



PROPOSED REVISION OF BYLAWS — JULY 2014
THE CAPSTONE CHURCH

PREAMBLE¹

This revision of the Bylaws is established for the purpose of realigning The Capstone Church's governmental and operational structure to what the affirmed Administrative Ministries Team ("AMT")² and all Staff Members (including the Senior Pastor and "Equipping Ministers"³) trust is a proper model of church leadership and operations based on Scriptural commands in the New Testament.

Those Scriptural commands and explanations will be spelled out in detail in the following Articles and Addendums of this document.

When this revision of the Bylaws is finalized and approved by a vote of three-fourths (3/4) of the Members at a scheduled Membership Meeting, it will supersede and replace all previous versions of the Bylaws. The final date and votes for formalizing the revisions to the Bylaws will be recorded and added to the Church record, which will be kept in the Church office location.

Primary changes to the Bylaws include:

1. Conversion of the AMT to a Servant Leadership Team, which includes changes in the function and role for the group, spelled out in Article Eight.
2. The establishment of Elders as a role in church government and operations, which will absorb many of the functions of the current AMT ("Leadership Team") and most of the functions of the now-defunct role of Director. For the purposes of this document (and spelled out in later Articles), Elders will have many of the same responsibilities as Directors.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------|
| Article One: Name and Principal Office | 4-5 |
| Article Two: Purpose of the Church | 6-9 |
| Article Three: Statement of our Faith | 10-14 |
| Article Four: Cooperation and Affiliation | 15-16 |
| Article Five: Membership | 17-21 |
| Article Six: Meetings of the Membership | 22-24 |
| Article Seven: Elders | 25-39 |
| Article Eight: Servant Leadership Team | 40-46 |
| Article Nine: Records and Reports | 47-48 |
| Article Ten: Construction and Definitions | 49-50 |
| Article Eleven: Amendments to the Bylaws | 51-52 |
| Addendum A: Indemnification of Elders/Staff/Church | 53-57 |
| Endnotes | 58-73 |



ARTICLE ONE: NAME AND PRINCIPAL OFFICE

The name of the corporation is THE CAPSTONE CHURCH. This corporation may be further described, in the Bylaws and elsewhere for ease of reference as “the Church.” The Church maintains its principal, but temporary, office at 13980 Prince William Way, Northport, Alabama, 35475. The Elders of the Church shall have full power and authority to change the principal office from one location to another.

If a change is made to the principal location of the Church office, the Elders shall add the changed address to these Bylaws at their discretion.



ARTICLE TWO: PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

The purpose of the Church^{4 5 6} (which is one part^{7 8} of the larger global⁹ Bride of Jesus Christ^{10 11 12}), in conformity with the Articles of Incorporation, is to bring glory to God^{13 14 15 16 17 18 19} in two manifested ways:

1. By fulfilling the Great Commandment²⁰ of Jesus Christ in the personal lives of all Members of the church²¹, and:
2. by working together as a unified Body^{22 23} in the ministry of reconciliation²⁴ to advance the Great Commission²⁵ of Jesus Christ locally, nationally and internationally.

The Church exists to provide our local community with an opportunity to:

1. Hear from God²⁶ through the preaching and teaching²⁷ of His Word^{28 29} in the Holy Bible³⁰ and through collective prayer;³¹
2. Respond to God's Word by singing music³² that extols the greatness of God, His glory in the universe and the grace He has shown to us³³;
3. Deepen their relationship with God through community discipleship in small groups^{34 35};
4. Discover how God has uniquely gifted them^{36 37} (through the Holy Spirit³⁸) and how He has prepared good works in advance for them to do with their lives^{39 40 41};
5. Be encouraged to join God in His Work⁴² in our community and abroad.^{43 44}

The Church will endeavor to accomplish this purpose by acting with intention in the following areas:

1. EVANGELISM AND OUTREACH

The Capstone Church will diligently and intentionally strive to share the Good News of Jesus Christ⁴⁵ with as many people as possible, both in our community and throughout the world.⁴⁶ We will daily take the never-changing Word⁴⁷ to an ever-changing world, and we will do so with clarity⁴⁸, focus, compassion and love.^{49 50 51 52}

In obedience to Christ's command that we are to "go and make disciples,"⁵³ The Capstone Church, including all Elders and the Servant Leadership Team, will strive to pour into all Members the reality that it is the responsibility of every believer^{54 55} to share the Good News of Jesus' virgin birth^{56 57}; physical death on a cross to atone for sin⁵⁸; bodily resurrection from the dead⁵⁹ and His promised physical return⁶⁰ with our neighbors, our community and the entire world.^{61 62 63 64}

In conformity with Christ's command that we love our neighbor as we love ourselves⁶⁵, the Church will also actively encourage and equip its members to serve and minister unselfishly, in the name of Jesus, to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those in our Church, in our community and in our world.^{66 67}

We want to be a Church known for our love for Christ, our love for each other^{68 69} and our love for the world for whom Christ died.^{70 71 72}

2. DISCIPLESHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

The Capstone Church will help Members develop and grow into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ^{73 74 75 76} and, in the process, train them to be effective ministers of the Gospel.⁷⁷ As effective ministers of the Gospel, Members can share Christ crucified⁷⁸ with their families, colleagues, friends and everyone they meet. The Church will promote the personal and spiritual growth of its Members through individual and collective Bible study⁷⁹ and discipleship training.^{80 81 82}

Recalling Jesus' directive that we "teach them to obey all I have commanded",⁸³ The Capstone Church will nurture people to become more like Christ in their thoughts^{84 85} and actions^{86 87 88}. As the Church grows, it will maintain a commitment to small-group ministry as the foundation for the process for discipleship. Through small-group ministry⁸⁹, the Church will "continue to preach Christ to each person, using all wisdom to warn and to teach everyone, in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature person in Christ."⁹⁰ In small groups, each Member can be encouraged

by other believers to pursue and live a godly life as they share life together.⁹¹ These groups welcome believers together to spur one another on as they share a bond, not just of common likes or interests, but the common bond of Christ's salvific power.⁹²

In addition to small-group ministry, the Elders and Servant Leadership Team Members will encourage one-on-one discipleship with older and younger members of the church.⁹³ Using the model of Christ's ministry on earth, the Church recognizes the impact that ministry has as one person disciples another.

3. CORPORATE WORSHIP

Human beings were specifically created⁹⁴ in the image of God⁹⁵ for the purpose of worshipping God and bringing Him glory. We are made to Worship.⁹⁶ ⁹⁷ Our worship to God is an expression of response toward Him for the great kindness and compassion He has demonstrated toward us.⁹⁸ The Capstone Church will oversee and facilitate the regular participation of its Members and attendees in public worship services where the Body of Believers come together in corporate prayer, fellowship and study as well as to sing the praises of God. The purpose of every song we sing in a corporate gathering is to glorify God, encourage the believer and convict the lost. ⁹⁹

The Capstone Church will emphasize that worship is something that happens every day of the week, not just during a corporate worship gathering on Sunday mornings.¹⁰⁰



ARTICLE THREE: STATEMENT OF OUR FAITH

The Capstone Church affirms all sixty-six books of the Holy Bible as the inspired, inerrant and infallible Word of God, and states that the Bible forms the **ONLY** acceptable and true basis and foundation for our faith and our beliefs. Moreover, the Church professes the following Statement of Faith, viz:

FOUNDATIONS

In essential beliefs related to Scripture, we have unity:

In the Biblical foundational beliefs that are vital to living a life of true faith in Christ, we must have unity as a Body of Believers. These foundations that we hold in unity are a solid rock to stand on, and those essential beliefs are spelled out in the numbers below.^{101 102 103 104}

In non-essential beliefs (scriptural or otherwise), we have liberty:

As believers of good conscience who are desperate to know Christ more fully, we will have non-essential beliefs (to salvation and living a Christian life) that we feel strongly about. We may consider these non-essentials “important”, but those differing strong beliefs should not cause us to break the bonds of fellowship with each other.^{105 106 107}

In all our beliefs, we show love:

In everything we say and do as a Church, we should display the love of Christ toward one another and toward the world. The point of our beliefs isn’t just to “be right” or win an argument but to spur one another on toward growing closer to Christ. We show that we are believers in Christ by the love we show to one another even as we may disagree on non-essentials. ^{108 109 110}

Even as we have shared diversity beliefs and are showing love in all things, Capstone Church DOES have essential beliefs that all Members must hold in unity:

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.”¹¹¹ We understand this to mean that the whole Bible is inspired and that holy men of God “were moved by the Holy Spirit” to write the

words contained in the Scriptures.^{112 113 114 115 116} We believe that this Divine inspiration extends equally and fully to all parts of Scripture as it appeared in the original manuscripts.^{117 118 119} We believe that the entire Bible, in the original manuscripts, is completely true¹²⁰ and is therefore inerrant and infallible.^{121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129} There is a clear statement from all Scripture that God preserves the purity of His Word and that it will never pass away.^{130 131 132 133 134 135 136}

We believe that all the Scriptures center around the Lord Jesus Christ in His Person and His finished Work on the cross; in His first and second coming and, therefore, that no portion of the Word of God, including the Old Testament, may be properly read or understood except as it leads and points to Jesus as our only hope as “the lamb that takes away the sins of the world.”^{137 138 139 140 141 142 143} We also believe that all Scripture was designed for our practical instruction and guidance in daily living.^{144 145 146 147 148} With such a solid foundation¹⁴⁹ that we have in Scripture, it must be the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinions should be tried.^{150 151}

The Bible, having infallible divine authority¹⁵², is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.^{153 154} As God’s people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the Gospel.

2. THE TRIUNE GODHEAD

We believe in the One True and Living God¹⁵⁵, the Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer and Ruler of all things.¹⁵⁶ He is infinite^{157 158 159 160 161}, eternal^{162 163}, unchangeable^{164 165 166 167} and is revealed to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Triune Godhead.¹⁶⁸

God the Father.

God, as Father, reigns over all of His universe with Providential care. He is all-powerful, all-loving, all-knowing, all-present and all-wise. He exercises complete authoritative control over every part of the universe. He is Fatherly in attitude toward all people but He is Father, indeed, to those who have become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, Who will deliver them into the Father’s hands.

^{169 170 171 172}

God the Son.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God¹⁷³, became man without ceasing to be God^{174 175}, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin¹⁷⁶, in order that He might reveal God¹⁷⁷ and redeem sinful man. This redemption He accomplished by voluntarily giving Himself as a sinless, substitutionary sacrifice on the cross at Calvary, thereby satisfying God's righteous judgment against sin.^{178 179 180 181} After substantiating the accomplishment of that redemption and justification by His bodily resurrection from the grave, He ascended to the right hand of His Father where He intercedes today on behalf of those who trust in Him.^{182 183 184 185 186}

God the Holy Spirit.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Divine Person Who convicts of sin (righteousness and judgment); that He alone brings new life to those who are spiritually dead; that He baptizes (or places) all believers into the one True Church, which is the Body of Christ; that He indwells believers permanently, bestowing spiritual gifts upon them, and that He fills (controls) those who are yielded to Him. Every believer is called to so live in the Power of the indwelling Spirit that he or she will not fulfill the lust of the flesh but will bear fruit to the glory of God.^{187 188 189 190}

3. CREATION

We believe that man was created directly by and in the image of God.¹⁹¹ We believe that God created the heavens and the earth, including all life, by His direct spoken act.^{192 193 194 195 196 197}

4. THE DEVIL - SATAN

We believe that Satan is a fallen angel¹⁹⁸, a created being, the author of sin and the cause of the fall of man, and that he is destined to the judgment of an eternal punishment in the lake of fire, as set out in the Holy Scriptures.^{199 200 201 202 203}

5. MAN

Although man was created in the image and under the authority of God²⁰⁴, we believe that men willfully fell into sin²⁰⁵ and, therefore, is completely lost²⁰⁶ without saving faith in Jesus Christ; this

is true of all men and women everywhere and, except a person be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, that person cannot see the Kingdom of God and will be forever separated from God in a place called Hell.^{207 208}

6. ATONEMENT FOR SIN

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a perfect substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe on Him^{209 210} are redeemed by His shed Blood. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified Body of our Lord Jesus Christ and in His ascension into heaven²¹¹; there, today, He is our High Priest and Advocate before the Father.^{212 213 214 215}

7. SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

We believe that salvation is the unmerited free gift of God's grace, obtained through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation cannot be gained or made more secure by meritorious works, but it is freely bestowed upon all who place their faith and full trust in the finished Work of Jesus at Calvary. All who so trust the Savior in repentance (genuine turning from sin toward God) are forgiven of their sins and born into the family of God by the regenerating Work of the Holy Spirit.^{216 217 218}

8. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We believe that as Believers, we are called with a Holy Calling to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the Power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. The new life we have in Christ will be made evident by our fruits. We are called to daily offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God²¹⁹ and to actively strive, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to keep the flesh in subjection to Jesus Christ. Since God began a good work in us, He is faithful to

bring it to completion through a lifetime of sanctification (experience, beginning at salvation and continuing throughout a believers life, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes and is enabled by the Holy Spirit to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity).^{220 221 222 223 224}

9. THE GREAT COMMISSION

Until the return of Christ, it is the Christian's duty and privilege to seek the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission and to minister in His Name of a needy world. We are to be the instruments of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit ministers redemption and reconciliation in the world.^{225 226}

10. LAST THINGS

We believe in the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to earth and the consummation of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal punishment of the unredeemed, and the eternal joy of the righteous as God himself promises to live with them. We believe that the interim period between Christ's ascension and return is to be filled with the mission of the Church - redeemed by God - not to sit idly by and wait to escape this earth, but to be agents of change and restoration in our world. Therefore, we are empowered by the hope of our King's return and we rejoice that God will one day make all things new.^{227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235}

²³⁶



ARTICLE FOUR: COOPERATION AND AFFILIATION

The Capstone Church is fully and completely autonomous and it maintains the right to govern its own affairs independently of any denominational control or influence. Recognizing, however, the benefits which inure to the local Church from certain cooperation or affiliation with other churches in world missions and otherwise, The Capstone Church reserves the option of voluntarily affiliating with any selected denomination or organization which the Elders may, after prayer and affirmation by a quorum of members present at a Membership Meeting, determine is in the best interest of the Church and in conformity with God's Will and Purpose for the mission and ministries of the Church.



ARTICLE FIVE: MEMBERSHIP

1. IN GENERAL

Membership in The Capstone Church shall consist of all persons who have met the qualifications for membership and who are listed on the membership rolls.

2. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership at The Capstone Church is not something to be taken lightly. As Christians, we are Members of God's household²³⁷ called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: Members who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do²³⁸. The Capstone Church holds its Members in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the Gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason²³⁹.

"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them."

— Romans 12:3–8

Being a member of The Capstone Church is really about being part of a family. All Members are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Members who enter into a covenant with The Capstone Church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service.

Here are the minimum requirements to be a member of The Capstone Church:

1. A personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation;

2. Baptism as a testimony and public profession of faith;
3. Completion of The Capstone Church's Membership Class 101, and
4. A commitment EACH CALENDAR YEAR to abide by the Membership Covenant (a copy is attached to these Bylaws, and incorporated herein by reference, as Addendum "B" to this document).

Nothing in this Article shall be construed as limiting the right of the Church to refer to persons merely associated with it as "Members." No such reference however, shall constitute any such person as a "member" within the meaning of Sections 10-3A-2 or 10-3A-26 of the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act. The Church may confer, by amendment of these Bylaws, some or all of the rights of a member as set forth in the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act upon any such person or persons. Reference in the Bylaws to "Members" are not references to such merely associated persons.

3. DESIGNATION OF MEMBERSHIP

In order to properly reflect the membership of The Capstone Church, three rolls shall be maintained. These rolls shall be updated periodically, as prescribed by the Elders.

- A. **Active/Resident Members:** All Members who reside within the Church's ministry area or who are currently active in the Church. A Member will be determined to be "Active" if they have met the requirements of membership listed above and have a signed copy of the Membership Covenant for the current calendar year.
- B. **Nonresident Members:** Members who have become inactive as a result of moving out of the Church's ministry area but who have not joined another church. The goal of this list is to encourage them to engage in another church body in the area they have moved to.
- C. **Non-member regular attendees:** These are not Members of the Church (and cannot vote at a Members meeting) but people who regularly attend but have not "plugged in" to

membership at the church. The goal of this list would be to see non-member regular attendees become active members.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

The responsibilities of membership are described in the Membership Covenant.

5. POWERS OF MEMBERSHIP

Every Active/Resident Member shall have the right to participate on the following matters:²⁴⁰

- A. the Annual Budget of the Church;
- B. disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Church;
- C. the merger or dissolution of the Church;
- D. the acquisition of real property and related indebtedness;
- E. amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the Church and
- F. the calling or removal of a Senior Pastor.
- G. nominate Members of the Church to serve as part of the Servant Leadership Team.
- H. nominate Members of the Church to serve as an Elder.
- I. affirm the selection of Elders and reaffirm Elders as spelled out in Section Seven.

- J. affirm the decision by Elders to add more Elder positions.
- K. affirm the decision by Elders to remove an Elder or to remove Elders as spelled out in Section Seven.

7. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Members shall be removed from the Church rolls for the following reasons:

- A. Death;
- B. Transfer of membership to another church;
- C. By personal request and written notification of/by the member, or
- D. Dismissal by a majority of the Elders under the following conditions:
 - a. The member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Membership Covenant in such a manner or fashion that such member is hindering the ministry of the Church in the community, and
 - b. Procedures for the dismissal of a member shall be in accordance with the guidance provided in:
 - i. Matthew 18:15-17
 - ii. Galatians 6:1
 - iii. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
 - iv. Titus 3:10-11
 - v. II Thessalonians 3:13-15
 - vi. and James 5:19-20.

As the Elders begin to lead the church in the direction of church discipline (with the full knowledge that they themselves are sinners saved only by God's grace and kindness), the goal is never just "behavior modification" or some outward appearance of change. The goal of any church discipline up to and including dismissal is to see true Gospel-saturated repentance of sin and return to the life of obedience to the Word of Christ.

Biblical repentance involves turning from sinful thoughts, actions and lifestyles to the abundant life and eternal joy set before us in Christ.

8. RESTORATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Once a Member has been dismissed by the Elders, the Member can be restored once the Elders see true repentance of sin and the fruit of that repentance. The fruit of their lifestyle displays that the member is once again in accordance with the provisions and pledges set out in the Membership Covenant.



ARTICLE SIX: MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP

1. QUORUM OF MEMBERSHIP

Thirty-three (33%) percent of the Active/Resident Members, if present at the commencement of a meeting duly noticed and called, shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the purpose of conducting the lawful business of the Church.

2. LOCATION OF MEETINGS

Meetings of the Members of the Church will be held in the main sanctuary of the building that the Church currently occupies. Meetings of the Members may also be held at any such other place or places within or outside the State of Alabama as may be designated from time to time by the Elders, including any location(s) utilized by Members. The meeting location must be included in the Notice Requirements listed in Section 5 below.

3. GENERAL MEETINGS

A general meeting of the Members will be called at least four (4) times a year. As long as a quorum of Members are present at the meeting and subject to Section Five of this Article, any lawful business may be conducted.

4. SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings may be called at any time by a majority of the Elders and such special meetings may be called for any lawful purpose by giving notice to the Members in accordance with Section Five of this Article. If the situation warrants it, a majority of the Servant Leadership Team members can also call a special meeting by giving notice to the Members in accordance with Section Five of this Article.

In the event of an emergency, a special meeting of the Members can be called without the two (2) week notification requirement listed in Section Five.

5. NOTICE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

General Requirements.

Whenever Members are required or permitted to take any action at a meeting, notice shall be given to Members no less than two (2) weeks prior to such meeting. Notification of membership meetings can be given in any of the following manners, which shall be deemed to be a reasonable method for calling a membership meeting.

- A. Distribution of written material to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday worship service (including church bulletins or other printed materials);
- B. Announcement of the meeting in The Loop or other email newsletter produced and distributed by, or under sanction of, the Church and/or the Elders;
- C. Announcement of the meeting in personal email correspondence;
- D. Oral announcement to the congregation at a regular Sunday worship service, or
- E. Delivery by United States Mail to each member identified on the Active/Resident Membership Roll.

6. DECISIONMAKING BY CONSENSUS

To the extent reasonably practicable, decisions which are required or permitted to be made by the Members shall be made only after adequate prayer, discussion and debate has occurred.

The Members, working in cooperation with the Elders and the Servant Leadership Team, shall endeavor to make its decisions by consensus and by acclamation if this can be reasonably accomplished under the circumstances.

With the exception of decisions regarding the purchase or encumbrance of real estate, or the incurring of debt, it shall be only after the Members have used best efforts to make a decision by consensus that Members shall engage in formal voting procedures in order to arrive at a decision.

In the situation where formal voting procedures are necessary, the vote totals will be recorded and added to the Church records.



ARTICLE SEVEN: ELDERS

The office of Elder is an important and indispensable aspect of healthy life in the local church. The New Testament exhorts us to appoint Elders, for Members to respect Elders, and for Elders to serve as shepherds of Christ's flock. It is a position that requires extreme commitment to the Church and should not be approached lightly.^{241 242 243 244}

An Elder must watch over the flock. He must instruct all the sheep, strengthen the weak ones, guard the vulnerable ones, rebuke the obstinate ones, and bear with the difficult ones. An elder watches over the Members of his church as one who will give an account to God.²⁴⁵

It is very important to note that the role of Elder is one of service, not "power" over the Body. Even as an Elder instructs, strengthens, guards, rebukes and bears, he does this as one who is completely under the headship of Christ. Christ is the supreme head of the Church and everyone is subject to His authority. Elders are first and foremost servants to the church. A servanthood-centered heart, committed to following Christ is absolutely key.

1. NUMBER AND TERMS

- A. Unless changed by amendment to the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws duly adopted by the Members, the number of Elders shall be no fewer than three (3) men. There is not a predetermined upper limit to the number of Elders that can serve the Church, but will be added to as the need arises.
- B. Affirmed Elders will serve terms of no fewer than five (5) years. For the first round of Elder selections, each Elder will have staggered terms to make sure all the Elders do not come up for reaffirmation at the same time.
- C. After an Elder's five-year term is complete, he has the option to continue as Elder for another five-year term, IF he is reaffirmed by the congregation, or to step down from the position.
- D. While it is recognized that someone who is leading the Body does not automatically stop leading the Body because a term limit came up, it is important for the Members of the Body

to have a voice to continue to reaffirm each Elder after each five-year term.

- E. When possible, the Members and the Servant Leadership Team should work to ensure there are more “Lay” Elders than Staff Elders. Note: A Lay Elder refers to a man whom does the church not employ.
- F. The Senior Pastor will always serve as an Elder.

REMOVAL OF AN ELDER

The removal of an Elder (including the Senior pastor) is a very serious matter and should only be undertaken under the following conditions:

- A. Death or permanent disability of the Elder;
- B. Transfer by the Elder of membership to another church;
- C. The Elder’s life and conduct is not in accordance with the Membership Covenant in such a manner and fashion that such Elder is hindering the work and the ministry of the Church in the community, or otherwise the Elder’s actions have the undesirable effect of limiting the spiritual growth of the members, or
- D. The Elder has engaged in immoral, unethical or illegal conduct, or has otherwise conducted himself in such a manner and fashion as to bring dishonor upon the work and ministry of The Capstone Church or the Elder has otherwise acted in such a way as to be an ineffective or negative witness for Jesus Christ.

In such a situation, as described in points C and D above, the hope is that the Elder would resign quickly once Church discipline has occurred in order to best protect the Body. However, if that is not the case, the procedure should be as follows:

- A. In the case of illegal or extreme moral/unethical conduct:

- a. A majority of the Elders can immediately call for an Elder's dismissal.
 - b. In the same situation, if it involves a majority of Elders, a supermajority ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the existing Servant Leadership Team can call for the immediate dismissal of multiple Elders.
 - c. In this extreme situation, a special meeting of the Members would be called without the prescribed two-week (2) notification.
 - d. Again, this is NOT the typical procedure but should ONLY be utilized in situations of illegal or extreme moral/unethical conduct.
- B. In the more likely situation where immediate removal is not required and the Elders have followed church discipline procedures outlined in Scripture:
- a. The majority of Elders will follow notice requirements for calling and conducting a meeting of the Membership;
 - b. At the Membership meeting, a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Members can remove an Elder. In the case of removing of an Elder (including the Senior Pastor), fifty (50) percent of the Active members must be present at the meeting to represent a quorum.
 - c. In a situation where multiple Elders or a majority of Elders need to be removed, a supermajority ($\frac{2}{3}$) of the existing Servant Leadership Team can call a meeting of the members, following notice requirements, to discuss removing an Elder.
 - i. Again, at the Membership meeting, a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the Members can remove a(n) Elder(s) as long as a minimum of fifty (50) percent of the Active members are present to represent a quorum.

2. REQUIREMENTS, QUALIFICATIONS & COMMITMENTS

First Timothy Chapter 3, Titus Chapter 1 and 1 Peter Chapter 5 lay out the particular requirements and qualifications. 2 The Church should prayerfully consider nominating persons for service as an Elder who are perceived to be:

- Above reproach
1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7
- The husband of one wife - (the man must be pursuing purity as he is faithfully committed to his wife, if married.)
1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6, Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7
- Temperate - (moderate, not given to excess)
1 Timothy 3:2
- Sober-minded - (a sensible, serious person)
1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
- Of good behavior - (respectable, orderly)
1 Timothy 3:2
- Hospitable - (one who shows genuine kindness and hospitality)
1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
- A lover of what is good - (one who is inclined to do good)
Titus 1:8
- Able to teach - (an able teacher and defender of the truth)
1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:2, 24; 2:15; Titus 2:7-8
- Not given to drunkenness - (“not addicted to wine”)
1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8.

- Not violent - (solves problems and settles disputes peacefully)
1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
- Gentle - (patient, gracious, forgiving)
1 Timothy 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:24
- Not quick-tempered - (he must be slow to anger)
Titus 1:7; James 1:19-20
- Not quarrelsome - (not argumentative)
1 Timothy 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 3:13-18
- Just - (righteous or upright, known for doing what is right)
Titus 1:8
- Holy - (“devout” or “set apart to God”)
Titus 1:8
- Self-controlled - (or self-disciplined)
Titus 1:8
- Not covetous - (not a lover of money)
1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2
- One who rules his own house well - (a good manager and leader)
1 Timothy 3:4; 2 Titus 1:6
- Having his children in submission with all reverence (having obedient, respectful, faithful children)
1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6

- Not a new or immature believer
1 Timothy 3:6
- He must have a good testimony among those who are outside (well respected even by unbelievers in the community)
1 Timothy 3:7
- He must serve, not by compulsion; he must desire to serve
1 Peter 5:2; 1 Timothy 3:1
- Not self-willed - (not anxious to control others or to have his own way)
Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:3
- An example to the flock
1 Peter 5:3; Titus 2:7

IMPORTANT NOTE: There is no man, outside of Christ, who meets all these qualifications 100 percent of the time. Men who seek the office of elder should be striving toward these with the help of the Holy Spirit.

In accordance with Scriptural commands of assigning the role of loving, sacrificial leadership to men, the office of elder is assigned to men.

- A. Men and women are created in the image of God and possess truly equal dignity and status. There is no person and no gender that is superior or inferior in God's sight.^{246 247}
- B. God fashioned different roles for men and women into the fabric of creation itself. He created Adam to be the head, leader, and authority, and created Eve to be a helper suitable for him²⁴⁸. While these distinct roles were corrupted by the fall, they were created before the fall, which means they are meant to be a pattern for us today.²⁴⁹ The idea of loving leadership and glad submission exists inside the marriage covenant and has existed eternally in the Trinity as the Son submits to the Father.²⁵⁰ To make the point again, just as the Son is not different in power or in dignity in the relationship to the Father, the differing

roles of men in women do not represent differences in power, dignity or worth.

- C. These roles are primarily enacted in the home and the church. In the home, men are to lead their wives by loving them as Christ loved the church while wives submit to their husbands as the church submits to Christ.
- D. In the Church, only men are to exercise authoritative leadership as they teach the gathered church (of men and women). This in no way precludes women from service in the Church. Women are encouraged to seek and utilize their own giftings from the Holy Spirit.

The Role of Elder requires a major commitment of time to the church.

- A. Elders must commit to meet weekly to pray for the church.
- B. Elders must commit to a strict regimen of Bible reading and memorization.
- C. Elders must commit to being physically present at many Church-sponsored events (including Sunday morning Worship and fellowship events).

3. OVERVIEW OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

The Elder Examination process at Capstone Church is both defined and flexible.

1. **It is defined.** Our process has specific steps and elements we believe are essential to examining men to lead the bride of Christ. The New Testament instructs us to examine elders in the areas of Doctrine, Ability, and Character (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Therefore, our process includes these three elements:

- **Doctrinal Examination** – Because the calling of elders focuses on shepherding souls with the Word of God, elders must have a good grasp on basic Christian theology, the interpretation of Scripture, and be thoughtful in their pastoral application of doctrine to the

church and its members. We examine for this through three means:

- **Papers on Doctrine and Ministry (see below)** – These short documents are designed to give the elders a brief overview of a candidate’s grasp on basic areas of Christian theology and positions on aspects of ministry, which they will encounter in a local church.
 - **Personal interviews** – In personal interviews, the Elders will ask the candidate questions to follow-up on the papers. For the selection of the first round of Elders, a subcommittee of the current Leadership Team will conduct the interviews.
 - **Observation** – Even before and outside any official “process,” current leaders are examining men, as they teach, participate, and counsel others.
-
- **Competency Examination** – The only qualification of an elder that is different from that of Servant Leadership Team Member (or from what is expected of all Christians) is that he is “able to teach.” Therefore, it is important that a man’s competence in teaching be demonstrated. “Able to teach” does not mean “able to preach from a pulpit to a large group on Sunday morning.” “Able to teach” can mean a variety of pastoral applications, including preaching, Sunday School, small group, or personal ministry. While theological papers demonstrate a grasp of abstract concepts, they do not necessarily demonstrate the ability to apply them to souls, in person. Therefore, we examine for this mainly through three means:
 - **Personal Interviews** – In interviews, we will look for the ability to explain doctrine and ministry to us, in person.
 - **Observation** – Our main form of examination will be observing the candidate in action. This will include watching them teach Sunday School, lead small groups, or participate in personal pastoral ministry.
 - **Affirmation from the Members** – We will look for members who can affirm and give specific examples of how a man has “pastored” them. In the end, if it cannot be

demonstrated that a man is “shepherding souls” when he is not an elder “officially,” it is doubtful he will shepherd once given the office.

- **Life Examination** – Besides competency in teaching the faith and shepherding souls, the Scripture calls us to examine a man’s life, to see that the Gospel is shaping and changing him. We use the aforementioned passages as guidelines for what to look for. We examine this area in mainly three means:
 - **Personal Interviews** – We will ask specific and direct questions of men about their private, family, business, and public lives. These interviews will include at least one interview with his wife (if married).
 - **Observation** – We observe the lives of our men, to see how they live in the world and in the church, asking questions about his character and integrity.
 - **Affirmation from the congregation** – We look to the members to affirm that the life and character of a man is in keeping with the guidelines of Scripture.

2. **It is flexible.** As men have occasion to lead, serve, and teach, through ministries such as Sunday School, Small Groups, Servant Leadership positions, etc., we are constantly observing and “examining” their abilities to lead, teach, shepherd souls, and do the work of an Elder.

Outline of Steps

Note: For the first round of Elder selections, the Leadership Team may invite key leaders from other trusted churches to participate in the selection process as part of the subcommittee. This will be done with the complete oversight of the current Leadership Team.

1. **Candidate Selection** – Candidates will be selected whether to continue in the process based on nominations from the congregation and/or Elder agreement that a man should be examined. For the first round of Elder selection, the Membership and the current Leadership Team will nominate candidates for the position of Elder and a subcommittee of the Leadership Team will sort through those.

2. **Agreement** – A man must agree to be examined. Men will not be examined who express no desire to be an elder. Candidates must express agreement to cooperate with the process as outlined in the Bylaws. Agreement to be examined implies the understanding that not all men examined will necessarily be nominated for Eldership.
3. **Note:** For the sake of privacy, the elders will not communicate to the congregation who is being examined. This is to eliminate the feeling of congregational pressure on a candidate, to protect reputations and eliminate cause for embarrassment should a candidate withdraw from the process or the elders decline to nominate.
4. **Elder Contact** – Each candidate will be assigned a specific Elder to coordinate the process and schedule. For the initial round of Elder selection, a subcommittee of the Leadership Team will be appointed to coordinate the process.
5. **Doctrine and Ministry Document** – The formal process will begin with the candidate submitting a few brief documents summarizing their understanding of basic areas of Christian doctrine and positions on various aspects of local church ministry (see below). The process will not proceed to interviews until the papers are received.
6. **Interviews** – The Elders will conduct no fewer than two in-person interviews with the candidate, one of which to include the candidate's wife (if married). More will often be required, depending on meeting length and desire of elders. For the initial round of Elder selection, a subcommittee of the Leadership Team will be appointed to conduct the interview process.
7. **Elder Meeting Attendance** – The candidate will attend one or more regular Elder meetings, to observe their participation in meetings and interaction with the elders. This requirement will not apply to the first round of Elders who are selected.
8. **Giving Analysis** — An Elder candidate must demonstrate that he is a sacrificial giver to the Church. For this component, the point is not to look for a particular dollar amount or percentage of giving. But, it should be clear that the candidate is giving in a cheerful, open-handed way.^{251 252}

9. **Congregational Affirmation** – At the appointed Members Meeting, the congregation will be allowed opportunity for public discussion and questions, before affirming the candidate, in the manner provided in the Constitution and Bylaws. If the candidate is approved, he will immediately begin serving as an Elder, according to the terms in the Bylaws.

Doctrine & Ministry Papers

Each candidate will provide the elders with a brief document summarizing their views on the following doctrines and ministry issues.

Doctrine

1. **The Bible** – Summarize your Doctrine of Scripture, including its inspiration and authority.
2. **God** – Summarize your Doctrine of God, including the Trinity.
3. **Christ** – Summarize your Doctrine of Christ, including his deity, humanity, etc.
4. **Holy Spirit** – Summarize your Doctrine of the Spirit, including views on the role of the Spirit and gifts today.
5. **Man** – Summarize your Doctrine of Man, including views on creation/evolution, purpose of man, etc.
6. **Sin** – Summarize your Doctrine of Sin, including original sin, the depravity of man, and Satan.

7. **Salvation** – Summarize your Doctrine of Salvation, including the Gospel, atonement, election, salvation, regeneration, etc.
8. **Church** – Summarize your Doctrine of the Church, including the Universal and Local Church, offices of the church, membership, baptism and Lord’s Supper.
9. **Last Things** – Summarize your Doctrine of Last Things, including heaven, hell, return of Christ.
10. **Doctrinal Essentials** – Summarize how you breakdown doctrine in the following categories:
 - a. Necessary for Salvation,
 - b. Necessary for Membership in the Local Church,
 - c. Non-essential but Important

Ministry

1. **Marriage & Divorce** – Summarize your views on Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, Homosexuality, Sexual Ethics, etc.
2. **Gender Roles** – Summarize your understanding of the roles of men and women, the meaning of such roles, and any restrictions for service in the local church.
3. **Ministry in the Church** – Summarize your understanding of who does ministry in the local church and how that is best done. Please include how you have personally pursued ministry in the local church.
4. **Ministry in the World** – Summarize your philosophy on who does ministry in the “world,” and how the church should approach such ministry. Please include how you have personally pursued ministry in the world.

5. **Elder Ministry** – Summarize your understanding of the office of Elder, how it differs from the Servant Leadership Team, what its ministry is and how it should be done. Please include your thoughts on how you would work through differences, pursue unity, resolve conflict, and submit to one another.
6. **Ministry Essentials** – Please outline what areas of ministry philosophy and doctrine are necessary for elders to serve together – such as views on the above issues and doctrines mentioned.

NOTE: The Elders are not looking for a seminary (or college) level treatise on any of these topics. They desire to see that the man has worked through the area personally and is able to express a basic grasp of the issues. Likewise in the interviews: the Elders are not looking for doctoral level “experts” in areas of doctrine and practice—in fact, they value the ability to say “I don’t know,” when a man doesn’t know. They are also looking to see how a man interacts with and distinguishes positions with which he disagrees.

4. POWERS

a) **General Corporate Powers.** Subject to the provisions and limitations set out in the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act and any limitations in the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws, the activities, business and general affairs of the Church shall be conducted by, and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of, the Elders. Except as otherwise provided for in the these Bylaws or by the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act, the decisions of the Elders shall take effect upon a majority vote of the Elders, a quorum of the Elders having been first present upon the commencement of the meeting.

b) **Specific Powers.** Without prejudice to the general powers set out above, and subject to the same limitations and conditions, the Elders shall have the power to:

1. Change the principal executive office or the principal business office of the Church within the State of Alabama from one location to another, and designate any place within or without the State of Alabama for the holding of any meeting or meetings of the Elders;
2. Adopt, make and use a corporate seal and alter the form of the seal;
3. Borrow money and incur indebtedness on behalf of the Church and cause to be executed and delivered for the Church's purposes and in the Church's name, promissory notes and other evidences of debt, contract and security as may from time to time be deemed necessary and prudent, and
 - a. The Elders will appoint Directors (known as Trustees within the church) to carry out the actual process of incurring indebtedness and handling the day-to-day financial affairs of the church. These Directors will only conduct business on behalf of the church under the direction of the Elders and at the discretion of the Elders. The Elders will maintain a minimum of three Directors (with no maximum number of Directors) to ensure church business can be conducted properly. Elders do not serve as directors.
 - b. A Director will serve a three-year term, and the Elders will have the option to reaffirm the Director(s) for subsequent three-year terms. The Directors can be removed from the post by the Elders under the following conditions:
 - c. The Director's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Membership Covenant in such a manner and fashion that such Director is hindering the work and the ministry of the Church in the community, or otherwise the Director's actions have the undesirable effect of limiting the spiritual growth of the members, or
 - d. The Director has engaged in immoral, unethical or illegal conduct, or has otherwise conducted himself in such a manner and fashion as to bring dishonor upon the work and ministry of The Capstone Church or the Director has otherwise acted in such a way as to be an ineffective or negative witness for Jesus Christ.
4. Exercise all such other powers, which are conferred by the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act and other applicable governing laws.

5. Coordinate with Servant Leadership Team members in their areas of ministry to make sure the vision, mission and strategy of the Church and the Elders are carried out. The Elders are charged with providing spiritual leadership to the Church as they set the vision, mission and strategy for the Church.
6. To settle disputes that arise as decisions need to be made in the Servant Leadership Team ministry teams.
7. To conduct church discipline with the Members as well as to dismiss Members. The Elders will also have the power to restore a dismissed Member.
8. To appoint Members to serve on the Servant Leadership Team.
9. To create, combine or dissolve ministry teams in order to facilitate the accomplishment of the mission of the Church.
10. Each Elder will be assigned to oversee a specific area of ministry that the Servant Leadership Team will execute.
11. Staff Elders SHOULD NOT serve in oversight of areas of Administration (finance team, personnel team and facilities team) just to prevent issues where a paid staff member is dealing with financial issues at the church. Only in extreme cases, or cases where there are only staff Elders available to serve in oversight over areas of Administration, can staff Elders serve in that manner.

5. ELDER MEETINGS

- A. A majority of the then-authorized number of Elders, if present at the commencement of a regular or special meeting duly called and noticed, shall comprise a quorum for the transaction of the lawful business of the Elders.
- B. Every action taken, and every decision made, by a majority of the Elders present and voting at such meeting, shall constitute the lawful action of the Elders, subject to the provisions of

the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act.

- C. Elders at a meeting at which a quorum has been initially present may continue to transact business notwithstanding the withdrawal of Elders therefrom after the commencement of the meeting, but official action requires an affirmative vote by the majority of the Elders present and voting.
- D. The Elders are also present at all Servant Leadership Team meetings, as spelled out in Article Eight.

6. DECISIONMAKING BY CONSENSUS

To the extent reasonably practicable decisions which are required or permitted to be made by the Elders shall be made only after adequate prayer, discussion and debate has occurred. The Elders, shall endeavor to make their decisions by consensus and by acclamation if this can be reasonable accomplished under the circumstances.

It shall be only after the Elders have first used their best efforts to arrive at a decision by consensus that the Elders shall engage in formal voting procedures in order to arrive at the final decision.



ARTICLE EIGHT: SERVANT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Introduction

There are three main functions that a Servant Leadership Team Member (“SLTM”) is charged with performing at Capstone Church:

1. Meeting the needs of the Body.

- For the church as a whole to grow and thrive, God enables leading servants through the Holy Spirit to care for the physical/spiritual needs of the people in the Body as well as the functional needs of church operations.
- Beyond the local body at Capstone Church, Servant Leadership Team Members also yearn to see the fulfillment of the Great Commission through local, national and international missions.
- Acts 6 provides a clear example that Servant Leadership Team Members are appointed as needs arise in the church. This means that the total number of Servant Leadership Team Members is not fixed but can grow or shrink based on the needs of the church.

2. Supporting the ministry of the Gospel.

- Servant Leadership Team Members are responsible for serving elders in such a way that it enables those elders to more effectively lead the Body as well as guard the Word and vision of the church.
- Servant Leadership Team Members are responsible for leading (and facilitating) others to serve in the Body. While Servant Leadership Team Members are servants in the church, they are not the only servants in the Body. As Servant Leadership Team Members lead in their areas of influence, other congregational members will be encouraged to serve as well.

3. Creating Unity in the Body around the Word.

- As one Body, serving one risen Christ, on one mission to exist for those who are not here yet (fulfilling the Great Commission), the Servant Leadership Team Member has a vital role to create unity in the Church. This is done in two ways:
 - **Squelching unbiblical dissent.** This means that a SLTM uses the Word and their influence to put an end to murmuring, backbiting, extreme criticism and gossip wherever they find it. It is vital for Servant Leadership Team Members to have and maintain a missions mindset. The church cannot fully reach out if there is disunity inside the body.
 - **Demonstrating a Christ-like character.** 1 Timothy 3 outlines the qualifications of a Servant Leadership Team Member.

1. NUMBER AND TERMS

- A. The Servant Leadership Team shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) members (excluding staff members). Again, this number can increase or decrease (to the minimum) depending on ministry needs in the Church.
- B. Staff Members are non-rotating permanent members of this team.
- C. SLTM shall serve a term of no less than three (3) years once they are submitted by the Members and appointed by the Elders.
- D. Elders can create and appoint new SLTM when or if the need arises. Appointed SLTM will be presented to and affirmed by the Members at a scheduled Membership meeting.
- E. Elders can dissolve a SLTM position after a three-year term if the ministry is no longer viable.
- F. REMOVAL OF A SERVANT LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER

- a. Any Servant Leadership Team Member may be removed from office, at any time, by a majority vote of the Elders at a regular or special meeting of the Elders and subject to the following particulars, viz:

The specific facts giving rise to the motion for removal shall relate to one or more of the following causes as grounds for such dismissal:

- i. Death or permanent disability of the Servant Leadership Team Member;
- ii. Transfer by the SLTM of membership to another church;
- iii. The Servant Leadership Team Member's life and conduct is not in accordance with the Membership Covenant in such a manner and fashion that such SLTM is hindering the work and the ministry of the Church in the community, or otherwise the SLTM's actions have the undesirable effect of limiting the spiritual growth of the members, or
- iv. The SLTM has engaged in immoral, unethical or illegal conduct, or has otherwise conducted himself or herself in such a manner and fashion as to bring dishonor upon the work and ministry of The Capstone Church or the SLTM has otherwise acted in such a way as to be an ineffective or negative witness for Jesus Christ.

2. QUALIFICATIONS & SELECTION PROCESS

1 Timothy 3 provides a framework for the qualifications for someone to serve as an SLTM:

- 1. Is this person honorable?
- 2. Is this person genuine and sincere?
- 3. Is this person self-controlled?
- 4. Is this person a sacrificial giver?
- 5. Is this person devoted to the Word?
- 6. Is this person faithful?

7. Is this person blameless?
 8. Is this person honoring Christ in the home?
-
- A. Every eligible Active/Resident Church member will have the opportunity to nominate one (1) person for each position available on the SLT.
 - B. Once nominees have been submitted, the Elders will interview the nominees to determine the candidate's credentials.
 - C. The Elders will select the candidates to serve on the SLT.

3. POWERS

- A. Each SLTM will be representing a specific ministry area in the Church. An Elder will work in an oversight role with the SLTM.
- B. Because SLTM positions can be created or removed by Elders as needed to serve the Body, there ISN'T and can't be an exhaustive list of the possible ministry areas in the Church. Here are a few examples of the possible ministry areas that could be covered (NOTE: More could be added or subtracted later):
 - a. Finance
 - b. Personnel
 - c. Guest Services
 - d. Small Groups
 - e. Local & National Ministries
 - f. International Missions
 - g. Facilities
- C. **FINANCE TEAM:** The SLTM in charge of the Finance Team would be responsible for leading a ministry team of people that will coordinate the budget for the church as well as approve

major expenditures for the church. If at all possible, a Lay Elder would serve in an oversight role over this team. The SLTM in charge of the Finance Team would also be responsible for preparing reports, documents and overseeing regular audits of the church.

- D. **PERSONNEL TEAM:** The SLTM in charge of the Personnel Team would be responsible for handling all staff personnel issues at the church. They will actively coordinate with the Finance Team SLTM on salary negotiations, raises and other issues that relate to paid Church staff. This team will also be responsible for conducting performance reviews of staff members and creating goals and expectations for those staff members.
- E. **GUEST SERVICES TEAM:** The SLTM in charge of the Guest Services Team would be responsible for leading a ministry team that coordinates the experience for Sunday mornings, fellowships and other opportunities for visitors to connect with the Church.
- F. **SMALL GROUPS TEAM:** The SLTM in charge of the Small Groups Team would be responsible for leading a ministry team that helps grow small groups at the church. They will be responsible for coordinating meetings with small group leaders and determining new ways (with the Guest Services team) to get new visitors “plugged in” to a small group.
- G. **LOCAL & NATIONAL MISSIONS TEAM:** The SLTM in charge of the Local and National Ministries Team would be responsible for leading a team that coordinates local and national ministry efforts in the church. They are also responsible for recruiting and informing members on ways they can get involved in local and national missions.
- H. **INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS:** The SLTM in charge of International Missions would be responsible for leading a team that coordinates and plans out the specific international mission trips that the Church participates in. They are also responsible for recruiting and informing members on ways they can get involved in international missions.
- I. **FACILITIES TEAM:** The SLTM in charge of Facilities would be responsible for making sure the facilities the Church has are operating at peak efficiency. If repairs, fixes or other issues come up, this team is in charge of making sure those issues are handled.

- J. **NOTE:** Within the teams, each SLTM will make decisions that pertain to their area of ministry (with the oversight of an Elder).

IMPORTANT NOTE: Again, this is not an exclusive or exhaustive list of SLTM, but are examples of possible teams and responsibilities.

4. SLT MEETINGS

- A. If possible, a majority (greater than 50 percent) of the then-authorized number of Elders should be present for the transaction of the lawful business of the SLT. But, at least one (1) Elder should be present at all meetings of the SLT to transact lawful business.
- B. A majority (greater than 50 percent) of the SLTM present shall comprise a quorum for the transaction of the lawful business of the SLT. Every action taken, and every decision made, by a majority of the SLTM present and voting at such meeting, shall constitute the lawful action of the SLT, subject to the provisions of the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act. SLTM at a meeting at which a quorum has been initially present may continue to transact business notwithstanding the withdrawal of SLTM therefrom after the commencement of the meeting, but official action requires an affirmative vote by the majority of the SLTM present and voting.
- C. The SLTM will meet at least once each month to conduct and coordinate lawful business at the Church.

5. DECISIONMAKING BY CONSENSUS

To the extent reasonably practicable, action taken by the SLT shall be by consensus of the members of the SLT and without the necessity of a formal vote. If action cannot be agreed upon by consensus, following adequate and prayerful consideration of the issue or issues before the SLT for decision and action, and reasonable debate, then and in such event action by the SLT may be effected upon a

majority vote of the SLT members present and voting, a quorum of the SLTM membership having first been established and present for the conduct of business.



ARTICLE 9: RECORDS AND REPORTS

The Capstone Church shall maintain the following records and reports in the normal and ordinary course of its business operations, viz:

1. Adequate and correct books and records of account (financial records);
2. Written minutes of the proceedings of its members, SLT and Elders;
3. A record of the members of the Church, setting forth the members' names, addresses, telephone numbers and email accounts, and
4. Contribution records and statements for contributors, with such information being kept current and available throughout the calendar year.

All such records shall be kept and maintained at the principal office of the Church and shall, with the exception of individual (or family) contribution records, be open and available for inspection by all Church members. Individual or family contribution (giving) records shall be open and available for inspection only by the person or persons who have made the contribution(s).



ARTICLE 10: CONSTRUCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Unless the context requires otherwise, the general provisions, rules of construction and definitions of the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act shall govern the construction of these Bylaws.



ARTICLE 11: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Subject to the provisions of the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act, these Bylaws or any provision of them may be altered, amended or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted, only by a vote of three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the members present at any special or regular membership meeting at which a quorum is, upon commencement thereof, present.



ADDENDUM A: INDEMNIFICATION OF ELDERS/STAFF/CHURCH

1. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this Article, the following definitions shall apply, viz:

- A. “Agent” means any person who is or was a Elder, Officer, Employee or other agent of the Church, or is or was serving at the request of the Church as a Elder, Officer, Employee or other agent of another foreign or domestic corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, or was a Elder, Officer, Employee or agent of a foreign or domestic corporation that was a predecessor corporation of the Church or of another enterprise at the request of such predecessor corporation;
- B. “Proceeding” means any threatened, pending or completed action or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, and
- C. “Expenses” include, without limitation, all attorney’s fees and any and all other expenses incurred in the defense of any claims or proceeding(s) against an agent by reason of his or her position or relationship as agent and all attorney’s fees, costs and other expenses incurred in establishing a right to indemnification under this Article and whether the claims advanced are well founded in law or in fact.

2. SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE BY AGENT

To the extent that any agent of the Church has been successful on the merits in the defense of any proceeding referred to hereinabove, or in the defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, the agent shall be indemnified against expenses actually and reasonably incurred by the agent in connection with such claim or claims. If an agent settles any such claim or sustains a judgment rendered against him or her, then the provisions on indemnification set out herein shall govern and be determinative of whether such agent is entitled to indemnification.

3. ACTIONS BROUGHT BY PERSONS OTHER THAN CHURCH

Subject to the required findings to be made pursuant to Section Five of this Article, below, the Church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party, to any proceeding other than actions brought by, or in the right of, the Church, to procure judgment in its favor, an action brought under the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act, or an action by the Attorney General of Alabama, by reason of the fact that such person is or was an agent of the Church, for all expenses, judgments, fines, settlements, and other amounts actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the proceeding(s).

4. ACTIONS BROUGHT BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH

- A. Claims Settled out of Court. If any agent settles or otherwise disposes of a threatened or pending action brought by or on behalf of the Church, with or without Court approval or approval of the Attorney General, the agent shall receive no indemnification for either amounts paid pursuant to the terms of the settlement or other disposition or for any expenses incurred in defending against the proceedings.
- B. Threatened Pending or Completed Actions Against Agent. The Church shall indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party, to any threatened, pending or completed action brought by or in the right of the Church, or brought under the Alabama Nonprofit Corporation Act, or brought by the Attorney General pursuant to such a Act, to procure a judgment in its or his favor, by reason of the fact that the person is or was an agent of the Church, for all expenses actually and reasonably incurred in connection with the defense or settlement of that action, provided that both of the following conditions are met, viz:
 - a. The determination of good faith conduct required by Section Five, below, must be made in the manner provided for in that section, and
 - b. Where the agent has actually been adjudged liable to the Church in the performance of such person's duties to the Church, unless and only to the extent that the Court in which such proceeding is or was pending, shall, upon application, determine that, in view of all of the circumstances of the case, the agent is fairly and reasonably

entitled to indemnity for the expenses incurred. If the agent is found to be so entitled, the Court shall determine the appropriate amount of such expenses or costs to be reimbursed.

5. DETERMINATION OF AGENT'S GOOD FAITH CONDUCT

The indemnification granted to an agent under Sections Three and Four of this Article are conditioned upon the following, viz:

- A. Required Standard of Conduct. The agent seeking reimbursement must be found, in the manner provided below, to have acted in good faith and in such a manner that he reasonably believed was in the best interest of the Church, and with such care, including reasonable inquiry, as an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would have used under similar circumstances. The termination of any proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith or in a manner which he or she reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the Church or that such person had reasonable cause to believe that the subject conduct was unlawful. In the case of a criminal proceeding, the person must have had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.
- B. Manner of Determination of Good Faith. The determination that the agent did or did not act in a manner complying with Section Five shall be made by:
 - a. The Elders, by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of the Elders who are not parties to the proceeding;
 - b. Approval by a majority vote of a quorum of the members, provided that persons to be indemnified are not entitled to vote thereon; or
 - c. The Court in which the proceeding is or was pending. Such a determination may be made on application brought by the Church or the agent or the attorney or other

person rendering a defense to the agent, whether or not the application by the agent, attorney or other person is opposed by the Church.

6. LIMITATIONS

No indemnification or advance shall be made under this Article, except as provided in Sections Two or Five, in any circumstances when it appears:

- A. That the indemnification or advance would be inconsistent with a provision of the Articles of Incorporation, the Bylaws, a Resolution of the members or an Agreement in effect at the time of the accrual of the alleged cause or action asserted in the proceeding in which the expenses were incurred or other amounts were paid, which prohibits or otherwise limits indemnification, or
- B. That the indemnification would be inconsistent with any condition expressly imposed by a Court in approving a settlement.

7. ADVANCE OF EXPENSES

Expenses incurred in defending any proceeding may be advanced by the Church, before the final disposition of the proceedings, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the agent to repay the amount of the advance unless it is determined ultimately that the agent is entitled to be indemnified as otherwise authorized under this Article.

8. INSURANCE

The Elders may adopt a resolution authorizing the purchase and maintenance of insurance on behalf of any agent of the Church against any liability asserted against or incurred by the agent in such capacity, or arising out of the agent's status as such, whether or not the Church would have the obligation to indemnify the agent under Alabama corporation law; provided, however, that the Church shall have no power to purchase and maintain any such insurance to indemnify any agent of the Church for intentional violation of law.

ENDNOTES

¹ On first mention, a verse will be written out in its entirety. On following references, the verse will just be listed.

² In colloquial use, the “Administrative Ministries Team (AMT)” has always been referred to as the Leadership Team or Servant Leadership Team by church members.

³ “Equipping Ministers” is the term used to describe all paid staff members. These staff members will be referenced as “paid staff members” or “staff members” in the Bylaws and elsewhere for ease of reference.

⁴ Matthew 16:18-19: And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

⁵ 1 Timothy 3:15-16: ...if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. 16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

⁶ Ephesians 1:22-23: And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:12-15: For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.

⁸ 1 Corinthians 10:17: Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

⁹ Revelation 7:9: After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 11:2: For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

¹¹ Ephesians 5:25-27: Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

¹² Ephesians 4:4-6: There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

¹³ Isaiah 43:6-7: I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.

¹⁴ 1 Peter 2:9-10: But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

¹⁵ 1 Peter 4:10-11: As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁶ Psalm 29:1-2: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:31: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

¹⁸ Isaiah 48:9-11: For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

¹⁹ Ezekiel 36:22-23: Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.

²⁰ Matthew 22:36-40: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

²¹ Luke 4:8: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

²² 1 Corinthians 3:5-9: What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

²³ 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15: And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

²⁵ Matthew 28:18-20: And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

²⁶ John 10:27: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

²⁷ Romans 10:14-17: How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

²⁸ Job 22:21-22: "Agree with God, and be at peace; thereby good will come to you. Receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart.

²⁹ Joshua 1:8: This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

³⁰ II Timothy 3:14-16: But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for

reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

³¹ James 5:16: Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

³² Colossians 3:16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

³³ Psalm 96:1-9: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

³⁴ Hebrews 10:24: And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

³⁵ Acts 2:42-47: And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

³⁶ 1 Peter 4:10-11: As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

³⁷ Romans 12:4-6: For as in one body we have many members,[e] and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. 6 Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:...

³⁸ 1 Corinthians 12:4-6: Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

³⁹ Matthew 5:14-16: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

⁴⁰ Ephesians 2:10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

⁴¹ James 1:22-25: But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

⁴² Philippians 1:6: And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

⁴³ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:10-11: But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

⁴⁵ John 3:16-18: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

⁴⁶ Martin Luther: "If he have faith, the believer cannot be restrained. He betrays himself. He breaks out. He confesses and teaches this gospel to the people at the risk of life itself."

⁴⁷ Numbers 23:19: God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

⁴⁸ Ephesians 6:18-19: ...To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints, 19 and also for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel,...

⁴⁹ Matthew 28:18-20

⁵⁰ Acts 1:8: But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

⁵¹ 2 Timothy 3:14-17: But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

⁵² Ephesians 4:15-16: Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

⁵³ Matthew 28:18-20

⁵⁴ Romans 1:16-17: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

⁵⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:11-15: Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

⁵⁶ Isaiah 7:14: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

⁵⁷ Matthew 1:18-21: Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

⁵⁸ Matthew 27:24-25: And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him.

⁵⁹ John 20:24-29: Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and

said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

⁶⁰ 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

⁶¹ 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

⁶² 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

⁶³ Matthew 10:26-33: "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

⁶⁴ Luke 14:23: And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.

⁶⁵ Mark 12:28-31: One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

⁶⁶ John Piper, "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself," delivered on May 7, 1995. "He commands, "As you love yourself, so love your neighbor." Which means: As you long for food when you are hungry, so long to feed your neighbor when he is hungry. As you long for nice clothes for yourself, so long for nice clothes for your neighbor. As you work for a comfortable place to live, so desire a comfortable place to live for your neighbor. As you seek to be safe and secure from calamity and violence, so seek comfort and security for your neighbor. As you seek friends for yourself, so be a friend to your neighbor. As you want your life to count and be significant, so desire that same significance for your neighbor. As you work to make good grades yourself, so work to help your neighbor make good grades. As you like to be welcomed into strange company, so welcome your neighbor into strange company. As you would that men would do to you, do so to them."

⁶⁷ James 2:14-18: What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

⁶⁸ Romans 13:8-10: Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

⁶⁹ John 13:34-35: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

⁷⁰ 1 Peter 4:8-11: Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

⁷¹ Colossians 3:12-14: Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

⁷² Matthew 5:43-48: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

⁷³ Galatians 2:20: I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

⁷⁴ Colossians 3:17: And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

⁷⁵ Ephesians 4:15-16

⁷⁶ Philippians 3:7-11: But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

⁷⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

⁷⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

⁷⁹ Charles Spurgeon sermon delivered in 1879: “How to Read the Bible” : “As for you, my brothers and sisters, who have not to preach, the best food for you is the Word of God itself. Sermons and books are well enough, but streams that run for a long distance above ground gradually gather for themselves somewhat of the soil through which they flow, and they lose the cool freshness with which they started from the spring head. Truth is sweetest where it breaks from the smitten Rock, for at its first gush it has lost none of its heavenliness and vitality. It is always best to drink at the well and not from the tank. You shall find that reading the Word of God for yourselves, reading it rather than notes upon it, is the surest way of growing in grace. Drink of the unadulterated milk of the Word of God, and not of the skim milk, or the milk and water of man’s word.

⁸⁰ Ephesians 4:11-24: And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Now this I say and testify in the

Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

⁸¹ 1 Corinthians 9:24-27: Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

⁸² Ephesians 3:16-19: I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

⁸³ Matthew 28:20

⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:16: ...But we have the mind of Christ.

⁸⁵ Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

⁸⁶ James 1:22-25: But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

⁸⁷ Matthew 7:24-27: "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

⁸⁸ Colossians 3:1-3: Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁸⁹ Acts 20:20: ...how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,...

⁹⁰ Colossians 1:28

⁹¹ Hebrews 10:24-25

⁹² 1 John 1:7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

⁹³ Titus 2:2-8: Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

⁹⁴ Genesis 2:5-7: When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

⁹⁵ Genesis 1:26-27: Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

⁹⁶ Psalm 96:1-3: Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

⁹⁷ Psalm 96:7-10: Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth! Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.”

⁹⁸ Psalm 66:1-5: Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you. All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.” Selah Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.

⁹⁹ Ephesians 5:17-20: Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

¹⁰¹ Ephesians 4:1-6: I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

¹⁰² 1 Corinthians 1:10: I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

¹⁰³ 1 Corinthians 15:1-8.

¹⁰⁴ 1 Peter 3:8-9: Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

¹⁰⁵ Romans 14:1: As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.

¹⁰⁶ Romans 14:4: Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

¹⁰⁷ Romans 14:7-19: For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as

evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

¹⁰⁸ 1 Thessalonians 5:8: But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

¹⁰⁹ John 13:34-35: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

¹¹⁰ John 17:26: I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

¹¹¹ 2 Timothy 3:14-17: But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

¹¹² 2 Peter 1:16-21: For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

¹¹³ Galatians 1:11-12: I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

¹¹⁴ Romans 15:4: For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

¹¹⁵ Acts 1:16: “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

¹¹⁶ Exodus 24:3-4: Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

¹¹⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1960, p. 27: “One thing must be emphatically stated. The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa—at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397—but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of these communities.”

¹¹⁸ Matt Slick, “Manuscript evidence for superior New Testament reliability”, Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry, <http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>: Less than 100 years after the last book of the New Testament was written, there are 5,686 copies (partial or full) of the New Testament in existence. The internal consistency of the New Testament documents is about 99.5 percent textually pure.

¹¹⁹ Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, 2004, pp. 225-228. “...The early church fathers — men of the second and third centuries such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and others—quoted the New Testament so much (36,289 times, to be exact) that all but eleven verses of the New Testament can be reconstructed just from their quotations....So we not only have thousands of manuscripts but thousands of quotations from those manuscripts.”

¹²⁰ Proverbs 30:5-6: Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.

¹²¹ John 5:39-40: You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

¹²² LaSor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*, p. 15. "To assure verbal precision God, in communicating his revelation, must be verbally precise, and inspiration must extend to the very words. This does not mean that God dictated every word. Rather his Spirit so pervaded the mind of the human writer that he chose out of his own vocabulary and experience precisely those words, thoughts and expressions that conveyed God's message with precision. In this sense the words of the human authors of Scripture can be viewed as the word of God."

¹²³ Clement of Rome in "First letter to the Corinthians XLV.": "Look carefully into the Scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit. Observe that nothing of an unjust or counterfeit character is written in them."

¹²⁴ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, XVII.2. "The Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and his Spirit."

¹²⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:3-8: For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

¹²⁶ 1 Thessalonians 2:13: And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

¹²⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:6,7,11: Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: ... These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

¹²⁸ According to Article X of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978, pg. 5: We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original. We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

¹²⁹ According to Article XI of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978: We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses. We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished but not separated.

¹³⁰ Psalm 12:6-7: The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times. You, O Lord, will keep them;...

¹³¹ Deuteronomy 4:1-2: "And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I command you.

¹³² Mark 13:31: Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. (Also, see the same verse in Matthew 24:35 and in Luke 21:33.)

¹³³ Isaiah 55:10-11: For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from

my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

¹³⁴ Matthew 5:17-18: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

¹³⁵ 1 Peter 1:24-25: "...for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

¹³⁶ Psalm 138:2: I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

¹³⁷ John 1:29-31: The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."

¹³⁸ Luke 24:25-27: And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

¹³⁹ Luke 24:44-48: Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

¹⁴⁰ John Piper, "Christ: The Ground and Goal of the Old Testament", preached on August 29, 2007. Christ upholds all things (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3). Therefore, all Old Testament events are possible because of Christ. Christ created all things (John 1:3, 10; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2). Therefore, all that exists in the Old Testament is because of Christ. Christ is one with God (John 10:30; 17:11, 22). Therefore, all that God does in the Old Testament Christ is involved in doing. All things were created for Christ (Colossians 1:16). Therefore, all people, things, customs, nature, and events in the Old Testament are for the glory of Christ. Christ is the end and goal of the law for righteousness to all who believe (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:24). Therefore, all Old Testament commands lead to Christ for righteousness. Christ was speaking through the Old Testament writers (1 Peter 1:10-12). Therefore, all the Old Testament is the word of Christ. All treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ (Colossians 2:3). Therefore, all Old Testament wisdom finds complete expression in Christ, the one who is wiser than Solomon (Matthew 12:41), who surpassed all the kings of the earth in wisdom (1 Kings 10:23). Christ is the final high priest (Hebrews 1:3; 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5-10; 6:20-8:1-2, 6; 9:11-12, 24; 10:11-14; 10:21). Therefore, all the atoning action of priests in the Old Testament is fulfilled through Christ and their atoning work is ended in him. Christ is himself the final atoning sacrifice (Romans 3:25; 5:9; Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 9:12-14, 25-26, 28; 10:10, 14; 13:12; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 4:10;). Therefore, all Old Testament sacrifices lead to him and end in him. Christ is greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6; John 1:14; 2:18-22; Colossians 2:9). Therefore, he is "where" we meet and have fellowship with God and see his glory. Christ is greater than Jonah (Matthew 12:41). Therefore, all the miracles of the prophets are surpassed in Christ's Jonah-like miracle of death and resurrection. Christ is preeminent in all things (Colossians 1:18; 3:11). Therefore, all greatness in the Old Testament points to and is surpassed by Christ's greatness. Christ is the Yes to all God's promises (2 Corinthians 1:20). Therefore, in him we are heirs of all the promises in Scripture. Christ is the seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). Therefore, in him we inherit the promise of Abraham. Christ is the son of David (Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:32, 69; John 7:42; Acts 2:30; 13:23; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8; Revelation 22:16). Therefore, the covenant with David is ours in him (Isaiah 55:3).

¹⁴¹ Adrian Rodgers, "A Portrait of Christ", <http://bit.ly/1o0h5WL>. Christ is the Seed of woman and in Genesis 3:15 we are told He will one day crush Satan. In Exodus we find the story of the Passover Lamb, and Christ is the sacrificial Lamb given for us. In Leviticus we read of the high priests making sacrifices for the people, and Christ has become our High Priest, making the perfect sacrifice to atone for our sins. In Deuteronomy Moses prophesied of a prophet who would come that would be greater than Himself. Jesus is that Great Prophet. In the book of Joshua, Joshua met the Captain of the Lord's host. That man is Jesus Christ. In Judges, the leaders were judges who delivered God's people, each of them typifying the Lord Jesus. Boaz, the kinsman who redeemed Ruth's inheritance, is a picture of Christ. David, the anointed one, pictures Jesus and Jesus is described as being the Son of David. In 2 Samuel when the king is being enthroned, the entire scene is descriptive of the Lord Jesus. The books of Kings speak of the glory of God filling the temple and the Chronicles describe

the glorious coming king, both referring to Jesus, the King of Kings. Ezra depicts Jesus as the Lord of our fathers. Job says clearly that the Redeemer is coming! Esther offers a picture of Christ interceding for His people. Christ appears time after time in the Psalms, including when David describes Him as "the Shepherd." Isaiah details His glorious birth. Jeremiah reveals that He will be acquainted with sorrows. Joel describes Him as the Hope of His people. Amos tells us that Jesus is the judge of all nations. Obadiah warns of the coming eternal kingdom. Jonah offers a picture of Jesus being dead for three days, then coming back to life to preach repentance. Zephaniah says that He will be the king over Israel. Zachariah is the prophet who speaks of Jesus riding on a colt. Malachi is the one who calls Him the Son of Righteousness.

¹⁴² John 5:46-47: For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

¹⁴³ Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article III, 1982: "We affirm that the Person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible. We deny that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

¹⁴⁴ Luke 24:25-27

¹⁴⁵ Luke 24:44

¹⁴⁶ Jeremiah 15:16: Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart, for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts.

¹⁴⁷ Deuteronomy 6:4-9: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

¹⁴⁸ Psalm 119:105-106: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn an oath and confirmed it, to keep your righteous rules.

¹⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 3:10-11: According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹⁵⁰ Psalm 19:7-11: The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹⁵¹ Psalm 119:89-96: Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast. By your appointment they stand this day, for all things are your servants. If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have given me life. I am yours; save me, for I have sought your precepts. The wicked lie in wait to destroy me, but I consider your testimonies. I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your commandment is exceedingly broad.

¹⁵² Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem, 73: The authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God's words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

¹⁵³ Statement adapted from the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, 1978, pg. 3.

¹⁵⁴ Psalm 119:9-16: How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes! With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

¹⁵⁵ John 17:3: And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

¹⁵⁶ 1 Timothy 1:17: To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

¹⁵⁷ 1 Kings 1:27: But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!

¹⁵⁸ Psalm 139:7-12: Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, 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. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you.

¹⁵⁹ Psalm 145:3: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

¹⁶⁰ Psalm 147:5: Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

¹⁶¹ Romans 11:33-36: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

¹⁶² Genesis 1:1-2: 1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

¹⁶³ Psalm 90:1-4: Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You return man to dust and say, "Return, O children of man!" For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

¹⁶⁴ Malachi 3:6: "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

¹⁶⁵ Numbers 23:19: God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

¹⁶⁶ James 1:17: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

¹⁶⁷ Hebrews 6:17-18: So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us.

¹⁶⁸ Romans 1:20: For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

¹⁶⁹ 1 Corinthians 8:4-6: Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "an idol has no real existence," and that "there is no God but one." For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"—yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

¹⁷⁰ Romans 8:14-17: For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁷¹ Genesis 1:1.

¹⁷² 1 Chronicles 29:10-13: Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: "Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory

and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.

¹⁷³ John 1:1-5: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

¹⁷⁴ John 1:14-18: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

¹⁷⁵ Philippians 2:5-11: Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹⁷⁶ Luke 1:26-35: In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

¹⁷⁷ John 14:8-11: Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

¹⁷⁸ Romans 3:21-26: But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

¹⁷⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:21: For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹⁸⁰ Isaiah 53:4-12: Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he

shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

¹⁸¹ 1 Peter 3:18: For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit...

¹⁸² Hebrews 9:11-12: But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

¹⁸³ Hebrews 9:15: Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

¹⁸⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

¹⁸⁵ Hebrews 7:23-25: The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

¹⁸⁶ Romans 8:32-34: He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

¹⁸⁷ John 16:7-15: Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

¹⁸⁸ Romans 8:9-11: You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus[d] from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

¹⁸⁹ Luke 12:11-12: And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

¹⁹⁰ Romans 8:26-27: Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

¹⁹¹ Psalm 139:3-6: For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

¹⁹² Genesis 1:1.

¹⁹³ Genesis 1:26-27: Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

¹⁹⁴ John 1:1-4.

¹⁹⁵ Colossians 1:15-17: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

¹⁹⁶ Jeremiah 1:4-5: Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

¹⁹⁷ Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics, Article XIV, 1982: We affirm that the biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact. We deny that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

¹⁹⁸ Luke 10:17-19: The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.

¹⁹⁹ John 8:44: You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

²⁰⁰ Revelation 12:9: And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

²⁰¹ Revelation 20:9-10: And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

²⁰² Romans 16:20: The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

²⁰³ 2 Corinthians 4:4: In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

²⁰⁴ Genesis 1:26-27.

²⁰⁵ Romans 3:10-12: as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

²⁰⁶ Luke 19:10: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

²⁰⁷ Romans 5:12-19: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

²⁰⁸ John 14:6: Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

²⁰⁹ John 3:16-19: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might

be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

²¹⁰ John 3:36: Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

²¹¹ Acts 1:9-11: And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, 11 and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

²¹² 1 Corinthians 15:4-8.

²¹³ 1 John 2:2: My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

²¹⁴ Hebrews 9:11-15.

²¹⁵ Hebrews 10:4-14: For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Consequently, when Christ[a] came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then he added, "Behold, I have come to do your will." He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ[b] had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

²¹⁶ Ephesians 2:1-9: And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

²¹⁷ Romans 10:9-11: because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

²¹⁸ Colossians 2:9-15: For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

²¹⁹ Romans 12:1-2: I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

²²⁰ Romans 6:11-14: Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members

to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

²²¹ Galatians 5:16-26: But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

²²² Ephesians 4:20-24: But that is not the way you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

²²³ 1 Peter 1:13-16: Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

²²⁴ 1 John 1:5-10: This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

²²⁵ Matthew 28:18-20.

²²⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:11-21.

²²⁷ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:35-58: But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?” You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed it its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

²²⁸ 1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18: But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

²²⁹ MATTHEW 24:29-51: Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that wicked servant says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

²³⁰ REVELATION 21:1-27: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement. The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and

the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

²³¹ REVELATION 22:1-7: Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." "And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

²³² Hebrews 9:27-28: And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

²³³ Acts 1:10-11: And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

²³⁴ 2 Peter 3:4-11: They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

²³⁵ 1 John 3:2-3: Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

²³⁶ Mark 13: 26-37: And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to stay awake. Therefore stay awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows,[c] or in the morning— lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake."

²³⁷ Ephesians 2:19-22: So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

²³⁸ Ephesians 2:10.

²³⁹ Acts 17:26-27: And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,...

²⁴⁰ 1 Peter 2:4-5: As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

²⁴¹ Acts 14:23: And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

²⁴² Titus 1:5-9: This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

²⁴³ 1 Timothy 3:1-7: The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

²⁴⁴ Hebrews 13:17: Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

²⁴⁵ James 3:1: Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

²⁴⁶ Genesis 1:27-31.

²⁴⁷ Galatians 3:25-29: But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

²⁴⁸ Genesis 2:18: Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

²⁴⁹ 1 Corinthians 11:3: But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

²⁵⁰ Ephesians 5:22-33: Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

²⁵¹ 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

²⁵² Mark 12:41-44: And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.