

Special Note: We at Long Walk understand there are areas of doctrine that are of first and second order (1 Cor 15:3). First-order doctrines must be taught with conviction. Second order doctrines are those where faithful believers have disagreed. While salvation is not at stake, those areas - which are still important - will be taught with grace. We believe that our statement of faith fully and clearly represent what you can expect from Long Walk Worship Ministries.

BIBLIOLOGY (The Bible)

Revelation: Revelation is both the act of God by which He communicates truth about Himself to man, and the content of that which He reveals. Certain basic truths about God are evident trademarks of everything which He has created. Yet it can be accurately stated that man, left to his own devices, is incapable of knowing the things of God (1 Cor 2:7-13). Accordingly, God has graciously revealed Himself in greater measure to us by His Spirit in various ways.

Natural Revelation: Every (intelligent) man has general access to a limited subset of knowledge about God, which is designed by God to bear witness of His sovereignty over creation, and thus, of creation's (specifically man's) moral accountability to Him. This is called *natural (or general) revelation*. I believe there are two distinct avenues by which God has made Himself known to man in this general manner. The first is the witness of nature (Ps 19; Rom 1:20) which declares the character and power of the Unseen Creator/Designer. The second avenue is the witness of conscience (Rom 2:15) which is the moral component of man's self-consciousness, creating in us the knowledge of our ethical accountability to God. These general witnesses ought to incite man to search for a more complete revelation of God -- what is called *special revelation*.

Special Revelation: Special revelation is the sum total of all God's special manifestations of Himself and His truth to specific individuals at specific times in history. This collection of manifestations is passed down to us in the form of religious experience (preserved in various fallible human forms) and most importantly, in *inscripturated* form (communicated through infallible inspiration, and preserved through God's miraculous intervention in human history). Scripture records, without the interference of human error, the communications of God to man which are essential for man to know the things of God (1 Cor 2:7-13). I believe God's *special revelation* was closed with the completion of the New Testament canon, circa A.D. 100.

Inspiration: The term *inspiration*, literally (God's) breath, is suggested by Paul in 2 Tim 3:16 to describe the activity of God the Holy Spirit by which He enabled fallible speakers and writers to communicate God's special revelation verbally, using their own unique personalities, yet without the intrusion of error or omission (cf. 2 Pet 1:21).

Verbal inspiration of the Scriptures refers to the fact that divine inspiration extends to every word of the Scriptures and to its grammatical form (Gal 3:16).

Plenary inspiration of Scripture holds that all parts of Scripture are fully and equally inspired. We hold this view in response to those who would claim that only certain portions of Scripture are inspired.

Inerrancy: I believe that Scripture is *inerrant*, i.e., without error in all that it affirms and teaches. Since the content of Scripture, whether historical, doctrinal or ethical, is without error, it communicates *infallible* truth and commands ultimate authority.

Authority: What God has expressed as His will for mankind implicitly demands the faith and obedience of all who read it. It should be noted that I do not *equate* inspiration with authority. Scriptures infallibly record the actual words and opinions of fallible creatures *in addition to* the infallible words of God.

Canonicity: I recognize the 66 books of the Old Testament and New Testament to comprise God's Breath - Scripture.

Trustworthiness: Though we claim that the qualities of Scripture are supernatural, we would be foolish to do so if there were valid claims against its trustworthiness. Can we honestly trust it to be God's Word?

In some ways, Scripture confirms itself. The internal integrity of Scripture and the confirmation of fulfilled prophecy both support its trustworthiness. Scripture claims to be trustworthy in spiritual matters (2 Tim 3:16). Additionally, Scripture is confirmed through the witness of external sources (profane literature, historical records). God has miraculously preserved Scripture despite attempts to destroy it. Perhaps the most significant witness is that the accumulation of man's knowledge since the completion of Scripture has neither invalidated nor obsoleted it.

THEOLOGY PROPER (Who God Is)

The human race will not be fully convinced of God's existence until the final day (Phil 2:11). Belief in God is a matter of faith (Heb 11:6). Theology must necessarily begin with the belief in God.

The Trinity: The great Shema declares "The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deut 6:4). There is only one divine essence, and it is infinite, undivided, and indivisible. The three Persons of the Godhead possess in common this divine essence; therefore, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit constitute one God, and are co-existent, co-eternal, and co-equal with one another. The doctrine of the Trinity is derived solely through special revelation.

Attributes: God's attributes are those *perfections* which outwardly manifest, and are essential to, His divine essence. God's attributes include: *self-existence* (Ex 3:14; Jn 5:26), *immutability* (Mal 3:6) {we call God's attributes *perfections* based on the fact that He never changes -- to change would mean either À He *was* perfect, but in changing He is no longer perfect, or Á He *isn't* perfect, therefore He changes to become perfect}, *omnipresence* (Ps 139:7f; Jn 14:16f), *omniscience* (Job 37:16), *omnipotence* (Mt 28:18), *sovereignty*, *holiness* (Lev 11:44f, Isa 6:3; 40:25), *righteousness/justice*, *goodness* {which includes *love* (Jn 3:16; 1 Jn 4:8), *mercy* and *grace* (Eph 2:8,9; Phil 2:13)}, and *truthfulness* (Ps 119:138; Jn 17:3).

Creation: God has revealed His creative works to man in Scripture, primarily in the account of Genesis 1 and 2. We accept this account literally, i.e., describing the six 24-hour days of creation. In our day of scientific enlightenment, belief in biblical creation is attacked as intellectually untenable, however, there are credible arguments to be advanced in defense of this position. One cannot deny the veracity of Genesis 1 - 11 without irrevocably denying all of the doctrines of the Bible, since the foundation for all doctrine is laid in the *literal* interpretation of the Creation, the Fall, and the Flood.

God's Decree: Ephesians 1:11 and 3:11 declare that God has ordained all things to come to pass according to His eternal plan. God's decree is perfect, unalterable, and certain. The ultimate objective of His plan is to bring glory to Himself (Isa 42:8; 43:7). God decrees freely according to His pleasure and will (Rom 11:33f), but His decree is always rational (it *can* be understood someday -- Jn 13:7). God's desire is not

the basis for His decree; e.g., He desires all to be saved (2 Pet 3:9), yet some will be lost. Though God's decree makes certain all actions of all His creatures, even evil actions, we must note that there is a distinction in the *means* by which He brings events to pass.

God's Directive Will: God *directly* brings certain events to pass and assumes responsibility for them.

God's Permissive Will: God *allows* other events to take place as the result of intermediate agencies and/or causes for which He does *not* assume responsibility. The permissive aspect of His will concerns the sinful actions of His creatures.

God's Providence: God exercises sovereign control over all of His creation in accordance with His plan for that creation. In identifying providence as an attribute (above), I have made an implicit statement of my belief that providence is part of the divine essence. In other words, God could not be God if He was not sovereign.

CHRISTOLOGY (Who Jesus Christ Is)

Deity of Christ: Jesus Christ existed from eternity with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Jn 1; Jn 8:58). The fact of Christ's preexistence underscores His deity. Yet there is much affirmation in Scripture of Jesus' deity. He is equal with God (Eph 1:2,3; Jn 14). He possesses and exercises the divine attributes -- omnipresence (Jn 14:16-20), omniscience, omnipotence (Mt 28:18). He asserted His deity in receiving honor (Jn 5:23), forgiving sin (Luke 7:48), and accepting worship (Mt 28:9).

Humanity of Christ: It was necessary for Jesus to take on humanness in order to accomplish our redemption (Heb 2:9,14-16). The fact that He was a man is stated by Himself (Jn 8:40), Peter (Acts 2:22), and Paul (1 Tim 2:5).

Incarnation: "The Word [eternal God the Son] became *flesh*..." (Jn 1:14). The incarnation was not an end in itself -- Christ came to die on the cross for us (Mark 10:45) to accomplish redemption.

Virgin Birth: Mary conceived Jesus miraculously; she was a virgin (Luke 1:34) and the power of the Holy Spirit was responsible for the human life which she bore (Luke 1:35). The virgin birth insured the sinlessness of Christ.

Hypostatic Union: Jesus Christ existed (in One Person) as God and man at the same time. He was the perfect union of God and man without alteration or diminishment of any of the characteristics or essence of either God or man.

Kenosis: In taking on humanity for the purpose of redemption, Jesus Christ "emptied Himself" (the meaning of *kenosis*) of certain ramifications of His deity (Phil 2:6-8). "The act of kenosis ... mean[s] that Christ surrendered no attribute of Deity, but that He did voluntarily restrict their independent use in keeping with His purpose of living among men and their limitations." [Walvoord]

Impeccability: Jesus was sinless, there is no question (Heb 4:15). One who holds to the peccability of Christ concludes (on the basis of His human nature) that He could sin, else His temptation and sinlessness would be of no consequence. I hold to the impeccability of Christ, appealing to His deity. He sympathizes with us, having shared the same human experience. But being fully God, He was always *holy*, set apart from sin.

Passion: John the Baptist addressed Jesus as "the *Lamb* of God Who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). At the celebration of Passover, God lay on Jesus the iniquity of a world of lost sheep (Isa 53:6). Jesus made atonement for our sins by His death on the cross, the central event of all history.

His Death: Jesus, the second Adam (1 Cor 15), was born without sin, and lived a sinless life. His sacrificial death was necessary to accomplish our redemption (1 Pet 1:18-21).

His Resurrection: After being buried in the tomb for three days, Jesus Christ rose from the dead, victorious over death and the power of sin! (Rom 6:9) If the fact of His resurrection were not true, Christians would be self-deceived liars, miserably destined for hell (1 Cor 15:12f), and the entire message of the Gospel would be powerless.

Extent of the Atonement: Christ's atonement is sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect. On this basis, we are free to share with all people the truth of John 3:16, "God so loved the *world*... that *whosoever* believes...."

His Ascension: A period of 40 days separated the resurrection from the ascension -- when Christ ascended bodily back into heaven (Acts 1:3f; 2:33). In heaven, Jesus now intercedes on behalf of believers as their great High Priest (Heb 4:14f). He enjoys an exalted position and rank, and awaits that great day when every soul shall confess Him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil 2:9f).

His Future Work: Jesus will return to rapture His church (1 Thes 4:16f), and then will come to earth a second time to establish His Messianic, millennial kingdom (2 Pet 3:4,10). The final defeat of Satan by Christ will occur after the millennium and before the creation of a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 20f).

PNEUMATOLOGY (Who the Holy Spirit Is)

His Deity: The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead, and is therefore fully God. Peter *refers* to Him as God (Acts 5:3f) as does Paul (1 Cor 6:11). The Holy Spirit *speaks* with the authority of God's breath (Jn 16:13). The Holy Spirit *possesses divine attributes*, including holiness (Rom 1:4), omnipresence (Ps 139:7), omniscience (1 Cor 2:10f), omnipotence (Job 33:4) and sovereignty (1 Cor 12:11). The Holy Spirit is *active* in Scripture *doing the work of God* (see below).

His Ministry:

In Creation: The entire trinity, including God the Spirit was involved in Creation. This fact is specifically attested in the Genesis account (1:2) and throughout Scriptures (Ps 104:30; Job 26:13; 33:4; Isa 40:12f).

In Inspiration: The Holy Spirit in particular was active in *special* revelation, i.e., the communication of Scripture. 2 Pet 1:21 describes how the Holy Spirit "moved" the writers of Scriptures. Jesus predicted the Spirit's ministry in this regard in Jn 16:12f.

In Illumination: Illumination concerns our ability to understand God's truth as we are taught by the Holy Spirit. Natural man cannot understand the truths of supernatural God without such teaching (1 Cor 2:11f; 2 Cor 4:3f). It should also be noted that Scripture places great emphasis on the importance of *personal Bible study*.

In Conviction: The unsaved person is described as *dead* (Eph 2:1), i.e., totally unable to understand or respond to the gospel. The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn 16:8ff).

In Salvation: The Holy Spirit is directly credited with the *regeneration* of the New Testament believer in both John 3:3f and Titus 3:5. The believer is *baptized* by the Holy Spirit (see below). The Holy Spirit also *indwells* the believer, i.e., He takes residence within the believer and abides with him forever (Jn 14:16f; Rom 8:9f). The believer is *sealed* (i.e., kept) by the Holy Spirit until the Day of Redemption (Eph 1:13; 4:30), and finally *anointed*, i.e., appointed and enabled for service (2 Cor 1:21f).

Prior to Pentecost: The Spirit is responsible for any spiritual life, including that of all O.T. believers (Ezek 36:27). The Spirit "came upon" these believers (Num 24:2), but not in the same sense as He indwells the N.T. believer. The Holy Spirit's presence during O.T. times was directed to specific individuals for specific tasks (Judges 14:19ff; 1 Sam 16:13f).

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit: The *baptism* of the Holy Spirit is the work by which He brings the believer into spiritual union with Jesus Christ and with all other believers in the (universal) body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:27). This baptism occurs once for all in every believer, at salvation (Acts 1:5 with 2:4), and is distinct from water baptism and from the *filling* of the Holy Spirit (see below). The baptism of the Holy Spirit first took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5 with 2:4 and 11:15f).

The filling of the Holy Spirit is an intermittent experience, though it *can* be a continual experience (Eph 5:18 "fill" is in the present tense). To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be under His control, to be energized by Him in both the inward and outward expressions of the Christian life ("walking in the Spirit" in Gal 5:16ff). This filling requires the believer's surrender and faith.

Spiritual Gifts: Spiritual gifts (literally *grace-gifts*) are unusual enablements given by the Holy Spirit to every believer for the purpose of effective ministry, the building of the body, and the glorification of God (1 Cor 12; Eph 4; 1 Pet 4:10f; Rom 12). If we are saved by *grace* through faith, we must also accept that we cannot *live* without grace and faith (Eph 2:8f), i.e., our efforts in our spiritual walk and witness are futile *in our own strength*. Thus, these grace-gifts are to be clearly distinguished from native abilities. Prior to the completion of the New Testament Scriptures, God used temporary grace-gifts (called *sign gifts* or *authenticating gifts*) to establish truth and doctrine in a clearly authoritative manner.

ANGELOLOGY

The Creation and Existence of Angels: Angels are created beings (Neh 9:6; Col 1:16). They were created prior to man (Job 38:4f). Several classifications of angels are described in Scripture: the archangels (e.g., Michael Dan 12:1), the cherubim (Ezek 28:14), the seraphim (Isa 6:2f), and the evil angels with their leader Satan (Mt 25:41; Rev 12:9). The number of angels is not specified, though it appears there is a large number (Rev 5:11), and is fixed, since angels do not reproduce (Mt 22:30). They are "spirit" beings (Heb 1:7), but are not at all to be compared with the spiritual (immaterial) component of man. Their capabilities are more extensive than man's (2 Pet 2:11; Heb 2:9), but, being created, their capabilities are far less than God's (Dan 10:13). Angels are *personal* beings, possessing self-awareness (Dan 10:11), moral awareness (Luke 15:10), intelligence (2 Sam 14:20; 1 Pet 1:12), and accountability (1 Cor 6:3).

The Work of Angels: Angels are *ministering* spirits (Heb 1:14), literally, *messengers* of God. The cherubim and seraphim minister in association with God's throne (Ezek 28:14; Isa 6:2f) and are involved in worship

(Rev 4:6f). Angels minister to humans (Mt 18:10; Heb 1:14), deliver messages from God (Luke 1,2), convey divine revelation (Acts 8:26 -- prior to the completion of Scripture), and carry out divine judgment (2 Sam 24:16ff). Angels ministered to Christ: announcing His birth (Luke 1,2) and resurrection (Mt 28:5ff), and ministering to His needs throughout His earthly life (Mt 4:11; Luke 22:23). Angels will assist Him during the events of the Last Days (Mt 25:31; Rev 4-21).

The Fall of Angels: Everything which God created was good (Gen 1:31), including the angels (Jude 6). Though we do not know how or when certain angels staged an uprising and rebelled against God, we do know that they (and their leader, Satan) incurred the wrath of God and await a sure and final judgment (Mt 25:41). Those angels who rebelled are known as "fallen" or "evil" angels and were immediately judged by God and restricted in terms of their power and location (2 Pet 2:4f).

Fallen angels (including Satan) are very active (Eph 6:12). Much of their evil work is perpetrated through possessed humans (e.g., Mark 5). They teach false doctrine (1 Tim 4:1) and incite evil (Mt 12:42f). Having failed at subverting the Redemption (by attempts on Christ's life, Mt 2:1f and Luke 22:44; by tempting Christ to sin, Luke 4:2f; etc.), the activities of these evil forces are now directed toward weakening the effects of the Redemption. Hence, the unsaved are blinded (2 Cor 4:4), the saved are under attack (Eph 6:11f), and the world system is manipulated toward evil (Eph 2:1f).

ANTHROPOLOGY

The Origin of Man: By a direct, purposeful act, God *created* man, apart from any organic evolutionary process (Gen 1:26f; 2:7,21f). Adam was created in two distinct steps: the formation of his *material* body out of dust, and the impartation of his *immaterial* soul through breathing into him the breath of life (Gen 2:7). God created man to be a unique creature -- to bear His image. This elevates man above the other creatures, placing him in a special relationship with his Creator. Man was given dominion over creation (Gen 1:26), and as God's image-bearer, was a reflection of God's attributes on earth.

The Fall of Man: Adam was created with innocence -- without sin. He was disposed to obey God and fellowship with Him, yet he still possessed the capability to rebel against God and sin. This is evidence of the fact that there always was a *significant* distinction between God and man -- God can not sin. Sin entered the human race through Adam's willful disobedience; Satan, the father of evil, participated in the fall (Rom 5:12f; Gen 3:1f). Sin introduced death in the creation (Jas 1:15), and as a result of Adam's disobedience, sin and death have passed to all men (Rom 3:23; 6:23). God's "image" in man was tarnished and distorted by sin, though not forfeited (Gen 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7). As redeemed believers, we are commanded to put on the "new man" and renew (in knowledge) this image which was tarnished (Col 3:10). We are also told that God's will is to conform us to the image of His Son, Jesus (Rom 8:29), Who is the "express image" of God (Heb 1:3).

HAMARTIOLOGY (Sin)

When God described His creation as "very good," He was assessing creation *before* the ravages of sin. Creation, including man, is no longer *normal*, i.e., what God created it to be, but is *sinful*, and the changes which sin has caused have been ruinous. When we understand our sinful condition, we can readily see our need for salvation.

God is all-knowing and all-powerful. Therefore, whatever He does is right (Ps 92:15). Logically, then, whatever He chooses not to do, is wrong. His creatures are not all-knowing nor are they all-powerful. Therefore, they are not capable of always determining what is *right*, and God understands this deficiency. However, God is all-loving, so, He always communicates to His creatures what is *right* for them, for their sake.

Sin: Sin is any thought, attitude or action which does not conform to the nature of God, and which contradicts the expressed will of God (Rom 4:15). Creatures, unlike God, have the capability to sin. Evil originated when Satan, a creature, fully knowing what was right, *willfully* chose to do what was wrong (Jn 8:44; 1 Jn 3:8f). Satan was fully responsible for his act -- God did not create evil. Clearly, God could have prevented the origin of evil, but for reasons understood only by God, He was *right* to permit Satan's evil rebellion. Sin entered the human race with Adam's disobedience. Every member of the human race (except Jesus Christ) participated in the act and results of Adam's sin (Rom 5:12f).

We each share in Adam's guilt, deserving God's judgment -- death (Rom 6:23). We each share his pollution and have a fallen, depraved nature (Isa 64:6) because, in a real sense, because we rebelled with Adam, existing in him *in seed form*. Likewise, the pollution of sin is transmitted to each individual because our total being (material and immaterial) is *procreated* in sin (mediately) by the parents.

Depravity: Total depravity means that the inherent corruption of sin affects *every* part of the unbeliever's human nature (material and immaterial) (Mark 7:15f; Rom 1:21f; Eph 4:17f). We are all guilty (Rom 3:23) and deserve God's judgment (Rom 6:23). Because of our sinful nature and state, we are incapable of conforming to the nature of God or of obeying His expressed will (Eph 2:1). Only the intervention of divine grace can effect salvation in man or result in any works acceptable to God (Eph 2:5f).

SOTERIOLOGY (Salvation)

The Need for Salvation: Sin separates the creature from the Creator, Who is holy, i.e., separate from all that is wrong. Yet this holy Creator has actively reached back toward His sinful creature, man. Jesus came specifically to save mankind from sin (Mt 1:21). Why? Because all men have sinned and are habitually rebelling against a holy God (Rom 3:23; 6:23). The divine penalty for sin, spiritual death (i.e., eternal separation from God in the lake of fire), is the certain destination for sinful man (Jn 3:18). Man's bondage to sin has rendered him blind and dead toward God and the things of God (Eph 2:1; 4:18). Indeed, man is helpless to correct his spiritual condition of spiritual death (Rom 5:6; Eph 2:8,9). Man needs a Savior!

The Basis of Salvation: Man's problem is that he is a sinner, helplessly destined for damnation. In contrast to man's condition stands God, Who, because of His love, was compelled to make provision for the salvation of man even while His holiness demands punishment for sin (Rom 5:8).

In a technical sense, man's salvation rests in the fact that Jesus lived a sinless life (the basis for reconciliation to God), made an acceptable atonement for sin by His sacrificial death on the Cross (the basis for the divine punishment for sin), and exercised sovereign power and dominion over sin and death by rising from the dead on the third day (the basis for eternal security). In a practical sense, salvation is the *gift* of God, based on God's grace, expressed through faith (Eph 2:8,9).

The Nature of Salvation:

Reconciliation: By reconciliation we mean that the substitutionary death of Christ has removed the barrier of sin, so that the believing individual is restored to God, and peace between God and the individual is established (2 Cor 5:15f; Col 1:20).

Justification: Justification is the act of God whereby He acquits the believer of the divine penalty for sin and declares him to be righteous (2 Cor 5:18f). God's declaration of righteousness is based wholly on the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:24).

Regeneration: Regeneration refers to the fact that the believer is given new (spiritual) life and becomes a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 4:24). The regenerated believer exhibits a new mind (1 Cor 2:16), a new desire (Col 3:1f), a new heart (Rom 5:5), a new character (Gal 5:22f), and a new will (Rom 8:1f).

Adoption: The word adoption means literally "son-placed." God has formally and publicly given the believer the full position and authority of being His son or daughter (Rom 8:14f; Gal 4:5f). Though we are presently called "sons" (Gal 4:6), the fullest extent of our adoption will not take place until God redeems our bodies (Rom 8:23).

Permanence: God does not "undo" what He has done. This is especially true of salvation. The Bible affirms this in several important ways: ① God wills it (Jn 6:39f), ② God is able (2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 1:3f), ③ Christ's death *fully* paid the debt of sin (Rom 8:1,32f), ④ God's love exceeds *any* possible cause of separation (Rom 8:38f), ⑤ Christ's ministry of advocacy and intercession cannot fail (1 Jn 2:1; Heb 7:25), ⑥ God deals with believers as *sons* in discipline *and* love (Heb 12:6), ⑦ the Holy Spirit indwells and seals the believer until the completion of salvation (Eph 4:30), ⑧ the believer is party to God's New Covenant, which is forever (Jer 31:31f; Heb 8:6f).

The Application of Salvation:

Grace: Grace is unmerited favor. In salvation, God's grace is an indispensable component because man is spiritually dead and unable to muster *any* salvational faith. Salvation is therefore *necessarily* initiated by God's unmerited favor in revealing Himself to the sinner (Eph 2:8,9).

Repentance: Repentance is a change in mind and attitude about God, especially in relation to one's sinful condition before God (2 Cor 7:10). Repentance is of God -- man is neither inclined to nor capable of repenting (2 Tim 2:25). It is inseparable from saving faith.

Faith: Faith in salvation means the attitude and action of the soul in seeing the need for personal salvation from sin, seeing Christ as the divine Savior, and embracing Him as one's personal Savior. The Gospel must necessarily be preached (Rom 10:17). As in every aspect of salvation, saving faith is wholly of God (Eph 2:8,9).

Sanctification: The believer is called a "saint" (Phil 1:1, etc.), meaning *holy one*. To be holy requires that one is *set apart* from sin, yet no believer attains sinless perfection in this life. One day, our sinful bodies will be redeemed (Phil 3:20f), and we will be holy in a *final* sense. But the believer experiences sanctification (which means simply *to set apart* or *to be set apart*) in this life in two significant ways.

Positional: God can call the believer holy because He has set each believer apart, through Christ, unto Himself (1 Cor 1:2). This is the believer's *positional sanctification* and refers to his standing in God's sight on the merits of Jesus Christ (Heb 13:12).

Practical: At any point in time, the individual believer may be experiencing close fellowship with God or broken fellowship, fruitful ministry or dry activity, spiritual victory or spiritual defeat. This is a reflection of the believer's state, or his *practical sanctification*. The believer is admonished to progressively be transforming in spiritual maturity, which includes separation from sin and application of His Word (Rom 12:1,2; Jn 17:17). Successful Christian living (practical sanctification) *requires* God's grace as much as salvation requires grace. God promises this grace in response to prayer and humble obedience (Heb 4:16; James 4:6).

ECCLESIOLOGY (The Church)

The Church The Body of Christ: The church is that company of people who are regenerated and baptized by the Holy Spirit to form the mystical "body" of Christ (1 Cor 12:12f). This mystical body is made up of only N.T. believers (Gal 1:13), and is often referred to as the *universal church*. The church, the body of Christ (as contrasted with the *local* church, see below) is used to picture the church as a unified whole of believers.

The Local Church: A *local church* is a group of baptized believers in a particular locality united into a covenantal assembly by the Holy Spirit, organized to corporately worship God (Acts 13:2) and to equip the saints for active ministry and effective evangelism (Eph 4:11f). The local church also assembles together for fellowship and observance of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:23f). Benefits that accrue to individual believers and/or churches that participate in acceptable associations include: ① growth (spiritual and numerical) of the body (Col 2:19), ② unified witness before the world (Jn 13:34f), ③ greater strength and efficiency in concerted ministries (e.g., agencies), ④ stability in times of trial, and ⑤ identification.

Organization of the Church: God has not outlined precise details for the organization of the local church, however, it is clear that the early church (and its leaders) exhibited organization. Certain specifics *can* be found, but in general, local churches are organized after the pattern for churches established in the New Testament.

The New Testament Pattern: The congregational pattern of church government is evident in the N.T. (Acts 14:23; Acts 11:22; 15:2, 25), and is based on two principles. First, the "work of the ministry" is to be done by the individual believers of each local church (Eph 4:11f). Second, 1 Pet 2:5 teaches that all believers have equal priestly rank and privilege (the *priesthood of believers*), and therefore eliminates hierarchical church government (via the *autonomy* of the local church). Because of these principles, the local church is led by the Holy Spirit in all decision-making processes through the corporate action of individual, Spirit-led members.

The Identity of Elders, Bishops, Pastors: Jesus Christ is the Head of His church, and is called the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:1f). Under His headship, the church is lead by under-shepherds, known interchangeably in the N.T. as elders, bishops or pastors (Titus 1:5ff; Acts 20:17-28; 1 Pet 5:1ff). The function of the under-shepherd includes: ① Feeding the flock -- through expositional preaching and teaching (Titus 1:9), ② Pastoral leadership of the flock by training and equipping the saints to

accomplish the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11f), and by overseeing the organization and program of the church (1 Pet 5:1f), ③ Pastoral care of the flock -- by visiting, serving, and offering biblical counsel to needy members (2 Tim 4:2), ④ Modeling for the flock -- by being an example among the believers in word and deed (Heb 13:7).

Deacons: On the basis of Phil 1:1 and 1 Tim 3:1f, there are two scriptural offices in the church -- pastor and *deacon*. Deacons are to minister to the body under the direction of the pastoral leadership, for the purpose of releasing the pastor(s) to perform effective, prioritized ministry (e.g., Acts 6:1f). The office of deacon requires individuals who are respected, reputable, and godly (1 Tim 3).

Ordinances: By *ordinance* we mean those outward rites which Christ has appointed to be administered in His church as visible signs of the saving *truth* of the Gospel with the intent that they be observed regularly throughout the earthly history of the church. Only two ordinances are commanded in Scripture -- Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The ordinance of water *baptism* is commanded of all believers (Mt 28:19f) as a public, symbolic testimony of the individual's salvational faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 6:1f). Baptism in the New Testament is *always* spoken of using the Greek term for immersion. No other mode was practiced in the biblical record. Immersion is also consistent with the symbolism of the ordinance -- Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

The ordinance of the *Lord's Supper* was instituted by Jesus on the eve of His death at the Passover meal He observed with His disciples (Mt 26:26f). As with baptism, this ordinance is *symbolic*, serving as a visible reminder of Jesus' sacrificial death. The Lord's Supper consists of broken bread (symbolizing the broken body) and wine (symbolizing the shed blood). Participants partake of both symbols (Mt 26:26f).

Worship of the Church: Worship is the expressed response of a vital relationship with God. Two elements are key to this definition: ① a vital relationship with God flows from an understanding of Who God is, and ② it always elicits a response which can be expressed in many ways. Isaiah 6 is an excellent case study of worship as I am defining it here. Worship results in the glory of God. Individuals can worship; even the unsaved can worship (Phil 2:9f). Corporate worship first requires a biblical focus *on God*. As the assembly collectively focuses on God (through singing, preaching, scripture reading, etc.), corporate responses take expression in the forms of giving, singing, active listening (amen!), obedient service, and a variety of other, God-honoring forms of worship (Eph 3:14-4:3).

The Mission of the Church: There are two aspects to the mission of the church as I understand it. The first aspect has in view the mission of each individual believer who is part of the *universal* church. The second aspect has in view the mission of the *local* church. For the pastor, this distinction gives a framework for the mission of the local church *in reference to* the mission of the universal church. Let me (try to) explain.

The Great Commission charges believers with the mission of evangelization (Mt 28:18f). But in order to accomplish this mission, God has charged the local church (specifically pastors) with the mission of equipping the believers in the commandments of Christ (Eph 4:11f, cf. Mt 28:20). The local church is not a soul-saving station -- it is an assembly of *believers*. I make this distinction in an attempt to avoid two dangerous extremes: ① a local church that becomes exclusively in-grown and self-occupied so that it fails

to accomplish any evangelism, and ② a local church that becomes exclusively evangelistic so that it fails to produce equipped believers with spiritual depth.

Separation: Separation is a dilemma for the individual believer as well as the church. What good is a lamp if it is hidden under a bowl (Mt 5:15)? Yet we are instructed to separate from the world (2 Cor 6:17). Jesus Himself expressed this dilemma in His prayer recorded in John 17:13f. His discussion pivots on the *truth of the Word of God* (v.17). This point is emphasized again in Romans 12:1,2 in the context of renewing our minds with truth rather than conforming to the world. So the purpose of separation is that we might not be deluded by what the world purports to be truth.

On the basis of the truth of God's Word, we are to separate from disobedient believers (2 Thes 3:6f), false teachers (Rom 16:17f), and worldliness (1 Jn 2:15). All this we can do *without* isolating ourselves to the point where we no longer can accomplish the mission Jesus gave us.

ESCHATOLOGY (End Times)

The Rapture: In Daniel's prophecy of the seventy weeks (Dan 7-9), the Messianic reign comes after a very special week of years, known as the seventieth week (Dan 9:25). This seven-year period precisely corresponds to the tribulation period described in the Revelation, chapters 6 through 9 (see below). As we now know, the first advent of Christ took place in correspondence with the completion of the first 69 weeks of years. But the nation of Israel rejected their Messiah (Mt 11:20), and the Messianic kingdom was postponed. The interlude between the end of the 69th and 70th weeks is now approaching 2000 years. This is the period known as the church age.

But Daniel's prophecy is given to Israel, not the church. This requires a removal of the church prior to the commencement of the 70th week. The removal of the church will take place at the "Rapture" and is described in 1 Thes 4:13f. In this passage, we are told that Christ will return for His saints, and will take them back to heaven with Himself. Deceased saints will be raised, and all living saints will catch up with them together with Christ in the air. Once the church is removed (and with it, the restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit), the Tribulation period will begin.

The Tribulation: The Tribulation period is the seven year period of divine wrath which precedes the second advent of Christ. This period fulfills the seventieth week of Daniel (Dan 9:24f), and is also called the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer 30:7). During this period of wrath, God will especially work among His chosen people, Israel, bringing them to repentance and faith in Jesus the Messiah (Dan 12:1; Rom 11:26). The second half of the Tribulation, known as the "Great Tribulation" (Mt 24:21), will be characterized by intense manifestations of God's purifying wrath upon the world.

The Millennium: Following His second coming to earth, Jesus Christ will be the Sovereign Ruler of this literal thousand-year kingdom (Rev 19:15f; Isa 9:6f), governing the entire world from His headquarters in Jerusalem (Mt 5:35; 28:18). Administrative responsibilities in this kingdom will be delegated to citizens as rewards (Mt 25:21; Rev 2:26), and David will again reign as king of Israel under Messiah (Jer 30:9). This millennium of peace and prosperity will come to an end as Satan is unbound for a brief season, during which he will attempt to rally the unredeemed kingdom citizens for one final rebellion against God (Rev 20:7f). This revolt will be put down. Satan will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10f). The final judgments and the eternal state will follow.

Final Judgments and Eternal State: The scene of the final judgments, known as the Great White Throne (Rev 20:11f), occurs after the heavens and earth have been burned (Mt 24:35). The doomed ("dead") are raised to be judged from the "books" (Rev 20:12), confirming without doubt the justice of their punishment which is eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:14f). The Eternal State is the ultimate reward of all redeemed creatures. Abundant completeness will be our experience forever (Ps 37:11).

Covenants: A covenant (from a doctrinal viewpoint) is a formal plan set forth by God, revealing His specific purpose(s) in the destinies of individuals or groups. Scripture describes several covenants (between God and man), specifically presented in terms of the *future* of the covenant parties. Major biblical covenants include: ① the Noahic covenant (Gen 9:8f), ② the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1f), ③ the Mosaic covenant (Ex 19:3f), ④ the Palestinian covenant (Deut 29:1f), ⑤ the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:10f), and ⑥ the New Covenant (Jer 31:31f).