local church.

- It is important that the future spouses have been baptized before their wedding. This speaks about their spiritual maturity and responsibility.
- If a person is not ready to be in covenant with God (1Peter 3:21) before marriage, how can he make such a promise of faithfulness to his spouse? What kind of spiritual unity in the family can we talk about if one of the spouses cannot participate in the Lord's Supper?

3. Financial situation. Spouses (especially husbands) should have some kind of stable source of income in order to support their family.

Choosing a future spouse

The choice of a life companion is the most important decision, since a Christian marriage is for life and ends only with the death of one spouse.

It is important to clearly understand that a Christian can only marry a sincere child of God.

Scripture forbids marrying an unbeliever. "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (2Cor. 6:14).

When it comes to choosing a future spouse, the main thing is to trust God, to wait for His answers and instructions, and not to rush to take your own actions dictated by the desire of the flesh. "Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass" (Ps. 37:5).

Christian Marriage according to the Bible

1. Union between a man and a woman. The Bible tells us that marriage is a union, established by God, between one man and one woman. Other forms of marriage are definitely unacceptable for Christians. Therefore, polygamy, homosexual, free/open, civil, and all other marriages actively pressed upon us by the modern world should be absolutely rejected as sinful (Hebrews 13:4, 1Cor. 6:9-10, 1Timothy 1:8-10).

2. Goals of Marriage. From the beginning God said: "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18), and to this day, people feel the need to create a family. God established the institute of family for the following reasons:

- Mutual aid and help of both companions in the passage through life (Genesis 2:18).
- Multiplication of mankind (Genesis 1:27-28).
- Mutual upbringing and perfecting of both husband and wife's character as a method of preparing them for the Heavenly Kingdom (1Peter 3:7).

3. The success of the marriage. The secret of successful marital life lies primarily in the deep dedication to God and the mutual sacrificial love of each of the spouses.

Here are some important conditions for a good spousal relationship:

- Common spiritual interests.
- Common beliefs in important everyday issues and situations.
- Purity of relationship before marriage between two young people.
- Reading the Bible together and family prayers.
- Biblical order of supremacy: 1) Christ, 2) Husband, 3) Wife, 4) Children (1Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:23).

Key Verse: 2Corinthians 6:14

Questions for check-up:

1. What is a Christian Marriage?
2. Who can a Christian marry? Confirm this with a Bible verse.

Money Management According to the Bible

"Money is a good servant, but a bad master."

The Role of Money in Our Life

1. Money should be earned by honest work.

- "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need" (Eph. 4:28).

2. All that we have is not ours; it belongs to God.

- "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1). Everything that we have is not ours, but God's. Consequently, I'm not in the right to use it as I please. I am only the manager of the means and resources that God entrusted to me. That's why I ought to use these funds wisely and preferably for God's work.

3. How should we, as Christians, spend our money?

- *Provide for our families.* "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1Tim. 5:8).
- *Donate to the work of God.* Our own church should be our highest priority of all our charitable donations. Your church is your family in Christ: you grow and are being fed spiritually there. The more you support your church, the more blessings you will get in return.
 - "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap... And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:6-10).
- *Share with the needy.* "He who despises his neighbor sins; but he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he" (Prov. 14:21).

Question: How do I manage God's money entrusted to me? Is God pleased with me?

The Love of Money

1. The love of money leads to dependence.

- God's opinion of this matter, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1Tim. 6:10).
- Greed is an excessive love of money, implying dependence. The love of money makes people to become slaves of money. This type of people are not only those who have a lot of money. You can be dependent even on one dollar. The state of slavery is determined by our attitude towards money, and not by their quantity. A slave is one who puts money above spiritual and moral values.
- "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'..." (Heb. 13:5).

2. Money breeds insatiability.

- "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase...." (Eccl. 5:10).

3. Why does the love of money prevent one from believing in God?

- Monetary dependence dictates its own terms, which are contrary to the commandments of God. It is important to note that the Bible recognizes money, but condemns dependence on money (Matt 6:24).
- Scripture warns us against the desire for quick and easy gain. "A faithful man will abound with blessings, but he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished" (Prov. 28:20).

4. The correct attitude towards money removes dependence on them.

- Money should play a secondary role in our lives.
 - "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matt. 6:33).
 - "Two things I request of You... Remove falsehood and lies far from me; Give me neither poverty nor riches—Feed me with the food allotted to me; Lest I be full and deny You, and say, "Who is the Lord?" Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God" (Prov. 30:7-9).
- Our main task is to seek the Kingdom of God. Practical advice: first of all look for God, and He will help with the rest.
- We can be happy without money; strive to be content with what you have (1Tim. 6:6-11). We should not to set the goal of buying things at any price. It is more important to learn to be pleased and grateful.
- It's important to save money for the future needs. "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer" (Prov. 30:25).

Tithing According to the Bible

What does the Old Testament say about material ministry?

1. Tithe existed long before the Moses Law.

- Abraham lived 700 years before Moses. When he met Melchizedek, he gave him "a tenth of everything" (Gen. 14:20).
- Jacob lived 500 years before the Moses Law. When he fled to Mesopotamia, he asked God for blessings on the way and promised a tenth (Gen. 28:22).

2. Tithing is fixed by the Law of Moses.

- "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord" (Lev. 27:30-32).

3. The Lord strictly punished for non-observance of tithing.

- "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings... Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it?" (Malachi 3:8-10).

The Old Testament principle: 1/7 of the time and 1/10 of income should belong to God.

The Doctrine of the New Testament about financial donations

1. Jesus did not abolish tithing.
 - "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, **without leaving the others undone**" (Luke 11:42)
2. "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).
 - While paying taxes to the state, we must not forget about the sacrifice to God.
3. Borrowing and lending money.
 - It is important to try not to borrow. "Do not owe anything to anyone except mutual love" (Rom. 13:8).
 - It is good to lend money to others if there is a possibility. "And do good, and lend, without expecting anything ..." (Luke 6:35).
 - Do not be a co-signer in the debts of others (Prov. 6:1-5, 11:15).
 - Do not lend to other believers for interest (Deut. 23:19-20, Psalm 14: 5, Ezekiel 18:8).

Summary

1. Mandatory tithing is the commandment of the Old Testament Law. Christians are free from the execution of the Law of Moses, including forced tithing. If we voluntarily decide to pay tithing, then this is an act of grace.
2. How much should we give to the Lord? Apostle Paul taught, "Let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper" (1Cor. 16:2) and "as he purposes in his heart" (2Cor. 9:7). This is a question of our conscience before God.
3. Christ taught, "Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20), and the righteousness of the Pharisees in the matter of tithing was impeccable (Matt. 23:23).
4. Christ approved the practice of tithing, but commanded His disciples to exceed it.
5. Someone said: "Abraham began tithing, Jacob continued, Moses commanded, Malachi ordered, and Jesus approved it."

Practical Advices on Giving from the Apostle Paul

Please read: 2Corinthians 8:11-12 and 2Corinthians 9:6-15

"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1Cor. 16:2).

According to this verse, our giving must be:

- SYSTEMATIC - "lay something aside, storing up "
- COMMON - "each one of you"
- CONSTANT - "on the first day of the week"

Questions to check:

1. What should we, as Christians, spend our money on?
2. What is the main ideas regarding the right attitude towards money?
3. What the New Testament teach about tithing and material teaching?

Brotherhood of the Evangelical Christians of the Baptists

Origins

Historically Baptists originate from English Puritans. Baptism origins are tied to John Smith (1570-1612). In the year 1606, he became a pastor of one of the communities in Gainsborough. Sometime around the year 1608, the persecution forced members of this community to relocate to Amsterdam. In this city, Smith participated in theological debates with Mennonites, after which he started to examine the New Testament. In consequence of this, he came to conclusion that **baptism by faith after repentance is a rule approved by the apostles for Christians.**

In the beginning of the year 1609, he was baptized in faith, and later baptized other members of his community. And so, the first Baptist church was established. The year 1609 is considered the appearance of modern Baptism. Namely from this group Baptism started spreading, first in Britain and later in North-American British colonies. The spreading of Baptism in continental Europe started in Germany in the middle of the XIX century.

Seven Baptist Principals

1. Books of the Holy Scriptures in the canonical composition – the only and infallible authority in the matters of faith and practical life.

We check our life, Christian traditions, and doctrines with the Bible. This gives us the possibility to renew inwardly, to avoid errors and false teachings, and to serve God in the form of the first apostolic Church of the New Testament.

2. Churches must consist of spiritually reborn people.

A new life in the Holy Spirit can be found through the means of the Holy Spirit moving into the heart; when a person sincerely asks not only for the forgiveness of sins, but also for the continuous intercommunication with the Creator.

3. Commandments about Baptism and Christ's Holy Communion are taught only to those who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

Since baptism is a union with Christ, and entry into a new life in the church, those who receive it should love and know Him with whom they are uniting, and realize what is being promised at the time of baptism. Therefore, Baptists do not christen infants, nor adults who have not experienced a spiritual rebirth. Only those baptized in faith can participate in Christ's Holy Communion.

4. Independence of local churches in spiritual and practical matters.

Local churches decide independently in matters tied to electing and re-electing votary, admitting new members and excommunicating unworthy members, financial – owner/household matters. No single echelon can cancel the decision of the whole Church.

5. Universal priesthood of Christians, absence of dividing church members for clergy and layman.

Jesus Christ grant his disciples and followers the high calling of a royal priesthood, and if there are any distinctions, they are in responsibilities and service: " And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,... for the edifying of the body of Christ," (Ephesians 4:11-12).

6. Freedom of conscience is an inalienable right for every person.

Every person is responsible for their beliefs and conviction only before God. "God is freedom and gives freedom" – wrote N. Berdyaev, - "He does not force us to acknowledge Him". This is why Baptists never persecuted anyone for their convictions and prefer to be the anvil rather than the hammer.

7. Separation of Church from Government.

They belong to different worlds: Church – to heavenly, eternal; Government – to earthly, temporary. Rulers have always strived to convert the Church into their ideological institution and it has been worse for both the Church and the Government because of this. There is only one way for their well state of existence: separation of Church from State (Government).

Appendix 1. The Holy Spirit: Comparing of Doctrines

Main differences between Baptists and Pentecostals/Charismatics

By Pavel Starikov and Vitaliy Boyko

This table is a modest attempt to show in a *simplified form* the main doctrinal differences about the Holy Spirit between Baptists on the one side and the Pentecostals and Charismatics on the other. Please consider that Pentecostals and Charismatics also have certain differences in doctrines among themselves. Therefore, we list only the major doctrines here, and for the most part, they refer to charismatics.

Doctrines	Pentecostals/Charismatics	We Believe
Prayer to the Holy Spirit	Praying to the Holy Spirit and speaking with Him is a normal practice.	In the Scripture, there is not a single example of the prayer to the Holy Spirit or instructions to do it. All texts speak simply of prayer to God, or God the Father, in the name of the Son. "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).
Acceptance of the Holy Spirit	<p>1. A person can be a Christian but without having the Holy Spirit until he experiences the Baptism in the Spirit.</p> <p>2. In order to receive the Holy Spirit, one must zealously desire and ask Him for this (baptism with the Holy Spirit). "...How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13).</p>	<p>A person cannot be born again and become a Christian without the Holy Spirit. "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. ...The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:9,16).</p> <p>Luke 11:13. When Jesus said these words, the Holy Spirit was not yet given (John 7:39). We should not pray today for the Holy Spirit to be <i>given</i> to us an indwelling Person in us, because He comes to indwell us at the time of our conversion (Rom. 8:9, Eph. 1:13-14).</p> <p>Samaritans (Acts 8: 6-17) and the Gentile Ephesians (Acts 19:1-7) were in the <i>transitional period between the Covenants</i>, and they were not yet Christians in the New Testament's full meaning, until the apostles prayed on them.</p>
Baptism of the Holy Spirit	<p>1. This is the action of the Holy Spirit different from regeneration. Being baptized with the Holy Spirit means being filled with the Spirit.</p> <p>2. You can be reborn and still NOT be baptized with the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit comes very closely with speaking in tongues.</p> <p>4. The manifestation of various gifts is the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Baptism with the Holy Spirit should not be confused or mixed with other doctrines: the regeneration, filling, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Baptism with The Holy Spirit is the process of joining of regenerated people to the Body of Christ – the Church of Christ.</p> <p>Who baptizes? - Christ (Matt. 3:11) With Whom? - with the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13) Result? - the Body, Church of Jesus Christ (1Cor. 12:13)</p> <p>The Spirit does not baptize into Himself, but Christ baptizes us into the Body, the Church.</p> <p>The Holy Spirit cannot be received halfway or only a little, because He is a person, not just a force.</p> <p>Either I received the Holy Spirit, and then He, as a person, lives in me in fully, or I did not receive Him at all!</p> <p>It is another question how the fullness of the Spirit is expressed in our lives, and it depends on our walking in the Lord (Eph. 4).</p>

Doctrines	Pentecostals/Charismatics	We Believe
The Signs of the Holy Spirit Baptism	Speaking in tongues is a sign of the Spirit Baptism.	As no signs are needed to confirm our regeneration or justification in Christ, the same way no signs are necessary to confirm the Baptism of the Spirit - spiritual joining to the Church. We rely on the God's promise in the Scripture and the following fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) Speaking in tongues is a gift for ministry, and only some of the believers can have it (1Cor. 12:10,11,30). The purpose of the tongues gift is for internal church use: "Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but <i>to unbelievers</i> " (1Cor. 14:22).
Speaking in Tongues	The gift of tongues is a special prayer language given for personal prayer life.	The gift of tongues is a supernatural ability to speak foreign languages. Scripture always refers to the present, already existing in the world language, which may be incomprehensible to the speaker (1 Cor 14:2), but it will be understood by those foreigners for whom it is originally intended (Acts 2, 1Cor. 12 and 14).
Tongues as an intercession of the Holy Spirit	Prayer in tongues is the intercession of the Holy Spirit in us, done according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27).	Rom. 8:26-27. The Holy Spirit intercedes not in us or through us, but <i>for us</i> . His intercession for us is with groanings, not tongues, and they cannot be uttered. Just as we do not hear the intercession of Christ for us (Rom. 8:34), we do not hear (and unable to hear), the intercession of the Holy Spirit for us.
Tongues of Angels	Prayer in tongues can also be a prayer in angelic tongues.	1Cor. 13: 1-3. Speaking "angelic tongues" is literary hyperbole (an exaggeration, intended not for a literal understanding, but for emotional impact), used by the apostle Paul to show the superiority of love over all supernatural gifts. In all the cases mentioned in the Bible, the angels spoke in understandable human languages (Hebrew or Greek). Just as there is no one who knows ALL of the secrets, has ALL knowledge and actually moves mountains, there are no people who can speak the angelic languages. There Angelic tongues (plural) cannot even exist, since the different languages in the world are a consequence of the judgment of God and separation (Gen. 11: 5-9). The angels of God, on the contrary, are obedient to God in everything and completely unite.
Simultaneous Prayer in Tongues	The church must zealously "pray in the Spirit" (in tongues). "Praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 1:20).	1Cor.14:27. The apostle Paul forbids simultaneous prayer even in true foreign languages. Praying out loud together at the same time, even in true foreign languages, will be a temptation to unbelievers (1Cor 14:23). "Praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 1:20) - to pray under the guidance of the Spirit and according to the will of God.
Miracles in the life of believers	True believers are called by Christ Himself to perform "greater works" than He did on earth (John 14:12).	The apostles of Christ did not raise Stephen and Apostle James from the dead like Christ did Lazarus. They did not multiply bread, did not walk on the water, and all but John were martyred. Mentioning about greater works, Christ spoke about what His Church (and not a single Christian) will do: preaching the gospel throughout the world, repentance and the rebirth of millions of people. "For without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Doctrines	Pentecostals/Charismatics	We Believe
Baptism of Fire	The Baptism of Fire purifies a person, gives him the constant supernatural desire of God, zeal in service, and the desire to live a holy and pure life.	<p>John the Baptist was the first one who introduced this term, "Baptism of Fire" (Matt. 3: 8-12). The content of his speech clearly shows that this is the baptism of judgment over those who did not bear the fruit of repentance. "Straw" is not cleaned, but is burned.</p> <p>As a doctrine, the "Baptism of Fire" wrongfully alternates or confuses the Biblical teachings about the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the Sanctification.</p> <p>The Filling of the Spirit is a special ministry of the Holy Spirit, when a believer gains strength and success in serving Christ. "... But be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).</p> <p>Sanctification of the Holy Spirit - the work of the Holy Spirit in enabling believers to lead holy lives, dedicated to the service of God and conformed to his likeness. Reading the Scriptures is a major part of our sanctification. "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).</p>
Demonic possession and oppression of regenerated Christians	Believers can have the Holy Spirit and be possessed or oppressed by demons at the same time.	The Scripture clearly says that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are sanctified "completely" (1Cor. 6:19-20, 1Thess. 5:23). The Holy Spirit will not tolerate presence of an unclean spirit in one body.
Signs and Wonders (Mark 16:17-18)	<p>1. These spiritual manifestations must remain in the churches until the coming of Christ.</p> <p>2. These signs are not special gifts for a few, but are given to ALL believers.</p>	The case with the bite of a deadly snake occurred with the apostle Paul was unexpected and not at his will (Acts 28:1-6). In the same way, the signs and wonders, mentioned by Christ, will occur in the life of Christians only at His will. They will occur in the time and place acceptable to Him, and not always, not everywhere.
Generational Curse	<p>The Christian needs a special prayer for deliverance from the generational curse that is with him for the sins of his fathers.</p> <p>"...By no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation" (Exd. 34:7b)</p>	<p>If a person repents, God forgives and removes punishment. Punishment remains only for those who knowingly continue to live in sin.</p> <p>"The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself" (Ezek. 18:20).</p>
Prosperity as the will of God for all Christians.	Financial blessing and physical well-being are always the will of God for Christians. Faith, positive speech, and financial offerings will increase one's material wealth. If humans have faith in God, He will deliver security and prosperity.	<p><i>Jesus Christ warned</i> against striving for material wealth: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth" (Matt 6:19).</p> <p><i>First Christians</i> were in deep poverty (Macedonian Church): "that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their <i>deep poverty</i> abounded in the riches of their liberality" (2Cor. 8:2).</p> <p><i>The apostles</i> themselves were often in need (1Cor. 4: 11-14).</p>

Doctrines	Pentecostals/Charismatics	We Believe
Physical healing from all diseases.	We are already healed of all diseases by His wounds. Now we just need to accept this fact by faith. “And by His stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53:5).	The question of healing depends on the cause of the illness: chasten for sin, test of faith, glorification of God, perfection of the Christian character, etc. Sometimes, it is God's will that the sickness remains (Jer. 45:3-5, 2Cor. 12:7-10, 2Tim. 4:20). We cannot demand healing from God, but only humbly ask for His grace and mercy.
“Slain in the Spirit” or “falling under the power”	A form of prostration in which an individual falls to the floor (usually onto their backs) while experiencing a “spiritual encounter with God”.	In the Bible, only sinful people fell backward from the power of the Son of God, not disciples of Christ (John 18:6). At the charismatic events, everything happens just the opposite – believers fall onto their backs. All the Scriptures show that believers always bowed down forward.
“Holy Laughter”	Uncontrollable laughter during church and prayer meetings. "Holy laughter" is a symbol of victory over the devil and manifestation of God's liberation from stress and problems.	We are expected to have constant spiritual sobriety. Christians should always stay vigilant and not to "turn off" their minds. “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Ps. 2:11). “Be sober, be vigilant; because[a] your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion...” (1Pet. 5:8). “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace” (1Cor.14: 33-34).

Appendix 2. Calvinism and the Bible Teaching

A Biblical Look at the Five Points of Calvinism

By Igor Matshplyuk

The heart of Calvinistic theology is the view that claims that God predestined or elected some to be saved and others to be lost. Those elected to salvation are decreed by God to receive salvation and cannot "resist God's grace." However, those that God elected to be lost are born condemned eternally to the Lake of Fire, and He will not allow them be saved. The five points of Calvinism spring from this false understanding of election and predestination. This teaching is referred to as "Five Point Calvinism." The five points are represented by using the acrostic "TULIP."

	Main Points	Calvinism	We believe
T	Total Depravity	Man is spiritually dead, so that the appearance of faith in him is not possible without the full intervention of God (moral impotence).	<p>a) We are spiritually dead, but at the same time we do not equate spiritual death with physical death, when the dead cannot hear, understand, or respond.</p> <p>b) Being spiritually dead, a person is still able to accept or reject the call of God (Acts 17:27-32).</p> <p>c) Being spiritually dead, a person has real free will (Acts 13:46).</p>
U	Unconditional Election	<p>Our election is decided by God according to His intention and sovereign will. Election does not depend on our desire or zeal, but entirely on the sovereign goal of God.</p> <p>All the elect will surely come to faith. God chooses a part of people for salvation.</p>	God really chose us, but only in Christ through sanctification in spirit and faith to truth (2 Thess. 2:13). That means, anyone who accepts Christ by faith becomes elected. But there is a condition: the manifestation of desire and faith (Eph. 1:13).
L	Limited Atonement	Christ came into the world, died and rose again only for the elect, and by no means for the whole world (John 6:39, John 10:15).	<p>Christ died and was resurrected for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16, John 1:29).</p> <p>Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13; Acts 17:30).</p>
I	Irresistible Grace	They believe that regeneration precedes faith. That means, God gives the spiritually dead person a desire to seek Him and, at the same time, he revives him. Based on this desire, a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16).	<p>Man, on the basis of his complete free will, accepts Christ, which we call manifestation of faith and being born again. These are inseparable doctrines.</p> <p>Eph 1:13 "Heard" → "believed" → "were sealed"</p> <p>Calvinists: "Were sealed" → "heard" → "believed".</p>
P	Perseverance of the Saints	Saved once – saved forever. If you have grace, you will never lose it. If you lost the salvation, it means you never had it (John 10:27-29).	A truly regenerated person who neglects grace (Heb. 12:15) and grieves the Holy Spirit with intentional sin (Eph. 4:30), will completely fall away from grace (Heb. 10:26, 1Tim. 5:15).

Biblical Teaching about Salvation

1. A Christian should take care to preserve his salvation throughout his life:

Acts 11:23; Rom. 11:20; 1 Cor. 16:13; Gal. 5:1; Eph. 6:13; Phil. 4:1; Col. 2:19; 1Tim. 6:12; 2Tim. 2:22; Titus 1:9; Heb. 4:14; 6:9; 10:23; Rev. 2:13,25; 3:11.

2. If the relationship with God is broken, the Christian may fall away from grace:

Lk 8:13; Acts 1:25; James 5:19-20; 2Pet. 2:15; 3:17; Rom. 11:22; 2Cor. 11:3; Gal. 5:4; Col. 1:23; 1Tim. 1:6,19; 4:1; 6:10; 2Tim. 2:18; Heb. 2:1; 3:12; 6:6; Rev. 2:4-5).

If a Christian sins consciously, then this indicates a loss of faith and repentance by this person.

3. Thus, God guarantees his protection and favor (John 6:39; 10:28-29; Rom. 8:38-39; 11:29; 1Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6), if the Christian remains faithful to the once accepted conditions of salvation (2Pet. 2: 20-22; Rom. 11:22; Heb. 10: 26-29). This applies to external protection against Satan, the world and the flesh (John 10:28-29; 1Peter 1:5; 1Cor. 1:8-9).

Source: Gennady Gololob, "A brief refutation of the five points of Calvinism"

Key Verse:

"*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*" (Phil.2:12)