

**THE FUNDAMENTALS  
OF OUR FAITH**

**STUDIES ON THE 1689 BAPTIST  
CONFESSION OF FAITH**

*About the author*

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**B S POH**



**PUBLISHED BY  
GOOD NEWS ENTERPRISE**

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF OUR FAITH: Studies On The 1689  
Baptist Confession Of Faith

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ISBN: 978-983-9180-24-4

First published: May 2017

This imprint: April 2024

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New King James Version, copyright 1979, 1980, 1982 by  
Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Published by:



GOOD NEWS ENTERPRISE, 52 Jalan SS 21/2,  
Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.  
[www.rbcm.net](http://www.rbcm.net); [www.ghmag.net](http://www.ghmag.net)

Printed by:

Kindle Direct Publishing, an Amazon company, United States  
of America.

Limited copies printed by James Aries Printing Sdn. Bhd., 40  
Jalan TPK 2/5, Taman Perindustrian Kinrara, 47100 Petaling  
Jaya, Malaysia.

Typeset by the author using TeXworks, the memoir class.

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To  
my grandchildren,  
with the prayer that you will  
“hold fast the pattern of sound words...  
...in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1:13)”.



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# PREFACE

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This is a short course in systematic theology based on the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689, often referred to as “The 1689 Confession” in brief. It arose from many rounds of teaching this Confession of Faith to the churches founded, under God’s grace, since the early 1980s in Malaysia. It follows closely the chapters of the Confession of Faith, paraphrasing the content, and drawing out implications.

This manual is suitable not only for Bible Study classes in church, but also to be a textbook or workbook of basic doctrine in seminaries and colleges. It is pitched at the level of a Certificate programme, equivalent to the first year of a Bachelor degree programme. Each chapter heading is accompanied by a relevant Bible passage suitable for reading at the beginning of a class. Each paragraph is marked with relevant Bible references, some or all of which may be consulted to confirm what is taught. Each chapter ends with ten review questions to be answered in writing in a seminary/college course to reinforce the lessons. An assignment question follows, which may be answered in writing or discussed in small groups. A short memory passage is provided to round off the training, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12)”.

One who has completed the course is expected to: (i) have a clear and firm grasp of the system of doctrine taught in the Bible; (ii) be aware of the errors that have appeared with regard to the doctrines; (iii) be able to interpret and teach the Bible with confidence as guided by the 1689 Confession; (iv) be better equipped to embark on a deeper study of Systematic

## PREFACE

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Theology.

This writer acknowledges with thanks the use of quotations from the New King James version of the Bible, published by Thomas Nelson, Inc. The fellowship and prayer support of members of the Damansara Reformed Baptist Church (DRBC), the Subang Jaya Reformed Baptist Church (SJRBC), and the Grace Reformed Evangelical Church (GREC) in Hong Kong, are gratefully acknowledged. Together with his dear wife, Goody, they are thankful to God for their sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren, who are a source of comfort and strength in the midst of busyness in the ministry.

It is hoped that this manual will find a wider use among Christians of all denominations, to strengthen faith and to disciple new converts, leading to a deeper appreciation of God's word. Reformed Baptist churches would do well to teach the Confession of Faith to its members every few years. May all the tribes of Israel increase, to the glory of the chief Shepherd!

B S Poh,  
Kuala Lumpur, May 2017.



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# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE 1689 CONFESSION (Jude 3-4, 20-23)

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Jude's concern was for believers to contend earnestly for the faith and for their faith to be built up. This twofold purpose can be seen to underlie the history of the 1689 Confession of Faith.

## Why We Need The Confession

- 1 The Confession of Faith is a book of doctrine systematically arranged, in small compass. Doctrine is important because:  
(a) the Bible is basically a book of doctrine; (b) God's people grow in the faith by doctrine (Acts 2:42; 1 Pet. 2:2);  
(c) doctrine determines practice, both in the personal life and in the church. A good Confession of Faith is useful for:  
(i) defining the beliefs of a local church; (ii) defending the church against wrong teaching.
- 2 A church that values the importance of doctrine should show it in two ways: (i) Preaching and teaching God's word will be prominent in the life of the church. (ii) A good Confession of Faith will be adopted as its doctrinal basis. Of the two, the first is essential, the second highly desirable.

- 3 Isn't the Bible sufficient for the church? Isn't a simple "Statement of Faith" good enough? To have a clearly defined body of truth is not a concept foreign to the Bible, e.g. Acts 2:42; Rom. 16:17; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Thess. 3:6; 2 Tim. 2:2; Tit. 1:9; Jude 3. A "Statement of Faith", of a few points of doctrine, is good enough to show that we are a true and Evangelical church. However, it is too brief: (i) to counter errors; (ii) to define the doctrines held by the church. The Confession of Faith is not a second, nor a secondary, source of authority next to the Bible. Rather, it defines the system of doctrine we believe is taught in the Bible. The Bible is our only authority in all matters of faith and practice.

## History Of The Confession

- 1 From Pentecost (30 AD) to Constantine (272-337 AD), the church expanded despite persecution. For the next 1000 years, the Roman Catholic Church gained ascendancy, spreading superstition and human traditions. In the 16th century, the Reformation recovered the central place of the Bible to Christians, and Protestant denominations were founded.
- 2 The Reformation, which began in Continental Europe, spread to England and Scotland. In England, the state church was Anglican (Episcopal). In Scotland, the state church was Presbyterian. The Separatists (comprising the Congregationalists, General Baptists, Particular Baptists, and others) multiplied in the 17th century. The Separatists (also known as Dissenters or Nonconformists) were persecuted by the state church up to 1640.
- 3 From 1640-1660, known as the period of the Commonwealth, Britain was ruled by Parliament and led for most of the time by Oliver Cromwell. This was a period of religious toleration. The Particular Baptists produced their first Confession of Faith of 1644, consisting of 52 articles. From 1643-1648, about 120 Christian leaders were summoned by Parliament

to prepare the Westminster Confession of Faith for the whole nation, to replace Anglicanism. This did not take place for, in 1660, Charles II came to power and began another period of persecution against the Nonconformists. The Westminster Confession of Faith was adopted by the Presbyterian churches in Scotland.

- 4 From 1672, a measure of toleration was granted to Nonconformists. The Particular Baptists met to produce their second and fuller Confession in 1677, based largely on the Westminster Confession, “to convince all that we have no itch to clogge Religion with new words, but do readily acquiesce in that form of sound words, which hath been in consent with the Holy Scripture, used by others before us.” The Westminster Confession was Presbyterian – believing in rule by hierarchy of committees of church representatives, infant baptism, and mixed church membership of believers and unbelievers. The Particular Baptists differed on these issues.
- 5 A new era of liberty dawned in 1688. In 1689 thirty-seven leading Particular Baptist ministers re-issued their Confession, calling it “The Second London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689”. During the persecution in Britain in the 17th century, Christians emigrated to the Netherlands, and then to America. As America was opened up, more Christians emigrated there. In 1742, the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith was adopted by the Calvinistic Baptists of North America, and called the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.
- 6 In 1855, CH Spurgeon issued the 1689 Confession to strengthen the doctrinal position of the New Park Street Chapel in London, later known as the Metropolitan Tabernacle. After Spurgeon, there was doctrinal decline on both sides of the Atlantic. Modernism (or Theological Liberalism) attacked the authority of Scripture and destroyed many denominations. Arminianism gained the ascendancy, and “decisionism” (or “easy-believism”), altar calls, and man-centred reli-

## AN INTRODUCTION

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gion took over. Churches planted in other parts of the world by missionaries from Europe and America were largely liberal and Arminian.

- 7 From 1958, there began a revival of interest in Reformed theology. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones was mightily used of God to inspire men in UK and America to return to the old path. The Baptists were among those affected by this revival of interest in Reformed theology. A spate of publication of the 1689 Confession followed.

## Concluding Remarks

1. The 1689 Confession is the most mature of the Confessions of Faith that came out of the Reformation. Certain parts could have been better written, e.g. Chapter 20 on missions. However, it correctly expresses what we mean by “Reformed” and “Baptist”. It is not infallible. It is not our authority. It expresses the main doctrines of the Bible, which is our authority.
2. Evangelical churches that have come around to be Calvinistic and baptistic should have no problem using the 1689 Confession of Faith. It will be unwise to draw up a new Confession of Faith for ourselves. Why “reinvent the wheel”?
3. All believers will benefit from studying the 1689 Confession since it contains the main teaching of the Bible which are expressed systematically, concisely, and precisely.

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## Review Questions

1. State why doctrine is important and why the Confession of Faith is useful to the church.
2. How may we recognise a church that values the importance of doctrine?
3. State the relationship between the Confession of Faith and the Bible.
4. What happened during the Reformation of the 16th century?
5. What church groups constituted the Independents of 17th century England?
6. When was the first Baptist Confession of Faith produced, and how many articles were in it?
7. When was the the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith produced, and when was it published?
8. What was the 1689 Confession of Faith called when adopted in North America in 1742?
9. Who issued the 1689 Confession in 1855 in London?
10. Who was greatly used by God in the revival of interest in Reformed theology in recent years?

## Assignment/Discussion

What would you say to those who claim that, (i) “The whole Bible is our Confession of Faith”, or “Jesus Christ is our Creed”? (ii) “Confessions of Faith were drawn up by Western churches. We need to be indigenous churches, not western churches.”

## Memory Passage (Jude 3, 20-23)

<sup>3</sup> Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. <sup>20</sup> But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. <sup>22</sup> And on some have compassion, making a distinction; <sup>23</sup> but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

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# One

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## THE HOLY SCRIPTURES (2 Tim. 3:10-17)

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The Holy Scripture is our sole authority in all matters of faith and practice.

### 1.1 About Holy Scriptures

1 Human beings are God's creatures. It is impossible for finite (i.e. limited) creatures to know the infinite (i.e. limitless) Creator unless He reveals Himself to us. God has revealed Himself to man in two basic ways: by *natural revelation*, and by *special revelation*. Let us first consider natural revelation. God makes Himself known in His creation, which is often called "nature". He also controls all things and events, and this is known as *providence*. He has made man with a sense of right and wrong, known as the *conscience*, by which we know He is our Judge. Natural revelation, therefore, covers these three areas: creation, providence, and conscience. From natural revelation, we know that God is good, wise and powerful.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 1:19-21; 2:12-16; Psalm 19:1-3

## 1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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- 2 The knowledge of God gained from natural revelation is not sufficient to lead us to know Him as our Friend. For that, we need special revelation. God has chosen to reveal Himself at various times, in different ways, to certain people.<sup>2</sup> By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, He caused His truths to be written down by some of these people, until all that He desired man to know was finally written down.<sup>3</sup> These writings, which we call the Holy Scriptures (singular, “Scripture”, if considered together) have been compiled into a book, which we call the Bible. To be precise, the Bible contains notes, maps, and other helpful material. The Holy Scriptures, however, have been specially preserved by God for man, so that we may know Him and His will for us.
- 3 There are altogether 66 books in the Bible – 39 in the Old Testament, and 27 in the New Testament. The Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language before the coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament was written in Greek after the time of Jesus Christ. All the books of the Bible point us to Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world. Everything that we need to know about God, and His will for us, is in the Bible.<sup>4</sup> We must not add any so-called new revelation of the Holy Spirit, or the teachings of men, to the Bible. We do not accept the books commonly called the Apocrypha as scriptures.<sup>5</sup> They were added into the Bible by the Roman Catholic Church and declared to be scriptures in 1546.
- 4 Holding to “the sole authority of Scripture” means that we accept the revelation of God as *complete, sufficient, final, and perspicuous* (i.e. capable of being understood).<sup>6</sup> We need the help of the Holy Spirit to understand the Bible.<sup>7</sup> We must also apply the correct rules to interpret it. Since the Bible is God’s revelation, it cannot contradict itself. Any part that is not clear must be interpreted by other parts that are

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<sup>2</sup>Heb. 1:1

<sup>3</sup>Prov. 22:19-21; Rom. 15:4; 2 Pet. 1:19-20

<sup>4</sup>2 Tim. 3:15-17; Luke 24:27, 44

<sup>5</sup>Gal. 1:8-9; Isa 8:20; Rev. 22:18-19



clear.<sup>8</sup> Any disagreement on doctrine and practice must be settled by Scripture.<sup>9</sup> When Scripture is not our only authority, truth becomes relative. All kinds of error will begin to creep in.

- 5 There is a difference between *knowledge* and *wisdom*. Wisdom is the ability to apply knowledge well. The Bible not only gives us the knowledge of God's truths, it is able also to make us wise.<sup>10</sup> A believer will be guided by the Holy Spirit to apply spiritual truths well so as to glorify God's name.<sup>11</sup> That is true wisdom.

Do you want to be wise? Study the Bible so that you may know God, and how best to live for Him.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 1.2 Review Questions

1. Why is it impossible for us to know God by our own power?
2. Name the three areas covered by *natural revelation*.
3. Where is God's *special revelation* found today?
4. How many books are there in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament?
5. In what languages was the Bible written?

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<sup>6</sup>2 Tim. 3:16-17

<sup>7</sup>John 6:45; 1 Cor 2:9-12

<sup>8</sup>2 Pet. 1:20-21; Acts 15:15-16

<sup>9</sup>Matt. 22:29-32; Eph. 2:20; Acts 28:23; Isa. 8:20

<sup>10</sup>2 Pet. 3:16; Psalm 19:7; 119:130

<sup>11</sup>1 Cor. 2:13-16; 1 John 2:20-21; Psalm 119:97-100

## 1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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6. What do all the books of the Bible teach about Jesus Christ?
7. What else may we learn from the Bible?
8. Why do we not accept the Apocrypha as part of the Bible?
9. How may we correctly understand the Bible's teaching?
10. The Bible is able to make us wise. What is wisdom?

### 1.3 Assignment/Discussion

Show why 2 Tim. 3:16-17 is a powerful passage that teaches the sole authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice.

### 1.4 Memory Passage (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Two

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# THE TRUE GOD (Deut. 10:12-22)

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We worship the triune God revealed to us in the Scripture.

### 2.1 About God

1 The Bible reveals to us only one living and true God.<sup>1</sup> He has always existed, and was never created. The power to exist is found in Himself, not from anything or anyone outside of Himself. He is a pure spirit, who is invisible and without physical form. No one can truly understand the essence or substance of His being except Himself.<sup>2</sup> It is ridiculous for anyone to ask for visible proofs of God's existence. We cannot see the wind, but we know that it is there when it blows. We cannot see electricity flowing in a wire, yet we know that it is there when the lamp lights up. We may not have seen the President of America but we believe he is there, from news of what he is doing and saying. We do not have to see God and touch Him with our hands before we believe that He exists.

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<sup>1</sup>1 Cor 8:4-6; Deut 6:4-5

<sup>2</sup>Psalms 90:2; John 4:24; Exodus 3:14

## 2. THE TRUE GOD

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- 2 God is not a mere force, or power, or influence. He is a person, although not a human being.<sup>3</sup> He is infinite (i.e. limitless) and perfect (i.e. with no moral defect or shortcoming) in His being and character. God is powerful, immortal (i.e. incapable of dying), unchanging, holy, wise, and just.<sup>4</sup> He hates all sin, and will punish those who rebel against Him, offend Him, and break His law.<sup>5</sup> God is also loving, gracious, merciful, patient, good, and true. He forgives sinful people who sincerely turn to seek Him. He rewards those who trust and obey Him.<sup>6</sup>
- 3 In this living and true God there are three Persons – the Father, the Word or the Son, and the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> The Father did not come into existence from any other being. The Son is eternally begotten of (i.e. eternally derived from) the Father. The Holy Spirit proceeds from (i.e. comes from) the Father and the Son.<sup>8</sup> Each Person is distinct and completely God – in substance, power, and eternity (i.e. timelessness). Yet, there is only one God, who cannot be divided in His nature and being.<sup>9</sup> How this can be is beyond human comprehension, but it is a truth clearly revealed to us in the Bible. This truth is called the doctrine of *the Trinity*.
- 4 The doctrine of the Trinity is of the utmost importance to us. *Firstly*, we depend on it to understand the meaning and purpose of life. The three Persons of the Godhead relate to one another in a familiar way, showing that it is God's desire to know and to be known. Until we enter into a personal relationship with Him, life will be meaningless.<sup>10</sup> *Secondly*, the doctrine teaches us what the true God is like. He is our Creator, and we owe Him worship, service, and obedience. This

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<sup>3</sup>Exod 3:14; 1 Thess 1:9

<sup>4</sup>Gen 17:1; Isa 6:3; Mal 3:6; Rom 11:33

<sup>5</sup>Exod 34:6-7

<sup>6</sup>Heb 11:6

<sup>7</sup>1 John 5:7; Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

<sup>8</sup>John 1:14, 18; 15:26; Gal 4:6

<sup>9</sup>Exod 3:14; Mark 12:29; John 14:11; 1 Cor 8:6

we have failed to do, thus incurring His wrath. Mercy, forgiveness, and blessings can be found only in Him.<sup>11</sup> *Thirdly*, the doctrine reveals to us the God who is Father to His chosen people. An adopted son who is seeking to know his true biological father will want to be certain who he really is. Any so-called god other than the Trinity is not the one true God. The true God has revealed Himself to us in the Bible so that we may know Him personally.<sup>12</sup>

Let us seek to know the one true God, who is revealed to us in the Bible.

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## 2.2 Review Questions

- 1 State some truths about the one true God.
- 2 Why is it ridiculous to ask for visible proofs of the existence of God?
- 3 Although God is without human form, what error about Him must we guard against?
- 4 Since God is powerful, holy and just, what is His response to sin?
- 5 God is also loving, gracious and merciful. What is His response to those who seek Him?
- 6 What is the relationship of the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son?

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<sup>10</sup>Matt 17:5; Eccl 3:11

<sup>11</sup>Acts 17:29-31; Rom 3:22-24

<sup>12</sup>Rom. 8:14-16; 1 Thess 1:6, 9-10

## 2. THE TRUE GOD

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- 7 State the first reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is so important to us.
- 8 State the second reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is so important to us.
- 9 State the third reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is so important to us.
- 10 Why is the one god of any other religion not the God of the Bible?

### 2.3 Assignment/Discussion

Is seeking to know the one true God the same as worshipping a god different from what is revealed in the Scripture? What is the difference between knowing about God and having a living relationship with Him? See Acts 4:12; 17:22-31; Rom. 1:18-25.

### 2.4 Memory Passage (Exod. 34:6-7)

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

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# Three

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## GOD'S DECREE (Rom. 9:6-24)

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God's decree is His plan from eternity for everything that shall ever happen.

### 3.1 About God's Decree

- 1 A *decree* is an authoritative decision or plan which must be carried out. The decree of God is His plan from eternity for everything that shall ever happen. Since God is infinitely powerful, wise, and holy, His plan was made by His own will *freely*, without influence from anything or anyone.<sup>1</sup> This is different from the decision of man which, although made freely – without external pressure – is nevertheless influenced by people and circumstances around him.
- 2 God's decree is *unchangeable* because He is all-powerful (*omnipotent*) and all-knowing (*omniscient*). He knows the end from the beginning, and with Him there can be no unforeseen emergency or lack of ability.<sup>2</sup> Consider the laws of nature – they remain the same always. Things thrown up will always come down. The earth has been revolving around

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<sup>1</sup>Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:15, 18

### 3. GOD'S DECREE

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the sun for as long as we know it. Light will always drive away darkness. The same can be said of the laws that govern the human reason and conscience. Stealing is always wrong, in any age and any culture. A mother will naturally love her baby. A father will always be looked upon as the head of the family. People may act contrary to these laws, but they cannot change them. God has planned these laws, just as He has planned the events that occur.<sup>3</sup>

- 3 God's decree is inseparable from His *providence*, by which He controls all things and events. Since God is good, He is never the author of evil and He does not tempt man to evil. God permits evil to occur in such a way that His good purpose is accomplished.<sup>4</sup> Man is held responsible for his actions. When wicked men killed Jesus Christ on the cross, they were held responsible for their terrible sin. At the same time, God was allowing that to happen so that Christ's death would be the means of saving His people.<sup>5</sup> Since all events occur according to God's decree, there is no such thing as fate. *Fatalism* teaches that all events are predetermined, either by chance or by a god. It excludes the idea of intelligent design and good purpose. It has the effect of minimising human responsibility.
- 4 By the decree of God, a definite number of men and angels have been *chosen* to have eternal life.<sup>6</sup> God chose sinners to be saved solely out of His free grace and love, and not because of any good He has foreseen in them.<sup>7</sup> Other people are left in their sin, and will finally receive the eternal punishment that they deserve.<sup>8</sup> Those who have been chosen by God from eternity are saved by Christ's death on the cross. At God's appointed time, they will be called to faith

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<sup>2</sup>Isa. 46:10; Heb. 6:17

<sup>3</sup>Acts 15:18; Rom. 9:11-18

<sup>4</sup>Psalms 33:11; James 1:13, 17

<sup>5</sup>Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28



in Christ, by the working of the Holy Spirit in them.

- 5 The ultimate aim of God's decree is to show forth His own *glory* (i.e. honour, fame, or greatness). All creation declares God's glory. God planned for sinners to be saved in order to show forth the glory of His grace. Other people receive their due punishment in hell to show forth the glory of His justice. It is only right to give all glory to God because He is our Creator.<sup>9</sup>

Let us humble ourselves, trust in Christ, and live to God's glory.

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## 3.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is a *decree*?
- 2 What is *God's decree*?
- 3 In what way is man's free decision different from God's free decision?
- 4 Why is God's decree unchangeable?
- 5 How is God's decree related to His *providence*?
- 6 How is evil related to God's decree?
- 7 Give one clear example of how God holds man responsible for his wicked actions.
- 8 What does *fatalism* teach?

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<sup>6</sup>2 Tim. 2:19; John 13:18

<sup>7</sup>1 Tim. 5:21; Matt. 25:34; Eph. 1:5-6

<sup>8</sup>Jude 4

<sup>9</sup>Isa. 48:11; Rom. 9:22-23; Rev. 4:11

### 3. GOD'S DECREE

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9 Why is *fatalism* unsatisfying and wrong?

10 What is the ultimate aim of God's decree?

### 3.3 Assignment/Discussion

"God's decree is easily confused with fatalism." Discuss.

### 3.4 Memory Passage (Isaiah 46:9-10)

<sup>9</sup> For I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is none like Me,

<sup>10</sup> Declaring the end from the beginning,

And from ancient times things that are not yet done,

Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,

And I will do all My pleasure...'

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## Four

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### CREATION (Gen. 1:26-2:3)

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God created all things out of nothing in six literal days.

#### 4.1 About Creation

- 1 God alone existed from eternity. Everything else was created by Him. Certain things were created instantaneously and, from them, other things were created. His creation included both visible and invisible things, and all of them were very good. His creation was *complete* in six literal days.<sup>1</sup> Since God's creation was complete, we may say that He created *everything* out of nothing. After His creation, the things might multiply or change forms, but no completely new thing ever came into existence from nothing. For example, two colliding asteroids may become three or more, plants grow out of seeds, and children are born to parents. The ultimate reason why God created all things out of nothing was to show forth His glory.
- 2 Many people today believe in the so-called *theory* of evolution. Strictly speaking, it is only a *hypothesis* (i.e. an unproven opinion) or, at best, a *model*, of how things came into existence. Conclusions have been made by relying on

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<sup>1</sup>Col. 1:16; Gen. 1:31; 2:2

#### 4. CREATION

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assumptions that are questionable. It is claimed that everything began from a “primeval soup”, consisting of elementary particles and gases mixed together. But where did the original “primeval soup” come from? No answer is given. It is claimed that man evolved gradually from apes, and apes from other animals. But, strangely, no creature that lies between the existing animals have been found. Some evolutionists have had to change their “theory” and claimed that “big jumps” occurred. Then, there is the claim that radiometric dating has shown that the earth is millions of years old, when the Bible shows that it is relatively young. But the assumption has been made that the radiometric rate of decay is always constant when, in fact, it has been shown that it varies with pressure. Furthermore, assumptions have been made concerning the amount of the parent and daughter elements present in the rock when it first formed. The theory of evolution cannot be true!<sup>2</sup>

- 3 The Bible teaches that God created all creatures, each according to its kind. Variations may occur within the same kind, but there has never been any “big jump” from one kind to another. Human beings belong to the same kind, since they descended from Adam and Eve, who were created by God. Unlike animals, they were made *in the image of God*, in the sense that they had immortal (never-dying) souls that were capable of reasoning and worship.<sup>3</sup> They were given knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. They had the law of God written on their hearts. In other words, they had a true sense of right and wrong built into their soul. They had the *ability* to do what was right, at the same time that there was the *possibility* of them breaking God’s law.<sup>4</sup>
- 4 Apart from the law of God written on their hearts, they received a command not to eat of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. It was a literal tree, although we do not know

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<sup>2</sup>Rom. 1:18-21

<sup>3</sup>Gen. 1:24-31

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 2:14-15

now what kind it was. As long as Adam and Eve kept this command they were happy in their relationship with God, and had control over all other creatures.<sup>5</sup>

We will never have inner peace until we come to know the God who created us.

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## 4.2 Review Questions

- 1 From Genesis 1:2, 3, 15 name some of the things God created instantaneously from nothing.
- 2 From Genesis 1:8, 10; 2:7, 19, 21, 22 name some things that were created from those that had been created earlier.
- 3 What is the ultimate reason why God created all things?
- 4 Does the Bible teach that the earth is millions of years old?
- 5 State the three questionable assumptions made by evolutionists.
- 6 Into what categories did God create the creatures?
- 7 Who were the first pair of human beings created by God?
- 8 What is meant by God creating man *in His own image*?
- 9 State in what ways man differ from animals.
- 10 Apart from God's law written on the heart, what other command did God give to man?

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<sup>5</sup>Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6

## 4. CREATION

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### 4.3 Assignment/Discussion

How does biblical creationism affect our view of man in relation to racism, gender equality, and the sacredness of human life?

### 4.4 Memory Passage (Heb. 11:3)

<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

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# Five

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## PROVIDENCE (Acts 17:22-34)

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The doctrine of providence is important because it gives comfort and strength to the children of God.

### 5.1 About Providence

- 1 *Providence* is God's work of preserving and controlling everything He has created. This work of God extends over the physical and the spiritual realms, the things that are without life as well as the things that have life, the events that happen as well as the decisions of man. Nothing happens by chance. Otherwise, prayer will be meaningless.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 God controls the events in the world in two ways. The first way is known as *general providence*, in which means are used. These means, also known as "second causes", include: (a) the laws of nature (e.g. gravity, light, heat, electricity, etc.); (b) the decisions of men, and (c) the interaction between the decisions of men and the laws of nature (sometimes known as "the law of cause and effect"). This is God's ordinary way of controlling everything.<sup>2</sup> In the second way,

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<sup>1</sup>Isa. 46:10-11; Psalm 135:6; Matt. 5:45; 6:30; Acts 14:17

## 5. PROVIDENCE

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known as *special providence*, God controls the timing and concurrence of events to specially answer the prayers of His people or to fulfil His own will. God may also perform miracles by overruling natural laws, human decisions and circumstances as and when He pleases.<sup>3</sup> He caused the Red Sea to open up for the Israelites to cross over. The three friends of Daniel were not burned to death in the fiery furnace. Lazarus was raised up to life after being dead four days. True conversion, leading to a transformed life, is a work of special providence.<sup>4</sup>

3 We must guard against two wrong ideas about providence. One idea is known as *deism*, which teaches that God allows all things to run on their own, just like a battery-operated clock that is allowed to run on its own. In other words, God is no longer involved in the affairs of the universe.<sup>5</sup> The other wrong teaching is known as *pantheism*, which teaches that God is everywhere in the universe in such a way that anything that happens is a direct act of God. Pantheism confounds (i.e. mixes together) the Creator with the things created, and the work of creation with the work of preservation. It denies the reality of all second causes.<sup>6</sup>

4 Even the sinful acts of men are under God's control and permission. However, men are held totally responsible for their sinful actions. The holy God can never be the author or approver of sins.<sup>7</sup> In fact, God restricts and controls the sins of men so that His wise and merciful purposes are fulfilled.<sup>8</sup> In particular, He governs all things to the good of His people.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Acts 27:31, 44; Prov. 16:1; 21:1

<sup>3</sup>Hosea 1:7; Rom 4:19-21; Dan. 3:27

<sup>4</sup>Isa. 37:21-22; Dan. 9:20-23; John 15:7; Acts 10:30-31

<sup>5</sup>Psalms 50:1, 15, 16, 23

<sup>6</sup>Acts 17:24, 29

<sup>7</sup>James 1:13; 1 Cor. 10:13

<sup>8</sup>2 Kings 19:28; Psalm 76:10

<sup>9</sup>Gen. 50:20; Rom. 8:28



- 5 Those who belong to God are often left, for a time, to face various temptations and sufferings, in order to punish them for their sins, or to show them the deceitfulness of their hearts. In this way, they will be kept humble and watchful against sins, and learn to trust and obey God. They will then appreciate more the death of Christ on the cross, which was to secure their salvation and to cleanse them from all sins.<sup>10</sup> Other men are allowed to continue in their sins, so that they harden themselves more and more. Their final condemnation in hell will be because they deserve it.<sup>11</sup>

Let us be thankful to God for His providence, and seek His mercy, through faith in Christ.



## 5.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is *providence*?
- 2 Why will prayer be meaningless if things happen by chance?
- 3 What is *general providence*?
- 4 Name the *second causes*.
- 5 What is *special providence*?
- 6 How does *deism* contradict providence?
- 7 How does *pantheism* contradict providence?
- 8 Why does God restrict and control the sins of men?
- 9 Why does God often leave His people to face temptations and sufferings?

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<sup>10</sup>2 Chron. 32:25-31; 2 Cor. 12:7-9

<sup>11</sup>Exod. 8:15, 32; Isa. 6:9-10; 1 Pet. 2:7-8

## 5. PROVIDENCE

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- 10 Why should we not blame God for the sins and condemnation of other men?

### 5.3 Assignment/Discussion

Why is the doctrine of providence such a comfort and strength to Christians? See Prov. 16:1; 21:1; Isa. 37:21-22; Dan. 9:20-23; John 15:7; Acts 10:30-31.

### 5.4 Memory Passage (Neh. 9:6)

You alone are the Lord;  
You have made heaven,  
The heaven of heavens, with all their host,  
The earth and everything on it,  
The seas and all that is in them,  
And You preserve them all.  
The host of heaven worships You.

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# Six

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## SIN (Rom. 5:12-21)

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A correct understanding of sin is essential to appreciate the grace of salvation in Christ.

### 6.1 About Sin

- 1 Sin is the breaking of, or failure to keep, God's law. These have been called *the sins of commission* and *the sins of omission*. Everyone in the world sins against God.<sup>1</sup> The law of God forbids us to steal, or lie, or hate, yet we have done all these. It requires us to worship God alone, to keep Sunday special to Him, and to honour our parents, but we have not done all these. From the time we were very young we showed forth anger, hatred, selfishness, envy, pride, and many such things. The tree is bad, that is why it produces bad fruits.<sup>2</sup> Where did this sinful nature come from? How bad is this problem of sin?
- 2 Our sinful nature actually came from the first man and the first woman – Adam and Eve. God created Adam and Eve perfect, and gave them a good law. They could freely eat from every tree, except one. God warned them that they

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 3:10

<sup>2</sup>Mark 7:21-23; Matt. 7:18

## 6. SIN

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would die if they broke that law. Satan managed to tempt them to eat from the forbidden tree. By this sin, Adam and Eve fell from their original righteousness and broke fellowship (i.e. the good relationship) with God.<sup>3</sup> God made Adam the federal (i.e. representative) as well as the natural head of the human race. We have Adam as our *natural head*, since we are all descended from him by birth. Therefore, the pollution of sin is passed down from Adam and Eve to the human race. We also have Adam as our *federal head*, so that we share in his guilt. His guilt is said to be *imputed* (i.e. counted as belonging) to us.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, we are guilty because of our own sins.<sup>5</sup>

3 The corrupt nature that everyone of us is born with has been called *original sin*. Original sin affects our total person – whether it is the mind, the feelings, or our actions.<sup>6</sup> This is also known as *Total Depravity*. Since God is holy and just, while we are sinful and guilty, He is unable to keep a friendly relationship with us. Original sin actually makes us spiritually dead so that, left to ourselves, we are unable to do anything good in the sight of God.<sup>7</sup> Like a mechanical clock whose hands always move in the clockwise direction, our sinful nature inclines us always in the direction of sin. We are therefore under God's condemnation, without the ability in us to save ourselves. That is how bad the problem of sin is.

4 When a person is born again, i.e. spiritually transformed by the Holy Spirit, he still carries with him the corrupt nature during this life.<sup>8</sup> Although the Holy Spirit now inclines him to do good, his sinful nature constantly draws him away in the direction of sin.<sup>9</sup> This struggle – to do good and to do

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<sup>3</sup>Gen. 2:16-17; 3:12-13; 2 Cor. 11:3

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 5:12; 5. Eph. 2:3

<sup>6</sup>Psalm 51:5

<sup>7</sup>Eph. 2:1

evil – will not be over until the believer arrives in heaven.

- 5 We must guard against two wrong views on the human nature. *Pelagianism* teaches that every person is born with a perfect nature, like that of Adam and Eve before they sinned against God. Whether he becomes good or bad depends on the teaching he receives, and the environment that he is exposed to. Another wrong teaching is known as *Semi-Pelagianism*. It claims that the sin of Adam only affected the human nature partially. Man still has the power to cooperate with God to do what is pleasing to Him. Both the teachings arise from human logic, and are not derived from the Bible. They are also contrary to human experience.

Let us turn to Christ in faith and be saved from the awful consequences of sin!

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## 6.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is *sin*?
- 2 Where did our sinful nature come from?
- 3 What do we mean when we say that Adam is the *natural head* of the human race?
- 4 What do we mean when we say that Adam is the *federal head*?
- 5 What is *original sin*?
- 6 What does original sin do to us?

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<sup>8</sup>1 John 1:8

<sup>9</sup>Rom. 7:23-25

## 6. SIN

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- 7 When will a believer be free from the struggles with sin?
- 8 What does *Pelagianism* teach about the human nature?
- 9 What does *Semi-Pelagianism* teach about the human nature?
- 10 Give two reasons why we consider *Pelagianism* and *Semi-Pelagianism* wrong.

### 6.3 Assignment/Discussion

How widely are Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism held by people around us? Does a person need to understand the doctrine of *Total Depravity* before being saved?

### 6.4 Memory Passage (1 Cor. 15:21-22)

<sup>21</sup> For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

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# Seven

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## GOD'S COVENANT (Gal. 3:7-18)

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God deals with His people by way of covenant, in which He initiates and accomplishes their salvation by grace.

### 7.1 About God's Covenant

- 1 A *covenant* is a contract, or solemn agreement, between two or more persons. In any covenant, there are terms (i.e. promises) and conditions. A man and a woman make a covenant with each other when they get married. A house buyer and the seller make a covenant when they both sign the sale-and-purchase agreement. The Bible shows that God often deals with people by covenant. He took the initiative to make a covenant with Adam, promising him eternal life, upon the condition that he obeyed God.<sup>1</sup> This has been called *the Covenant of Works*. By his fall, Adam came under the curse of the law. Physical and spiritual death came upon him and the human race, which descended from him.
- 2 God mercifully made another covenant with man, by which He freely offers to sinners life and salvation in Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gen. 2:15-17

## 7. GOD'S COVENANT

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This covenant of salvation has been called *the Covenant of Grace*. The condition is that sinners repent of their sins and trust in Christ alone to be saved. The promises are: (a) that He will give the Holy Spirit to His chosen people to make them willing and able to believe;<sup>3</sup> and (b) that those who are saved will be reconciled to Him, and be able to enjoy all the blessings in Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

3 This Covenant of Grace is revealed through the *gospel* (i.e. “the good news”), which is the message that focuses on the person and work of Christ in saving sinners. It was first revealed to Adam in the promise of salvation by the seed (i.e. a particular descendant) of the woman.<sup>5</sup> This was a reference to the coming of Jesus Christ. It was then revealed by the system of animal sacrifices, which pointed to the need for the Saviour to lay down His life as a perfect sacrifice for His people. The prophets also spoke of the coming Saviour, who would die, and rise again from death. These various steps continued until the revelation was complete in the New Testament.<sup>6</sup>

4 The Covenant of Grace rests on another, known as *the Covenant of Redemption*, or *the eternal covenant*, which was made in eternity, between the three Persons of the Trinity.<sup>7</sup> The Son agreed: (a) to take on human nature, without sin, by being born of a woman, (b) to be born under the law, i.e. with the obligation to keep the law of God; (c) to bear the sins of God’s chosen people by dying, in their place, on the cross. The Father promised: (a) to strengthen and enable the Son by giving Him the Holy Spirit freely and fully, (b) to save the Son from the power of death and exalt Him to His right hand in heaven, (c) to give to the Son all His chosen people so that they will be saved and be exalted with

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<sup>2</sup>Rom. 3:20-21; 8:3

<sup>3</sup>Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16

<sup>4</sup>Ezek. 36:26-27; John 6:44-45

<sup>5</sup>Gen 3:15

<sup>6</sup>Heb 1:1; Luke 24:46-47



Christ throughout eternity. The Holy Spirit agreed with this arrangement, and does His work in harmony with the other Persons of the Godhead.<sup>8</sup>

- 5 The final revelation of the Covenant of Grace in the New Testament is also called *the new covenant*, in contrast to *the old covenant* of the Old Testament period. The latter was basically a covenant of works – made with Noah, Abraham, David, and Moses – to which was attached the gradual revelation of the Covenant of Grace. Anyone who has been saved since the Fall of Adam is by the grace of the Covenant of Grace.<sup>9</sup>

Do not seek salvation by any other way. Come to Jesus Christ to be saved!

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## 7.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is a *covenant*?
- 2 What is *the Covenant of Works*?
- 3 What is *the Covenant of Grace*?
- 4 Who are the parties involved in *the Covenant of Grace*?
- 5 What is the condition of *the Covenant of Grace*?
- 6 What are the promises of *the Covenant of Grace*?
- 7 What is the *gospel*?

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<sup>7</sup>2 Tim 1:9; Tit 1:2

<sup>8</sup>Isa 52:1-2; 53:10-12; Heb 13:20; 2 Thess 2:13; Tit 3:5-6

<sup>9</sup>Heb 11:6, 13; Rom 4:1-2; Acts 4:12; John 6:37-40

## 7. GOD'S COVENANT

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- 8 On what does *the Covenant of Grace* rest?
- 9 Who are the parties involved in *the Covenant of Redemption*?
- 10 What is *the Covenant of Grace* called in the New Testament?
- 11 How was *the Covenant of Grace* revealed in the Old Testament?

### 7.3 Assignment/Discussion

Presbyterians claim that the Covenant of Grace was revealed in the Old Testament by stages, or “administrations”, in which both regenerate and unregenerate people, were included. They extended the argument by claiming that the revelation of the Covenant of Grace in the New Testament must, therefore, include the children of believers, while awaiting their conversion. What are the difficulties encountered in such a view?

### 7.4 Memory Passage (Jer. 31:33)

<sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

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# Eight

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## CHRIST THE MEDIATOR (John 1:1-14)

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God has mercifully appointed a Mediator for sinners who, otherwise, will not be able to save themselves from eternal damnation for their sins.

### 8.1 About Christ The Mediator

- 1 We have become the enemies of God because of our sin against Him. We need a *Mediator*, or Peacemaker, to bring us into a good relationship with God again. The Mediator we need must be able to represent well the two parties – man and God. He must also be able to offer an acceptable payment to God for our offence against Him. God has appointed Jesus Christ as the only Mediator.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 At the time determined by the Triune God in eternity, Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. He was born to a woman from the tribe of Judah, a descendant of Abraham and David, just as has been taught in the Scriptures. The eternal Son of God took

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<sup>1</sup>Isa. 42:1; 1 Tim. 2:5

## 8. CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

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on real human nature, but without sin, because the power of the Holy Spirit was working in Mary.<sup>2</sup> Two perfect and *distinct* natures were joined together in *one* person forever. The joining of the divine and the human natures are without *conversion* (i.e. without the changing of one nature into the other), *composition* (i.e. without the mixing of the two natures together to form a different kind of nature), and *confusion* (i.e. without the characteristics of one nature being transferred to the other.)<sup>3</sup>

- 3 The Lord Jesus Christ was enabled by the Holy Spirit to fulfil the task of Mediator, which the Father had assigned to Him, perfectly. He kept the law of God perfectly despite being tempted to sin. This is known as His *active obedience*.<sup>4</sup> He then died on the cross as the perfect sacrifice, to pay the penalty of the sins of His people. This is known as His *passive obedience*.<sup>5</sup> On the third day, He rose from death with the same body in which He had suffered, and went up to heaven to intercede for (i.e. speak on behalf of) His people.<sup>6</sup> He shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.<sup>7</sup>
- 4 All God's elect (i.e. those chosen to be saved) are saved by Christ's work as the Mediator, regardless of whether they lived before the time He was born or after that.<sup>8</sup> The elect will certainly be saved because the Holy Spirit gives them understanding of the message of salvation in God's word, persuades them to believe and obey, governs their hearts according to the teaching of the word, and preserves them in the faith to the end.<sup>9</sup> God saves His people not because He foresaw any worthy deed or response of faith in them, but solely by His grace (i.e. undeserved mercy and favour.)<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Matt. 1:22-23; Luke 1:27, 31, 35

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 2:5; Phil. 2:5-11

<sup>4</sup>Gal. 4:4; Matt. 3:15

<sup>5</sup>Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 3:18

<sup>6</sup>Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rom. 8:34; Heb 9:24

<sup>7</sup>Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:9-10

God's choice of the elect for salvation has been called *Unconditional Election*. Christ's death for the redemption of the elect, and the elect alone, has been called *Limited Atonement*, or *Particular Redemption*.

- 5 As the one and only Mediator between God and man, Christ acts as Prophet, Priest, and King over His people.<sup>11</sup> As *Prophet* He reveals God, and His will, to us. As *Priest* He reconciles us to God and presents us to Him as acceptable. As *King* He rules over us and preserves us until we arrive safely in heaven. This number and order of offices (i.e. Prophet, Priest, and King) is essential to the life of the Christian and of the church.<sup>12</sup> Many Christians, and many churches, face difficulties because of not appreciating the relevance of the three offices of Christ – in that number and in that order.

Let us seek peace with God through our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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## 8.2 Review Questions

- 1 Why do we need a Mediator?
- 2 What are the qualifications of that Mediator?
- 3 How did the Son of God become the Mediator?
- 4 Explain what is meant by *without conversion*, *without composition*, and *without confusion*, as applied to the natures of Christ?

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<sup>8</sup>Heb.. 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:10-11

<sup>9</sup>John 3:8; 16:8; Rom. 8:9-14; 1 John 5:20

<sup>10</sup>Eph. 2:8-9

<sup>11</sup>Acts 3:22; Heb. 4:14; Luke 1:31-33

<sup>12</sup>John 1:18; Col. 1:21; Luke 1:74-75

## 8. CHRIST THE MEDIATOR

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- 5 How was the Lord Jesus Christ able to fulfil the task of Mediator perfectly?
- 6 What is the *active obedience* of Christ?
- 7 What is the *passive obedience* of Christ?
- 8 How were the elect before the time of Christ saved?
- 9 Why will the elect be saved certainly?
- 10 Why do we need Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King?

### 8.3 Assignment/Discussion

Jesus Christ, as Head of the church and Mediator between God and man, occupies the offices of prophet, priest and king. How do the number and order of these offices affect evangelism and the reformation of the church?

### 8.4 Memory Passage (1 Tim. 2:5)

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

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# Nine

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## FREE WILL (Eph. 2:1-5)

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Fallen man is unable to freely choose what is good in God's sight because his will is in bondage to his sinful nature.

### 9.1 About Free Will

1 God has equipped man with three basic faculties: the *mind* to understand and think, the *affection* (or heart) to feel, and the *will* to choose or decide. The sense of right or wrong arising from the interaction between these three faculties is known as the *conscience*.<sup>1</sup> The will is free to function according to man's desire or nature without anything from outside or within himself forcing him. The will of man is *free* to make choices, but is it *able* to make certain choices compared to others? *Freedom* and *ability* must not be confused.<sup>2</sup>

2 When the first man, Adam, was created, he had freedom and ability to choose and do what was good and pleasing to God. He could also choose to do wrong.<sup>3</sup> After the Fall from the state of innocence, man lost the ability to choose, and to do, any good which leads to salvation. His will, and

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 6:17; 2:14-15

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 17:12; James 1:14

## 9. FREE WILL

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the other faculties, can only function according to what his nature is like, which is sinful. His will is still free in the sense that it is not forced to choose and act contrary to his own wish. He is, therefore, not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself for conversion.<sup>4</sup> He is like a clock, whose hands are free to turn either in the clockwise or the anti-clockwise directions but only turn in the direction determined by the spring in it.

3 When God converts a sinner, He frees him from his natural bondage to sin. By grace alone, He enables him freely to choose and to do what is spiritually good.<sup>5</sup> However, due to remaining corruptions, he is unable to *perfectly* and *always* decide to do good. His will is free, but its ability to do what is good in God's sight is still limited, although vastly improved.<sup>6</sup> The will of man will be made perfectly and permanently able to do good only when he arrives in heaven.<sup>7</sup>

4 Many Christians confuse *freedom* with *ability*. They claim that man must be able to freely choose. Otherwise, he cannot be held responsible for his sins. This means that the will of man is somehow not affected by sin. The practice of "the altar call" in gospel meetings is based on this belief. However, the will is a faculty of the person, and not something detached from him. It can function only according to what the person's nature is like. Also, it cannot function independently of the mind and the affection. Since the person's nature is sinful, the will is under bondage to sin. The man is still responsible for his actions, since no one forces him to act the way he does. He makes his choices according to what his mind knows and what his affection likes. His ac-

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<sup>3</sup>Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 3:6

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:1-5; Jer. 13:23

<sup>5</sup>Eph. 2:1-5; Tit. 3:3-5

<sup>6</sup>Rom. 7:21; Eph. 4:13

<sup>7</sup>2 Pet. 3:13



tions flow from his own wishes and desires.<sup>8</sup>

- 5 To avoid confusion, it is better to say that man is a free agent, whose will is enslaved to sin. We then say that we believe in *free agency*, and not *free will*, if by “free will” is meant that the will has the ability to act independently of the person’s nature and other faculties.<sup>9</sup>

Why not plead with God to save you from your bondage to sin?

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## 9.2 Review Questions

- 1 Name the three basic faculties of man.
- 2 What is the *conscience*?
- 3 What does *free will* mean?
- 4 What happened to man’s will after the Fall?
- 5 What happens to man’s will when God converts him?
- 6 What is the mistake made by many Christians regarding the human will?
- 7 Why is the human will unable to choose the things that are pleasing to God?
- 8 Why is man still responsible for his actions?
- 9 What is the better way of describing man and his will?
- 10 What definition of *free will* do we not believe in?

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<sup>8</sup>Rom. 3: 10; John 6:44; James 1:14

<sup>9</sup>Jer. 13:23; John 6:44

## 9. FREE WILL

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### 9.3 Assignment/Discussion

Why is the altar call contrary to Calvinism and harmful to the gospel?

### 9.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 7:22-25)

<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

<sup>23</sup> But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

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# Ten

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## EFFECTUAL CALLING (Eph. 1:3-14)

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In effectual calling, the Holy Spirit applies the gospel to the elect by transforming his nature so as to convince, convict, and convert him, from a life of sin to faith in Jesus Christ.

### 10.1 About Effectual Calling

1 Those who have been chosen by God to be saved (i.e. the *elect*) will be spiritually united to Christ in His appointed time.<sup>1</sup> This is achieved by the Holy Spirit who works directly upon them when they hear or read the word of God. The Holy Spirit works upon all their faculties: (a) He enlightens their minds to understand the things of God; (b) He makes their hearts tender and responsive to the truth; (c) He renews their wills and causes them to desire and pursue the things that are good.<sup>2</sup> The Holy Spirit draws them to trust in Jesus Christ in such a way that they come absolutely freely, being made willing by God's grace.<sup>3</sup> This work of the Triune God in bringing sinners out of darkness to light, and giving them eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, is

## 10. EFFECTUAL CALLING

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known as *effectual calling*.

- 2 This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not on account of anything foreseen by God in man. Man is totally passive in the matter.<sup>4</sup> He is spiritually dead until made alive by the Holy Spirit. This change in the soul, accomplished by the Holy Spirit, is known as *regeneration*.<sup>5</sup> By this he is enabled to respond to the call of the gospel. The certainty of the elect coming to faith in Christ by the drawing of the Holy Spirit has been called *Irresistible Grace*. (Looked at from the point of cause-and-effect, *effectual calling* is the effect, while *Irresistible Grace* is the cause.) The response of the elect may be instantaneous but, more often, it is protracted (i.e. drawn out over time). The response is the *effect* of regeneration, not the *cause*, or *contribution*, to it. This enabling power is like the power which raised up Christ from death. It is wholly the work of God.<sup>6</sup>
- 3 The effectual call is different from the *external call*, which is the word of God preached to all men regardless of who they may be. It is the duty of the Christian to preach the gospel to all since that is the command of God.<sup>7</sup> We may know who are chosen by God only after they are effectually called. Those who are not chosen by God may experience a degree of understanding and conviction by the hearing or reading of the word of God, but they will not and cannot truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved.<sup>8</sup> It is important not to assume that a person is saved simply because he shows some signs of conviction.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 8:30

<sup>2</sup>Eph. 1:17-18; Ezek. 36:26, 27; Eph. 1:19

<sup>3</sup>Psalms 110:3; John 10:27

<sup>4</sup>2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 2:8

<sup>5</sup>John 3:8; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:5

<sup>6</sup>Eph. 1:19-20

<sup>7</sup>Matt. 28:18-20; 22:14

<sup>8</sup>Heb. 6:4-5; John 6:44-45, 65

<sup>9</sup>2 Cor. 7:10; 13:5

## 10.2. Review Questions

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- 4 Since faith in Christ is alone the way to be saved, those who have never heard the gospel and those who follow other religions cannot be saved, however diligently they frame their lives according to their understanding and the requirements of their religions.<sup>10</sup> This is a hard truth to accept, but we must submit to it and work hard at sending the gospel to those who are perishing in their sin.
- 5 What about infants who die and those who are mentally handicapped? Will they perish in their sin? What we can say for certain is that the elect among them are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works powerfully when, where, and how He pleases.<sup>11</sup> God is all-wise, and He will do right.<sup>12</sup>

Plead with God to save you! Turn to Christ in faith!

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## 10.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is *effectual calling*?
- 2 How does the Holy Spirit work in a person who is effectually called?
- 3 What is *regeneration*?
- 4 What does *regeneration* accomplish for the man?
- 5 What is the *external call*?
- 6 When may we know who are chosen by God?

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<sup>10</sup>Acts 4:12; John 4:22

<sup>11</sup>John 3:3-6, 8

<sup>12</sup>Gen 18:25

## 10. EFFECTUAL CALLING

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- 7 Why is it important not to assume that a person is saved simply because he shows signs of conviction?
- 8 Why can't those who have never heard the gospel and those who follow other religions be saved?
- 9 Are all infants who die and the mentally handicapped saved?
- 10 How are elect infants saved?

### 10.3 Assignment/Discussion

Discuss the merits and demerits of believing that all infants who die in infancy are elect and, therefore, saved, taking into consideration passages such as 2 Sam. 12:23; 1 Kings 14:13; Luke 18:15-17.

### 10.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 9:16)

<sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

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# Eleven

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## JUSTIFICATION (Tit. 3:4-7)

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A person who repents and believes in Jesus Christ is, at that instant, justified before God.

### 11.1 About Justification

- 1 *Justification* is a legal term. It is the declaration of a judge that the accused is not guilty. The accused is accepted as righteous, instead. The teaching of the Bible is that God planned from eternity the justification of His people, Christ died and rose again for their justification, and they are actually justified upon faith in Christ. That God decreed the justification of His people from eternity is not difficult to understand. If He planned for the salvation of His people from eternity, that salvation would include justification.<sup>1</sup> This should not be confused with the “eternal justification” taught by men like John Gill, John Brine, and Abraham Kuyper, who claimed that God pronounced the elect righteous before the foundation of the world.
- 2 The *ground* (or reason) for justification is the righteousness of Christ. To *impute* is to reckon to, to ascribe to, to count as. Justification is achieved by God imputing to the believer

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<sup>1</sup>Gal. 3:8; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rom. 8:30

## 11. JUSTIFICATION

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the two aspects of Christ's righteousness, namely, His *active obedience* to the whole law and His *passive obedience* in death.<sup>2</sup> Christ's righteousness is not infused or absorbed into the person. Rather, it is considered his legally so that he is pardoned and regarded as righteous.

- 3 The *means* (or instrument) of justification is faith in Christ. The person who is effectually called will repent of his sins and trust in Christ for salvation. He is personally justified when the Holy Spirit applies Christ to him, giving him faith.<sup>3</sup> A *double imputation* takes place. First, the person's sins are regarded as taken away by Christ on the cross. Second, Christ's righteousness is regarded as given to him. In that way, his sins are forgiven by God and He is accepted as righteous by God.<sup>4</sup> Repentance and faith are not produced by the person. Instead, they are gifts of God.<sup>5</sup>
- 4 This faith is never alone in the person justified but is accompanied by all the other graces (or qualities) of a true Christian, e.g. love, joy, peace, gentleness, self-control.<sup>6</sup> The person will be full of loving gratitude to God. He will humbly live to please God. He will love to make God known to others. The person is not justified by good works, but good works will be the evidence that he is "justified by grace through faith". The doctrine of "justification by faith, in Christ, alone" has been called "the article by which a church stands or falls". It is the core of the gospel.<sup>7</sup> The Roman Catholic Church errs by perverting this teaching.
- 5 Justification is a once for all act by which the elect receive forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, from God.<sup>8</sup> The teaching of Karl Barth (1886-1968), an influential Neo-Orthodox theologian (emphasising subjective experience over against ob-

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<sup>2</sup>Phil. 3:8-9

<sup>3</sup>Tit. 3:4-7

<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24

<sup>5</sup>Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:17; Acts 11:18

<sup>6</sup>Gal. 5:6, 22; James 2:17-26

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 3:28; 1 Cor. 2:2; Gal. 1:6-9



jective truth), is that justification is not a once for all act but goes hand-in-hand with sanctification. In this, he is followed by the modern view of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP). The right teaching is that all sins – whether past, present, or future – are forgiven when the elect are justified. They can never lose their justification but they may fall under God’s fatherly displeasure because of their sins.<sup>9</sup> When that happens God will withdraw His smile and blessings from them, and chastise them by various trials, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, ask for pardon, and renew their walk of faith with Him. The believers in the Old Testament period were justified in the same way, although their faith was upon the Saviour who had yet to come.<sup>10</sup>

Don’t trust your own righteousness. Seek peace with God through Christ alone!

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## 11.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is the basic meaning of *justification*?
- 2 When did God decree the justification of His people?
- 3 What is the *ground* of justification?
- 4 What two aspects of Christ’s righteousness are imputed to His people?
- 5 What is the *means* of justification?
- 6 When is a person personally justified?

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<sup>8</sup>Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:7-9; John 10:28

<sup>9</sup>Ps. 89:31-33; Heb. 12:5-11

<sup>10</sup>Gal. 3:9; Rom. 4:22-24

## 11. JUSTIFICATION

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- 7 Explain “double imputation”.
- 8 State the relationship between justification and good works.
- 9 What has the doctrine of justification by faith been called?
- 10 State the nature of justification as opposed to the wrong views of Karl Barth and the NPP.

### 11.3 Assignment/Discussion

Contrast “justification by faith” and “justification by works” in the experience of Paul in any of these passages: Rom. 6:15-7:6; Gal. 3:10-29; Col. 2:11-23; Phil. 3:1-11.

### 11.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 3:21-24)

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

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# Twelve

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## ADOPTION (Rom. 8:14-17)

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The doctrine of adoption is precious to the Christian, but insufficiently taught in churches.

### 12.1 About Adoption

1 A person who is truly converted (i.e. changed by the Holy Spirit to trust in Christ) will not only be justified by God but also be adopted as His son or daughter.<sup>1</sup> *Adoption* is the transfer of one's relationship in one family into another. Before conversion, we live in spiritual darkness, under the power of Satan. We are also under God's wrath (or holy anger) because of our sins against Him.<sup>2</sup> When converted, we are transferred into the kingdom of God and enjoy all the freedom and privileges of the children of God. God our Judge not only declares us no more guilty, but takes us to be His children!<sup>3</sup>

2 Like justification, our adoption into the family of God is legal in nature. God's name is regarded as written on us and we receive the Holy Spirit who is the seal, or guarantee, of our

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<sup>1</sup>John 1:12; Gal. 4:4-5

<sup>2</sup>John 8:44; Eph. 2:1-2

<sup>3</sup>Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:13

## 12. ADOPTION

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salvation.<sup>4</sup> A document that is legally sealed (or stamped) is binding. The adopted child cannot be deprived of his rights and privileges. So also, nothing can cut us off from God's love, or take away our rights and privileges as God's children.<sup>5</sup>

- 3 One great privilege is that we may draw near to God boldly and call Him "Father".<sup>6</sup> Indeed, this is a sign that we have become true Christians – the ability to call upon God sincerely from our heart, "Father!" The sonship that belongs to believers must not be confused with the unique sonship of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> Christ's sonship is due to eternal generation by the Father. Our sonship is due to a change in our status, at God's appointed time. Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, we are adopted sons of God. Nevertheless, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our God and Father. We share the same God and Father, Christ is now our elder brother, and we have become joint-heirs with Christ.<sup>8</sup>
- 4 God takes special care of His children – protecting them, providing for them, chastening them when they sin against Him, and ensuring that they arrive safely in heaven.<sup>9</sup> This does not mean that we should become lazy or careless. Rather, we are to work hard, and take all necessary precautions to preserve and protect ourselves, while praying to, and trusting in, God. As the children of God we have the duty to live a holy life, in obedience to His word.<sup>10</sup>
- 5 We reject the idea that God is the Father of all men, which is often expressed as "the fatherhood of God" and "the brotherhood of men". It is true that God is the Creator of all, and He causes His blessings to be enjoyed by all (e.g. sunshine,

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<sup>4</sup>Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22

<sup>5</sup>Rev. 3:12; Rom. 8:15, 38-39; Heb. 13:5

<sup>6</sup>Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18

<sup>7</sup>John 1:14; 2 Cor. 6:17-18

<sup>8</sup>John 20:17; Mark 3:34-35; Rom. 8:17

<sup>9</sup>Prov. 14:26; Zech. 2:8; Matt. 7:11; Heb. 12:6; John 10:28

<sup>10</sup>Heb. 1:14; Rom. 8:12-14; 1 Pet. 1:13-17

rain, civil government).<sup>11</sup> However, since the Fall of man, the relationship between God and man can no longer be likened to that of father and son.<sup>12</sup> From the Bible's point of view, the terms "father", "son", and "brother" belong to the intimate family relationship of those who are in Christ.<sup>13</sup>

What a great privilege to be adopted by God! Come to Christ in faith!

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## 12.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is *adoption*?
- 2 What are we like before conversion?
- 3 What happens to us after conversion?
- 4 State the two things we receive when we are adopted by God.
- 5 What is one great privilege we have when adopted?
- 6 What is the difference between Christ's sonship and our sonship?
- 7 What is our relationship to Christ when we are converted?
- 8 How does God take special care of His children?
- 9 What is our duty as the children of God?
- 10 Why do we reject the idea that God is the Father of all men?

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<sup>11</sup>Acts 17:26-29

<sup>12</sup>Matt. 5:45; John 8:42-45

<sup>13</sup>1 John 3:1-2, 10; John 20:17; Mark 3:34-35

## 12. ADOPTION

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### 12.3 Assignment/Discussion

How would the doctrine of adoption help Christian families when they adopt other children?

### 12.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 8:15-17)

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

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# Thirteen

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## SANCTIFICATION (Rom. 7:13-25)

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It is important to be clear on the doctrine of sanctification as there are conflicting teachings on this subject.

### 13.1 About Sanctification

- 1 We have learned that *effectual calling* is the work of God in saving sinners by the power of the Holy Spirit through the hearing or reading of His word.<sup>1</sup> We have learned also that the person who is effectually called will be regenerated, i.e. given spiritual life by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Once regenerated, the dominion (or reign) of sin over the person's life is destroyed. However, the person is not made perfect immediately. The continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the person, gradually making him holier, is known as *sanctification*.<sup>2</sup> Unlike *justification*, which is the once for all act of God declaring the person not guilty but righteous, sanctification is a process that will last the lifetime of the person on earth.

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 10:17; Gal. 3:2

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 6:14; 1 John 1:7-10

### 13. SANCTIFICATION

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- 2 The Holy Spirit convicts the person of his sins, by the word of God. He will also give the person the desire, and the ability, to fight against those sins.<sup>3</sup> Remaining corruptions will resist the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. Often, there is a severe struggle. Increasingly, the lusts of the body will be weakened and be put to death.<sup>4</sup> This must not be confused with the efforts of an unconverted person to live a moral life, through sheer discipline and exertions of the will. Such efforts can improve the behaviour of the person to some extent, but they cannot change his nature. Sanctification is a supernatural work of God, the effects of which are far deeper and more thorough than can be achieved by mere human efforts. We see now that sanctification is totally the work of God, which at the same time involves the efforts of man.<sup>5</sup>
- 3 Sanctification affects the whole of the person, and not just some, or most, parts of him.<sup>6</sup> A Christian cannot excuse himself for certain sins in his life – such as a bad temper, or gluttony – by saying that he is born that way. The Holy Spirit will continually supply strength to him to resist those sins. The believer, on his part, must attend to *the means of grace*, i.e. the means which God provides for their spiritual growth. These include reading and hearing the word of God, getting baptised, taking part in the Lord's Supper, praying individually and together with other believers, and being in fellowship with other Christians.<sup>7</sup> The Christian grows in grace and holiness as he obeys the commands of Christ more and more, submitting to Him as Lord.<sup>8</sup>
- 4 There are two errors which we must guard against. Firstly, there is *Perfectionism* which teaches that it is possible for believers to be free from sin in this life. This error has the

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<sup>3</sup>Rom. 8:13-14; Gal. 5:17

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 7:23; 6:14

<sup>5</sup>2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Phil. 2:12-13

<sup>6</sup>1 Thess. 5:23

<sup>7</sup>Col. 1:10-11; 2 Tim. 2:22; Heb. 10:24-25

<sup>8</sup>2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 7:1



effects of lowering the standard of holiness set by the Bible, and limiting the idea of sin to conscious wrong-doings only.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, there is the *higher life* or *victorious life* view of sanctification, which is a particular form of *Perfectionism*. It teaches that by a definite act of faith and commitment to Christ, one can achieve instantaneous sanctification. It fails to take into consideration the clear teaching of Scripture that faith and commitment to Christ is not something passive, but involve habitual trust and obedience, constant prayer and hard work.<sup>10</sup>

Seek to live a holy life, by trusting and obeying Jesus Christ!

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## 13.2 Review Questions

- 1 What happens to the dominion of sin when a person is re-generated?
- 2 What is *sanctification*?
- 3 State one difference between *justification* and *sanctification*.
- 4 State the three things the Holy Spirit does to the person who is being sanctified.
- 5 What is man's role in relation to God's role in sanctification?
- 6 Why can't a Christian excuse himself for certain sins in his life?
- 7 State the different *means of grace* used by God to help the believer in sanctification.

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<sup>9</sup>Rom. 3:25; 1 John 1:7-10; Heb. 12:14

<sup>10</sup>Rom. 8:13-14; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:29

## 13. SANCTIFICATION

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- 8 Name the two errors we must guard against with respect to sanctification.
- 9 What are the harmful effects of the first error?
- 10 What is the Bible's teaching on faith and commitment to Christ?

### 13.3 Assignment/Discussion

What are the similarities and differences between the views of sanctification as taught by John Wesley, the Keswick Convention, and Watchman Nee? At what points do they differ from the view taught in the 1689 Confession?

### 13.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 8:12-14)

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

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# Fourteen

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## SAVING FAITH (Rom. 10:14-17)

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Do you have *saving faith*? It will be tragic to discover on the last day that your faith does not save.

### 14.1 About Saving Faith

- 1 The word *faith* means a belief in things not seen based on the testimony of others. A person who believes in the so-called “theory of evolution” has a faith that is based on the testimony of scientists. The followers of various religions have a faith that is based on the teaching of their parents and teachers. Not all faiths lead to eternal life. The faith of the elect (i.e. those chosen to be saved) is a gift from God, produced by the Holy Spirit in them when they read or hear the word of God.<sup>1</sup> This faith is increased and strengthened by the *means of grace*, e.g. the reading and hearing of God’s word, prayer, etc.<sup>2</sup>
- 2 Unlike atheists (those who do not believe that God exists) and agnostics (those who do not know if there is a God),

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<sup>1</sup>Eph. 2:8; Rom. 10:14-17

<sup>2</sup>Luke 17:5; 1 Pet. 2:2; Acts 20:32

## 14. SAVING FAITH

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there are those who claim to be Christians but actually have a *historical* (or *intellectual*) faith. They accept the Bible as God's word, and agree with its teaching, but only in an intellectual way. They have never been convicted with a sense of guilt over their sins, and do not trust in Christ for salvation. Such people may appear morally upright when, in reality, they are full of self-righteousness. Their lives do not show love for the Lord Jesus Christ, and they have no concern to glorify God. A historical faith does not save. It is described as *dead*.<sup>3</sup>

- 3 There are others who only have a *temporary* faith. They might have pangs of remorse over their behaviour or actions, fear the day of judgement, and make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, but only for a period of time. Theirs is a case of "the sorrow of the world" which "produces death". Judas Iscariot showed this type of remorse for sin.<sup>4</sup> There are others who appear to be true believers, showing signs of spiritual growth, but ultimately return to their old ways of life. They finally die as unbelievers. Their temporary faith is illustrated by the Lord in the Parable of the Sower, in which some seeds fell on stony ground and grew for only a short time, while some grew on good ground but became choked by thorns.<sup>5</sup>
- 4 *Saving faith* may be defined as a gift of God by which a sinner trusts in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, as He is revealed in the Bible. The person who has this faith will trust in Christ, the Son of God, alone as his Saviour. He will believe that Christ's death on the cross alone is the means by which his sins are paid for to secure God's forgiveness.<sup>6</sup> His *mind* is convinced of the truth of the gospel, his *heart* is convicted of his own guilt before God, and his *will* acts in repentance from sin and faith towards Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> Such a

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<sup>3</sup>Acts 24:14; James 2:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:10

<sup>4</sup>2 Cor. 7:10; Matt. 27:3-5; 2 Pet. 2:21-22; John 17:2

<sup>5</sup>Matt. 13:3-9, 20-22

person will have a hunger for God's word, live a righteous life, and show love for fellow believers.<sup>8</sup>

- 5 Although the faith of true believers is frequently under attack by trials and doubts from the devil, it will ultimately have the victory.<sup>9</sup> It will grow to full assurance in many believers since Christ is the author and finisher of our faith.<sup>10</sup>

Have you true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ?

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## 14.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is *faith*?
- 2 How does God give faith to the elect?
- 3 How is this faith increased and strengthened?
- 4 What is *historical/intellectual faith*?
- 5 What is *temporary faith*?
- 6 How may we define *saving faith*?
- 7 How is the *mind* affected when there is saving faith?
- 8 How is the *heart* affected when there is saving faith?
- 9 How is the *will* affected when there is saving faith?
- 10 Why will assurance of salvation grow in true believers?

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<sup>6</sup>Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:2; 2 Pet. 1:1

<sup>7</sup>Acts 20:21; Rom. 6:17; 1 Thess. 1:9

<sup>8</sup>Rom. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 1 John 4:7-11

<sup>9</sup>Eph. 6:16; 1 John 5:4-5

<sup>10</sup>Col. 2:2; Heb. 6:11-12; 12:2

## 14. SAVING FAITH

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### 14.3 Assignment/Discussion

Why is the assurance of salvation important to the Christian? What may cause it to be shaken? How may we grow in assurance?

### 14.4 Memory Passage (Eph. 2:8-9)

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

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# Fifteen

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## REPENTANCE (2 Cor. 7:8-12)

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Saving faith will be accompanied by genuine repentance from sin.

### 15.1 About Repentance

- 1 To be saved from sin, and eternal punishment by God, a person must respond to the call of the gospel (i.e. the message of salvation in Christ). This response consists of two aspects, viz. *repentance* and *faith* which, together, is known as *conversion*. There can be no saving faith without repentance, and there can be no saving repentance without faith in Christ.<sup>1</sup> These are the two sides of the same coin. That is why repentance must be preached, and not just faith in Christ. Just as saving faith is a gift of God, saving repentance is also a gift of God.<sup>2</sup>
- 2 What exactly is *repentance* that leads to salvation? It consists of three elements: (i) a *knowledge* of one's own guilt and sin against God; (ii) a *conviction* of one's filthiness and inability to save oneself; and (iii) a *decision* to turn from the life of sin to trust and obey the Lord Jesus Christ. As with faith,

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<sup>1</sup>Tit. 3:2-5; Acts 20:21

<sup>2</sup>Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25

## 15. REPENTANCE

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the total personality is involved – the mind, the affection (or heart), and the will.<sup>3</sup> In faith, the focus is upon Christ. In repentance, the focus is upon the sinner. Conversion takes place when the person turns from himself to trust and follow Christ.

- 3 As a general rule, the greater is the sense of guilt and shame in the sinner, the clearer will be his turning to trust in Christ and the greater will be his love for Him.<sup>4</sup> Saving repentance, however, must be distinguished from *worldly sorrow*. A person may feel strong remorse and attempt to make up for his wrongs, but if there is no change in his person, and no trust in Christ, it is not a repentance that saves.<sup>5</sup> In genuine repentance, the conviction of guilt and shame might be short or prolonged, leading to prayer for pardon and desire to live a life pleasing to God.<sup>6</sup> A person born and raised under the sound of the gospel might not have as sharp a change, or as dramatic a conversion, as one from a pagan family – but change there will be. One who has passed over the peak of the mountain, as it were, would know it even if the mountain is not a steep one.
- 4 The best of Christians may fall into great sins because of the power and deceitfulness of indwelling corruption, and of the temptations around them. God has mercifully provided, in the Covenant of Grace, for their restoration when they fall, through repentance.<sup>7</sup> They will need to seek pardon from God and cleansing by the blood of Christ, for all their sins. Repentance is therefore to be continued throughout life, and not just at the beginning of the Christian life. God will never allow any of His children to be lost. That is another reason why repentance must be constantly preached, and not just faith in Christ.

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<sup>3</sup>Rom. 3:20; Psalm 51:17; Acts 26:18; Rom. 6:17

<sup>4</sup>Ezek. 36:31; Luke 5:8; 1 Tim. 1:15

<sup>5</sup>2 Cor. 7:10; Matt. 27:3-5; Luke 18:23

<sup>6</sup>Acts 9:9, 17-19; 26:18; Psalm 119:6, 128

<sup>7</sup>1 John 1:8-9; Heb. 12:7-11; Rom. 6:23



- 5 The *Roman Catholic* view of repentance is that the sinner must confess his sins to a priest and do penance, i.e. some prescribed acts of punishment upon himself. The teaching of the Bible is that we confess our sins to God, and to those whom we have offended. We repair the wrong done to the persons as best as we can, and trust in Christ our High Priest for our forgiveness by God.<sup>8</sup> The *Arminian* view of repentance and faith is that these are acts arising from the sinner's own ability which cause God to save him. The will of the person is regarded as free and not bound by sin. The teaching of the Bible, however, is that our will is in bondage to sin. The Holy Spirit must transform us before we can live right before God.<sup>9</sup>

Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved!

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## 15.2 Review Questions

- 1 What must a sinner do to be saved?
- 2 Name the two aspects of *conversion*.
- 3 Why must *repentance* be preached, and not just *faith* in Christ?
- 4 State the three elements of *repentance*.
- 5 What is similar about *repentance* and *faith*?
- 6 What is different between *repentance* and *faith*?
- 7 What is generally true about guilt and shame in a person who is saved?

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<sup>8</sup>Psalm 51:4; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Luke 19:8; Heb. 2:17

<sup>9</sup>John 6:44; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 2:25

## 15. REPENTANCE

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8 How is *worldly sorrow* different from saving repentance?

9 Give another reason why *repentance* must be constantly preached.

10 Name the two wrong views on *repentance*.

### 15.3 Assignment/Discussion

In the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20, we are commanded to “make disciples of all the nations”. How does this relate to repentance and faith?

### 15.4 Memory Passage (1 John 1:8-9)

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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# Sixteen

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## GOOD WORKS (Eph. 2:4-10)

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Good works should characterise those who have true faith.

### 16.1 About Good Works

1 Justification is by faith alone, but the faith that saves will result in works of piety and mercy.<sup>1</sup> Such “good works” are acts of devotion to God or compassion for man, arising from faith in Christ.<sup>2</sup> How may we characterise such good works? *Firstly*, they must be works that are commanded by God in the Bible.<sup>3</sup> Anything that does not find its warrant (or authority) in the Bible is not regarded as a good work, even if it is done with great zeal and sincerity, e.g. going on pilgrimages, confessing sins to priests, erecting religious images, etc. *Secondly*, they must be done out of a heart of obedience to God.<sup>4</sup> Only those who have a true and living faith can obey God joyfully and out of love for Him. *Thirdly*, they must be done with the ultimate aim of glorifying God.<sup>5</sup> Anything done merely to please men or to gain the praise of

## 16. GOOD WORKS

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men is not a good work.

- 2 It is obvious that the ability to do good works does not come from the Christian himself, but from the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> When first converted, the believer is enabled by the Holy Spirit to repent of sins and trust in Christ. After conversion, the believer continues to need the power of the Holy Spirit to live to please God. This does not mean that the believer may remain passive until moved by the Holy Spirit to do what is right. Rather, he has a duty to diligently stir up the grace of God that is in him.<sup>7</sup> The church should be involved in good works without compromising the gospel.<sup>8</sup>
- 3 We must guard against two errors. *Firstly*, we must not think that any Christian can do more good works than is required to satisfy God.<sup>9</sup> The most obedient Christian still falls far short of his duty to God. It is, therefore, not possible for any of his excess merits to be transferred to other people, for he has none. The Roman Catholic Church, however, teaches that some exceptional Christians have been able to do that. *Secondly*, we must not think that our good works have earned pardon of sin or eternal life from God.<sup>10</sup> That is simply impossible because of the following: (i) Our best works are greatly inferior to the glory of heaven and will never be able to make up for our sins against the infinitely holy God; (ii) When we have done our very best, we have only done our duty, and are still unworthy servants of God; (iii) We cannot claim any credit for whatever good works because they originate from the Holy Spirit; (iv) Even then,

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 3:30; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; James 2:20

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 23:23 cf. Matt. 6:1, 5, 16; Luke 2:37; Eph. 2:10; Gal. 2:10; Tit. 3:8, 14

<sup>3</sup>Mic. 6:8; Heb. 13:21

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 6:17-18; Eph. 2:10; Heb. 11:6

<sup>5</sup>1 Cor. 10:31; Matt. 6:2-5; Phil. 1:11

<sup>6</sup>John 15:4-5; 2 Cor. 3:5

<sup>7</sup>Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 6:11-12

<sup>8</sup>Tit. 3:8, 14; Matt. 5:13, 14, 16; 6:3; Gal. 2:10

the good works are so defiled by weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgement.

- 4 Despite weaknesses and imperfections, good works will be accepted by God for Jesus Christ's sake, and He will reward the sincere believer accordingly.<sup>11</sup> This is not the case with an unconverted person. His works may happen to be commanded in the Bible, but they are not done out of a heart of faith nor for the glory of God, and therefore cannot be acceptable to God.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, it cannot be argued that he might as well not do any of those works, because that would be even more sinful and displeasing to God.<sup>13</sup> He owes obedience to God, who is his Creator. What he must do is to humble himself and trust in Christ alone for salvation.

Do not trust in your self-righteousness. Turn to Christ and be saved!

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## 16.2 Review Questions

- 1 State the three characteristics of *good works*.
- 2 Give some examples of works that are not *good works* in God's sight.
- 3 Where does the ability to do good works come from?
- 4 What is the believer's duty concerning God's grace in him?

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<sup>9</sup>Gal. 5:17

<sup>10</sup>Luke 17:10; Rom. 3:20; 4:6; Isa 64:6; Psalm 143:2

<sup>11</sup>Eph. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 25:40; Heb. 6:10

<sup>12</sup>Gen. 4:5; Heb. 11:4-6

<sup>13</sup>Job 21:14-15; Matt.25:41-43

## 16. GOOD WORKS

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- 5 What error does the Roman Catholic Church teach concerning excess merits from good works?
- 6 What second error about good works must we avoid?
- 7 Why must believers continue to do good works even though these are defiled by weakness and imperfection?
- 8 State the two reasons why the works of an unconverted person cannot be accepted by God although they happen to be commanded in the Bible.
- 9 Why mustn't we argue that the unconverted person might as well not do the works commanded in the Bible?
- 10 Why does the unconverted person owe obedience to God?

### 16.3 Assignment/Discussion

How do good works help in evangelism and missions? How may we avoid preaching "a social gospel"?

### 16.4 Memory Passage (James 2:19-20)

<sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

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# Seventeen

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## PERSEVERANCE (John 10:22-30)

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All who are truly God's people will persevere in the faith to the end of their lives.

### 17.1 About Perseverance

- 1 The Bible refers to all true believers as *saints*, or holy ones.<sup>1</sup> (The Roman Catholic Church wrongly declares certain individuals with exceptional holiness as saints.) They have been washed clean by the blood of Christ and are accepted by God as His children. Despite many trials and temptations, they will not totally or finally fall away from the life of faith. God preserves them while they persevere in the faith.<sup>2</sup> As we exert effort to flee from temptations, to put to death remaining sins, and to pursue righteousness, God is at work in us to give us holy desires and the ability obey His word. This is known as the doctrine of *the Perseverance of the Saints*.
- 2 It is possible for true believers to fall into grievous sins because of the following: (a) the attacks of Satan; (b) the

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<sup>1</sup>Rom.. 1:7

<sup>2</sup>John 10:28-29; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:19

## 17. PERSEVERANCE

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temptations of the world; (c) the remaining corruptions in their own nature; and (d) neglect of the means of grace.<sup>3</sup> If they harden their hearts and continue in sin, the following will happen: (i) God will be displeased and the Holy Spirit will be grieved; (ii) they will lose the comfort of God's blessings; (iii) they suffer a hurt conscience; and (iv) others will be stumbled (i.e. grieved, confused, and discouraged).<sup>4</sup> God will chastise them to bring them to repentance. They will be forgiven but may have to bear certain consequences of their sins – the thought of which should deter believers from sinning.<sup>5</sup>

- 3 The success in perseverance does not lie in the believers, but in God. If it were to depend on, say, their own free will, they will not have the power to continue to the end. Thankfully, it is God who preserves them by renewing in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> God will certainly preserve the faith of His people because: (a) His decree of election cannot be changed;<sup>7</sup> (b) Christ's death on the cross and His present intercession (i.e. acting for His people) in heaven are sufficient and effective in salvation;<sup>8</sup> (c) the Holy Spirit in the believers will enable them to persevere;<sup>9</sup> and (d) the Covenant of Grace requires that God's people shall never be lost.<sup>10</sup>
- 4 What about professed believers who fall away completely from the faith? The Bible reveals that they were never true believers, despite having lived like believers. They had a *temporary faith*, which is not true faith in Christ at all.<sup>11</sup> A common objection is that this doctrine makes the many

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<sup>3</sup>Luke 22:31; James 1:13-15; Rom. 7:18; 2 Tim. 2:22

<sup>4</sup>Eph. 4:30; Psalm 51:10-12; Psalm 32:3-4; Matt. 18:6

<sup>5</sup>2 Sam. 12:14; Heb. 12:7-8

<sup>6</sup>1 Cor. 1:8-9; Rom. 8:38-39; 11:29; Phil. 1:6

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 8:30; 9:11-16

<sup>8</sup>Rom. 5:9-10; John 14:19; 9. Heb. 6:19-20; Luke 22:32

<sup>9</sup>1 John 3:9

<sup>10</sup>Heb. 6:19-20; Jer. 32:40



threats of eternal destruction, found in the Bible, unnecessary. The answer is that God has ordained not only the end but also the means to the end.<sup>12</sup> The threats, as well as the promises, are used by God to keep the true believers persevering, without which they can never be sure that they have true faith. At the same time, the warnings will confirm the justice of God in the damnation of the wicked. Finally, it should be noted that this doctrine is different from the Antinomian teaching of "once saved, always saved," in which it is claimed that once a profession of faith has been made, it does not matter how you live. The Bible demands holy living in God's people.<sup>13</sup>

Have you backslidden from the faith? Repent and seek forgiveness from God!

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## 17.2 Review Questions

- 1 In the Bible, what are true believers also known as?
- 2 What does it mean to *persevere in the faith*?
- 3 State four reasons why true believers may fall into sin.
- 4 State the four things that will happen if they continue in sin.
- 5 State why believers will not want to fall into sin.
- 6 What will happen if perseverance in the faith were dependent on our free will?

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<sup>11</sup>Matt. 7:21-23; 13:18-23; 1 John 2:19; Heb. 6:6, 8

<sup>12</sup>Acts 27:22, 31

<sup>13</sup>2 Tim. 2:19; Phil. 3:12-14

## 17. PERSEVERANCE

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- 7 State the four reasons why God will certainly preserve the faith of His people.
- 8 What does the Bible teach about professed believers who fall away completely?
- 9 Why are there threats of eternal destruction in the Bible?
- 10 In what way is the idea of “once saved, always saved” different from the doctrine of *the perseverance of the saints*?

### 17.3 Assignment/Discussion

The idea of “the carnal Christian” has been invented to explain why some professing believers live a worldly life. Is this a biblical teaching? See 1 Cor. 3:1-3 cf. Rom. 8:9-11; Gal. 5:19-26; Col. 3:1-17.

### 17.4 Memory Passage (Phil. 3:12-14)

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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# Eighteen

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## ASSURANCE OF SALVATION (1 John 3:14-24)

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The assurance of salvation is a precious gift of God that believers should seek.

### 18.1 About Assurance Of Salvation

- 1 A converted person will show changes in his total person: including his mind, affection (or heart), and will. He will truly believe in the Lord Jesus, love Him in sincerity, and live in obedience to His word. Such a person may come to know, and feel sure, that he is truly saved, and rejoice in the hope of eternal life.<sup>1</sup> This is not the case with a person who has only a *temporary faith* or a *dead faith*. He may think that he is saved, when he is actually deceiving himself. His false hope will soon die away.<sup>2</sup>
- 2 The assurance of a true believer is not based on mere guesswork, feelings, or self-will. Instead, it is something that is concrete and trustworthy because it is founded on the following: (a) the finished work of Christ in saving sinners;<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>2 Tim. 1:12; 1 John 2:3; 3:14-24; 5:13

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 7:22-23

## 18. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

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(b) the evidence of spiritual graces in the believer in connection with definite promises made in the Scriptures;<sup>4</sup> and (c) the inner conviction of adoption arising from the witness of the Holy Spirit with the believer's spirit.<sup>5</sup> From these, it is clear that assurance of salvation is given by the Holy Spirit, working by and with the word of God. From the word of God we know that Christ has done everything that is needed to save sinners. As we engage in self-examination we discover that the fruit of the Spirit (e.g. love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) is in us. As we draw the conclusion that we are true believers, the Holy Spirit assures us inwardly that we are the children of God.

- 3 Assurance of salvation is *not of the essence of faith*, nor the *root* of faith, but a *fruit* of faith. In other words, it is not a part of faith, nor the cause of faith, but a result of faith. A person who has saving faith will not automatically and definitely have assurance. He may have to wait long and fight many difficulties before he gets assurance.<sup>6</sup> It is the duty of the Christian to work towards getting this assurance.<sup>7</sup> This is to be done, not by praying for extraordinary revelation or whipping up the feelings, but by using the means of grace.<sup>8</sup> As assurance grows, his heart will be kept humble and holy. He will be given strength and cheerfulness to obey God.<sup>9</sup>
- 4 A believer may have his assurance of salvation shaken, diminished, or interrupted by slothfulness, disobedience, lack of prayer, worldliness, or some other sin. God will chasten (i.e. punish with a view to correct) a true believer who persists in his sin so that he loses his peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Spirit. If he does not repent, God may even allow

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<sup>3</sup>Heb. 6:17-18

<sup>4</sup>2 Pet. 1:4-11

<sup>5</sup>Rom. 8:15-16

<sup>6</sup>Isa. 50:10

<sup>7</sup>2 Pet. 1:10

<sup>8</sup>1 John 4:12-13; Heb. 6:11-12

<sup>9</sup>1 John 3:1-3; Rom. 5:1-2, 3; 6:1-2; Tit. 2:11-14

him to lose his assurance of salvation.<sup>10</sup> However, even in the deepest state of backsliding the true believer will have the spark of spiritual life – the consciousness of faith – in him. The Lord will continue to support His wayward child even as He chastens him. This consciousness of faith will preserve him from utter despair, and he will finally turn to God in repentance. In due time, the Holy Spirit will revive his assurance.<sup>11</sup>

Have you true faith in Christ? Thanks be to God for the assurance of salvation!

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## 18.2 Review Questions

- 1 What may a converted person expect in himself with regard to his salvation?
- 2 In contrast, what may happen to the person who has a *temporary faith* or a *dead faith*?
- 3 Why is the assurance of the true believer concrete and trustworthy?
- 4 How does the Holy Spirit give assurance of salvation?
- 5 How is assurance of salvation connected with faith?
- 6 What may the believer face before he gets assurance of salvation?
- 7 How may the believer get assurance of salvation?

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<sup>10</sup>Psalms 32:4; 38:2; 51:8-14; Heb. 12:6-8

<sup>11</sup>Psalms 42:5, 11; Luke 22:31-32; 1 John 3:9

## 18. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

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- 8 What will happen to the believer as he gets assurance of salvation?
- 9 What may happen to the assurance of the believer if he sins?
- 10 Why wouldn't the true believer plunge into utter despair when he backslides?

### 18.3 Assignment/Discussion

There are true believers who face inexplicable periods of spiritual darkness and wonder whether they are saved, one of whom was William Cowper (1731-1800), the hymn writer. Explore this phenomenon and draw some conclusions (cf. Ps. 30:7; 143:5-7).

### 18.4 Memory Passage (John 10:28-29)

<sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

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# Nineteen

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## THE LAW OF GOD (Rom. 6:15-23)

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Is the law of God still relevant to Christians today?

### 19.1 About The Law Of God

1 The law of God consists of three categories: (a) the moral law; (b) the ceremonial law; and (c) the civil law. The *moral law* is a reflection of God's character, and is binding upon all men for all time. Christ has not cancelled it in the Gospel. Instead, He has strengthened our obligation to obey it.<sup>1</sup> The *ceremonial law* was given to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament time as a system of worship which pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of world. With the coming of Christ the ceremonial law has been cancelled.<sup>2</sup> The *civil law* was given to govern the nation of Israel, as a people separated unto God. Only its underlying principles of justice and fairness continue to be applicable in modern times.<sup>3</sup> Those who deny the continuing relevance of the moral law are known as *Antinomians*, although this is not to suggest that they necessarily practise, or advocate, lawlessness. Numbered among these are Christians who hold to so-called New Covenant Theology. Those who insist on the

## 19. THE LAW OF GOD

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continuing relevance of the ceremonial law are known as *Legalists*. Those who believe in the continuing relevance of the civil law are known as *Theonomists* (or *Reconstructionists*).

- 2 The moral law is summarised in the Ten Commandments, which God first gave to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, on two tables of stone.<sup>4</sup> The first four commandments spell out our duty towards God, and the other six deal with our duty to man.<sup>5</sup> The Lord Jesus Christ summarised the Ten Commandments further into two, viz. “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength”, and “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”<sup>6</sup> A careful study of these commandments will show that they are all-encompassing, covering all our duties to God and man.
- 3 Before the moral law was reduced to writing as the Ten Commandments, God had already written it in the heart of man, from the time of Adam. God required Adam to live in complete obedience to Him, promising him life upon the fulfilling of the law, and death upon breaking it. That the moral law is written in the heart of man is clear from the following: (a) all men everywhere exercise moral judgement, condemning wrongs in others even though they are themselves sinful; (b) all men have a conscience which, although it is distorted or suppressed to varying degrees, convicts them when they do wrong.<sup>7</sup>
- 4 John Calvin wrote of the “Threefold Use of the Law”.<sup>8</sup> The first use is as a mirror, to reflect the righteousness of God. It exposes our sinfulness and drives us to Christ for salvation. The second is the “civil use”, as a restraint from evil. The

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 5:17-19; Rom. 3:31

<sup>2</sup>Heb. 9:11-12; 10:1; Col. 2:13-14

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. 9:8-10; Mic. 6:8)

<sup>4</sup>Deut. 10:4

<sup>5</sup>Exod. 20:1-17

<sup>6</sup>Mark 12:30-31

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 2:1, 14-15



law works on the conscience and through civil authorities, punishing the guilty and protecting the righteous. The third use is to guide believers into what is pleasing to God. This is the highest function of the law, guiding the Christian to serve and honour God. The 1689 Confession, following the Westminster Confession, gives four uses of the law directed at believers. First, it reveals the will of God, and our duty to obey it.<sup>9</sup> Second, it exposes sin, so that by self-examination we are kept humble and led to a greater appreciation of our salvation in Christ.<sup>10</sup> Third, it restrains corruption in the believer by warning of the punishment due to its transgression.<sup>11</sup> Fourth, it encourages to good, showing the approval and blessing of God for its obedience.<sup>12</sup> Believers keep the law, not as a covenant of works to gain salvation, but because they are already saved by grace. They, therefore, keep it joyfully, and not grudgingly.<sup>13</sup>

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him (Psalm 34:8)!”

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## 19.2 Review Questions

- 1 Name the three categories of God’s law.
- 2 Which of these is still binding upon us, and which have been cancelled?
- 3 Where is the *moral law* summarised?

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<sup>8</sup>Gal. 3:19-24; 1 Tim. 1:8; Rom. 13:3-4; John 14:15

<sup>9</sup>Mark 12:30-31; Eph. 2:10

<sup>10</sup>Rom. 3:20; 7:7; 1 John 1:8-9

<sup>11</sup>Gal. 5:18-21; Eph. 5:1-7; Heb. 12:14

<sup>12</sup>1 Pet. 3:8-13; Rev. 21:12

<sup>13</sup>Psalm 19:7-11

## 19. THE LAW OF GOD

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- 4 What do the first four commandments deal with?
- 5 What do the other six commandments deal with?
- 6 What does a careful study of these commandments reveal about them?
- 7 Where was the moral law found before it was written down as the Ten Commandments?
- 8 How may we know that the moral law has been written in the heart of man?
- 9 State “the three uses of the law” according to John Calvin.
- 10 Why and how do believers keep the law?

### 19.3 Assignment/Discussion

“Legalists cannot be true Christians. Antinomians and Theonomists may possibly be true Christians.” Comment.

### 19.4 Memory Passage (Matt 5:17-19)

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

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# Twenty

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## THE GOSPEL (Rom. 1:18-32)

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The gospel is the distinct message of salvation in Jesus Christ, to be proclaimed to sinners.

### 20.1 About The Gospel

1 God made a solemn agreement with Adam, the representative head of mankind, promising him eternal life for his obedience, and death for disobedience. That solemn agreement is known as the *Covenant of Works*. Since the Covenant of Works was broken by Adam, it can no longer give life. God instituted the *Covenant of Grace*, in which He mercifully promised a Saviour from among the seed (or descendants) of the woman to save the elect.<sup>1</sup> That very first promise was basically the gospel (or good news of salvation), by which sinners are to be saved. In due time, that Saviour was revealed to be the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

2 This promise – of Christ and the salvation which comes by Him – is revealed only by the word of God. That is why the word of God is known as *special revelation*. Whatever

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<sup>1</sup>Gen. 3:15

<sup>2</sup>Rev. 13:8; John 1:29

## 20. THE GOSPEL

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may be known about God from nature, the events in life, or human reasoning is known as *natural revelation*. Natural revelation does not show the way of salvation at all.<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, impossible for those who do not hear the gospel to be saved.<sup>4</sup>

- 3 The gospel also includes instructions on the responses required of sinners for them to be saved, namely repentance and faith. It also includes the promises of God to sinners who repent, e.g. forgiveness, adoption, preservation, hope, and eternal life. The various aspects of the gospel have been revealed at different times to various nations and individuals solely according to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God.<sup>5</sup> It was never given to them because they had deserved it in any way. No one is able to do any good to earn the right of hearing the gospel.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, in all ages, the preaching of the gospel to individuals and nations – whether to a great extent or a limited extent – is in accordance to God’s will alone. The church, however, has a responsibility to bring the gospel to others – in local outreach and wider church planting.<sup>7</sup>
- 4 Although the gospel is the only external means of revealing the way of salvation, something else is needed before men, who are spiritually dead, are actually saved.<sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit needs to do a powerful internal work of changing the whole person so that he is born again (i.e. spiritually changed and given eternal life).<sup>9</sup> Salvation, therefore, comes about by the hearing of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Rom. 1:16-17

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 10:14, 17

<sup>5</sup>Psalms 147:20; Acts 16:7; 17:26

<sup>6</sup>Rom. 1:18-32

<sup>7</sup>Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Cor. 10:15-16

<sup>8</sup>Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:22-23

<sup>9</sup>John 3:3, 5-6; 1 Cor. 2:14

<sup>10</sup>John 6:44; 2 Cor. 4:4-6

5 We must guard against three mistakes. *Firstly*, we must not confuse the gospel with “the whole counsel of God” (i.e. the totality of the Bible’s teaching). The gospel is part of the whole counsel of God, but it is a recognisable part of it. In fact, it is the essence of the Bible’s message.<sup>11</sup> We should concentrate on preaching the gospel to sinners on a regular basis until they are saved. Once saved, the whole counsel of God should be taught to them.<sup>12</sup> *Secondly*, we must guard against minimising the gospel to only a few points, just to get a quick decision from the hearer. One example of this is the use of “The Four Spiritual Laws” by the Campus Crusade for Christ. A few Bible truths presented out of the context of the whole counsel of God’s word will be a truncated gospel. There will be little likelihood of conviction of sin and genuine conversion. Making a decision “to accept Jesus Christ” or uttering the so-called “sinner’s prayer” is not the same as repentance from sin with faith in Jesus Christ, wrought by the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup> *Thirdly*, we must beware of *chronological preparationism* in which is advocated that revelation history must be taught prior to the presentation of the message of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified”. This is different from the “preparationism” the Puritans were wrongly accused of when they preached the law together with the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near (Isa. 55:6)!

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<sup>10</sup>Luke 24:44-47; 1 Cor. 1:17-18; 2:2; Acts 18:4-8

<sup>11</sup>Matt. 28: 19-20; Acts 20:21, 27

<sup>12</sup>Acts 2:37-40; 16:14; Gal. 1:8-9

<sup>14</sup>Gal. 3:24-25

## 20. THE GOSPEL

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### 20.2 Review Questions

- 1 Why can't *the Covenant of Works* give life now?
- 2 What did God promise after *the Covenant of Works* was broken?
- 3 Where may the gospel be found?
- 4 Why do some nations and individuals hear the gospel preached while others do not?
- 5 State the two things needed before a person can be saved.
- 6 State the first mistake we must avoid with regard to the gospel.
- 7 When do we concentrate on preaching the gospel, and when the whole counsel of God?
- 8 What second mistake must we avoid with regard to the gospel?
- 9 What may be the adverse consequence of this second mistake?
- 10 State and explain the third mistake we must avoid.

### 20.3 Assignment/Discussion

Based on Luke 24:44-47, we draw the conclusion that the gospel may be preached from any passage of Scripture. Discuss the validity of this conclusion, and what constitute "a passage of Scripture".

### 20.4 Memory Passage (Matt. 28:18-20)

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name

#### 20.4. Memory Passage (Matt. 28:18-20)

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of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

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## Twenty-one

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# LIBERTY AND CONSCIENCE (John 8:31-36)

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God alone is Lord over our conscience in all matters of faith and religious practice.

### 21.1 About Liberty And Conscience

- 1 *Freedom* and *ability* must not be confused. An unconverted person is free to make choices in the sense that nothing from outside hampers him. However, he is not able to make certain choices because his sinful nature inclines him in the direction of sin. For example, he is not able to believe in Christ or to live a life of obedience to God's law. His will is in bondage to his sinful nature. When converted, God's Spirit sets him free from the power of sin. He now possesses true liberty as a child of God.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 This liberty may be stated negatively and positively. Negatively speaking, the believer is no longer under the bondage of sin, Satan, and the wrath of God.<sup>2</sup> He is not delivered completely from sin while in this life, but the reign of sin is

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<sup>1</sup>John 8:34-36; Rom. 8:15

## 21. LIBERTY AND CONSCIENCE

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broken. He now is enabled by the Holy Spirit to resist sin. The Christian is no longer burdened by the guilt of sin, and the condemning wrath of God, because Christ has paid the penalty of his sins. Satan may afflict him, and cause him to fear death, but God will work out all things for his good and deliver him from everlasting damnation.<sup>3</sup>

- 3 Positively speaking, the Christian has free access to God, the ability to obey Him, and the right to enjoy the blessings of salvation. The Christian is able to draw near to God freely because Christ has reconciled him to God and is still interceding for him in heaven. He now obeys God willingly, out of a heart of love. He no longer has a slavish fear of God, but enjoys all the blessings of salvation as a child of God.<sup>4</sup> The true believers in the Old Testament time also experienced the same kind of liberty.<sup>5</sup> However, New Testament Christians have a larger measure of that liberty since they do not have to keep the ceremonial laws, which have been fulfilled in Christ. They also have a greater boldness to approach God in prayer, and a fuller experience of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives.<sup>6</sup>
- 4 God alone is Lord of the conscience.<sup>7</sup> No man, organisation, or government may make an individual believe or act contrary to his conscience by force, law, or threats.<sup>8</sup> The state may advise, consult, and offer help to, the church, but it may never apply any kind of force against it. The same may be said of the other institutions – the state, the church, and the family – in their relationship to one another. Each has its own sphere of authority. In matters concerning faith and worship, a Christian must never obey any doctrine or commandment of men that is contrary to the word of God, or not taught in it.<sup>9</sup> To require an implicit faith – i.e. a faith in

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<sup>2</sup>Acts 26:18; Gal. 1:4; 3:13

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:56-57; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 8:28

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 8:15; Luke 1:73-75; 1 John 4:18

<sup>5</sup>Gal. 3:9-14

<sup>6</sup>John 7:38-39; Heb. 10:19-21

which it is assumed that everything taught or commanded is right or good – is to destroy liberty of conscience and human reason.<sup>10</sup>

- 5 *Christian liberty* and the *liberty of conscience* are not to be used as excuses, or license, for sin and disorderly conduct.<sup>11</sup> Rather, they are meant to set us free to worship and serve God, in holiness and righteousness.<sup>12</sup> A person who lives in bondage to sin and man-made rules, in fear of man and of death, must be miserable indeed!<sup>13</sup>

Let us strive to have a conscience without offence toward God and men.

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## 21.2 Review Questions

- 1 State two examples of what the unconverted person is unable, although free, to do.
- 2 Why is he unable to do these?
- 3 State negatively what is meant by Christian liberty.
- 4 State positively what is meant by Christian liberty.
- 5 In what ways were the Old Testament believers similar to the New Testament believers?

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<sup>7</sup>James 4:12; Rom. 14:4

<sup>8</sup>Acts 4:19; 5:29; 1 Cor. 7:23; Matt. 15:9

<sup>9</sup>Col. 2:20-23

<sup>10</sup>1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 1:24

<sup>11</sup>Rom. 6:1-2

<sup>12</sup>Gal. 5:13; 2 Pet. 2:18-21

<sup>13</sup>Acts 24:16

## 21. LIBERTY AND CONSCIENCE

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- 6 State the three ways New Testament believers enjoy greater liberty than the Old Testament believers.
- 7 Why is it wrong for anyone to force an individual to believe or act contrary to his conscience?
- 8 What must a Christian do, with regard to his conscience, in matters of faith and worship?
- 9 State the wrong use of Christian liberty and the liberty of conscience.
- 10 State the actual purpose of Christian liberty and the liberty of conscience.

### 21.3 Assignment/Discussion

The doctrine of “the separation of church (religion) and state” has been upheld by some and denied by many. The 1689 Confession of Faith departs from the teaching of the Westminster Confession (Chapters 19:4 & 30:3) on this. How is the position of the Westminster Confession opposed to *Christian liberty* and *the liberty of conscience*?

### 21.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 6:17-18)

<sup>17</sup> But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. <sup>18</sup> And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

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## Twenty-two

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# WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY (JOHN 4:19-24)

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Worship is to be carried out “in spirit and truth”, i.e. in sincerity and in accordance to Scripture.

### 22.1 About Worship And The Sabbath Day

1 We must worship the true God – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – because He is our Creator.<sup>1</sup> We must not worship angels, or saints, or any other creatures.<sup>2</sup> If a king must be approached according to palace protocols, how much more we need to approach God in the way prescribed by Himself in the Bible. God may not be approached by way of visible images, e.g. pictures, statues, and idols.<sup>3</sup> Since the Fall (i.e. the time Adam rebelled against God), worship is to

## 22. WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY

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be given through a Mediator, namely Jesus Christ alone.<sup>4</sup>

- 2 Prayer, with thanksgiving, is one part of worship which is accepted by God only when made through the mediation of the Son, by the help of the Holy Spirit, and according to the revealed will of God.<sup>5</sup> In other words, only converted people are able to offer up acceptable prayer. All acts of worship, including prayer, must be carried out with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance. When praying with others, it must be in a known language.<sup>6</sup> We are to pray for lawful things (i.e. things agreeable to the will of God), for people who are alive now or who will live in the future,<sup>7</sup> but not for the dead,<sup>8</sup> nor for those known to have sinned “the sin leading to death” (probably a reference to those who fall away from the faith and are bitterly opposed to God).<sup>9</sup> The Roman Catholics err by praying for the dead, and so do many pagan religions.
- 3 The other elements of worship include: (i) reading, preaching, and hearing the word of God; (ii) singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; (iii) the special ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; and (iv) the collection.<sup>10</sup> On special occasions, worship includes religious oaths and vows, fasting, and thanksgiving.<sup>11</sup> Nothing else must be added to these. The elements and attitude of worship are prescribed by the Bible, but the circumstances of worship (e.g. the time and duration of worship, the order of worship, whether the congregation should be seated, standing, or kneeling) are to be determined by sanctified common sense and the general principles taught in Scripture – e.g. to do all things to

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<sup>1</sup>Jer. 10:7; Mark 12:32-33; Matt. 4:9-10; John 4:23; Matt. 28:19

<sup>2</sup>Rom. 1:25; Col. 2:18; Rev. 19:10

<sup>3</sup>Deut. 12:32; Exod. 20:4-6; John 4:23

<sup>4</sup>John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5

<sup>5</sup>John 14:13-14; Rom. 8:26; 1 John 5:14

<sup>6</sup>1 Cor. 14:16-17

<sup>7</sup>1 Tim. 2:1-2; 2 Sam. 7:29; Luke 16:26

<sup>8</sup>2 Sam. 12:21-23

<sup>9</sup>1 John 5:16; Heb. 6:4-6

the glory of God, for the edification of the church, decently and in order, and without stumbling weaker brethren and non-believers.<sup>12</sup> This has been called *the Regulative Principle of Worship*. New Testament worship is not tied to, or made more acceptable by, any place in which it is performed or towards which it is directed. God may be worshipped anywhere in spirit and in truth.<sup>13</sup> Some Charismatic groups err by having “prayer mountains” and “prayer houses”.

- 4 The Fourth Commandment, which is part of the moral law, requires that one day in seven be set aside as holy for God.<sup>14</sup> Up to the resurrection of Christ, this was the last day of the week. After the resurrection of Christ, it was changed to the first day of the week.<sup>15</sup> The Sabbath, or the Lord’s day, is kept holy in these ways: (i) preparing the heart in anticipation of it; (ii) arranging the daily affairs in advance so that the day may be a rest from normal work and recreation; (iii) spending that day with acts of piety (i.e. in worship and advancing the cause of the gospel), necessity, and mercy.<sup>16</sup>

Let us draw near to our Creator, through faith in Jesus Christ.

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## 22.2 Review Questions

### 1 Why must we worship God?

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<sup>10</sup>1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 4:2; Luke 8:18; Col. 3:16; Matt. 28:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:26; 16:2

<sup>11</sup>Matt. 6:5, 16; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17-18

<sup>12</sup>1 Cor. 10:23, 31; 14:40; Rom. 14:19

<sup>13</sup>John 4:21; Mal. 1:11; 1 Tim. 2:8

<sup>14</sup>Exod. 20:8

<sup>15</sup>1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10

<sup>16</sup>Isa. 58:13; Neh. 13:15-22; Matt. 12:3-5, 11-12

## 22. WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY

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- 2 What manner of approach to God is forbidden us?
- 3 Who is the Mediator appointed by God for us?
- 4 How is prayer made acceptable to God?
- 5 How must all acts of worship be carried out?
- 6 Who are the people we must not pray for?
- 7 Name the other elements of worship, apart from prayer.
- 8 Name the elements of worship found only on special occasions.
- 9 How do we decide on the circumstances of worship?
- 10 State how the Lord's day is to be kept holy.

### 22.3 Assignment/Discussion

How may we avoid the extremes of *legalism* and *liberalism* in the keeping of the Lord's day?

### 22.4 Memory Passage (Heb. 10:24-25)

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

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## Twenty-three

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# LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS (Heb. 6:13-18)

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What are oaths and vows? Should Christians ever swear at all?

### 23.1 About Lawful Oaths And Vows

- 1 An *oath* is a solemn promise or declaration made to people, or between people, in which God is called upon as witness. A *vow* is a solemn promise made to God. Both are acts of worship that are permitted by God in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Oaths and vows may be made, and ought to be made, on solemn and important occasions, e.g. in marriage, when becoming a member of the church, and in the ordination of a pastor. Some Christians mistakenly think that Christ forbade oaths, when He only forbade vain and rash swearing. He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.<sup>2</sup>
- 2 Oaths may be sworn only in the name of God, and vows may be made only to God. To swear by any other name, or thing, is sinful and detestable to God.<sup>3</sup> Oaths and vows must not

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 26:63-64; Heb. 6:13-18

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 5:17-18, 33-37

### 23. LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

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to be made rashly because God's holy name must be treated with fear and reverence. Furthermore, we are required to speak the truth at all times, so that it is not necessary to make an oath under ordinary circumstances. However, on important occasions, an oath is allowed in order to confirm the truth of what we say, and for the ending of disputes.<sup>4</sup> A lawful oath imposed by a lawful authority, e.g. the elders of a church and the civil courts, can rightly be taken in such circumstances.<sup>5</sup> A vow may be made to God in thankfulness for mercies received, or in anticipation of answered prayer. It is to be made voluntarily, out of faith, and with a desire to please God.<sup>6</sup>

- 3 An oath, and a vow, is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without ambiguity and mental reservation. Those who make rash or insincere oaths and vows, using words of double sense, and with no intention of keeping to all or part of the promise, will be judged by God.<sup>7</sup> Whatever is promised in an oath or a vow must be kept, even if it hurts, provided it is not sinful in nature and is capable of being fulfilled.<sup>8</sup> It is better not to make an oath or vow, than to break it.<sup>9</sup> It is better to make a lawful oath or vow when necessary, than not to make it, e.g. to make oaths during marriage, and to vow to follow Christ forever when converted.<sup>10</sup>
- 4 Some oaths and vows that need not, or must not, be kept include: (i) A person who became a monk, vowing to remain single, to live in poverty, and to obey the rules of the monastery, without realising that these are contrary to God's word;<sup>11</sup> (ii) A person who was given by his parents to be the

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<sup>3</sup>Deut. 10:20; Matt. 5:34-37; James 5:12

<sup>4</sup>Heb. 6:16; 2 Cor. 1:23

<sup>5</sup>Neh. 13:25

<sup>6</sup>Gen. 28:20-22; Psalm 76:11

<sup>7</sup>Eccl. 5:2, 4; Psalm 24:3-4

<sup>8</sup>Lev. 19:12

<sup>9</sup>James 5:12

<sup>10</sup>Rom. 7:1-3; 4

“adopted child” of a medium or a spirit, without his ability to consent and before he knew the Lord Jesus Christ;<sup>12</sup> (iii) In a covenant relationship, such as marriage and church membership, when the terms and conditions of the covenant are broken by the other party and persisted in without repentance;<sup>13</sup> (iv) A person who was “dedicated to God” for full-time ministry by his parents when he was underage.<sup>14</sup>

- 5 Let us aim to be truthful in speech, so that no swearing is needed except during solemn occasions. We give due allowance for friendly banter and jesting but duplicity (deceitfulness in speech) must be avoided.<sup>15</sup>

Why not solemnly vow to trust in Christ and walk in newness of life with Him?

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## 23.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is an *oath*?
- 2 What is a *vow*?
- 3 When may oaths and vows be made?
- 4 Why can't oaths and vows be made rashly?
- 5 On important occasions, why is an oath made?
- 6 Why is a vow made?

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<sup>11</sup>1 Cor. 7:2, 9

<sup>12</sup>2 Cor. 6:14-18; Exod. 34:4

<sup>13</sup>Matt. 19:11-12; 1 Cor. 5:4-5, 13

<sup>14</sup>Ezek. 18:19-20

<sup>15</sup>Matt. 5:37; Eph. 4:29, 31; Col. 4:6.

## 23. LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS

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- 7 How should the vow be made?
- 8 How should we take the words of an oath or a vow?
- 9 Complete the sentence: Whatever is promised in an oath or a vow must be kept, even if it hurts, provided...
- 10 Give one example of an oath or a vow that need not, or must not, be kept.

### 23.3 Assignment/Discussion

Should parents dedicate their children to full-time gospel service? What if such children grow up realising that they are not called by God to ministry, or do not have the biblical qualifications? Cf. Ezek. 18:19-20.

### 23.4 Memory Passage (Matt. 5:37)

<sup>37</sup> But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No.” For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

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## Twenty-four

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# THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

## (Rom. 13:1-7)

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What should be the relationship between church and state?  
Lack of clarity leads to great perplexity.

### 24.1 About The Civil Government

1 The civil government is ordained by God, although this is not recognised by everyone. By His providence (i.e. control over all things), God has allowed the government to come into power, regardless of whether it is a *monarchy* (i.e. rule by a king/queen) or a *republic* (i.e. rule by the people), a *democracy* (i.e. rule by popular vote) or an *autocracy* (i.e. absolute rule by one person), *free* (in which individual rights are recognised) or *totalitarian* (in which the community is treated as one, with no possibility of dissent). (Here, we have considered a country from the perspectives of *who* rules, *how* rule is carried out, and *what* effect rule has on the citizens.) God has given the civil authority the power and right to use force, for the defence and encouragement of those who do good, and for the punishment of evil-doers.<sup>1</sup> This includes capital punishment (i.e. the death penalty),

## 24. THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

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meted out to those who deserve it.<sup>2</sup>

- 2 Christians ought to submit themselves to, and obey, all those laws of the nation which do not contradict the laws of God. We do so not merely to avoid punishment, but because of our desire to please God. For that reason, we will pay all taxes due to the government, and will not engage in illegal activities such as smuggling.<sup>3</sup> If any law of the country is against the law of God, we will choose to obey God rather than men. Boldness, wisdom, and perseverance are needed. For example, a law that forbids parents from caning their children is not of the same order of importance as a law that forbids Christians from evangelising.<sup>4</sup> In the first case, the law is directed at all, regardless of their faith. We would still discipline our children in other ways, without caning. In the second case, the law is directed at our faith. We would have to boldly and wisely evangelise, at the risk of being punished for it. However, if the punishment is disproportionately severe, we might have to withdraw and preach to others.<sup>5</sup> We ought also to pray for rulers and all who are in authority, that under them we may live a quiet and peaceful life, so that the gospel may be freely propagated.<sup>6</sup>
- 3 It is lawful for Christians to hold public office, e.g. to be a government minister, a judge, or a police officer. In their office they are particularly responsible for maintaining justice and peace by applying the right and beneficial laws of the nation.<sup>7</sup> Also, they may lawfully engage in war if it is just and necessary.<sup>8</sup> Our view of the Christian's responsibility to the state arises from the Bible's teaching that the church and the state are two co-equal and independent powers, each with its own sphere of power and authority. This

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 13:1-4

<sup>2</sup>Gen. 9:6

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 13:5-7; Matt. 22:21

<sup>4</sup>Acts 4:19-20; 5:29

<sup>5</sup>Matt. 10:14, 16, 23

<sup>6</sup>1 Pet. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:1-2

view has been called *Voluntaryism*. The Christian is a member of the church at the same time that he is the citizen of the country. He has responsibilities towards the church and towards the country.<sup>9</sup> Not every citizen of the country, however, is a member of the church. Gospel work should be done by Christians only, although it is not wrong to employ non-Christians, or to accept their offer of help, in the supportive works involved in the propagation of the gospel.<sup>10</sup>

- 4 *Voluntaryism* is different from *Separatism*, which maintains that the Christian must not have anything to do with the state – whether to help the state or to be helped by the state. This view of the Anabaptists is still held by some in Christian circles today. Another view is *Co-operatism*, which teaches that help from the state should be sought in the furtherance of the gospel. This was the position of the original Westminster Confession of Faith, no longer held by many Presbyterians today. There are two other views on church-state relationship. One view, called *Papism*, maintains that the church has authority over the state. The Roman Catholic Church teaches this. Another view, called *Erastianism*, teaches that the state has authority over the church. The Church of England teaches this.<sup>11</sup>

Let us submit ourselves to the authority of Christ.

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<sup>7</sup>2 Sam. 23:3; Psalm 82:3-4

<sup>8</sup>Luke 3:14

<sup>9</sup>Matt. 22:21

<sup>10</sup>1 Cor. 5:9-10; 2 Cor. 6:14-16

<sup>11</sup>Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2

## 24. THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

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### 24.2 Review Questions

- 1 For what purpose has God given the power and right to use force to civil government?
- 2 Why do Christians obey the laws of the nation?
- 3 What will a Christian do if the law of the nation is against the law of God?
- 4 Why do we pray for rulers and those in authority?
- 5 What is the particular responsibility of the Christian who is in public office?
- 6 What does *Separatism* teach?
- 7 What does *Co-operatism* teach?
- 8 What does *Voluntaryism* teach?
- 9 What does *Papism* teach?
- 10 What does *Erastianism* teach?

### 24.3 Assignment/Discussion

Other systems of civil government are but variations of the main ones we have considered, the names of which only seek to emphasise certain characteristics. Discuss *socialism*, *communism*, and *oligarchy*. How does *anarchy* fit into all this (cf. Judges 21:25)?

### 24.4 Memory Passage (Matt. 22:21)

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

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## Twenty-five

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### MARRIAGE (1 Cor. 7:1-16)

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Marriage is a sacred institution of God, to be valued and honoured.

#### 25.1 About Marriage

1 Marriage is to be between one man and one woman. The so-called “marriage” between two persons of the same sex is unlawful in God’s sight.<sup>1</sup> It is not lawful for anyone to practise polygamy (i.e. having more than one wife or having more than one husband, at the same time). It is often argued that godly men in the Bible, like Abraham and David, had more than one wife, and they were not condemned for it. In answer to that objection, we may say three things: (i) What is recorded in the Bible need not be what God approves of in His people, e.g. the adultery and murder committed by David;<sup>2</sup> (ii) What God tolerates need not be what He will allow to continue for ever, e.g. the sin of the Amorites in Abraham’s time, and the refusal of sinners today to repent;<sup>3</sup> (iii) Christ put an end to polygamy when He discontinued the practice of divorce introduced by Moses, and reinstated monogamy (i.e. marriage between one man and

## 25. MARRIAGE

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one woman).<sup>4</sup>

- 2 Marriage was given by God for three reasons: (i) in order that husband and wife may find help and comfort in each other;<sup>5</sup> (ii) in order that children may be born legitimately to populate the world;<sup>6</sup> and (iii) in order to prevent sexual immorality.<sup>7</sup> A marriage remains wholesome even when the couple is unable to have children. We should attempt to have more children, instead of limiting the number for our own selfish reasons.<sup>8</sup> The exact number of children to have is up to each couple to decide. Sex within marriage may be enjoyed for its own sake (i.e. not necessarily with the view of having children). Contraception (i.e. methods of preventing pregnancy) of the lawful kind may be practised, e.g. the kind that does not destroy the fertilised eggs in the womb.<sup>9</sup> A married person must not withhold sex from his or her spouse (i.e. marriage partner), except by mutual consent, for a time.<sup>10</sup>
- 3 All sorts of people – regardless of their status, ethnic background, or job – may marry if they are: (i) rational (i.e. able to think for themselves) and, (ii) able to give their consent.<sup>11</sup> However, it is the duty of Christians to marry only those who are true Christians.<sup>12</sup> Also, they may marry only those who are not too closely related, by blood or marriage (known as “consanguinity” and “affinity”, respectively). The Bible forbids marriage between brothers and sisters, between uncles and nieces, between grandparents and grandchildren, and “in-laws” of the same degrees of closeness. Only re-

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<sup>1</sup>Eph. 5:31; Rom. 1:26-27

<sup>2</sup>2 Sam. 12:7-9

<sup>3</sup>Gen. 15:16; Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4

<sup>4</sup>Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:15; Matt. 19:5-6

<sup>5</sup>Gen. 2:18

<sup>6</sup>Gen. 1:28

<sup>7</sup>1 Cor. 7:2, 9

<sup>8</sup>Gen. 1:28

<sup>9</sup>Luke 1:41, 44

<sup>10</sup>1 Cor. 7:5

lationships from first-cousins and beyond are permitted.<sup>13</sup> The apparent problem is sometimes raised that the children of Adam must have intermarried between themselves. But what God allowed for a time were not meant to be practised forever. The Old Testament system of animal sacrifices, for example, was discontinued with the coming of Christ. Seeking God's will for a life-partner should include the factor of compatibility – in spiritual aspiration, age difference, education, etc.<sup>14</sup>

- 4 Divorce is permitted only if the marriage covenant is irreparably broken by a marriage partner, say, by committing sexual immorality (of any kind) and refuses to repent of it,<sup>15</sup> by desertion (i.e. leaving the family without care),<sup>16</sup> by persistent battery (physical attack) upon the spouse,<sup>17</sup> by persistently withholding the body from the spouse,<sup>18</sup> or by the unconverted partner insisting to end the marriage after his or her spouse is converted.<sup>19</sup> Otherwise, marriage is for life.<sup>20</sup>

Is your marriage a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His church?

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## 25.2 Review Questions

- 1 What sort of marriage was intended by God from the beginning?

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<sup>11</sup>Heb. 13:4; 1 Tim. 4:3

<sup>12</sup>1 Cor. 7:39

<sup>13</sup>Lev. 18:6-18; Mark 6:18; 1 Cor 5:1

<sup>14</sup>1 Cor. 10:31; Amos 3:3

<sup>15</sup>Matt. 5:32; 19:9

<sup>16</sup>Eph. 5:25-27

<sup>17</sup>Eph. 5:28-29

<sup>18</sup>1 Cor. 7:4-5

<sup>19</sup>1 Cor. 15:15

<sup>20</sup>1 Cor. 7:39; Rom. 7:2

## 25. MARRIAGE

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- 2 State the first reason why marriage was given by God.
- 3 State the second reason why marriage was instituted by God.
- 4 State the third reason why marriage was instituted by God.
- 5 All sorts of people may marry provided what conditions are observed?
- 6 Who may a Christian marry?
- 7 What other condition must be observed by a person who wishes to marry?
- 8 State the condition under which divorce is allowed.
- 9 Give some examples when this condition occurs.
- 10 Apart from this condition, for how long is marriage to last?

### 25.3 Assignment/Discussion

We hold to “the Westminster view” on divorce and remarriage. This was generally the view of the Puritans. (See Westminster Confession 22:4-5; John Owen, Vol. 16: 240-254.) Some churches hold to absolutely “no divorce and no remarriage”. Discuss the pain and injustice done to the victims under this view.

### 25.4 Memory Passage (Heb. 13:4)

<sup>4</sup> Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

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## Twenty-six

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# THE CHURCH (Matt. 18:15-20)

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The local church is central and unique in the purposes of God.

### 26.1 About The Church

- 1 The *universal church* consists of all true believers – of the past, present, and future. It is described as *invisible* because the internal work of the Holy Spirit in converting them cannot be seen, except by their life and profession of faith. Professing Christians who are not truly converted are not members of the universal church. True converts in isolated situations who are unable to be members of a local church are members of the universal church.<sup>1</sup>
- 2 The universal church manifests itself in the world as local churches.<sup>2</sup> The *local church* is made up of baptised believers who voluntarily bind themselves together by covenant (i.e. solemn vow) to worship and serve God in accordance to the teaching of the Bible.<sup>3</sup> All true believers are required by God's word to become members of a good local church.<sup>4</sup> No

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<sup>1</sup>Heb. 12:23; Eph. 1:10; 5:23-32

## 26. THE CHURCH

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local congregation on earth is perfect, but it must strive to be pure in membership, doctrine, and practice.<sup>5</sup> It must admit into membership only those who have a *credible profession of faith*, i.e. those who show true faith by their doctrine and life.<sup>6</sup>

- 3 Jesus Christ is alone the Head of the church.<sup>7</sup> He has given all the necessary power and authority to function to each congregation that is gathered in accordance to His word. Each local church is therefore *autonomous* (i.e. self-ruling) and *independent* (i.e. not dependent on any outside help to exist).<sup>8</sup> Men who are spiritually mature, able to teach and rule, and are of good and exemplary character should be appointed to become elders of the church.<sup>9</sup> As a body, led by the pastor (or one of the pastors), they rule the church by making the decisions, and then getting the consent of the members.<sup>10</sup> Deacons are spiritually mature men, with good and exemplary character, who are appointed to help the elders in the mundane affairs of the church.<sup>11</sup> A pastor is an elder who is supported by the church to engage in full-time preaching, prayer, and the care for souls.<sup>12</sup>
- 4 Members of the church must: (a) *submit* to the biblical oversight of the elders;<sup>13</sup> (b) *support* the ministries (or works) in the church by prayer, offerings, and attendance at meetings;<sup>14</sup> (c) *serve* in the church in some active ways.<sup>15</sup> When called upon, those who are able should engage in teaching

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<sup>2</sup>Eph. 5:26-27; Matt. 18:17; John 17:20-23; Acts 9:31; Gal. 1:1-2; Rev. 1:4, 11, 20

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:41

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 18:15-20; Acts 11:26; Rom. 1:7

<sup>5</sup>1 Cor. 5; Rev. 2 & 3; 2 Cor. 6:14-18

<sup>6</sup>Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 5:4, 12-13; 2 Cor. 8:5

<sup>7</sup>Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23

<sup>8</sup>Matt. 16:19; 18:18; 1 Cor. 5:4; Rev. 1:12-13

<sup>9</sup>Acts 14:23; 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9

<sup>10</sup>Acts 15:13-21, 22; 2 Cor. 8:18-19

<sup>11</sup>Acts 6:1-4; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8-13

<sup>12</sup>1 Tim. 5:17; Eph. 4:11

and evangelism (i.e. bringing the gospel to others).<sup>16</sup> Private offences should be handled in a biblical manner – by speaking to the offender in private, bringing one or two persons as witnesses, and bringing the matter to the church – as necessary.<sup>17</sup> The church exercises discipline through the process of *admonition* (warning and rebuke), *suspension* (withholding certain privileges, such as the Lord's Supper), and *excommunication* (expulsion from membership), as necessary.<sup>18</sup>

- 5 Like-minded churches should voluntarily associate together for the furtherance of the gospel and for mutual help.<sup>19</sup> Representatives of the churches (normally the pastors) who meet to consider a problem may report their conclusions and suggestions to the churches concerned, but they have no right to impose on those churches.<sup>20</sup> We reject other systems of church connection in which persons or committees outside the local church have power over it.

Are you a disciple of Jesus Christ? Are you a covenanted member of a local church?

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## 26.2 Review Questions

- 1 Who make up the membership of the *universal church*?

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<sup>13</sup>Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12

<sup>14</sup>Eph. 6:18; 2 Thess. 3:1; Col. 4:3; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; Gal. 6:6; Heb. 13:7

<sup>15</sup>Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31

<sup>16</sup>Acts 11:19-21; 1 Pet. 4:10-11

<sup>17</sup>Matt. 18:15-18

<sup>18</sup>Tit. 3:10-11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14-15; 1 Cor 5:4-5, 12-13

<sup>19</sup>Gal. 1:2; Rev. 1:4; 2 Cor. 8:18-19; Col. 4:16

<sup>20</sup>Acts 15:2-6; 22-25; 2 Cor. 1:24; Rev. 1:12-13

## 26. THE CHURCH

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- 2 Why is the universal church described as *invisible*?
- 3 What is the *local church*?
- 4 What is meant by the local church being *autonomous* and *independent*?
- 5 Who executes rule in the local church?
- 6 State the three responsibilities of church members.
- 7 State the three steps in dealing with private offence.
- 8 Name the three steps of church discipline.
- 9 Why should like-minded churches voluntarily associate together?
- 10 What power do church representatives have over the churches concerned?

### 26.3 Assignment/Discussion

We disagree with the systems of synods, councils, area superintendents, episcopal bishops, and other kinds of denominational authority. Are there dangers of an independent local church becoming isolationist?

### 26.4 Memory Passage (Eph. 5:25-27)

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

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## Twenty-seven

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# THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS (1 John 1:1-4)

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The love between Christians, and between churches, is to be shown practically, without compromising the truth.

### 27.1 About The Communion Of Saints

1 The Bible calls all true Christians *saints*. All saints are united to Jesus Christ by His Spirit and by their faith. This union is spiritual, vital (i.e. living), and real, although it does not make them one person with Him. They, therefore, share in His graces (i.e. spiritual characteristics), sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory.<sup>1</sup> Three things are true of them compared to non-believers. *First*, the fruit of the Spirit is seen more and more in their lives, e.g. love, joy, peace, kindness, compassion, and righteousness.<sup>2</sup> *Second*, they will experience trials and difficulties arising from their faith.<sup>3</sup> *Third*, they have the expectation of being received by God into heaven.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John 1:16; 15:5; 1 John 1:3; Phil. 3:10; Rom. 6:5-6

<sup>2</sup>Gal. 5:22-25; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:18

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 3:12; James 1:2, 12

<sup>4</sup>John 14:1-4; 17:24-26

## 27. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

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2 By their union with Christ, all believers are spiritually united to one another.<sup>5</sup> They have a love for one another that cannot be accounted for otherwise. They share in one another's gifts and graces, and are obligated to do good to one another, both on the personal level as well as the corporate level. On the *personal* level they are to help, encourage, and pray for other believers who are in need.<sup>6</sup> On the *corporate* level, they are to relate to one another as members of the same church, and as members of one church with those of another church.<sup>7</sup> God saves people *individually*, in order that they may live *communally*, as members of local churches. Every true Christian ought to commit himself to the membership of a good local church. That is why Christians are described as members of Christ's body, living stones in the temple of God, and children in God's household.<sup>8</sup>

3 Needs vary, the ability to meet those needs differ, and the opportunity to meet the needs of others is never the same among believers. It is therefore unavoidable that *selective fellowship* is practised. The Lord practised selective fellowship: choosing seventy to send out two by two;<sup>9</sup> choosing twelve to be His disciples;<sup>10</sup> taking only three disciples with Him on certain occasions;<sup>11</sup> and specially loving one disciple.<sup>12</sup> A Christian will first help the members of his own church, then the members of like-minded churches, before extending help to members of other churches.<sup>13</sup> The *communion of the saints* does not destroy or infringe the right of personal ownership.<sup>14</sup> Some groups err by advocating communal living of the kind that denies the right of private property, infringes the liberty of conscience, and leads to

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<sup>5</sup>John 17:23; 1 John 4:7-11

<sup>6</sup>1 Thess. 5:11; 1 John 3:17-18

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 1:12; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:7; 3:12-13

<sup>8</sup>1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 12:7

spiritual bondage.

- 4 Just as members of a local church have an obligation to strengthen and help one another, churches also have a similar obligation towards one another. The *communion of saints*, and the *communion of churches*, should never be exercised at the expense of truth.<sup>15</sup> We have a duty to obey God, and to be faithful to His word. Selective fellowship between churches has, therefore, to be exercised on the basis of truth. The more truth we are agreed upon, the closer will be the fellowship, and vice versa. This is ignored by the *ecumenical movement*, which practises fellowship that compromises truth. Separation from sin, heresy and worldliness is commanded of us.<sup>16</sup>

How blessed is the person who trusts in the Lord. Come, trust in Him!

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## 27.2 Review Questions

- 1 Who are the *saints*?
- 2 Describe the union of believers with Christ using three words.
- 3 How are believers united to one another?

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<sup>9</sup>Luke 10:1

<sup>10</sup>Luke 9:1

<sup>11</sup>Matt. 17:1; 26:37; Mark 5:37; 13:3

<sup>12</sup>John 20:2; 21:7, 20

<sup>13</sup>1 Tim. 5:4, 8; Gal. 6:10; Acts 11:29-30

<sup>14</sup>Acts 5:4; Eph 4:28

<sup>15</sup>Eph. 4:1-6

<sup>16</sup>2 Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:8-9; 2:14; 1 John 2:16

## 27. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

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- 4 How does the *communion of saints* work out on the *personal* level?
- 5 How does the *communion of saints* work out on the *corporate* level?
- 6 Why has *selective fellowship* to be practised?
- 7 What right is not denied or infringed by the *communion of saints*?
- 8 Why mustn't the *communion of saints* and the *communion of churches* be exercised at the expense of truth?
- 9 How does truth affect the fellowship between churches?
- 10 What is wrong with the *ecumenical movement*?

### 27.3 Assignment/Discussion

How may we express communion between churches: (i) in times of peace; (ii) in times of natural disaster?

### 27.4 Memory Passage (John 17:20-21)

<sup>20</sup> "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."

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## Twenty-eight

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# BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER (Heb. 8:6-13)

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Baptism and the Lord's Supper are special ordinances given to the local church as signs of the new covenant.

### 28.1 About Baptism And The Lord's Supper

1 Baptism and the Lord's Supper are two *special ordinances* instituted by the Lord Jesus in His church, to be continued to the end of the world.<sup>1</sup> Like hearing the word and prayer, they are *means of grace*, i.e. outward and ordinary means by which Christ communicates the benefits of salvation to believers. However, unlike hearing the word and prayer, they are *signs* of the new covenant as well. In other words, each of the special ordinances not only has a *purpose*, but also a *meaning*. As visible and outward signs, they represent inward and spiritual realities. Baptism is the sign of *union* with Christ, and the Lord's Supper is the sign of the believers' *fellowship* together in Christ's death. Under normal circumstances, a person should be baptised before taking part in

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the Lord's Supper.<sup>2</sup>

- 2 These special ordinances are to be administered in the local church, by those who are qualified and called to be ministers of the gospel.<sup>3</sup> Since these are church ordinances, it is wrong to administer them outside the context of the local church. Under exceptional circumstances, other men in the church may be delegated to carry out the baptism or the Lord's Supper, but the *responsibility* of doing so lies with the ministers of the gospel.<sup>4</sup> Four matters relating to the special ordinances must be considered: the *meaning*, the *purpose*, the *subject*, and the *mode* (i.e. the method). Error in any of these will affect the gospel, the purity of the church, and fellowship between churches, to various degrees.
- 3 The Roman Catholic Church refers to baptism and the Lord's Supper (which it calls the *holy eucharist* or *mass*) as *sacraments*, or means of salvation. For that reason, we are reluctant to use the word "sacraments" in reference to these means of grace. It is claimed that there are five other sacraments, including *confirmation* (a ceremony for baptised infants who have come of age), *penance* (confession of sins to a priest), *extreme unction* (the anointing with oil of those who are dying), *holy orders* (becoming a monk or nun), and *marriage*. The Roman Catholic Church also errs seriously by claiming that Christ is crucified afresh, under the appearances of bread and wine, each time the mass is celebrated. Furthermore, it is claimed that the elements change into the actual flesh and blood of Christ when taken – a belief called *transubstantiation*.
- 4 If it is a serious matter to err on the Lord's Supper, it is also a serious matter to err on baptism. Paedobaptist churches (including the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Methodist Churches) err by baptising babies, who

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 28:19-20; 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 4:1

<sup>4</sup>John 4:2

are not yet capable of faith. Since baptism is a sign of union with Christ, it is to be administered only to believers, which is what the Bible teaches.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of baptism is to initiate the subject into the membership of the local church.<sup>6</sup> By baptising babies, paedobaptists introduce into the membership of the church many who grow up to be unbelievers. The purity of the church is thus compromised. When converted later, the new believer is denied baptism because he is supposed to have been baptised already. Biblical baptism is, therefore, denied to him. Instead, an unbiblical practice, called *confirmation*, is performed on him. Furthermore, paedobaptists are wrong by admitting sprinkling as a mode, if not *the* mode, of baptism. There is only one baptism commanded by the Lord, which is the baptism of believers by immersion.<sup>7</sup>

Repent and believe first. Then get baptised and be joined to the church.

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## 28.2 Review Questions

- 1 What are the two *special ordinances* of the local church?
- 2 What is meant by *the means of grace*?
- 3 Of what is baptism a sign?
- 4 Of what is the Lord's Supper a sign?
- 5 Who should rightly administer the special ordinances?

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<sup>5</sup>Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38

<sup>6</sup>1 Cor. 12:12-14; Acts 2:41

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 4:5

## 28. BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

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- 6 What four matters relating to the special ordinances must be considered?
- 7 Why are we reluctant to use the word *sacraments* in reference to these means of grace?
- 8 What serious error is made by the Roman Catholic Church in regard to the meaning of the Lord's Supper?
- 9 State three errors on baptism committed by paedobaptist churches.
- 10 What is the one baptism commanded by the Lord?

### 28.3 Assignment/Discussion

The special ordinances are given to the local church. How would the meaning and purpose of each ordinance be affected if carried out by para-church organisations or individual Christians?

### 28.4 Memory Passage (1 Cor. 12:12-14)

<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For in fact the body is not one member but many.

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## Twenty-nine

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### BAPTISM (Rom. 6:1-11)

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Baptism does not save but the saved would want to get baptised, when that is possible.

#### 29.1 About Baptism

- 1 Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, that carries with it a meaning and a purpose. It is a *sign* of union with Christ, which indicates the following about the believer: (i) he has died and resurrected with Christ; (ii) he has been forgiven all his sins; (iii) he has given himself to God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life.<sup>1</sup> The *purpose* of baptism is to initiate the believer into the membership of the local church.<sup>2</sup> Baptism must not be identified (i.e. equated) with the circumcision of the Old Testament. Regeneration (i.e. the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming the human nature) is *figuratively* called *the circumcision of the heart*, or *the circumcision made without hands*. Circumcision pointed to regeneration, not to baptism. Baptism is a new sign of the new covenant (corre-

## 29. BAPTISM

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sponding to the new age brought in by Christ).<sup>3</sup>

- 2 Only those who show a *credible profession of faith* are to be baptised. This means the following: (i) they must actually profess *repentance* towards God;<sup>4</sup> (ii) they must actually profess *faith* in Jesus Christ;<sup>5</sup> and (iii) they must resolve to walk in *obedience* to the Lord.<sup>6</sup> They do not have to be adults, or theologians (i.e. experts on the teaching of the Bible) before being baptised. We do not baptise infants because they are not yet capable of faith, as required by the Bible. The Bible contains no command, example, or certain inference to baptise the infants of professing believers. In this, the paedobaptists (i.e. those who baptise infants) are wrong.
- 3 Baptism is to be by *immersion*, i.e. the dipping of the whole person, in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup> The original Greek words “to baptise” (*baptizo*) and “baptism” (*baptisma*) mean immersion. Baptism is figuratively used in other ways, but the actual meaning of a word must never be determined from its figurative usage. The examples of baptism in the Bible also indicate immersion.<sup>8</sup> Despite the clear teaching of the Bible, there are Christians who wrongly argue for sprinkling (*rantizo*) and pouring (*katacheo*). The ceremonial washing in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the spiritual cleansing of regeneration, not in the external sign of baptism.<sup>9</sup>
- 4 Paedobaptists like to support their practice of infant baptism by: (i) quoting the “household passages” in the book of Acts; (ii) making much of the phrase “For the promise

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<sup>1</sup>Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 22:16

<sup>2</sup>Acts 2:41; 5:14; Matt. 28:19-20

<sup>3</sup>Rom. 2:29; Col. 2:11-12; Heb. 8:6, 13

<sup>4</sup>Acts 2:38; 20:21

<sup>5</sup>Mark 16:16; Acts 8:36-37

<sup>6</sup>Rom. 6:4, 17-18; Acts 19:18-19; 1 Thess. 1:9-10

<sup>7</sup>Matt. 28:19-20

<sup>8</sup>John 3:22-23; Acts 8:36-39

<sup>9</sup>Ezek. 36:25-27 cf. Heb. 10:1-4, 12-18; Tit. 3:5; Acts 22:16

is to you and to your children" in Acts 2:39; (iii) appealing to 1 Corinthians 7:14; and (iv) arguing from the covenant God made with Abraham. (a) However, the "household passages" show that only believers were baptised.<sup>10</sup> (b) Acts 2:39 has not been quoted fully, nor understood correctly in its context. The last phrase in the verse "as many as the Lord our God will call" qualifies the earlier clause "the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off". Furthermore, "children" is a reference to the descendants, and not to the immediate children in the family, much less to infants. Salvation is promised to those spread out in time ("to you and to your children"), and in space ("to you and to all who are afar off"), who respond in faith (cf. Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 10:17). (c) In 1 Corinthians 7:14, the children of a believing parent is regarded as "holy" not in the sense that they are saved, but rather that they are "set apart" to be under the influence of the gospel, in contrast to those who are born in pagan families. In the same verse, the unbelieving spouse is regarded as "sanctified" or "made holy" in the same sense. Both words, "holy" and "sanctified" are derived from the same root word. (d) God's covenant with Abraham is fulfilled in Christ, so that all who have faith in Christ are Abraham's children.<sup>11</sup>

Have you been biblically baptised – as a believer, and by immersion?

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## 29.2 Review Questions

1 What does the sign of baptism say about the believer?

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<sup>10</sup>Acts 16:34; 1 Cor. 1:16 cf. 16:15

<sup>11</sup>Gal. 3:7-9, 27, 29

## 29. BAPTISM

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- 2 What is the purpose of baptism?
- 3 Why mustn't baptism be equated with circumcision?
- 4 Who alone are to be baptised?
- 5 What three things must be true about those who are baptised?
- 6 Does the Bible teach us to baptise the infants of professing believers?
- 7 How is baptism to be performed?
- 8 What do the "household passages" in Acts actually show?
- 9 Name two other passages that have been quoted by paedobaptists to wrongly support infant baptism.
- 10 In the covenant that God made with Abraham, who are his true children?

### 29.3 Assignment/Discussion

Baptism is a special ordinance of the New Testament, commanded by the Lord in the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Can it be possible that the Lord gave a command in which we are uncertain about how, and who, we are to baptise?

### 29.4 Memory Passage (Rom. 6:3-4)

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

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# Thirty

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## THE LORD'S SUPPER (1 Cor. 11:23-32)

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The Lord's Supper is a means of grace which believers would not want to miss too often.

### 30.1 About The Lord's Supper

1 Like baptism, the special ordinance of the Lord's Supper has a *meaning* and a *purpose*. The meaning of the Lord's Supper is that believers are expressing fellowship with one another by their common faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> As they physically consume the elements, they spiritually feed on Christ, by faith.<sup>2</sup> The *purpose* of the Lord's Supper is at least three-fold, affecting the *believers*, the *church*, and the *world*. First, it nourishes the faith of believers by exercising their mind, heart, and will. The mind is engaged in remembering the death of Christ symbolised by the bread and the cup;<sup>3</sup> the heart is engaged in covenant commitment to Christ;<sup>4</sup> and the will is engaged in repentance of past sins, resolve to love God's people, and desire for future obedience and usefulness in service "till He comes".<sup>5</sup> Second, the church demonstrates its unity by its fellowship with Christ.<sup>6</sup> Third, the Lord's Sup-

### 30. THE LORD'S SUPPER

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per also has a witnessing function like baptism, reminding non-believers of the gospel of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” and the necessity of “discerning the Lord’s body” without which they will be eating and drinking “in an unworthy manner”.<sup>7</sup>

- 2 The elements are bread and the cup, which symbolise the body and blood of Christ, respectively.<sup>8</sup> Significantly the New Testament refers to “the cup” and “fruit of the vine” (grape juice, not necessarily fermented) for the Lord’s Supper, never “wine”. The taking away of leaven in the Passover feast pointed to the taking away of our sins by the Lord, just as the circumcision of the flesh pointed to the circumcision of the heart, i.e. regeneration.<sup>9</sup> This truth leads to the following implications: (i) it is not right to insist on using unleavened bread; (ii) it is right to insist that only true believers partake; (iii) it is recommended that one loaf/piece of bread be used to signify the unity of believers.<sup>10</sup> Normally, baptism should precede the Lord’s Supper, since church membership should precede fellowship.<sup>11</sup> The Lord’s Supper should not be celebrated so frequently that its special significance is lost, for the Passover feast which foreshadowed it was celebrated only once a year. On the other hand, the Lord’s Supper is a new sign of the new covenant, and must be celebrated frequently enough to be a means of grace. Having it once a fortnight, or once a month, is recommended.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>1 Cor. 10:16-17

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 26:26-27; John 6:51-58

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. 11:24, 25; Matt. 26:28-29

<sup>4</sup>1 Cor. 10:21-22

<sup>5</sup>1 Cor. 5:7-8; 11:26; Matt. 5:23-24

<sup>6</sup>1 Cor. 10:16-17; 12:12-14; John 17:20-23

<sup>7</sup>1 Cor. 11:26

<sup>8</sup>Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26

<sup>9</sup>1 Cor. 5:7-8; Col. 2:11

<sup>10</sup>1 Cor. 10:17

<sup>11</sup>Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42

<sup>12</sup>1 Cor. 11:24, 26

- 3 The church has a duty to announce that only baptised believers, who are not under church discipline, may take part in the Lord's Supper. In *open communion*, anyone who considers himself/herself a Christian may take part. In *close communion*, members of the same denomination may take part. In *closed communion*, only members of the particular local church may take part. In *restricted communion*, only true believers, regardless of denomination, may take part. *Restricted communion* takes into consideration the facts that: (i) the Lord's Supper is a special ordinance of the local church;<sup>13</sup> (ii) it is not open to non-believers;<sup>14</sup> and, (iii) visiting believers are our brethren in Christ.<sup>15</sup>
- 4 The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the mass (instead of the Lord's Supper) by lifting up and adoring the elements, and even keeping them for religious use, claiming that Christ is being crucified afresh. This directly contradicts the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper. In effect, it teaches faith in the rituals, and not faith in Christ alone, for salvation. The teaching of *transubstantiation*, which claims that the elements are transformed into Christ's flesh and blood when prayed over by the priest, is nothing but superstition. The worship of those elements is idolatry.<sup>16</sup> The Lutheran belief of *consubstantiation*, which claims that the body and blood of Christ are present "in, under, and along with" the elements must also be rejected.

What a blessing it is to partake of the Lord's Supper! But you must come to Christ in faith first.

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<sup>13</sup>1 Cor. 11:23

<sup>14</sup>1 Cor. 11:29; Matt. 7:6

<sup>15</sup>1 Cor. 10:17

<sup>16</sup>Matt. 15:9; Exod. 20:4-5

## 30. THE LORD'S SUPPER

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### 30.2 Review Questions

- 1 What is the meaning of the Lord's Supper?
- 2 In the first purpose, how does the Lord's Supper nourish the faith of believers?
- 3 What is the second purpose of the Lord's Supper?
- 4 What is the third purpose of the Lord's Supper?
- 5 What do the elements of the bread and the cup symbolise?
- 6 Give the reason why we must not insist on using wine at the Lord's Supper.
- 7 What did the taking away of the leaven in the Passover feast point to?
- 8 How do we determine the frequency of holding the Lord's Supper?
- 9 What is the practice of *restricted communion* in contrast to *open communion*, *close communion*, and *closed communion*?
- 10 What are claimed in *transubstantiation* and *consubstantiation*?

### 30.3 Assignment/Discussion

Find out Ulrich Zwingli's view, and John Calvin's view, of the presence of the Lord in the Lord's Supper. One loaf/slice of bread is recommended. What about the grape juice used, should it be in one cup only? Cf. Luke 22:17, 20.

### 30.4 Memory Passage (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was



#### 30.4. Memory Passage (1 Cor. 11:23-26)

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betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

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# Thirty-one

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## DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION (1 Cor. 15:35-58)

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The resurrection of Christ guarantees the resurrection of His people to glory.

### 31.1 About Death And The Resurrection

1 When death occurs, the soul separates from the body. The body will decompose, and return to dust, just as the body of the first man, Adam, was made from dust.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the body, which is physical matter, the soul is immortal (i.e. undying) spirit. Upon death, it returns to God the Maker.<sup>2</sup> The examples of burial in the Bible show that that is the proper way of disposing of the body, although cremation (i.e. burning) will not affect the resurrection (i.e. the raising up of the dead). The body, not just the soul, is also from God and must be treated with dignity. Burning is a sign of God's judgement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gen. 3:19; Acts 13:36

<sup>2</sup>Eccl. 12:7

<sup>3</sup>1 Cor. 3:15; Heb. 6:8; Rev. 20:10

### 31. DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION

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2 The souls of the righteous are made perfect in holiness, to be with Christ, living in the light and glory of God's presence, and waiting for their bodies to be restored fully to them.<sup>4</sup> The souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and darkness, reserved for the judgement of the last day.<sup>5</sup> There is no such place as *purgatory*, as taught by the Roman Catholic Church, where souls are purified by suffering for their sins for a time. The souls in heaven or hell are never released to roam on the earth at any time, as believed by the Taoists. There is no reincarnation (i.e. the soul being reborn as another person or creature), as taught by the Buddhists.

3 When Christ returns to judge the world, the believers who are still alive will not die but shall be changed.<sup>6</sup> An old car that is melted down can be remade into a new car. Similarly, all the dead shall be raised up with their own, same, bodies.<sup>7</sup> God will gather all the constituent elements to reconstitute the bodies and reunite them to their souls for ever.<sup>8</sup> The bodies of the just shall be raised to honour, and made like the body of Christ.<sup>9</sup> The bodies of the unjust shall be raised to dishonour, with qualities suited to their shame, and reunited with their souls. The last traces of God's image would have been erased from them so that they are absolutely evil. The wicked will increasingly suffer in hell, while the righteous will increasingly grow in blessedness in heaven.<sup>10</sup> There will be no marriage in heaven, but we will be able to recognise one another.<sup>11</sup> Family ties will be transformed into the more splendid fellowship of the glorified saints. The handicapped will be given perfect bodies. The Lord, however, continues to bear the marks of His crucifixion, to remind us of His sac-

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<sup>4</sup>Luke 23:43; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6-8; Phil. 1:23; Heb. 12:23

<sup>5</sup>Jude 6-7; Luke 16:23-24

rifice for us.<sup>12</sup>

- 4 While waiting for the day of judgement, there is no possibility of contact between those living on earth and those in heaven or hell.<sup>13</sup> Any attempt to contact the dead is sinful, and dangerous.<sup>14</sup> In the Old Testament, the attempt by Saul to contact the spirit of Samuel was contrary to God's law. If Samuel were truly raised, he would have rebuked Saul for the act. It was most probably an evil spirit who impersonated Samuel. We are to pray only for the living, and for those who are yet to be born, but not for the dead.<sup>15</sup> Some people teach *annihilation*, i.e. that the souls of the dead will gradually disappear into non-existence.<sup>16</sup> This is contrary to the Bible's teaching, and makes the warnings of the Bible meaningless.

We have only one life on earth. Why not live it well, by faith in Christ?

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## 31.2 Review Questions

- 1 What happen to the body and soul when death occurs?
- 2 Give three reasons why burial is the proper way of disposing of the body.

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<sup>6</sup>1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:17

<sup>7</sup>Job 19:26-27

<sup>8</sup>1 Cor. 15:42-43

<sup>9</sup>Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; Phil. 3:21

<sup>10</sup>Matt. 25:29-30, 46; 1 Cor. 15:49

<sup>11</sup>Matt. 22:30; Rev. 21:4; 22:1-5

<sup>12</sup>John 20:27; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rev. 5:6

<sup>13</sup>Luke 16:26, 30; 1 Thess. 4:14

<sup>14</sup>Deut. 18:10-12; Lev. 20:6; 1 Cor. 10:20-22; 1 Sam. 28:11-19

<sup>15</sup>2 Tim. 2:1-7; 16. Matt. 25:46; Jude 6-7

## 31. DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION

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- 3 What happen to the souls of the righteous at death?
- 4 What happen to the souls of the wicked at death?
- 5 What will happen to believers who are still alive when Christ returns to judge the world?
- 6 What will happen to the bodies of the just on the last day?
- 7 What will happen to the bodies of the unjust on the last day?
- 8 Why does the Lord continue to bear the marks of His crucifixion?
- 9 What may be said about any attempt to contact the dead?
- 10 What is wrong with the doctrine of *annihilation*?

### 31.3 Assignment/Discussion

Some Christians believe in *trichotomy* instead of *dichotomy*. Consider the Bible passages used to support *trichotomy* and explain them from the perspective of *dichotomy*.

### 31.4 Memory Passage (John 5:28-29)

<sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup> and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

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## Thirty-two

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# THE LAST JUDGEMENT

## (Matt. 25:31-46)

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There will be a day of judgement for everyone, prior to the eternal states of heaven and hell.

### 32.1 About The Last Judgement

1 God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness. God the Father has given to God the Son all power to be the Judge.<sup>1</sup> Not only the apostate (i.e. fallen) angels shall be judged,<sup>2</sup> but also all people who have lived on the earth. All true Christians believe the following about the day of judgement: (i) Christ will return in bodily form in a visible way;<sup>3</sup> (ii) all men will be raised and given their resurrection bodies;<sup>4</sup> (iii) all men will be judged according to their thoughts, words, and deeds;<sup>5</sup> (iv) the righteous ones will be forgiven all their sins and be rewarded for their faith, while the wicked will be condemned to the torments of hell

## 32. THE LAST JUDGEMENT

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eternally.<sup>6</sup>

- 2 The last judgement will show forth the glory of God's *mercy* in the eternal salvation of the elect. It will also show forth His *justice* in the eternal damnation of the wicked and disobedient.<sup>7</sup> The righteous shall then go into everlasting life and receive fulness of joy and glory in the presence of the Lord. The wicked, who do not know God and refused to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be punished in the torments of hell.<sup>8</sup> This is known as the *second death*.<sup>9</sup> In the first death, the body and the soul were separated, and only the soul was sent to hell. In the second death, the body and the soul are reunited and sent to hell, to be punished forever.
- 3 The Lord wants us to be fully convinced that there will be a day of judgement so that all men will be deterred from sin,<sup>10</sup> and the godly who suffer for their faith will be comforted.<sup>11</sup> Some Christians take sins too lightly because they wrongly believe that their sins are wiped out of God's record on account of their faith in Christ. The teaching of the Bible, however, is that all – including Christians – will be judged. All our sins will be revealed on judgement day, and God will be seen to be merciful and just. The elect have the assurance that they shall be *forgiven*, on account of their faith in Christ.
- 4 Different views on Christ's return have arisen. Many believe there will be a period, known as the *millennium* (i.e. a thou-

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<sup>1</sup>Acts 17:31; John 5:22, 27; Rom. 2:5-16

<sup>2</sup>1 Cor. 6:3; Jude 6

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 24:30; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16

<sup>4</sup>Acts 24:15; 1 Thess. 4:16-17

<sup>5</sup>2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 12:36; Rom. 14:10-12

<sup>6</sup>Matt. 25:32-46; John 5:28-29

<sup>7</sup>Rom. 9:22-23

<sup>8</sup>Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:48; 2 Thess. 1:7-10

<sup>9</sup>Rev. 21:8

<sup>10</sup>2 Cor. 5:10-11

<sup>11</sup>2 Thess. 1:5-7; Heb. 9:27-28



### 32.1. About The Last Judgement

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sand years), of unparalleled gospel prosperity on earth before the general judgement.<sup>12</sup> The *premillennialists* believe that Christ will return before that period. The *postmillennialists* believe that Christ will return after that period. Among the premillennialists are those who hold to a wrong teaching called *dispensationalism*, in which the events of Christ's return are worked out in detail, contrary to Scripture. They also believe that God saved by methods other than by faith in Christ alone in the previous dispensations. The *amillennialists* (or *non-millennialists*) understand the *millennium* figuratively as the period between the two comings of Christ, in which the gospel will spread, at the same time that evil will increase. The gospel age is also known as "the last days".<sup>13</sup>

- 5 The exact day of Christ's return is kept secret from men so that they may not be slack but be watchful for the Lord's return.<sup>14</sup> After judgement, the whole universe will be melted down, and new heavens and a new earth will be reconstituted, in which righteousness dwells.<sup>15</sup> When all the elect are gathered safely on the new earth, which is in the new heavens (or universe), heaven (i.e. the dwelling place of God) will be on earth and earth will be in heaven.<sup>16</sup> While the eternal state of unbelievers is horrendously awful, the eternal state of believers is stupendously blessed! Believers should be longing for the coming of the Lord, and say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly!"<sup>17</sup>

Flee from the coming wrath of God! Trust in Christ to be saved!

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<sup>12</sup>Acts 1:7; Rev. 20

<sup>13</sup>Acts 2:17-21; 2 Tim. 3:1-9; Heb. 1:2; 2 Pet. 3:3

<sup>14</sup>Mark 13:35-37; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thess. 5:1-11

<sup>15</sup>2 Pet. 3:3-13; 1 Cor. 15:40-41, 50-54; Rom. 8:21-23

<sup>16</sup>Rev. 21:1-8, 22-27; 22:1-5

<sup>17</sup>Rev. 22:20

## 32. THE LAST JUDGEMENT

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### 32.2 Review Questions

- 1 Who will be the Judge on the day of judgement?
- 2 Who will be judged on the day of judgement?
- 3 How will Christ return to earth?
- 4 Name the two attributes (characteristics) of God that will be manifested in the judgement.
- 5 What happens to the wicked at the *second death*?
- 6 State two effects the judgement should have upon us.
- 7 What do the *premillennialists*, *postmillennialists*, and *amillennialists* believe about the *millennium*?
- 8 How do the *dispensational premillennialists* err on the return of Christ?
- 9 Why is the exact day of Christ's return kept secret from us?
- 10 What is the eternal state of the blessed compared to that of the unbelievers?

### 32.3 Assignment/Discussion

*Amillennialism* has much to commend itself compared to *premillennialism* and *postmillennialism*. Why must we reject *dispensationalism*? Name some well-known people who hold to, or had held to, each of these views.

### 32.4 Memory Passage (Heb. 9:27)

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

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## MEMORY PASSAGES

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### **INTRODUCTION, Jude 3, 20-23**

<sup>3</sup> Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. <sup>20</sup> But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, <sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. <sup>22</sup> And on some have compassion, making a distinction; <sup>23</sup> but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

### **1 THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, 2 Tim. 3:16-17**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

### **2 THE TRUE GOD, Exod. 34:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

## MEMORY PASSAGES

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### **3 GOD'S DECREE**, Isaiah 46:9-10

<sup>9</sup> For I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like Me,  
<sup>10</sup> Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,  
Saying, 'My counsel shall stand,  
And I will do all My pleasure...'

### **4 CREATION**, Heb. 11:3

<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

### **5 PROVIDENCE**, Neh. 9:6

You alone are the Lord;  
You have made heaven,  
The heaven of heavens, with all their host,  
The earth and everything on it,  
The seas and all that is in them,  
And You preserve them all.  
The host of heaven worships You.

### **6 SIN**, 1 Cor. 15:21-22

<sup>21</sup> For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

### **7 GOD'S COVENANT**, Jer. 31:33

<sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

### **8 CHRIST THE MEDIATOR**, 1 Tim. 2:5

<sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

### **9 FREE WILL**, Rom. 7:22-25

<sup>22</sup> For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

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<sup>23</sup> But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? <sup>25</sup> I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

**10 EFFECTUAL CALLING**, Rom. 9:16

<sup>16</sup> So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

**11 JUSTIFICATION**, Rom. 3:21-24

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

**12 ADOPTION**, Rom. 8:15-17

<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

**13 SANCTIFICATION**, Rom. 8:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

**14 SAVING FAITH**, Eph. 2:8-9

<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

## MEMORY PASSAGES

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### **15 REPENTANCE**, 1 John 1:8-9

<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### **16 GOOD WORKS**, James 2:19-20

<sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

### **17 PERSEVERANCE**, Phil. 3:12-14

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. <sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

### **18 ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**, John 10:28-29

<sup>28</sup> And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. <sup>29</sup> My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

### **19 THE LAW OF GOD**, Matt. 5:17-19

<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup> Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

### **20 THE GOSPEL**, Matt. 28:18-20

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore

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and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

**21 LIBERTY AND CONSCIENCE, Rom. 6:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. <sup>18</sup> And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

**22 WORSHIP AND THE SABBATH DAY, Heb. 10:24-25**

<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

**23 LAWFUL OATHS AND VOWS, Matt. 5:37**

<sup>37</sup> But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No.” For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

**24 THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT, Matt. 22:21**

And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

**25 MARRIAGE, Heb. 13:4**

<sup>4</sup> Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

**26 THE CHURCH, Eph. 5:25-27**

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

**27 THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, John 17:20-21**

<sup>20</sup> “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will

## MEMORY PASSAGES

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believe in Me through their word; <sup>21</sup> that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”

### **28 BAPTISM AND THE LORD’S SUPPER, 1 Cor. 12:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. <sup>13</sup> For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. <sup>14</sup> For in fact the body is not one member but many.

### **29 BAPTISM, Rom. 6:3-4**

<sup>3</sup> Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? <sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

### **30 THE LORD’S SUPPER, 1 Cor. 11:23-26**

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

### **31 DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION, John 5:28-29**

<sup>28</sup> Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup> and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.



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**32 THE LAST JUDGEMENT, Heb. 9:27**

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.



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